

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

**DEVELOPING READING STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE UPON READING
CULTURE AMONG UPPER PRIMARY PUPILS OF MALSHEGU KIDZ
ACTIVE FOUNDATION SCHOOL IN TAMALE, NORTHERN REGION,
GHANA**

UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES



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UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

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BY

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DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION**

FEBRUARY, 2018



DECLARATION

Student

I hereby declare that this dissertation/project work is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere:

Candidate's Signature... ..Date:

Name: KONLAN JOB NAAFAN

Supervisor's

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation/project work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation/project work laid down by the University for Development Studies.

Supervisor's Signature:Date:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to develop reading culture among the upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School through alternative reading strategies. The project guided by the interpretive paradigm adopted a qualitative approach (action research) design to assist 97 upper primary pupils (30 in class four, 34 and 33 pupils in classes five and six respectively). A teacher in each of the Upper Primary classes was also guided as to how to use different teaching strategies to promote reading abilities among the pupils specifically the development of reading culture. The researcher interviewed the teachers, employed both participant and non-participant observation techniques as instruments to achieve the research objectives. The study revealed that reading difficulties among the pupils were not only associated with socio-economic or environmental factors but also language factor and learning styles as well as inadequate exposure to books. Moreover, the syllabus was designed in such a way that it did not provide room for creative teaching. Among the numerous strategies employed to improve upon the reading abilities of pupils, the syllabic method was identified as the most successful and effective method for promoting reading abilities and reading culture. This accounts from the fact that the method enabled most of the pupils in the upper primary classes of the school to read fluently which subsequently led to the development of reading culture among them. Based on the outcomes, the researcher made some recommendations for developing reading culture among the pupils. These include placing emphasis on the syllabic method of teaching reading and comprehension at the basic level. Also, reading competitions should be organized periodically in schools. Besides that reward packages should also be kept in place for pupils who excel in these competitions.



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Konlan Laar for their constant encouragement and support in my academic success.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CRDD	Curriculum Research and Development Division
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
FCUBE	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
G.E.S	Ghana Education Service
IQ	Intelligent Quotient
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAAL	National Assessment of Adult Literacy
NEA	National Education Assessment
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Study
P.T.A	Parent Teacher Association
SACMEQ	South African Consortium Monitoring Education Quality
SADC	South African Development Communities
SHS	Senior High School
TLMs	Teaching and Learning Materials
UDS	University for Development Studies
UNESCO Organization	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Over the years, there has been a great public outcry over the declining interest in reading among pupils in many parts of the world due to technology and other factors. Despite the fact that many professional teachers have placed emphasis on the development of life-long reading interests and reading habits among pupils, the problem still persists. Internationally, research indicates that there is a growing concern in many countries around the world over the inabilities of many pupils to read effectively of not only at the basic schools, but also at the tertiary institutions (Hugo, Le Rocks, Muller and Nell, 2005; Bella, 2013). According to Bean (2004), there are many pupils with reading disabilities in American schools which has become a great concern for many.

A study conducted in South Africa by Annual National Assessment (ANA) of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2012 on pupils in grade 1-6 and grade 9 in English language and mathematics also revealed that most pupils could not read, pronounce some words in their comprehension books correctly and lack ability to make inferences from given information in a text or to spell frequently used words correctly. The most worrying situation was inability of pupils to read with understanding (Bella, 2013). According to Hugo et al (2005), the situation is even more worrying since many tertiary students in South Africa have poor literacy skills and knowledge.

In Ghana, according to the 2013 National Education Assessment (NEA) of English competencies among Primary three and six pupils across the ten regions, many pupils within this category in the public schools could not read and others could read simple words, but cannot understand what they have read (USAID, 2013). However, reading



culture is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. In all competencies in formal education that contribute to life-long learning and sustainable development, none is quite central as the ability to read and write. Educational research all over the world indicates that literacy is fundamental to success in formal education (Trudell, 2012; Ruerana, 2012). A successful and adaptable reader can enhance the chances of success at school and beyond. According to Bamberger (1975), reading culture begins at home, improves systematically in the school and is carried on in later life through the influences of the general cultural environment and the conscious efforts of education.

Reading is not just for school but for life because it is very vital for better and informed life. It enables people to have a better understanding of themselves, others and the society in which they live in. It also makes us develop thoughtfully, become constructive contributors to democratic and cohesive society (Darrel, 2005; Ndikubwayeze, 2009; Ruterana, 2012; Bella, 2013). There is no country that can dream of meaningful development if its citizens cannot read. The inability to read affects enlightened citizenry because they cannot readily mobilise for the attainment of political, social and economic goals of the nation. It has been emphasized by Bella (2013) that the decline interest in reading these days is a cause for alarm and challenge to all. It is against this background that comprehensive and effective strategies to promoting reading culture among pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School in Malshegu in the Sagnarigu District is a laudable idea.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Poor reading culture among pupils in many parts of Africa has become a source of worry for many well-meaning educationists, policy makers and parents in Ghana. Many pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School find it very difficult to read simple words and sentences. The researcher observed that in Kidz Active Foundation School, most of the pupils in the upper primary do not only find it difficult to read simple words and



sentences, but also have challenges in pronouncing English words correctly while others do back tracking and re-reading of words and lines.

This situation has resulted in lack of comprehension among the pupils, slows their reading speed and leads to poor academic performance in the school. According to Bohlman and Pretorius (2002), learners who do not learn how to read during their elementary school years have difficulty in navigating the school curriculum during their higher level of education. Despite the fact that the management and staff of the school have adopted numerous strategies to improving upon the reading abilities of pupils, the problem still persists. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to develop practical and effective strategies to developing reading culture among pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School in Malshegu in the Sagnarigu District of Northern Region.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective of the study is to develop strategies to improve upon reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.

1.2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To find out the causes of poor reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.
- 2) To examine the existing state of reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.
- 3) To develop effective strategies to promoting Reading culture among Upper Primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.



1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 Main Research Question

How can upper primary pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School develop reading culture?

1.3.2 Sub-Research Questions

- 1) What are the causes of poor reading culture among pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School?
- 2) What is the state of reading culture among upper primary students of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School?
- 3) What effective strategies can be adopted to improve upon the reading culture of pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School?

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

UNESCO leads global debate by advocating for the rethinking of sustainable development. It advises policy-makers on how to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into education plans and curricula. It also emphasizes that sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instrument alone. Sustainable development requires quality education and learning at all levels and in all contexts (UNESCO, 2017). In line with that the project would contribute to improve quality education for development. Specifically, it would improve upon the reading culture among pupils of all levels in education.

The findings of this study would be very instrumental in unlocking the bottlenecks of reading difficulties among pupils in the Sagnarigu District of the Northern Region of Ghana through the development of strategies to improving upon the reading culture of



pupils. Besides that the researcher envisaged the findings of this study would stimulate the interest of pupils in the school to enjoy reading which will lead some of them to pursue English related careers such as journalism.

Furthermore, the outcome of the study would be communicated to the Ghana Education Service, Ministry of Education (MoE), Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), head teachers of basic schools and English Language teachers in the District in order to draw their attention to the need to promote reading culture among pupils through the design of innovative and practical oriented methodologies for the teaching and learning of reading and comprehension. Finally, the findings of the study would serve as a foundation for further research work on measures to addressing reading difficulties in the country.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

There are many schools in the Sagnarigu District where pupils have poor reading culture but it was convenient to select the upper primary of Kidz Active Foundation School for the study because the English teachers had identified the problem and were making efforts towards finding a solution to the problem. The upper primary was also chosen because it is at that stage English Language is used as medium of instruction and where rigorous reading starts at the basic level of education in Ghana. The main thrust of the project is to develop effective strategies to promoting reading culture among pupils in Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School in particular, the Sagnarigu District, Northern Region and Ghana at large. The project also sought to identify the causes of reading disabilities among pupils as well as examines the existing strategies that have been put in place to improve upon the reading abilities of pupils and consequently, the development of reading culture.



1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT REPORT

This project is put into five chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction/background to the study, problem statement, research objective and research questions, significance of the study, scope and structure of the study. Chapter two is review of literature relevant from international and Ghana state of reading culture, probable causes of reading difficulties including theories that explain reading difficulties and approaches in solving the problems. Chapter three is the methodology which outlines the research process and types of intervention strategies the teachers used. Chapter four presents the activities of the project whiles the fifth chapter consists of the outcomes of the project, conclusion and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of a brief introduction of reading concepts and culture of reading. It also looks at the international, African and the Ghanaian states of reading difficulties among pupils. Other issues reviewed are the factors influencing reading among pupils, approaches and methodologies for the teaching and learning of reading and various theories related to reading. These theories are behaviorism and constructivism.

2.1 CONCEPTS OF READING

The most important element of high quality education is literacy. Without effective literacy skills, pupils lose the needed creativity and pertinent information with regards to health, social, cultural and political issues as well as sources of pleasure and enrichment (Baatjies, 2003; Gunning, 2007; Bella, 2013). Reading offers pupils easy access to a vast world of information, fulfillment and enjoyment. It has been emphasized that reading is part of nation building and that it is the most important linguistic skill that needs to be developed in young learners. According to Schmidt (2002), the ability to read is a critical component of academic performance among pupils. They maintained that there is a strong correlation between poor reading ability and poor academic performance among pupils. Reading is essential for learning and if learners have not properly mastered the skill, their potential for success in the learning context is hampered. The ability to read skillfully and at the same time acquire relevant knowledge is achieved through reading culture.

In formal school situation, much of the school learning takes place in the form of reading, whether from the chalkboard, textbook or the media. It has been noted that



being proficient in reading is a fundamental requirement in life (Lovett et al., 2000; Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2012). According to (Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2005), reading is ‘magical’ as it is an opening to a vast world of information, fulfillment and enjoyment and after a person has acquired the skill, he feels he is not the same as those who cannot read.

Despite this effective role of reading, reading difficulty among pupils still persists in many parts of the world. Reading difficulty is where an individual fails to acquire rapid, context-free word identification skills. Reading difficulty is an unexpected obstacle for children who possess the intelligence, motivation and educational edge. According to Ruterana (2012), reading difficulty is mostly associated with children who come from households where they hardly see the adults reading. They asserted that, even within literate households, most adults do not often practice reading due to lack of reading materials or work schedules.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL STATE OF READING

The reading difficulty as a result of poor reading culture is not limited to only Ghanaian pupils. Internationally, research indicates that there is a growing concern in many countries around the world over reading disabilities among pupils. According to Hugo et al (2005), many learners lack the necessary reading abilities to make success of their academic years at school and even at tertiary level. They however maintained that it is difficult to get a complete picture about reading difficulties among pupils around the world because much of the literature is in home languages of many countries and data bases tend to be national and limited in accessibility. For instance, there have been media publications complaining about the poor state of reading in American schools, stating that there are learners who are struggling to learn to read across the United States of America.



A study conducted among fifteen year old school children in the fourth grade in New Zealand, France, Sweden and Finland revealed that there are many pupils with reading difficulties. The study indicated that about 40% of the fourth graders could not read basic or simple words under the supervision of their teachers. The results indicated that children of the black Americans were the worse off when it comes to reading difficulties. About 69% of them could not read nor pronounce basic words and sentences (Temple et al, 2005). A similar study carried out in the year 2002 also revealed that, over 40% of school children in the United States of America (USA) experienced significant problems in becoming competent readers. According to Temple and co, more than 40% of the fourth and eighth graders in the USA failed to read at the level considered basic to performing grade-level schoolwork.

The United State Department of Education reported that of the 2,887,217 school-aged children receiving services for learning disabilities, the majority of whom were identified as having a learning disability because of the developmental delays in reading. The estimated prevalence rates of reading difficulties in the USA, Britain and New Zealand ranges between 13% and 17% and vary according to the definition used. It has been noted even with appropriate early interventions approximately 4-6% could still be expected to experience reading difficulties (Torgessen, 2000; Hugo et al, 2005, Martin, Martin & Carvalho, 2008). Large scale national assessment of learner's reading skills in the USA indicated that a substantial percentage of learners were not acquiring or maintaining grade-level reading skills.

This is reflected in the National Assessment of Educational Progress' results conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics in the year 2010-2011, with 33% of fourth grade learners, 24% of eighth grade learners and 26% of twelfth grade learners scoring below the basic levels in reading. It was further indicated that the reading below the grades was the highest in learners from the low-income group (Lonigan, Purpura,



Wilson, Walker & Menchetti, 2012). This results indicated substantial continuity between early skills and reading skills, suggested that efforts to improve learner's reading skills should focus on the development of learner's early reading skills.

In Netherlands, Dutch pupils achieved high average performance levels in an international comparative study of reading comprehension conducted in 2011, but this high average performance levels hide some significant undesirable differences. Hence, about 7% of Dutch fifteen-year old children could not read well enough to function independently in wider society. The European's average for the same category was just over 17% (Houtveen and Van de Grief, 2003). This is an indication that reading difficulties experienced by learners are issues of international concern and need undivided attention and focus.

New Zealand has been doing well in international comparisons of reading achievement and was ranked fourth behind USA, Sweden and Finland. New Zealand has demonstrated a relatively widespread range of reading scores in comparison to other countries. For instance, in the Progress in International Reading Study (PIRLS), New Zealand was ranked 13 out of 35 countries and 16% of the national learner's scores were in the bottom quartile (Baker, 2001). From the foregoing discussion, it is very obvious that reading disabilities as a result of poor reading culture among pupils is enormous. This reading disabilities or poor reading culture is mostly associated with child developmental problems. Research findings revealed that majority of learners identified as having reading difficulties had poor foundations on reading at the early grades or levels of education.

If this situation is not diagnosed and addressed appropriately, the overall academic success of pupils would be hampered not only in their subsequent academic life, but also in their adult and working life (Baker, 2001). In an effort to turn the tides around, policy makers, governments, legislators, businessmen, parents and teachers across the globe



have sought for strategies to improve upon and promote reading culture among not only pupils, but also the general public. As a result, there has been a recommendation that reading specialist should be employed to work with the struggling readers as well as provide support to class room teachers (Bean, 2004). On international educational achievement study in the year 2002, American children with nine years old scored second and surpassed only children from Finland.

2.3 AFRICA STATE OF READING

The language of education in multilingual societies has always been a matter of concern to policy makers and professionals. In Africa, education and language issues are very complex because of the multi-ethnic and multilingual situation (Ouedraogo, 2000; Owu-Ewie, 2006). The case is even more complex and severe when the official language of the nation is different from the indigenous language. It has been revealed by researchers that reading situation in Africa constitutes a serious educational crisis.

There is a public outcry over the years over the low grade twelve marks and poor pass of secondary school students. However, the reading skills of these final year learners are not stated but their high failure rate suggests problems in their reading. The pupils have no good reading culture. Many of these learners then apply to study at tertiary institutions and yet because of their poor reading and English proficiency levels, they are poorly equipped to cope with the demands of study at tertiary level (Howie, Venter, Vanstaden, Zimmerman, Long, Scherman & Archer, 2007). Furthermore, African countries have complex situation in terms of reading difficulties because the syllabus is failing to nurture reading culture at the school age. For instance, Nigeria is a multilingual society with about 250 recognised different languages, accompanied by many dialects. This situation makes it comfortable to adopt English language as the official language of instruction in schools.



In some schools in Nigeria, reading instructions are in two languages carried out simultaneously. It is the learner's first language that provides a rich foundation for second language learning (Aina et al., 2011). Nigerian primary school children are about three years behind their British or American counterparts and over thirty (30) million Nigerians have graduated from high school with poor reading skills.

According to Mutenda (2008), children in Namibia learn to read formally in their mother tongue but learn English as a second language from grade one with an intention of developing strong literacy skills in English language. However, when children enter grade four, they are not able to read well either their home language or English. This was also confirmed by South African Consortium Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ) report, which found that grade six learners were unable to read texts with understanding. Moreover, Namibia recorded the lowest reading performance in the South African Development Communities (SADC) region. The situation was even worse with only 25% of learners reaching the desired levels of reading competence.

Moreover, in Uganda, the first school was established by the Catholic and Protestants missions who aimed at training catechists. The education system underwent various reforms from mission school to privately owned schools, until 1997 when the Republic adapted the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme. As a result, schools were characterized by overcrowding, unqualified teachers, lack of resources and instructional and reading materials which were few, low level and quality (Nalusiba, 2010). However, most learners in the UPE hardly read outside the school, since reading was not part of the curriculum and this negatively affected the learners' performance in and out of school as well as both in the English language and academic subjects.

Similarly, in South Africa, Annual National Assessment (ANA) conducted by Department of Basic Education (DBE) in 2012 on learners in grade 1-6 and grade 9 in English language and mathematics revealed that most learners could not read, pronounce



some words in their comprehension books correctly and lacked ability to make inferences from given information in a text or to spell frequently used words correctly. The most worrying situation was inability of learners to read with understanding (Bella, 2013). Moreover, in South Africa there are many students studying at the tertiary institutions whose levels of literacy are not up to the standards required by their studies (Hugo et al., 2005). In addition, a research conducted by pupils Service Bureau of the University of the Orange Free State, revealed that 60 first-year pupils were tested in English language and not one being higher than grade eight and only 13 of them were able to read at grade one and two levels.

In another study conducted by the Unit for the Development of Language Abilities at the University of Pretoria found that the language ability of 2,000 out of 6,000 first-year pupils were on the same level or even lower than that of grade seven learners. Some pupils also had poorly developed reading and writing skills. It is clear that there are many pupils in South Africa who might have the potential to study successfully at tertiary level but lack the necessary literacy skills, including reading to guarantee academic success. In the year 2012, Annual National Assessments' qualitative analysis indicates that the North West province of South Africa was the worst performing province for literacy and numeracy levels in grades 3, 6 and 9 (Hugo, 2005). This compelled the provincial department of education to incorporate intervention activities through programs such as learner attainment improvement program and quality improvement development support in order to overcome or address the challenges and to help learners improve their performance.

2.4 GHANA STATE OF READING

Studies indicate that reading difficulties and disabilities is a major challenge confronting many pupils in Ghana. Many pupils in both public and private schools cannot read effectively. Some of those who are able to read do not understand what they have read



(USAID, 2013). In the year 2013, the National Education Assessment (NEA) conducted a research on English competency level of the pupils in primary three and six in the ten regions of Ghana. The pupils were put in three categories: below competency, minimum competency and proficiency. The assessment revealed that 41.9% of class three and 31.3% of class six pupils were below competency. In terms of minimum competency it was 29.7% for class three and 29.8% for class six pupils. For English Language proficiency, class three pupils attracted 2.4% while class six pupils proficiency level was 30.0%. It has been reported that recent studies have not changed the proficiency significantly (USAID, 2013). It must however be noted that, the study indicated that children in urban and private schools do better than those in the rural areas and public schools.

The use of mother tongue language of a child has been theoretically confirmed to be beneficial at the lower primary level but the multilingual situation in the country especially in urban schools has made it difficult to use Ghanaian language as medium of instruction. It has been documented that fifty to sixty percent of the children in each class in the urban area speak a different languages. Hence, it becomes impossible to insist that all the children should be instructed in all the different languages depending on where the child is located (Ouedraogo, 2000; Owu-Ewie, 2006). However, some professionals assert that children can transfer knowledge from L1 to L2 but it becomes difficult when the child has not mastered the L1. This could have negative effect in transferring the knowledge.

Baker (2001) maintains that there is low academic performance, especially in English language in Ghanaian schools despite the use of different activities at the lower primary and this need to be investigated. The causes could be many but there should be proper planning for good performance. In addition, Lewelling (1991) argues that second language L2 acquisition has shown that the level of proficiency in the mother tongue L1



has a direct influence on the development of proficiency in the L2 but much depend on the nature and characteristics of the L1 of the child. Some local languages may have negative impact on the child English language development if not properly guided.

2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING AND AFFECTING READING

Factors accounting for reading disabilities and difficulties among pupils are many and varied. They include socio-economic factors, neurological factors, systemic factors, language factors, personality factors and learning styles (Davin & Van Staden, 2005; Geske & Ozola, 2008) emphasized that there are many different and usually very complex factors affecting learners' reading levels. Some these factors are beyond the influence of school.

Research studies have identified socio-economic backgrounds of pupils as the greatest factor accounting for reading ability or otherwise of pupils. Studies revealed that there is a positive correlation between socio-economic background and academic performance of pupils. According to Taylor and Shindler (2008), children from poor families tend to perform poorly in tests of reading than those from rich homes and families. They maintained that 25% of reading achievement among pupils is explainable in terms of social background of learners (Taylor & Shindler, 2008). The socio-economic factors that affect reading in Sub-Saharan Africa including Ghana include family conditions such as poverty, resources, pupils' attitude towards education and poor collaboration of parents and their young ones.

Studies have shown that family poverty can negatively affect pupils' academic performance. Pupils from poverty driven families often come to school without their basic needs being met. Thus poverty levels of families are likely to negatively affect pupils' performance in school. For instance, pupils from poverty trickling families are not usually exposed to extra leisure reading as parents might not afford to buy books. However, pupils' level of poverty does not automatically determine their success or



failure at school because a disproportionate number from low income families are less successful and eventually drop out of school (Taylor & Shindler, 2008)

According to Sadker and Sadker (2005), a learner who is hungry and tired will not be able to learn effectively as a well-nourished one. On this regard, Washington (2001) emphasized that children from homes characterized by poverty are subject to high levels of environmental stress that can affect their functioning at school and can in turn affect their performance in reading.

Again, factors within the teacher and the academic systems of a country are other factors influencing reading abilities or otherwise. Research reports in Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that, one of the most challenging issues affecting reading is limited conceptual knowledge base of many teachers (Washington, 2001). Teachers face increasing different tasks and are expected to deal supportively with learners whose lives are constituted by poor socio-economic conditions, who live with poverty and suffer from violence and have to rise above the challenges of diversity and inequality. Meanwhile teachers are being held responsible and accountable for learners' performance in school.

Another important area is information and communication technology tools which constitute viable instruments and foster reading. However, these days technological advances in communication (internet, iPad, iPod, soft touch phones, video games and others) have drove people into modern hobbies and people spare no time for intensive reading of books. This implies that the reading culture has declined (Ruterana, 2012). It has been noted that instead of people reading books or newspapers, potential readers may prefer browsing the net, watching movie, playing games or indulging in other hobbies. These have constituted new culture replacing reading culture in our societies. The children see parents in this act and also take the same steps. As explained by Vygotsky (1993), culture is understood as people's ways of being in a society, behaving and acting based on what they have observed in the society.



2.6 LITERACY

One of the aims of formal education in Ghana is to equip citizens with literacy and numeracy skills so as to enable them integrate and function well in society. It is in the light of this that the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program was launched in 1996; by the government of Ghana to ensure that all children of school going age are equipped with literacy and numeracy skills (Ouedraogo, 2000). Also, modern technological innovations such as the mobile phone, internet, among others need literacy skills to be able to access them. This calls for the attachment of literacy to civilization in modern day life. However, pupils these days at the basic level education still find it difficult to read simple text and are not making efforts to learn how to read. This makes teaching and learning difficult and sometimes affects pupil's academic performance in their future career.

It is an undeniable fact that adolescent entering the adult world in this 21st century will read and write more than any other time in human history. Literacy is a fundamental requirement in education. The literacy knowledge and skills are needed to perform tasks which include search for documents, comprehend and use of continuous texts (essay, articles, journals, research work and others). These examples also include editorials, news stories, brochures and instructional materials. This type of literacy is called prose (NAAL, 2003). There is document literacy which refers to knowledge and skill required to perform document task such as searching for information, comprehend and use of non-continuous texts (tables, graphs, diagrams and others) in various formats.

There is another known as quantitative literacy which both literates and semi-literates are likely to be performing in many instances. This is the knowledge and skill required to perform quantitative tasks like identifying and performing computations either alone or sequentially using numbers embedded in printed materials (Saibu, 2016). These include counting of money, balancing a check book, completing an order form or determining



the amount. All these types have a starting point and that is pre-reading activities. For example activities that include vocabulary, exercises that focus on phonics or defining unfamiliar words will be a very good beginning.

However, it is always easy to measure adult literacy. According to UNESCO (2016), adult literacy rate is the percentage of people ages 15 and above who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement above their everyday life. The literacy rate is an outcome indicator to evaluate educational attainment. This information can be used to predict the quality of future labor force and ensuring policies for life skills for men and women. The information can also be used as a proxy instrument to see the effectiveness of education system.

Thus a high literacy rate suggests the capacity of education system to provide a large population with opportunities to acquire literacy skills that are used in everyday life. For instance, literate women can seek and use information for the betterment of their health, nutrition and education of their household members (UNESCO, 2016). The only challenge is that the literacy statistics for most countries cover the population ages 15 and older but include younger ages or confined to age ranges that inflate literacy rates.

This implies that it varies from one country to another.

Many countries report literacy of people from self-reported data and others use educational attainment data as a proxy but apply different lengths of school attendance or level of completion. However, the youth literacy rates for ages 15-24 reflects progress in education (UNESCO, 2007). The literacy rate in Ghana is the percentage of people ages 15-24 and it seems not to be increasing much because illiteracy remains pervasive in the country particularly among the poor and in under developed areas. The 2007 estimation suggested that about 42% of the adult population were illiterates and about 50% of Ghanaian women were illiterates compared with 33% of men.



The regional rates of illiteracy also differed sharply. For instance, while the rate of illiteracy in Greater Accra region and Ashanti region was 21% and 40% respectively, it increased to an alarming rate of 54% in the Brong Ahafo Region and 76% in the three Northern Regions (UNESCO, 2007). In the light of this, some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are supporting the government to combat illiteracy, promote socioeconomic development, empower the poor and underprivileged groups particularly women and the youth. The teachers in the public schools are also creative in their teaching methods just to improve literacy rate throughout the country.

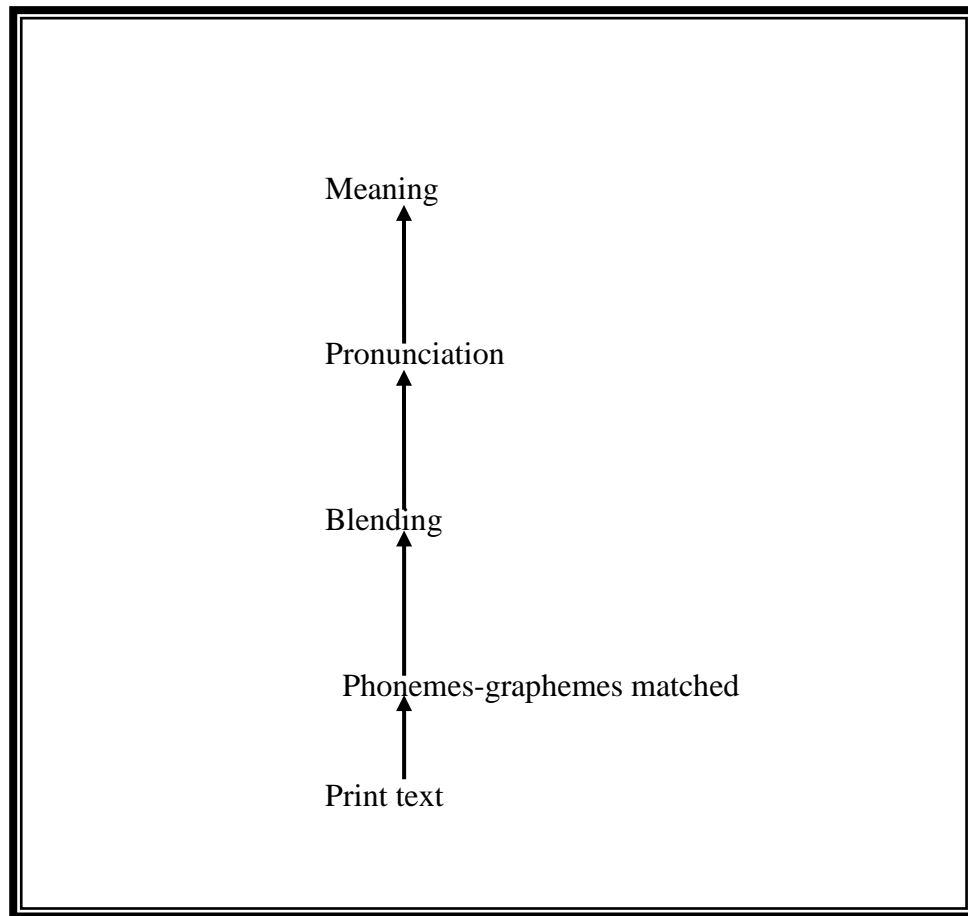
2.7 READING MODELS

There are many reading models which include (a) the bottom up model, (b) top-down model and (c) direct model of teaching (Norton, 2007). The bottom up model is also known as the part-to-whole approach for teaching reading. It begins with sound of letters and progresses upwards from the single letters to the combination of letters that form words and that the point of departure is to teach letter-sound relations and then sounds and say the words. In this model rules for word pattern and sounding out words are more important than understanding a long text.

Those who support this model, state that if readers are able to carry out the process successfully they will automatically understand what they are reading (Norton, 2007). It has been emphasized that in this model, learners first learn the letters and then analyze words. The written words are then encoded in their sound components. It has been observed by Norton (2007) that this form of reading is very abstract because the letter-sound connections are abstract. Thus readers are unable to attach meaning to what they are reading from the start. However, according to Landsberg and Nel (2005), teachers who use this approach for reading instruction can use a synthetic approach in which letters, sound and syllables are used to build meaning. The bottom up model is illustrated in the next page.



(a)The Bottom-Up Model

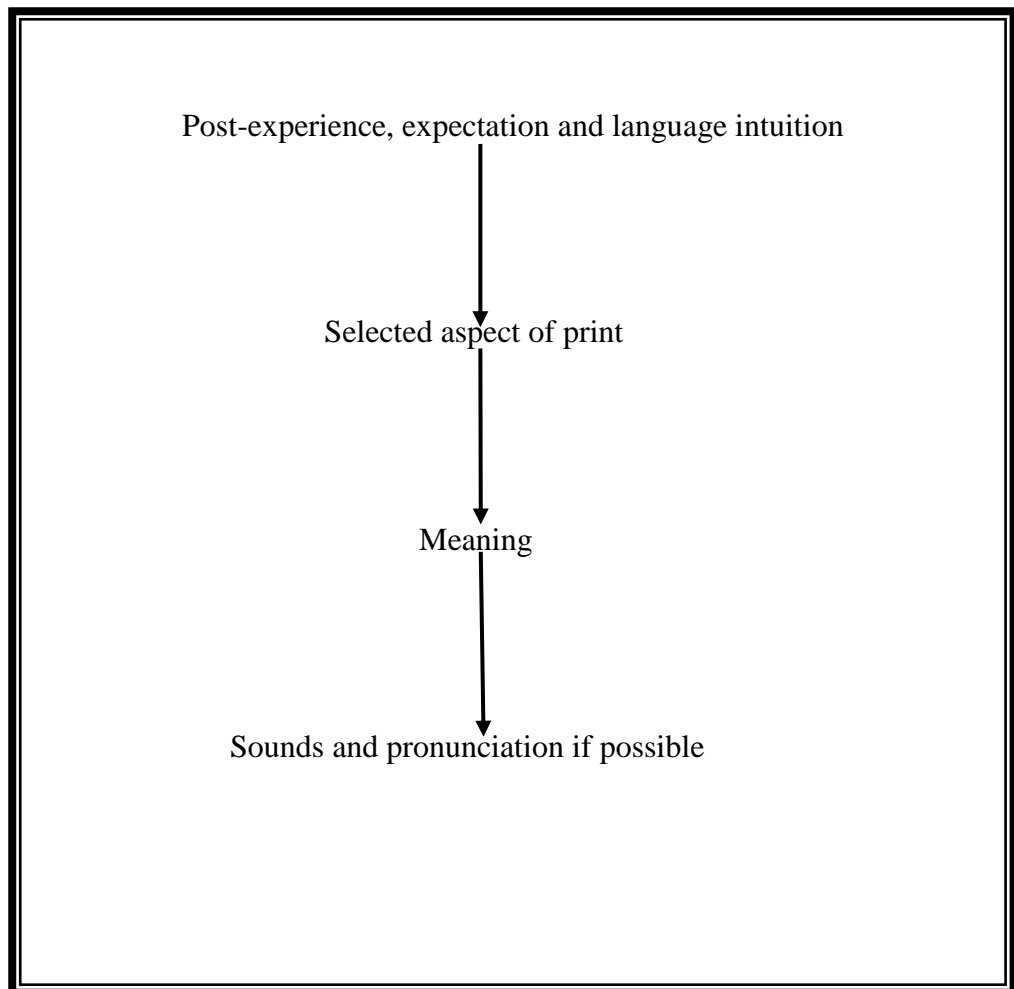


Source: (Norton, 2007).

The bottom-up model of the reading process is text base model because of its focus on the information provided by the text rather than the input from the reader's experience or previous knowledge. In this model, reading begins with the sound of the letter and progress upward from a single letter to combination of letters that form words. The strategies used in the invention were bottom up approach. The approaches started from written words followed by pronunciation or reading and finally the meaning of the words.



(b) The Top-Down Model



Source: (Norton, 2007)

The top-down model is also known as the meaning-giving theory and it is based on the premise that reading forms a meaningful whole in which meaning and sense lie at the foundation. This model concentrates mainly on the learner's association with real books and authentic texts and on reading for meaning. According to Norton (2007), the top-down model of the reading process is a reader-based model because the reader brings his or her own knowledge, culture and experience to the interpretation of text. Concepts in this model are held by readers which trigger information during reading. The previous knowledge of readers and expectations of language as well as their prior experiences help them to comprehend the material.



(C) Direct Model of Teaching

The direct model of teaching focuses on the importance of structured lessons in which presentation is followed by learner practice and teacher's feedback. In this model the role of the teacher is that of a strong leader, one who structures the classroom and sequences the subject matter to reflect a clear academic focus. The model is helpful during the first stages of learning new and complex information (Sadker & Sadker, 2005). Moreover, it enables integrating multi-sensory experiences with direct systematic and sequential instructions. The model can be effective means of solving learning difficulties and effective for fundamental language skills including reading. This was usually related to phonemics which were revised with the pupils and served as their relevant previous knowledge.

2.8 DEFINITION OF THEORY

A theory is defined as “a scientifically accepted set of principles offered to explain a phenomenon” (Schunk, 2008:337). Similarly, Sadoski and Paivo (2007), defined theory as a set of interrelated constructs, definitions and propositions that presents a systematic view of the phenomenon with the purpose of predicting and explaining the phenomena. In relation to this study, behaviorism and constructivism were regarded as interrelated constructs and were considered relevant in presenting a systematic view of reading difficulty and approach in solving the reading difficulty.

2.8.1 BEHAVIORISM

Behaviorism is based on observable changes in behavior and focuses on a new behavioral pattern being repeated until it becomes automatic. It concentrates on the study of overt behavior that can be observed and measured, viewing the mind as black box in the sense that response to stimuli can be observed while ignoring the possibility of thought processes occurring in the mind (Mergel, 2011). Behaviorist explains learning in terms of environmental events and mental processes but they may not necessary explain



acquisition, maintenance and generalization of behavior. Practice is needed to strengthen responses and complex skills can be accomplished by shaping progressive small appropriations to the desired behavior (Sadoski & Paivo, 2007). Instructions should have measurable objectives in small steps and deliver reinforcements. Behaviorism theorists stipulate that learners learn to read by being taught a sequence of skills that form the building block of reading (Norton, 2007). Behaviorists believed that a student can be taught to perform any task successfully if the unit of learning is small enough.

The theory has influenced teachers who adhere to the bottom-up model of the reading process in which learners learn to read by proceeding from the part to the whole. In relation to the study, task was broken into small units and was tackled in a bottom-up approach (Mergel, 2011). For instance, revising phonics and braking words into syllables for children to practice pronunciation before using the words in phrases and sentences.

2.8.2 THE BEHAVIORISTS' PERSPECTIVE OF READING

Reading is regarded as a process that moves from the parts to the whole (bottom up). A child first learn separate letters and their characteristics, then diphthongs and other letter units that represents sounds, thereafter single words, phrases and sentences (Norton, 2007). They lastly learn meaning of the text after these steps.

Teachers who subscribe to the behaviorists theory have the opinion that reading aloud is essential for beginners. The teachers regard reading as a complicated skill made up of sub-skills and reading readiness programs need to be implemented before a learner can be allowed to read. According to Joubert et al (2008), teachers use a series of graders to teach learners to read, after they first master the sound of words, developed sight vocabulary words and thereafter read aloud to the teacher and peers. The learner's reading ability is assessed on the basis of his or her ability to read single word as well as sounding letter combination correctly.



2.8.3 CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas. It is based on the premise that learners construct their own perspective of the world through individual experiences and schema, which enable them solve problems in ambiguous situation (Mergel, 2011). The constructivist perspective has important implications for instruction and curriculum design, based on an assumption that teachers should not teach in the traditional way but rather structure learning is such a way that learners are actively involved and teachers provide support and guidance rather than lecturing.

Constructivists emphasized that on reflective teaching, social group learning and peer collaboration are useful because as learners model for and observe each other they acquire not only skills but also experience higher self-efficacy (Schunk, 2008). Moreover, learner-centered is very important. There is the need for active learner participation with teachers acting as facilitators. Learner-centered is an educational process that is design to promote problem-solving skills, to develop learners' critical thinking through exploration, experimentation and to promote social interaction (Nel et al., 2012). The intervention process engaged pupils to be actively involved in the reading both individuals and groups. This provided opportunity for them to learn from each other.

2.8.4 CONSTRUCTIVISTS' ASSUMPTION WITH REGARDS TO READING

Constructivists assume that teachers should not teach in the traditional way but rather structure reading lesson such that learners are actively involved, provide support and guidance rather than lecturing and place emphasis on reflective teaching. They stress that social group learning and peer collaboration are useful because as learner model for and observe each other they teach and learn not only skill but also experience higher self-efficacy for learning (Schunk, 2008).



Constructivists assume that knowledge is first constructed as social context and is then appropriated and owned by the individual. Constructivists view reading as an active process through which learners discover concepts. In the views individual learners make meaning of learning through interaction with each other and with the environment in which they live (Schunk, 2008). These principles are similar to those outlined in the outcomes-based system of education that encourages group work and interaction among pupils.

2.9 SUMMARY

The most important element of high quality of education is literacy and without the ability to read, pupils are denied of creativity, pertinent information about health, social, cultural and political issues as well as sources of pleasure and enrichment. However, in this modern world there is a decline in reading. Pupils are not interested in reading intensively to acquire knowledge.

The factors associated with that are many but the common ones include poverty, lack of resources, teacher competence, attitude of parents and pupils towards education and the advancement of technology. There are approaches to teach effective reading in schools especially at the primary level where there are struggle readers these days. These are top-down model and bottom-up model and others. The theories that best explain change in behavior either to improve reading ability or reading culture are behaviorist and constructivist. The behaviorist is based on observable changes in behavior and focuses on a new behavioral pattern being repeated until it becomes automatic. Constructivism is a theory of knowledge that argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology of the research. It begins with the study strategy, the design, and settings of the action research which consists of the targeted population, the sampling technique, the intervention (input), which consists of the alternative interventions, the final course of action, how the intervention will be implemented and final evaluation of the intervention.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was an action research. It is an approach to develop techniques and improve teaching and learning. Action research refers to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative and analytical research methods designed to diagnose problems in academic field or organisation and help educators develop practical solutions to address them quickly and effectively (Bryman, 2004). The design helps the researcher to integrate theory, practice and meaningful application of research results. The essence of action research is researcher or teacher solving everyday problems in schools to improve both student learning and teacher effectiveness. The general goal is to create a simple, practical, process of iterative learning, evaluation and improvement that leads to increasing better results for teachers, schools and programs.

3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The study employed observation for the primary data collection. According to Bryman (2004), observation is watching what people do. There are different types of observations. These include control observation, Natural/non-participant observation and participant observation. In addition, observation can be overt/disclosed or



covert/undisclosed observation. In the overt observation the research makes it known and participants know they are being observed. In the covert observation, the researcher keeps his identity secret from the participants and acting like a genuine member of the group (Bryman, 2004). This technique can be used in the major types of the observations (participant/ non-participant observations). However, the control observations are usually structured observations and are usually done by psychologists in specific places. In this type of observation, the researcher decides where the observation will take place, time of the observation, the participants, under what circumstance and uses standardized procedures (Creswell, 2003). Non-participant observation is unstructured type and involves spontaneous behavior of the participants in natural settings. In this case, the researchers simply record what they see. This gives the researchers an opportunity to study complete situation of the case with minimum interruption.

Participant observation is where the researcher joins and becomes part of the group under investigating but keeps his professionalism. It is a way of getting deeper understanding of the phenomena (Bryman, 2004). In the study, both non-participant observation and participant observations were used in order to get deeper understanding of how teachers will use suitable strategies to teach reading and improve reading culture.

3.3 SELECTION OF SITE AND PERMISSION

The selection of the Kidz Active Foundation School was based on previous knowledge of the innovative teachers and the declined reading culture of the pupils in the school. The researcher wrote letters to the head teacher of the school seeking for permission to conducting a research in the school. The researcher explained the purpose of the project and what the whole project study entailed in the letter. The researcher further explained that he will be overt and record observations using tapes, pictures, write notes and respect ethical issues in the school. The researcher later gave an introductory letter from



University for Development Studies (UDS), to the head teacher of the school who further consulted the school board as well as the Sagnarigu District Education Office about the research. There was further deliberation upon which permission was granted to conduct the research. This implies that permission was sought from all the gatekeepers as part of the ethical consideration.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

The targeted population for the study was a total of ninety-seven (97) pupils which consisted of (30) pupils in class four, thirty-four (34) pupils in class five and thirty-three (33) pupils in class six in the Kidz Active Foundation School. Three (3) teachers (one from each class) were also selected for the study.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

With regards to sampling technique, the study employed the non-probability sampling technique. Non probability sampling is a qualitative sampling technique that does not necessarily strives for representativeness, but rather, respondents are selected based on their “relevance to the research topic” (Neuman, 2006 p, 220). Quota sampling, purposive sampling, convenient/accidental/haphazard/availability sampling, snowball, deviant case, sequential and theoretical sampling has been identified as some types of non-random sampling technique (Neuman, 2006; Creswell, 2003). In this study, the purposive sampling strategy was employed.

Purposive sampling is a process of selecting respondents based on their relevance to the subject of study. Purposive sampling is based on the judgment of the researcher. The researcher selects participants who are deemed as persons with the required knowledge and expertise with regards to the topic of discussion (Creswell, 2003). The purposive sampling technique was deemed appropriate for this study because the pupils were



observed in a teaching and learning situation in the classes and the teachers were also observed when teaching in the various classes they were assigned to teach. These groups of pupils were already known by the researcher and were observed in their classes during English lessons.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

The data collection process involved primary and secondary data.

3.6.1 Primary Data

The primary data included interview and observations (non-participant and participant observations). These were meant to get in-depth understanding of the problem of the pupils, strategies that were used in English lessons and the response of the pupils or changes that occur in the traditional methods of teaching.

3.6.1.1 Interview

The researcher conducted individual interviews in order to achieve the objectives of the study. The interview involved the headmaster of the school and three classroom teachers. This was meant to get in-depth information about the causes of poor reading culture, the state of reading in the school and methodology the teachers have been using to teach English at Kidz Active Foundation School. It was also meant to help in looking for the best alternative strategies to help improve the reading culture rather than depending on the traditional methods of teaching English language. The interview helped in understanding how teachers could be creative in teaching reading and maintain reading culture.



3.6.1.2 Observation

Another instrument employed in the data collection process was observation. The researcher employed both participant and non-participant observations. Observation is a technique that allows one to observe what people actually do. It is an essential part of research and professional practice. Observation usually combines with other techniques such as interview, questionnaire and content analysis (Hignett, 2001).

A) Non-Participant Observation

In non-participant observation, the researcher becomes detached watcher and listener (Fetterman, 1998). The researcher observes and does not interrupt with the study subjects or participants. The researcher becomes a non-participant observer in order to look at the pupils in their natural settings in classrooms to understand their problems and how they could be solved. In the non-participant observation session, the researcher adopted a passive role. The researcher did not seek for data aggressively in lessons until later.

The researcher closely watched and noted classroom teaching and learning as well as happenings and finally recorded important events. This was to understand what was going on in their natural settings. The technique makes it easy for the researcher to record behavior of the people being studied.

It was observed that in non-participant observation pupils could alter their behavior when being observed. Hence there was the need to combine both participant and non-participant observations to minimize pretends. An observation schedule was established based on the English lesson time table in the classes. In each lesson, the researcher observed, wrote and recorded interesting behaviors related to the study. Moreover, at the actual reading stage observation was randomly done. The observation schedule is seen in the Table 1.



Table 1: Observation Schedule (16th May 2016- 8th July 2016)

Intervention	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Remarks
Week 1 Mixed letters	Monday Time 9:00-9:45	Tuesday Time: 12:00-12:45	Friday Time:9:00-9:45	Observed
Week 2 Stress on keywords	Monday Time 9:00-9:45	Tuesday Time:12:00-12:45	Friday Time:9:00-9:45	Observed
Week 3 Rhyming words	Monday Time 9:00-9:45	Tuesday Time: 12:00-12:45	Friday Time:9:00-9:45	Observed
Week 4 Syllabic method	Monday Time:9:00-9:45	Tuesday Time: 12:00-12:45	Friday Time:9:00-9:45	Observed
Actual reading	Time: random	Time: random	Time: random	Observed

B) Participant Observation

In participant observation the researcher joins the participants and becomes part of them in order to get a deeper insight into their lives. The researcher makes an intensive and inclusive study of a group and can gain into the real character of that group (Fettman, 1998).

In the participant observation session, the researcher acted as a participant in the classroom and involved in the activities of the class and decided in advance what was to be observed. Among the issues observed were the teaching methods, the level of understanding of the pupils, performance of the pupils after evaluation and others. There was classroom interaction with the pupils where notes were taken. In addition, the pupils



freely talked about their weaknesses in terms of words pronunciation in English reading before the intervention and this was recorded. The researcher used video recorder to capture pupils during the observation and jotters were used to take down notes.

The rationale for being a participant observer in the study was to get detail information, identify specific behavior and assist both teachers and pupils to improve reading culture through various activities. It enabled the researcher to participate in all the activities from a close angle and could interpret the situation clearly. This procedure also gave an adequate understanding of the methods and their outcomes.

3.6.1 Secondary Data

The secondary data included review of documents, information from books, journals, articles and other research materials. In addition, information relevant to the research context such as course overviews, lesson plans, classroom materials and others during the intervention was organized for analysis. The information served as useful guide to the problem solving because it revealed what the teachers are capable of doing and the secondary data also revealed errors and success of other interventions.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

In a research, once the data has been collected, the next steps are analysis, interpretation and drawing conclusion. According to Wallace (1998), researchers can also think about changing or refocusing their original research question at this stage. However, the general guide in research states that the researcher has to identify pattern in the data, compare different findings from the data and build interpretation. This process was followed to come up with a comprehensive report. The qualitative data involved primary data from observations and secondary data from books, documents, reports, articles and



others. In the observation sessions there were notes and recordings and the information obtained was categorized for analysis.

Moreover, meanings of the data gathered were taken in order to determine the value of the intervention. This involved sorting through the data to discover important themes relating to the issues observed. The information in the research includes data from teachers' actions (teaching methods and evaluations) these were categorized according to themes for reporting.

The recorded information: field notes from the classroom and observations were used to confirm which strategies were working and those that were not effective according to the themes. The secondary data was also used to understand other reading problems and interventions such as errors and success in similar studies. This gave an opportunity for conclusion and necessary recommendation.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

There is no exhaustive range of ethical issues in the course of conducting a research. However, some ethical issues often arise between the researcher and research participants which need to be considered. It is important to note that a research that is likely to harm participants is not accepted by most people (Bryman, 2004). Harm in this project refers to physical harm, harm to participants' development, which include loss of self-esteem and stress among others. These aspects of harm were considered the most important issues. For instance, poor pronunciation of English words by some pupils may lead to loss of self-esteem or stress if not properly handled by the teacher or the researcher. Therefore, learner and teacher friendly atmosphere was created in order to build confidence and make pupils feel at ease to participate in the reading sessions. Some important ethical issues considered in this study include the following: No harm to participants, informed consent from teachers and pupils, permission and confidentiality.



3.9 CREDITABILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

Creditability is similar to internal validity because the goal is to demonstrate that the enquiry is conducted in such a way that the subjects are accurately identified and described (De Vos, 2005). In order to ensure creditability and trustworthiness of the research, the researcher selected specific classes of the school in which English language was medium of instruction. The information obtained provided clear evidences and interpretation started from the data collection. Besides that, the data were given to participants to confirm what had been reported to ensure accuracy.

3.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The limitation of the study is that the research was not able to cover issues related to all pupils with learning difficulties especially persons with disabilities in class. There could be pupils with mild mental retardation or neurological problems that limit their ability to process and produce information which may affect their ability to speak, listen and read. A study of this nature may require specialized trained professionals to test and handle such pupils effectively even though teachers manage them in integrated schools.



CHAPTER FOUR

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the activities of the project. It starts with information obtained regarding the causes of poor reading and the state of reading in the school. It discusses the various strategies employed to teach reading and comprehension. These strategies were used in upper primary starting from primary four to six. The aim was to teach, reflect and finally select the best strategies that could improve reading and reading culture. The first step focused on how to teach pupils to read effectively. This was followed by strategies to promoting and maintaining reading culture among the pupils. The chapter also consists of newly created strategies employed by the school to improve reading abilities and reading culture among pupils. Some of the reading strategies include; (i) identifying words in a mixed letters, rearrange the letters to form words and pronounce them correctly, (ii) reading of short phrases and pronouncing words correctly stressing on key words, (iii) pronouncing words that rhyme with one another but pronouncing each word clearly and distinctively, (iv) the syllabic method. These activities have been put into pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention activities

4.1 PRE-INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

The pre-intervention activities included finding the causes of poor reading, identifying the state of reading through interview with the teachers, the methods that are always used in teaching English and planning with the teachers to come out with new and best alternatives that could be used to improve and maintain reading culture in the school.



4.1.1 Causes of Poor Reading Culture among the Upper Primary Pupils

It was found that reading difficulties among the pupils were not only associated with socio-economic or environmental factors but also language factor as well as learning styles. The teachers in the school said the pupils come from multi-ethnic communities such that the local languages they speak have great influence on English language. It is common to hear the pupils pronouncing an English word with local language tone or finding it difficult to pronounce some vowels and consonants clearly in some words. Moreover, some of the pupils do not speak English in their houses because they are predominantly from illiterate homes. One of the teachers said listening to English news on radio and television would have helped but most of them are not encouraged to develop such practice. The pupils who come from parents with formal education are exposed to English words because they hear their parents speak to family and friends often in English language. These groups of pupils are usually exposed to print materials and in learning situation, they are slightly ahead of their colleagues in English words pronunciation.

It was also confirmed by some teachers that the academic system of the country affect reading in schools. For instance, the syllabus is designed in such way that it does not provide room for creative teaching. The tradition methods (look and say in placards) are recommended to teach reading and teachers have been using this method for many years. Another factor is easy access to information through internet by use of computers, tablets, mobile phone and other devices is creating laziness in reading in schools. It is common to see school children in the internet café browsing instead of reading intensively in the libraries for knowledge. The teachers emphasized that there was great agent need for intervention to improve quality of teaching and learning through different strategies.

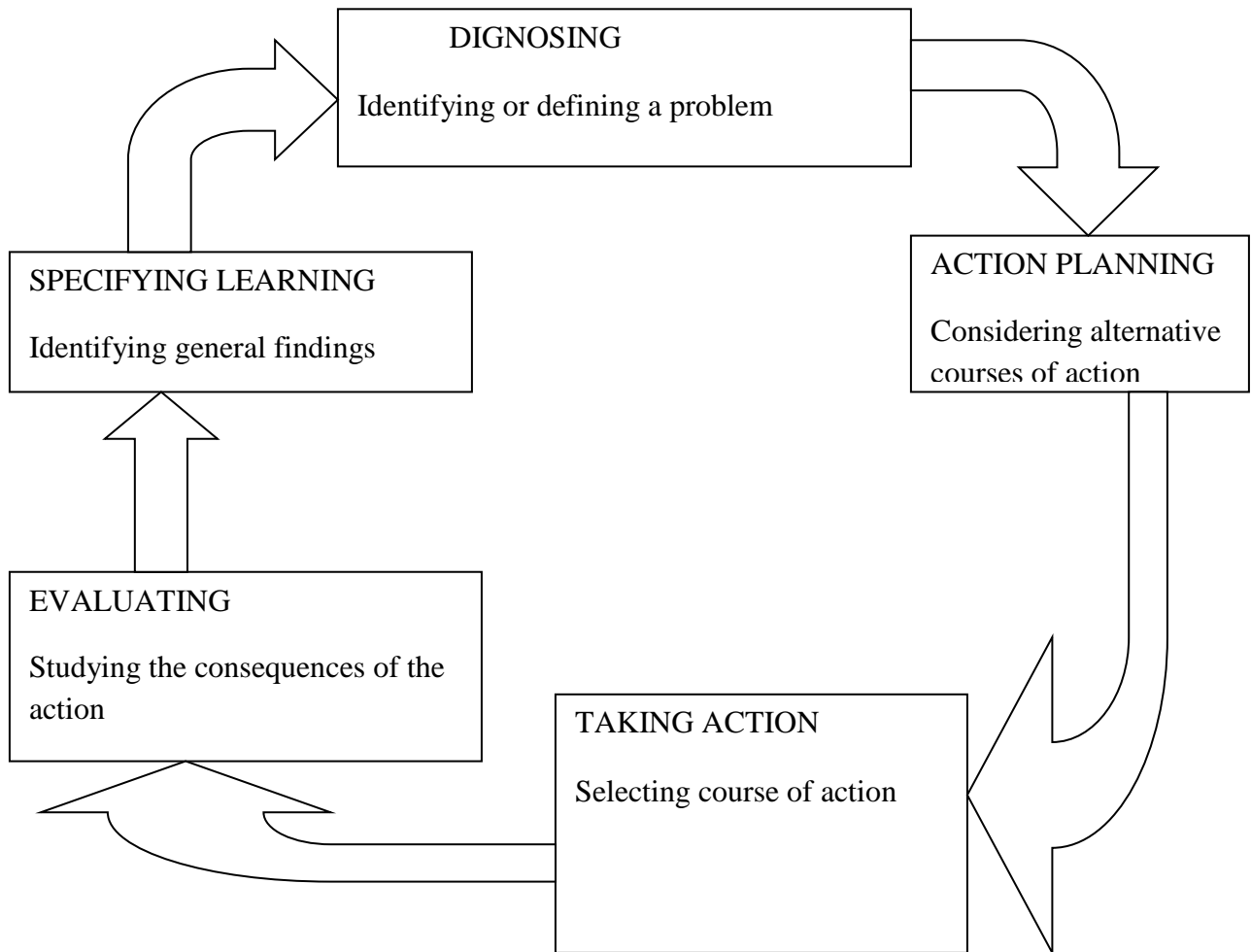


4.1.2 The State of Reading Culture among Upper Primary Pupils

It was confirmed by the teachers that the state of reading in the school is not encouraging. There were some pupils in the upper primary class who could not read their English text books fluently. Some even found it difficult to pronounce words correctly and others repeated sentences because they lacked confidence in reading. It was surprising that there were some pupils in class Five and Six who were not ready to read during English lessons. However, some of the pupils who were very fluent in reading were observed to have come from families with high number of educated people. The school has a library but it is not common to see the pupils reading in the library for knowledge at their free time. The library lessons are organised by teachers in the school but it is not motivating the pupils to read. The information from the interview led the researcher to team up with creative teachers to develop alternative strategies in solving reading problems in the school.



Figure (one) 1: Detail Action Research Model



UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

(Adopted from Susman, 1983)

4.2 MODEL USED FOR INTERVENTION

The model starts with an identification of the problem and this was done in the interview with the teachers to know the causes and understand the state of reading in the school. This was followed by finding alternative courses of action. Then comes the selection of a particular course of action stage, examining the consequences of the selected course of action and reflection is next stage. It must however be noted that, in any stage of the cycle, there could be small cycles. In relation to the study, after identifying the problem, the researcher observed teachers using alternative interventional strategies which were

carried out. The cyclical process was repeated on each strategy based on reflections. Considering the model, the problem was already known and it was reading difficult due to poor reading culture among pupils in the upper primary school. The next stage was to consider alternative courses of action. This was done by the teachers reflecting on the various strategies that could solve the problem. The teachers tried various strategies and finally employed four methods in improving pupils reading culture. These strategies are, identifying words in mixed letters, reading of short phrases and pronouncing words correctly stressing on key words, pronouncing words that rhyme with one another and the syllabic method.

The final stage was to evaluate that course of action and identify general findings. The teachers' philosophy of reading was that reading has two types: one type includes phonemic awareness, phonics word recognition, vocabulary and simple comprehension. The other type is the will to read. As a result, a good reader should have these skills. The successful strategy should lead to acquisition of these skills. The teachers also had constructivists and behaviorists' perspectives which they believe that a teacher should not teach in the traditional way but rather structure reading lesson such that learners are actively involved, teaching while teachers provide support and guidance to pupils rather than lecturing.

4.3 INTERVENTION

This was the stage the researcher started observing the activities of the teachers and the pupils in the classes. The teachers started by considering alternative courses of action. This was done by looking for various strategies (alternatives) that could be used to improve the pronunciation of English words and reading fluency of the pupils. The strategies employed by the teachers included identifying words in a mixed letters, rearrange the letters to form words and pronounce them correctly, reading of short



phrases and pronouncing some key words correctly or stressing on the key words, pronouncing words that rhyme with one another but pronouncing each word clearly and distinctively. These were done in the class room situation and during English lessons. The lessons were held four times in a week within the period of 30 minutes in each lesson in all the classes. The alternatives were all effectively used and considered as the final course of action. This intervention took three weeks with different cycles in order to evaluate the success and to decide whether there was the need for adjustment or to make a final report on a particular intervention.

However, to start with all the alternative solutions, it was important for the teachers to identify relevant previous knowledge of the pupils. The pupils had previous knowledge in the pronunciation of syllabic consonants for example (*p/k/f*) and vowels for example (*o/u/e*). These had been taught in class one in the school. The researcher saw the teachers reviewed phonetics for example /t/b/m/f/s/l/ aimed at identifying the first letters and sound of words.

At this stage, pupils are expected to develop proficiency by identifying and discriminating first sound of words. According to UTCRLA (2014), there are letters with continuous sound and letters with stop sound in English language. Letters that have continuous sound are: /a/, /e/, /f/, /i/, /l/, /m/, /n/, /o/, /r/, /s/, /u/, /v/, /w/, /y/, /z/ and the letters that have stop sound are: /b/, /c/, /d/, /g/, /h/, /j/, /k/, /p/, /q/, /t/, /x/. As a result, the teachers guided the pupils to identify and put stress on these letters of English words which were on the chalkboard. This exercise was followed by teachers using all the interventions in each class starting with the first alternative which is mixed letters.

4.4 THE ALTERNATIVE COURSES OF ACTION (INTERVENTIONS) USED

Alternative: 1. Identifying correct word in mixed letters, arrange the letters and pronounce the word correctly. This method aimed at teaching word recognition. In this



procedure, the letters of particular words in their reading books were mixed with vowels and consonants, written on a chalk board in such a way that the pupils could not pronounce them. The pupils were asked to identify the words in the mixture, arrange the letters and pronounce the word correctly. The first pronunciation after identification was done by the teacher and the pupils pronounced the words after him. Also, the pupils were given the opportunity to demonstrate similar to what had been done by the teacher.

Dotryes-(Destroy)

Apcomyn-(Company)

Tarew-(Water)

Alternative: 2. Reading short phrases and stressing on key words. In this procedure, key words from their text books or the vocabulary that were difficult for the pupils to pronounce in their reading books were used to form short phrases. The pupils were guided to read these phrases several times but stress were put on the difficult words in each phrase. This was done several times to master the correct pronunciation of the key words in the phrases. For example:

I will come *quickly*

It *occupies* the room

A *flying* insect

Alternative: 3. Mastering words that rhyme with one another. It has been observed that rhyming words are sometimes difficult for the pupils to pronounce correctly or hear in a loud speaker. The rhyming words were used to identify and discriminate words with close pronunciation. In this procedure, the words that rhyme with one another were written in pairs on chalk board. The pupils were guided by the teacher to get the distinctive pronunciation of each word. However, this has a limitation because there are some words that are difficult to get other words that rhyme with them and which may be



difficult to pronounce by the pupils. These type of words need to be treated differently.

However, examples of rhyming words are:

Look-book, west-best

Rush-rash, gold-sold

Talk-walk, thinking-sinking

Alternative: 4. Syllabic method of words pronunciation is one of the methods for teaching reading. The researcher also employed this method to help the upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School to improve upon their reading abilities. In this method, a word is divided in parts or in bits to aid pronunciation. The division of a word depends on the length of the word, how it can be stressed and the number of parts it can be divided. A word can be put in one syllable e.g. *go, come, run, dance etc.* There are words in two syllables e.g. *con-fuse, wel-come, con-trol* and others. Some long words can be put into three or more syllables

Examples of the words with three syllables are:

Mos-qui-toes- (*Mosquitoes*)

Tele-vi-sion- (*Television*)

Pre-si-dent- (*President*)

In the action research model by Susman (1983), after planning the action (considering alternative courses of action) a researcher takes an action and that is selecting the best course of action. As a result, all the four alternatives were used from primary four to six and each method contributed in no small measure in helping pupils to read fluently during demonstration lessons. In this regard, the researcher proposes an integrated approach to teaching reading and comprehension. Again, the British pronunciation of words was considered in the intervention because Ghana is a colony of the British and follows their system of education. However, nasalized vowels were not stressed too



much because of the African accent. For example *penchant* will be pronounced as it is spelt.

4.5 SELECTED COURSE OF ACTION (SYLLABIC METHOD)

Steps in the Syllabic Method

The selected course of action is syllabic method. It is the combination of phonemes within a word. In this approach, words were taken from the pupils' English books (comprehension and grammar). These are words that the pupils come across in their English lessons and are noted to be difficult to pronounce correctly by most of them. In this method the pronunciation of the words will be practiced systematically to become perfect.

Step 1: Words that are in one syllable and rhyme with one another in their English books will be written on chalk board. Some of them are; *can, bend lost, sing* among others. These could be ten to fifteen words in a session. These words were pronounced by the teacher and the pupils repeated after him. This was done with stress until the pupils got the correct pronunciation of the words. The words are put in short phrases. For example: *I can sing, it was a bend, I lost my book*. The pupils read the phrases but there will be much stress on the key words. The pupils were put in groups to form simple phrases with the words where there will be stress on the words to ensure correct pronunciation. However, the meaning of the words will be explained by the teacher. These types of words are illustrated in the sketch below:

Words that rhyme and have one syllable
Can, cat Cut / cart Corn, Curb, Coin Cane Came,
Ben Burn Bend, Bent, Bane,



Example of the phrases using first person pronoun (i)

I can sing, I have a cat, I can cut the stick

Step 2: Words that can be put into two syllables such as *chil-dren, maxi-mum, assis-tant, fa-mouse hea-ler, hun-dred* and others could be 10-15 words in a session. The words will be written on chalk board. These words will be pronounced several times and be repeated by the pupils after the teacher. The syllables are put as single word to refine the pronunciation. The teacher explains meaning of words to the pupils. Next, the words are put in short phrases or sentences for children to practice the use of the words but there will be stress on the key words. For example: *they are children, it was the maximum limit, he is an assistant teacher* and others.

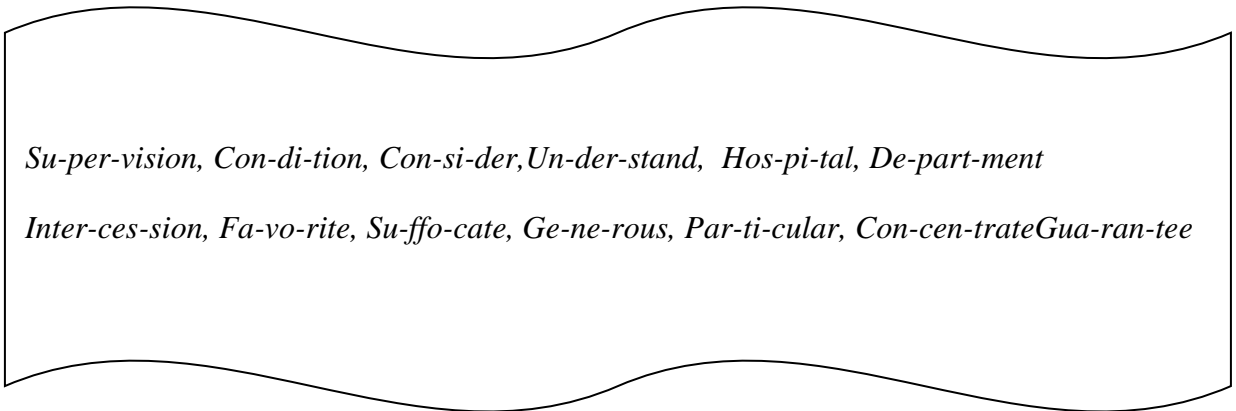
These phrases are written on cardboard and flash cards to practise the correct pronunciation. The next stage, pupils make any short phrases with them but there will be stress on the key words. See some of the two syllabic words in the sketch:

*Tea-cher, Buc-ket, Bed-room, Shep-herd, Cen-tral, Con-trol, Doc-tor, Law-yer, Bum-per,
Dan-cer, Hus-band, Hand-some, De-press, Que-stion, Pic-nic Con-scious, Won-der*

Step 3: The words that can be put in three syllables are written on the chalk board and card boards such as *beau-ti-ful, uni-ver-sity, con-fi-dent sen-ten-ces, con-jun-ction, im-por-tant, inde-pen-dence, exe-cu-tive* and these could be 10-15 words. The pupils practice the pronunciation of these words in syllables and finally pronounce them as single words. The teacher will explain the meaning of the words. Finally, the words are put in short phrases for practice but stress will be put on the pronunciation of the key words.



For instance, *the girl is beautiful, the boy is confident* and others. Some of the three syllabic words are illustrated in the sketch below:



However, there is the need to show how the syllabic method was taught with all the instructional features-what to do as a teacher and explicit instruction for the pupils to follow. This can best be explained in a table form. Table 1 shows how the syllabic method was executed. There was also a check list that was used to monitor the success of the pupils in the various lessons and this is shown in Table 2.

4.6 PRACTICAL LESSON THAT WAS USED IN THE CLASSES

The teacher employed syllabic method of teaching reading and comprehension to deliver a practical lesson on reading in which a lesson plan was prepared to that effect. This was aimed at enabling pupils to be able to read fluently. It also served as a guide for other teachers in the school and probably those outside to also adopt appropriate methods of teaching reading.

Teaching Learning Materials

Chalk board, cardboards, color pencils and word cards.

Lesson Objectives:

1. Pupils will be able to pronounce a word in parts and combine the parts and pronounce
2. Form any short phrase or sentence with the word



Rational and Purpose: This strategy will provide pupils with additional practice of pronouncing words correctly, using them in phrases and sentences. This further improves efficiency in reading their text books. The ability to pronounce segmented word and combine the part as one word is important skills for more development of phonological awareness.

Relevant Previous Knowledge: Pupils have been taught sound of letters in their previous classes in the past years and have alphabetic understanding or phonemic awareness.

The Necessary Pre-Skills

For pupils to be successful, they need to be able:

- To identify letters and have knowledge in the sound of letters
- To understand concepts
- To isolate beginning, middle and last sound of words



Table 2: Teaching Instructions

Instructional Sequence		
Instructional Features	What to do	Explicit Instructions
<p>Step 1</p> <p>Rhyming words with one syllable</p> <p><i>Can, cat Cut / cart Corn</i></p> <p><i>Ben Burn Bend, Bent, Bane,</i></p>	<p>Write the words on cards color them differently and group pupils to pronounce words in turns following the teacher. The teacher says, watch me sound out the word e.g. can, cat etc. the pupils are put in groups to practice. Teacher explains the meaning of each word.</p>	<p>We are going to play a game called word speed. You will pronounce each word and use it in short phrase as fast as you can in groups</p> <p>The goal today is to pronounce fifteen words correctly and use them in short phrase or sentences.</p> <p>Provide pupil opportunity to practise in game format for the teacher to award marks</p>
<p>Step 2</p> <p>Word with two syllables</p>	<p>Assign pupils in groups and within each group pupils are put in partners. Teacher</p>	<p>We are going to continue with the game called word speed. You will pronounce</p>





<p><i>Tea-cher, Buc-ket, Bed-room, Shep-herd, Cen-tral, Dan-cer, Hus-band, Hand-some, De-press, Que-stion</i></p>	<p>provides each pair with a set of word cards with two syllables. The teacher says, watch me sound out the word <i>Tea-cher, Buc-ket, Bed-room</i> etc</p> <p>The pupils practise the syllabic words and pronounce as whole words. One of them reads the word card, while the partner holds and flips the card and the teacher check for correct pronunciation. After that the pair change role.</p> <p>Teacher explains the meaning of each word.</p>	<p>each word and use it in short phrase as fast as you can in groups</p> <p>The goal today is to pronounce fifteen words correctly and use them in short phrases or sentences.</p> <p>Provide pupil opportunity to practise in game format for teacher to award marks</p>
<p>Step 3</p> <p>Words with three syllables</p>	<p>The teacher pronounces each word once. The pupil practice reading word cards following the teacher’s</p>	<p>We are going to play a game called word speed in groups. You will pronounce each word and use it in any</p>

<p><i>Su-per-vision, Con-di-tion,</i> <i>Con-si-der, Un-der-stand,</i> <i>Inter-ces-sion, Fa-vo-rite,</i> <i>Suf-fo-cate,</i></p>	<p>pronunciation.</p> <p>Position the cards in such a way that pupils can see.</p> <p>Flip through the stack of cards once. Previous errors will be corrected by the teacher.</p> <p>Teacher explains the meaning of each word to the pupils.</p>	<p>short phrase as fast as you can in each group</p> <p>The goal today is to pronounce 15 words correctly and use them in short phrases or sentences</p> <p>Provide pupil opportunity to practise in a game format for teacher to award marks to each group.</p>
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4.7 EVALUATION OF THE SYLLABIC METHOD IN CLASS

A check list was designed to monitor the success of the syllabic method. Table 2 is the check list that was used to monitor pupils’ success in correct words pronunciation for improvement of reading. It showed great improvement considering the scores in the upper primary at Kidz Active Foundation School. The people acquired skills in reading which includes phonemic awareness, phonics word recognition, vocabulary and simple comprehension. The children were also willing to read because of their confidence in correct words pronunciation. The pupils were put in four (4) groups in class four, five and six throughout the intervention process which gave an opportunity to evaluate their performance which is shown in the Table 3, on page 52.



Table 3:Weekly Checklist for Evaluation

Group	week 1					week 2					week 3				
Class 4	words with one syllable					words with two syllables					words with three syllables				
Group I	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	x	x
Group II	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group III	x	X	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group IV	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	O	x	X	x	x
Class5															
Group I	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group II	x	X	X	X	X	o	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group III	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group IV	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Class 6															
Group I	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group II	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group III	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x
Group IV	x	X	X	X	X	x	X	X	X	X	X	x	X	x	x

However, in each group an individual was given five chances to pronounce the set of words provided in a lesson, use the words in a sentence and each time the task was performed correctly in a group. The box that corresponded to a group was checked (x) meaning that the individuals in each group were successful in the five chances given and (o) implied was not successful and needed correction. The errors occurred where some individuals were not successful in the five chances given. The Table 3 above indicates



that the children in all the class were successful in the syllabic method despite some challenge.

4.8 POST-INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

The post intervention activities were done to encourage the pupils to develop the culture of reading after the success of the syllabic method. The pupils could pronounce English words correctly with confidence and form sentences with familiar words. This gave the teachers chance to expose the pupils to books and reading competitions that sustained their interest in reading in the school.

4.8.1 Maintaining Reading Culture

It was observed that after the teachers taught the pupils how to read using the best strategy, they further motivated the pupils to read more books in order to improve better. This motivation was done through series of reading competitions organized by teachers in which those who read best were awarded dictionaries, cash prizes, story books and many other material items in all the classes. This was the beginning of maintaining reading culture in the school. The teachers further made pupils to read the whole of some books after which they talked about the plot, settings or genre and that gave them fun and pleasure out of the stories. This was a strategy to push the pupils to read for comprehension after acquiring fluency in reading. It was noted that the stories motivated them to read more books for pleasure.

4.8.2 Maintaining Reading Culture Which Included Struggle Readers

The struggling readers were helped by the teachers. The teachers were observed repeating reading for the pupils to feel confident and read fluently. The teachers organized books clubs and reading groups in each class and there was a periodic reading



competition. This was both oral and comprehension. This was noted to be giving straggle readers so much joy and enhanced their comprehension skills. In general, it was observed that to maintain reading culture among pupils, the teachers organized weekly class test to evaluate progress achieved and encourage pupils to read important information and cultivate the habit of reading. These days many schools have stopped organizing library lessons. As part of the project goals, the researcher urged the teachers of Kidzs Active Foundation School to organize library lessons and helped the pupils to choose books at their level.

The teachers made charts and logs in class for each of the pupils to keep track their own progress in reading. The chart or logs were very helpful because the pupils could keep track of the number of books they had read, the new words they had learned and the amount of time they had spent in reading. This was observed to be more concrete for the pupils and they could see their own progress with their own eyes. It was also observed that pupils were quite excited by these improvements in their ability to read. For instance, many pupils showed their colleagues their marks with the saying “look at how much I have done this week”. They felt proud of what they had accomplished. This situation has undoubtedly promoted and maintained reading culture among the school pupils. This is evidenced in the fact that, all most every pupil wanted to read more books and acquires for themselves more new vocabulary.



CHAPTER FIVE

THE OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the outcome of the project. Among the outcomes presented are the effectiveness of the various strategies that were used to improve reading and reading culture among pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School. In all the strategies used, the teachers wanted to make the pupil acquire decoding and encoding skills which would help the pupils in correct pronunciation of word or read fluently. Decoding here refers to the process of breaking a word down to its individual parts and determining the word pronunciation based on common sound/pattern of English. This will intend increase reading skill and improve reading culture. As a result, the chapter starts with mixed letters.

5.1 THE MIXED LETTER, IDENTIFICATION AND CORRECT WORD SOUND

In this method, the teachers mixed the letters of some words in their reading books for the pupils to identify the right words and pronounce them correctly with a guide. For instance, words like Dotryes-(Destroy), apcomyn-(Company) and others. This was meant to make the pupils understand the alphabetical system and to acquire good words identification skills which will improve the correct pronunciation of words.

The study revealed that this method was very effective in improving pupils reading abilities especially pupils who were exposed to books and other reading materials. The study also revealed that this method is very appropriate for pupils in class Five and Six. In this regard, the method would not be very helpful for pupils in class four and lower since its focused is on those who are able to read some basic words and statements. One problem identified with the method is that, it made pupils to concentrate themselves on



the identification of words out of presented mixed words without necessarily focusing on correct pronunciation and understanding of the words. In this regards, the method might not be applicable in all the various classes.

5.2 THE USE OF RHYMING FOR CORRECT WORD PRONUNCIATION

Another method employed in improving and promoting reading abilities of pupils was the rhyming for correct words pronunciation method. This method was employed based on the beliefs and reflections of the researcher as a classroom teacher. The purpose of this method was to enable learners to acquire decoding skills, meaning and pronunciation of words that rhyme with one another.

The study revealed that this method is associated with some problems. Among the problems identified with this method was that it is time consuming. This accounts from the fact that in this method, teachers had to spend more time to teach meaning of the words after the pupils had mastered pronunciation of the words. It also involved guiding pupils in the spelling of each word in order not to mix or interchange the words when speaking or writing. This implies that the teachers had to teach many things at the same time which could sometimes result in loss of focus on the part of the teacher, which result in the inability of the teacher to meet set lesson objectives.

Again, the study also revealed that the method was quite confusing for some pupils because, it was difficult for them to recall the meaning and clear distinctive pronunciation of some words. For instance, *cart and curt* could be confusing in terms of pronunciation and meaning at the upper primary. It was however observed that, pupils whose parents were literates had the opportunity of benefiting from the method than those from illiterate homes. This was because such children were not only exposed to books and other educational materials, but also they are more likely to access extra tuition either from their parents or contracted teachers.



5.3 THE SENTENCE AND PHRASE WITH KEY WORDS

The sentence and phrase with key words method was another strategy employed by the teachers in a quest to promoting reading abilities among pupils. In this method the key words that were meant to enable pupils master pronunciation were put in a short sentences or phrases for pupils to read with emphasis on the key word.

Despite the ability of the method in motivating pupils to strive for correct pronunciation of words, the method also had its weaknesses. It created panic and anxiety among pupils since most of them could not pronounce the words correctly as expected. It took the intervention of the researcher to sensitized pupils to understand that the exercise was meant to improve upon their reading abilities and hence, not meant as punishment. Also, because most of the pupils had difficulties in pronouncing the words correctly, the teachers had to spend more time in taking them through the rudiments of reading, hence could be said to be time consuming. It must however be noted that the method or strategy was more effective for pupils in classes five and six than those in class four. Again, the strategy benefited those who were fluent in reading than those with difficulties.

5.4 THE SUCCESSFUL STRATEGY (SYLLABIC METHOD)

Another strategy employed in improving reading abilities of pupils was the syllabic method. The syllabic method was identified as one of the effective methods for promoting reading among pupils. The study revealed that the syllabic method is very useful and effective method for teaching reading and comprehension at the basic level of education. In this method, words were divided into parts depending on the number of stresses found in the words. The stresses were the combination of phonemes within the words. A word with single stress is known as one syllable word. Words with two tresses are called two syllabic words and so on. The researcher observed how this method was



employed by teachers in the teaching and learning of reading. The method involves putting words into syllables and guiding pupils to pronounce the words. The results indicated that most learners were very comfortable with this method since it enabled them to form short phrases with the words.

The second phase of the method was the pronunciation of two syllabic words from the pupils' reading books. The phase allowed learners to practise the pronunciation of two syllabic words and as well form sentences with those words. This was made possible because, the teachers expended enough time to take pupils through the lessons with effective examples to promote understanding. This method was observed to improve the reading skills of all the classes.

The pupils could pronounce two syllabic words with confidence. The next phase of the syllabic method was the pronunciation of more challenging task phase. This phase involved the pronunciation of three or more syllabic words. Most of these words were taken from the pupils' text books. The researcher observed that the syllabic method was one of the most effective methods of reading that can be applied at all stages in education.

According to a weekly progress monitoring report instituted by the researcher through a checklist, about 98% of the pupils in class six could now read and pronounce words correctly after being taken through the syllabic method of teaching and learning reading. For class four and five, the percentage of pupils who could now read and pronounce words and phrases successfully were 70% and 84% respectively. The study further revealed that pupils could even pronounce unfamiliar words without stopping when reading. The method really helped those with reading difficulties to rise above their reading conundrums.

Despite the successes associated with this method, there were some challenges that confronted the method. Among the weaknesses identified with this method is the



tendency of the method to develop and encourage slow readers. This accounts from the fact that the method involves the splitting of words into syllables for pupils to pronounce. Another weakness identified with the method is that most of the pupils had difficulties in linking words with meaning.

In spite of the ills associated with the method, the syllabic method was adjudged the best and the most effective method for promoting reading abilities and reading culture among pupils. After the implementation of the method, the study revealed that the confidence level of the pupils had boosted tremendously. As it has been emphasized by the behaviorists, that a new behavioral pattern is being repeated until it becomes automatic (Nel et al., 2012). The pronunciation of the words became automatic when the pupils were repeating the practice. One of the pupils in class four said, “Sir, I could not read the English reading books for this class but now I can read the books and spell some words correctly. Yes it is true.” The child said that with joy.

5.5 PROBLEMS LIKELY TO ENCOUNTER WITH THE SYLLABIC METHOD

It was observed that in the syllabic method of teaching to improve fluency in reading, there were some technical problems the teachers were encountering which professionals should take note of especially when handling pupils from multilingual societies. The local languages that the pupils acquired have natural stress on some parts of the words they pronounce which is likely to be transferred to English language. In English language, when there is a strong or weak stress on some parts of a word, it can change the meaning of the word completely. This problem was common in this method. There is the need to guide stressed and put words into context in the teaching and learning situation. For instance, it was observed that a stress in some parts of a word could change from noun to verb. These types of words can be seen in table 4. In this illustration, capital letters indicate strong stress and small letters indicate weak stress.



Table 4: Words likely to be changed from Noun to Verb Because of Stress and Tone

Noun	Verb
RE-cord	re-CORD
SUS-pect	sus-PECT
IM-port	im-PORT
IN-sult	in-SULT

Moreover, there are some types of words that can change meaning with a little stress and tone. These words need to be put in context when using syllabic method. It was observed that some pupils in the class sounded words different from what the teacher meant based on the tone and stress. For instance the following words in table 5 are likely to change meaning based on tone or stress.

Table 5: Words that Change Meaning with Tone and Stress (Homographs)

RE-fuse (rubbish)	re-FUSE (to say no)
OB-ject (a thing)	ob-JECT (to say no)
DES-ert (the Sahara)	des-ERT (leave alone)
RE-sume (CV)	re-SUME (go on again)

Another problem encountered was the words that some letters are silent when pronouncing them. Most of the pupils in class four (4) were tempted to pronounce those words with every letter being heard but that was wrong pronunciation. For instance, (Iron) the ‘**r**’ in the word is silent in pronunciation. The word (sword) the ‘**w**’ in the word is silent. The word (receipt) the ‘**p**’ in the word is silent. The teachers had to spend more time on such words when using syllabic method. There were also some words that needed more time to take note of the sound of first letters by the pupils.



5.6 CONCLUSION

The role of the teacher in promoting reading culture among pupils cannot be over emphasised. The use of appropriate teaching methods is very key to developing the reading skills of pupils especially at the elementary level. Reading disability has been identified as both a cause and a consequence of reading culture among pupils and the general public. This accounts from the fact that those who are able to read fluently tend to enjoy reading and thereby developing reading culture unwittingly. On the other hand, those with reading difficulties tend to dislike books.

The researcher therefore concludes that, reading culture can only be developed by helping pupils to read fluently and making reading materials available to them. In this regard, the researcher employed a number of strategies to improve upon the reading abilities of upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School. Among all the different methods of teaching reading, the syllabic method was identified as the most useful and effective method for teaching reading and comprehension at the basic level of education.

With the use of this method over some time, it was observed that most upper primary pupils of Kidz Active Foundation School could read and pronounce simple words and sentences with ease. A weekly progress monitoring report instituted by the researcher through a checklist revealed that about 98% of the pupils in class six could read and pronounce words correctly after being taken through the syllabic method of teaching and learning reading. Whiles 70% and 84% of the pupils in primary four and five respectively were able to pronounce words, and read simple phrases and sentences.

Despite the fact that the method may have its own weaknesses such as encouraging slow pace readers, the syllabic method was adjudged the best and the most effective method for promoting reading abilities and reading culture among the pupils.



Another strategy employed to promote reading abilities and reading culture among pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School was the establishment and organization of reading competitions among pupils in the school where reward packages such as books, dictionaries and cash prizes among others were given to pupils who excelled in these competitions. This eventually led to the development of reading habit among pupils in the school. Fast readers did not only strive to read more books, but also the slow readers also strived to be able to read so as to enable them attract reward packages in subsequent reading competitions. This undoubtedly promoted reading culture among the pupils in the school.

Furthermore, in our quest to make Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation school a beacon of hope in northern Ghana with regards to the development of reading abilities and reading culture among its pupils, the teachers and management of the School also organized weekly class test outside their syllabus and that made the pupil to read beyond what was in their course work. This was noted to have improved creativity and reading culture of the pupils.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the outcomes of the project, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

1. More emphasis should be placed on the syllabic method by all teachers of basic schools since it was identified as the most effective method in improving reading abilities among pupils. The study also indicated that pupils who were able to read effectively were more likely to cultivate the habit of reading culture than those with reading difficulties. In this regard, teachers must strive to improve upon the reading abilities of their pupils.



2. Teachers and school administrators should organize reading comprehensions periodically in schools as a means for promoting reading culture. There should also be reward packages such as books, dictionaries and cash prizes among others for pupils who excel in these competitions.
3. Basic school teachers should also pay special attention to pupils with reading difficulties to enable them overcome their problems. This would go a long way to encourage them.
4. Basic school teachers should also use concrete and attractive teaching and learning materials (TLMs) as well as learner-centered activities when teaching reading. This would not only promote understanding, but also sustain the interests of learners.
5. Finally, parents/guardians and government should endeavor to provide pupils with the required reading books and materials so as to enable them develop the habit of reading.

5.8 Suggestions for Further Research

The outcomes of this project revealed that reading culture can be developed among pupils through numerous strategies. Since this project was carried out in just the upper primary classes of a particular school, the researcher recommends that further research/projects be carried out in other schools in and outside the District or Region. It is also recommended that further projects be carried out in the Lower Primary level across the country.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Qualitative Interview Guide for Obtaining Information Regarding Reading

A project meant to develop reading strategies to improve upon reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School in Tamale, Northern Region of Ghana. The questions seek to obtain information about the causes of poor reading culture and information about the state of reading in the school. This is to enable the researcher to assist teachers to develop strategies of improving reading.

The objective of these questions is to find out the causes of poor reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.

Questions:

- 1) How is the pronunciation of English words in class?
- 2) What are the causes of reading difficulties in the school?
- 3) Could you please explain the factors and how they can be controlled?
- 4) How can you identify pupils with reading difficulty in class?
- 5) Do the pupils read their books after school?
- 6) Are there possibilities that the pupils could be reading information from other source rather than their text books?
- 7) Could you explain why some pupils can read better than others?
- 8) How are the feelings of teachers about the causes of poor reading among the pupils?
- 9) How do parents feel about the causes of poor reading among their wards?
- 10) How can the poor reading culture among the pupils be corrected in the school?

Conclusion: What else do you have to say about the poor reading culture?



The objective of these questions is to examine the existing state of reading culture among upper primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School.

Questions:

- 1) How is the reading culture in the school?
- 2) How do teachers organize reading lessons in the school?
- 3) What are the methods used in teaching English Language?
- 4) Are there other methods that could be better in teaching the English Language?
- 5) How can the methods be executed in the classes?
- 6) How long do you think the methods could be used to bring change?
- 7) How effective will it be if there will be a resource person to assist you to use those methods in teaching?
- 8) Are the pupils aware of their state of reading culture and how?
- 9) How can their parents be aware of their state of reading culture?
- 10) How can the pupils exiting state of reading culture be improved?

Conclusion: What else do you have to say about the state of reading culture in the school?



APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Kidz Active Foundation School

Post Office Box 2314

Tamale

10/02/ 2016

The Head Teacher

Kidz Active Foundation School

Post Office Box 2314

Tamale

Dear Sir,

INFORMED CONSENT

I would be very grateful if you could grant me permission to conduct a research on the topic **“Developing Reading Strategies to improve upon reading culture among Upper Primary pupils of Malshegu Kidz Active Foundation School in Tamale, Northern Region, Ghana”** in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a Master of Arts Degree in Development Education at the Faculty of Education in the University for Development Studies, Tamale.

The researcher is assuring you the strictest confidentiality and anonymity. Therefore no individual shall be identified in this project study and at the same time schools academic activities shall not be disrupted by this project study. The researcher will strive to be honest, objective and empathetic. Participants will be allowed to withdraw at any time without penalty or victimization and will be protected from any form of abuse. The outcome of this project will be communicated to the District Education Directorate.

Thank you, in advance for your time and co-operation.

Yours faithfully,

Konlan Job Naafan



(Student Researcher)
Student ID: UDS/MDE/0017/14

**APPENDIX C: A LETTER OF REPLY FROM THE HEADTEACHER OF THE
SCHOOL**

Kidz Active Foundation School
Post Office Box 2314
Tamale
25/02/2016

Kidz Active Foundation School
Post Office Box 2314
Tamale
Dear Sir,

RE-INFORMED CONSENT

STUDENT ID: UDS/MDE/0017/14

With reference to your letter dated February 10, 2016 on the above subject, I wish to inform you that permission has been granted you in my school to undertake your research as requested.

All the necessary arrangements have been made for this programme, as it is not only going to benefit the selected students, but the entire school as a whole.

Yours faithfully,

.....
Alhassan Hussein

(Headmaster)



APPENDIX E: PICTURE OF OBSERVATION SESSION



**APPENDIX F: PICTURE OF A LESSON WITH AN UPPER PRIMARY CLASS
ON THE SYLLABIC METHOD OF READING**

