

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE**

**IMPROVING THE ENGLISH READING ABILITY OF PRIMARY FOUR (4)  
PUPILS OF EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BIMBILLA**

**ADAM ABUDU**

**2017**



UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

IMPROVING THE ENGLISH READING ABILITY OF PRIMARY FOUR (4) PUPILS OF  
EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION PRIMARY SCHOOL  
IN BIMBILLA

BY

ADAM ABUDU

[UDS/MTD/0016/14]

THIS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS,  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN  
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS  
OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT.

AUGUST, 2017



## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature:..... Date:.....

Adam Abudu

UDS/MTD/0016/14

### Supervisor's Declaration

This thesis has been submitted for review with my approval as university supervisor.

Signature:..... Date:.....

Rev. Fr. Dr. Thomas Asante



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my creator God the Almighty for the health and guidance He offered me throughout this research work. And to my wife for the immense love and support she offered me, thank you.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My profound gratitude goes to Mr. A. Abu Wemah the Principal of E.P College of Education, Bimbilla for the concern and encouragement he gave me during this study. I am equally grateful to Mr. Mohammed Bello of University for Development Studies and Dr. Mohammed Issah also of University for Development Studies for their guidance. I would also like to thank my wife Abukari Andaratu, my children Mohammed-Amin C. Adam and Alesha Adam for the care, love and support they gave me through the entire course.

I also want to express my sincere thanks to the head teacher, the study class teacher and the pupils of the study school for their cooperation. I also want to thank Mr. Suale a teacher trainee who was on his out programme in the study school for his assistance. Many thanks also go to my thesis supervisor Rev. Fr. Dr. Thomas Asante. Above all, I thank God Almighty my creator for His mercy.



## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges associated with Primary four (4) pupils inability to read text in English Language especially, in reading fluently, reading comprehension, spelling and linguistic competencies at E.P. College of Education Primary School. The researcher reviewed literature relating to theories of reading, the nature of reading, the reading process, causes and effects of pupils inabilities to read. An action research was used. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of thirty-five (35) pupils who had difficulties in reading. The instruments used to aid in data collection were observation, interviews and test. Data was analysed quantitatively using frequency tables and qualitatively (manually) where responses were put in text. Some of the findings were that: It was found out that the reading and comprehension level of the pupils before the intervention was not good, none of the pupils could read the p4 level passage fluently, lack of exposure to reading materials alongside with poor knowledge of letter sounds were identified as the main issues that accounted for the pupils inability to read text in English. Reading difficulties that were prominent during the observation had to do with wrong pronunciation of words, skipping words and omitting letters. After the intervention, it was established that twenty-two (22) pupils were able to read the p4 level passage effectively. It was also found that the number of pupils who could read the p4 level passage with difficulties had reduced from 25 pupils to ten pupils. Also, the number of pupils who could not read at all had reduced from ten (10) pupils to four (4) pupils. The researcher made some recommendations which included: The school authority in collaboration with parents (PTA) should initiate remedial lessons for struggling readers; the school should encourage parents through the school PTA to buy learning materials especially supplementary reading materials for their wards and supervise their usage, Ghana Education. Service (GES) should ensure that teachers at the basic school level are trained regularly to equip them with the requisite skills and effective methods of teaching English reading, School authorities/teachers should identify children with reading problems early and provide them with appropriate early intervention and Ministry of Education (MOE) should ensure adequate supply of well-developed curriculum materials and equipment especially that of English



## ACRONYMS

GES	-	Ghana Education Service
TED	-	Teacher Education Division
NRP	-	National Reading Panel
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	-	United State of America
APW	-	Auditory Processing Weakness
PISA	-	Programme for International Student Association
TLMs	-	Teaching and Learning Materials
P4	-	Primary Four
MOE	-	Ministry of Education
NNDEO	-	Nanumba North District Education Office
NND	-	Nanumba North District
EPCE	-	Evangelical Presbyterian College of Education
PTA	-	Parent Teacher Association
NALAP	-	National Literacy Accelerated Programme
L1	-	Mother-tongue
L2	-	Second Language (English)



**TABLE OF CONTENT**

**Content**

DECLARATION ..... ii

DEDICATION ..... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... iv

ABSTRACT ..... v

ACRONYMS ..... vi

TABLE OF CONTENT ..... vii

LIST OF TABLES ..... xi

**CHAPTER ONE.....1**

**INTRODUCTION.....1**

1.1 Background to the Study ..... 1

1.2 Perceived Problem ..... 4

1.3 Problem Diagnosis ..... 4

1.4 Evidence of the Problem ..... 5

1.5 Causes of the Problem..... 6

1.6 Statement of the Problem ..... 7

1.7 Purpose of the Study ..... 7

1.8 Objectives of the Study ..... 8

1.9 Research Questions ..... 8

1.10 Significance of the Study..... 9

1.11 Limitation ..... 9

1.12 Delimitation of the Study ..... 10

1.13 The Structure of the Study ..... 10

**CHAPTER TWO.....11**

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....11**

2.1 Introduction ..... 11

2.2 Review of Previous Research ..... 11

2.3 How Present Study Extend Literature ..... 12

2.4 Theoretical Framework ..... 13





2.5 Theoretical Rationale .....	15
2.6 Definition/Concept of Reading .....	16
2.7 Benefits/Importance of Reading .....	19
2.8 The Nature of Reading .....	21
2.9 The Reading Process .....	23
2.10 Components of Reading .....	24
2.11 Causes of Pupils Inability to Read .....	26
2.12 Effects of Pupils Inability to Read on Academic Performance.....	33
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>38</b>
3.1 Research Design.....	38
3.2 Population and Sampling Size .....	39
3.3 Sample Technique.....	39
3.4 Research Instruments .....	40
3.5 Data Collection Procedure.....	40
3.5.1 Observation.....	40
3.5.2 Interview.....	40
3.5.3 Test.....	41
3.6 Pre-Intervention .....	42
3.7 Intervention.....	42
3.7.1 Introduction.....	42
3.7.2 Main Intervention.....	43
3.7.2.1 The Phonic Method .....	44
3.7.2.2 The Matching Card Technique:.....	45
3.7.2.3 The Alphabet Hopscotch activity .....	46
3.7.2.4 Composite letters with only one sound value .....	47
3.7.2.5 Composite letters that have two possible sound values .....	47
3.7.2.6 Vowels and Consonants.....	48
3.7.2.6.1 Vowels.....	48
3.7.2.6.2 Consonants.....	48
3.7.2.6.3 Vowel Letters and their Two Principal Sound Values.....	49
3.7.2.7 Alphabet Combination.....	52



3.7.2. 8 The Value of ‘Silence Letters’ .....	54
3.7.2.9 The Concept of the Magic/Silent ‘e’ .....	55
3.7.2.10 Combination of Letters and how they Sound in Words.....	56
3.7.2.11 Consonant letters with Two Sound Values .....	58
3.8 Syllabic Method.....	59
3.9 Look and Say Method .....	60
3.9.1 Associating a sentence with a picture.....	61
3.9.2 Reading of Rebus .....	63
3.9.3 Identifying Words in Context .....	64
3.9.4 Minor Interventions.....	65
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>68</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	68
4.2 Presentation of Findings.....	68
4.2.1 Reading and Comprehension Level of Pupils before and after the Intervention .....	68
4.2.2 Reasons that Account for Pupils Inability to Read.....	72
4.2.3 Difficulties Pupils Encounter when Reading.....	74
4.2.4 Effects of Phonic and Syllabic Instruction on Pupils Reading .....	76
4.2.5 Proposed Strategies to Guide Teachers Teach English Reading Effectively.....	78
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>81</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	81
5.2 Summary .....	81
5.3 Conclusion.....	83
5.4 Recommendations.....	83
5.4.1 Recommendation to the Study School .....	84
5.4.2 Recommendation to other Stakeholders .....	84
5.4.3 Suggestions for Further Research .....	86
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>97</b>
APPENDIX ‘A’ .....	97
APPENDIX ‘B’ .....	97



APPENDIX 'C' ..... 103  
APPENDIX 'D' ..... 104



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Alphabet Hopskotch	46
Table 3.2 Identifying Target Words	64
Table 3.3 Substitution Table	66
Table 4.1 Pupils Reading and Comprehension Level before the Intervention	68
Table 4.2 Pupils Reading and Comprehension Level after the Intervention	70
Table 4.3 Reasons that Account for Pupils Inability to Read Text in English	72
Table 4.4 Difficulties Pupils Encounter when Reading Text in English	74
Table 4.5 Effects of Phonic and Syllabic Instrument on Pupils Reading	76



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Ghana adopted English Language as a National language from our colonial masters (the British) since the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (1848), and therefore uses it as a medium of instruction in its schools.

In Ghana, pupils start to learn English Language at the basic level, that is from Kindergarten through Primary to Junior High School (JHS) and then continue to use it up to the tertiary level. According to United State Department of Education, children are expected to learn to read in the Kindergarten, the Primary grades, through to third grade, when most reading instruction is given. By fourth grade children are expected to read.

Unfortunately, reading text in English Language is a problem to most of the pupils in many schools even at the Senior High School level. Ghana is currently facing a national literacy and numeracy crises. Based on data available only 26% of pupils who reach 6<sup>th</sup> and final year of Primary School are literate in English Language and only 11% are numerate. (Ministry of Education, Ghana 2008, and 2007 Educational Assessment Report-Ghana) cited in National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) Baseline Assessment (2009).

However, research has shown that, the mother tongue (L<sub>1</sub>) based literacy instruction approach helps the child to develop literacy and language skills first in the (L<sub>1</sub>) and systematically transfer these skills to English (L<sub>2</sub>) by gradually introducing age-appropriate lessons in the English Language. This approach is based on the evidence that mother-tongue



based instruction enhances the acquisition and acceleration of literacy skills in L<sub>1</sub> and boost transfer to L<sub>2</sub> (Ministry of Education, Ghana/Ghana Education Service, 2014).

Children whose first language (L<sub>1</sub>) is not the language of instruction in school (Burgoyne, Whitely and Hutchinson, 2011) and children from socially disadvantaged families (Potter, 2007) may experience particular problems with literacy development and later school attainment.

Pupils are better prepared to learn to read English when the concepts of reading have been established in the mother-tongue. That notwithstanding, research, also shows that pupils have the ability to learn more than one language fluidly, given the enabling contexts (Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service, 2014).

In view of this, the language policy makes provision for the use of Ghanaian Language and English gradually till Primary three (3). English Language then becomes the medium of instruction from Primary four (4). English Language (reading) serves as a service subject for all subjects in the basic school curriculum.

The National English Language Policy requires teachers to help pupils develop the required English language skills through story telling, spelling, dictation, group discussion, rhymes, drama, role play, picture description or picture reading, singing, miming and retelling story among others. To achieve this, programmes such as NALAP, Spelling Bee and reading competition have been introduced at the basic school level to help improve pupils reading ability.

However, many pupils after leaving school cannot read and write effectively. This situation is highly unacceptable.



My preliminary visit to the school under study revealed that some of the classes were overcrowded and some pupils were lying on their stomach to write. This clearly cannot promote effective teaching and learning. There is therefore the need to correct this unfortunate situation by laying a firm foundation for the pupils to acquire the appropriate literacy.

Concerning the acquisition of literacy, numerous programs have been initiated especially in English-speaking countries. Evidence from the impact of these programs suggest that emphasis on phonics during reading instruction in the first years of literacy education benefit a child's reading acquisition (Ehri et al., 2001, Rose, 2006). For instance, the Cumbria Reading International Program (for example Hatcher, Hulm and Ellis, 1994) uses phonological training in combination with reading. This program seems to be very effective in helping English speaking children develop their reading skills.

Many Ghanaians generally have poor reading habits. Amlado (2015) noted that Ghanaians attitude alone towards reading in our various offices discourages the reading interest in our children in schools. He explained that newspapers are purposely meant for reading. Yet most officers including our policy makers see just some three (3) pages and do away with the rest of the readings.

There should be some kind of intensive sensitization for Ghanaians to develop an intensive reading culture. Amlado (2015) laments that the Western world has proved its high recognition with regard to high reading achievement, whereas Africa is still lacking behind, hence the need to accelerate reading culture in our children.



Johnson (2002) defined reading culture as the social condition under which readers and text coexist, and which involves the readers' access to their appropriation, consummation and use of texts. The concept of an ideal literature implied the creation of an ideal reading culture in which "as many readers as possible were to read as available text as possible" (Janacek 2004: 166) cited in Roar (2014 pg.110). These were all aspects of the Soviet mass reader concept that emerged after a Russian Revolution and elevated the masses, the proletariat and peasantry to judges of artistic value (Carleton, 1998: 112).

Soviet authorities conducted numerous surveys to identify the need of the new class of readers and to include the mass readers as active agents in the production and reception of texts (Carleton, 1998: 113-117). This mass reader concept will go a long way to improve the Ghanaian reading habit especially in the basic schools if properly adopted.

### **1.2 Perceived Problem**

Through the researcher informal interaction with some pupils in some basic schools in the Nanumba North District, he realized that just a few of the pupils could read fairly, not even fluently. Some Primary four (4) pupils were asked to read the first two paragraphs of the first unit (The boy who met Sasabonsam) of the Primary four (P4) English textbook for Ghana Schools, but most of the pupils were unable to read effectively, others could not pronounce most of the words correctly let alone to understand the passage.

### **1.3 Problem Diagnosis**

In order to find out whether the perceived problem really exist in the school under this study, the observation method was employed alongside a check list. A paragraph was developed as





a short test on reading to assess the pupils reading skills. The check list was used as a guide to grade pupils on correct pronunciation of words, appropriate use of punctuation marks, their understanding of the text as well as fluency in reading.

The results obtained gave an indication of each pupil's strength and weaknesses and this revealed to the researcher the aspects of their proficiencies that require improvement. The results from the observation showed that the pupils really had challenges in reading that could be put into two categories with regards to their English Language proficiencies; those who could read with difficulty and those with little difficulty in reading.

As part of the diagnosis, both the class teacher and the head teacher were interviewed about the pupils reading abilities and they affirmed that the pupils reading ability was abysmal.

#### **1.4 Evidence of the Problem**

During a reading lesson delivered by the Primary four (4) teacher, the researcher realized that after the class teacher had read a text and the pupils repeated after him a number of times, the pupils were then given the opportunity to read that same text by themselves in turns, unfortunately, only a few were able to read fairly. Also, the results of the test conducted earlier on reading revealed that over 70% of the pupils could not obtain the average score of 5 marks.

Again, documentary evidence from the school showed that results of the pupils for the third term examination (2015/2016) indicates that about 55% of the pupils scored below 50% in most of the subjects. Based on this, the pupils were interviewed and it was revealed that the pupils were not able to read and comprehend the questions as expected of them. They



attributed their reading challenges to the fact that they feel shy and do not have the courage to read aloud to avoid being laughed at by their colleagues in case they make mistakes.

### **1.5 Causes of the Problem**

The inability of pupils to read can be attributed to many factors such as inadequacy and in some cases lack of reading materials for the pupils both in the school and at home.

Another possible factor could be due to the little time usually allocated for reading in the Basic School timetable. The amount of time available for reading [both in the school (average of 60 minutes in a week) and at home] is compromise by the availability of other competing media, such as Television and computer; in 1999 *YOUNG PEOPLE*, new media found that in the National Survey of 6 to 17 year olds more households had Television than books (Livingstone and Bovill, 1999).

The inability of pupils to read could also be as a result of the incompetence of the teacher. It has been noted that the most significant factor in student's learning is the quality of the teacher (Harrington, 2001). Teachers who are fully prepared and have greater training are said to be more successful and effective with students than teachers with less preparation and training (Agyeman, 2000; Furguson, 2001; Hama, 1998).

Many teachers simply take the pupils' English Course Book and draw up their scheme of work. Others just copy the text from the English Text Book on the chalkboard and ask the pupils to read in turns. This practice does not help achieve effective reading. It is important that teachers refer to the syllabus and note various activities that could be done during the reading to facilitate the skill of reading.



### **1.6 Statement of the Problem**

English Language serves as a service subject for other subjects in the Basic School Curriculum. Examination questions of all subjects (except Ghanaian Language) are set in the English Language for pupils to read, comprehend and then answer appropriately.

The researcher observed that pupils have challenges in reading and their inability to read and understand text in English language often cause their failure in examinations. According to Lerner (2006), a number of learners are unable to use reading as a tool for learning, getting new information, ideas, attitudes and values from standard four upwards. At the basic level, Primary three (3) serves as a transitional class between the Lower Primary and the Upper Primary. Pupils in Primary four (4) who have just completed the Lower Primary where L<sub>1</sub> was mostly used as a medium of instruction usually find it difficult to cope with the English Language which is used as the main medium of instruction in Primary four (4).

If pupils are not helped at this early stage to build a firm foundation in their literacy abilities, they will find it extremely difficult if not impossible to achieve their academic dreams because the success in education appears to have a strong association with person's English Language proficiency, especially in English-speaking country such as Ghana.

### **1.7 Purpose of the Study**

The researcher proposed to carryout this study to assess the challenges associated with pupils inability to read text in English Language especially, in reading fluently, reading comprehension, spelling and linguistic competencies and to provide suggested approaches that will improve the pupils reading abilities in English Language.



It is also to examine the nature and effectiveness of the existing methods used to teach reading in the class under this study. Also, it is to examine the available reading materials that are accessible to the pupils in the class under study (both in the school and at home).

Finally, it is to suggest effective methods of teaching reading in Primary Schools.

In summary, the purpose is to assess the extent of the pupils inability to read text in English and provide effective approach or intervention that will help improve pupils reading ability.

### **1.8 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Assess the English reading and comprehension level of Primary four (4) pupils of E.P. College of Education Primary School, Bimbilla.
2. Find out the reasons that account for pupils inability to read.
3. Assess the challenges or difficulties the pupils encounter when reading text in English.
4. Find out whether phonic instruction has effect on pupils reading
5. Provide suggested approaches that will guide teachers teach English reading effectively.

### **1.9 Research Questions**

The questions that guide this study are:

1. What is the reading and comprehension level of pupils before and after the intervention?



2. What reasons account for pupils inability to read?
3. What difficulties do pupils encounter when reading a text in English?
4. What is the effect of phonic instruction on pupils reading?
5. What approach can be proposed as a measure to guide teachers teach English reading effectively?

### **1.10 Significance of the Study**

The main idea behind this work is to help the Primary four (4) pupils of E.P.C.E Primary School, Bimbilla out of their poor reading habits. This study brought to light the challenges or difficulties pupils have in reading text in English Language and has provided suggestions to assist Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders in education to design suitable reading materials for pupils to enhance their reading competencies.

It also serves as a reference material for future research work. Also the findings of this work serves as a blue print for policy makers to formulate appropriate English Language literacy strategies that will improve the poor reading habits of basic school pupils. Finally, English teachers are made to identify and adopt the appropriate methodologies that can be used to teach reading.

### **1.11 Limitation**

The pupils felt reluctant to read aloud for fear of making mistakes or been laughed at by the mates. Some pupils absented themselves from some of the lessons during the intervention period and this affected the results of the study.



### **1.12 Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of the study is limited to only Primary four (4) pupils of the research school due to time constraint. The problem investigated was also limited to reading and not other aspects of English because the materials available to the researcher were not enough to be extended to other aspects of English. More so, the researcher identified only the inability of the pupils to read, hence the choice of English reading inability.

### **1.13 The Structure of the Study**

Chapter One presents the background of the study and the problem that led to the undertaken of such research. The purpose of the study, significance, research questions, objectives, limitations and delimitations are also presented. Chapter Two presents the literature review as it relates to the study including theories developed from other research with the same scope as the current study. It represents views different researchers and educationist, pertaining to the challenges associated with pupils inability to read text in English Language. Chapter Three discusses the research methodology in detail. It presents the instruments used for data collection. It also discusses the research sample and data collection procedure as well as the interventions used in this study. The fourth chapter involves the presentation, analysis and discussion of research findings. The findings are presented in accordance with the research questions that were raised to guide the study. Chapter Five seeks to summarise the findings of the study, draw conclusions and make recommendations. The summary address the objectives of the study and the conclusions drawn are based on the research findings. A number of recommendations are also made in this chapter.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this study, the researcher reviewed literature relating to the problem. The literature materials reviewed include the wisdom, the sayings and recommendations of scholars who have spoken about similar or the same issues under the study. The researcher also resorts to books and websites relating to the problem. Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service publications, reports and publication from other bodies or organizations were also consulted. The main objective here was to utilize the material as a reliable tool upon which effective analysis, discussions and conclusions could be drawn.

The researcher reviewed literature relating to theoretical framework, definition/concept of reading, the nature of reading, the reading process, components of reading, benefits of reading, causes of pupils inability to read, the effects of pupils inability to read on academic performance as well as interventions that will improve pupils reading abilities.

#### 2.2 Review of Previous Research

Literature was reviewed in relation to the main research problem it was found that, the inability of pupils to read text in English Language is not peculiar to the study school alone but rather a global issue. According to Cimmiyotti (2013), in the state of Florida, roughly 20% of students are receiving reading intervention. Interventions in kindergarten focus on phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition which is in line with this study.

Another study which examined English Language learners fluency and comprehension found out that, over half of the students assessed had a significant gap between their reading



fluency and comprehension (Quirk & Beem, 2012). This current study agrees with (Quirk & Beem, 2012) in the sense that the finding in this study shows that almost all the pupils were unable to read and comprehend the p4 level passage before the intervention.

The literature reviewed also revealed that for pupils to improve upon their reading ability, they need to practice reading in order to develop their phonemic awareness, phonic, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. According to Opoku-Agyeman (1998), we need to practice reading every day because reading is a skill which honed to perfection through practice.

According to Cimmiyotti (2013). Mastering of these skills will not only improve pupils reading ability but, grant them access to increasingly complex knowledge in other subject areas. Cimmiyotti (2013) also found that a reader with poor decoding skill struggles with the text itself and isn't able to perform the task requiring logical reasoning strategies. Such pupils usually perform poorly in all subject areas because they find it difficult in comprehending text.

### **2.3 How Present Study Extend Literature**

The present study looked at ways of improving the reading ability of pupils at the lower level. It sought to employ a number of reading interventions or strategies that will enable pupil to improve their reading abilities.

Earliest study focused on the use of specific methods but this study expands on earlier research by adopting a multi-intervention or integrated approach. By this approach the researcher used a combination of phonetics, syllabic methods and the look and say methods to improve the pupils reading ability.





## 2.4 Theoretical Framework

According to Etsey and Ocran (2002) the different types of methods and different notions of people about how reading should be taught stem from the psychological orientation that influences their beliefs. They identified three (3) major psychological orientations or theories that have influenced the teaching of reading since the early 1900. These are the behaviourist psychology, cognitive psychology and the cognitive-constructivist, or simply constructivism.

The cognitive psychologist views the mind as central to learning and reading in particular. To the advocates of cognitive psychologist, the background knowledge of the reader (about the text being read) is very important. In their view, without it, people will not understand text or understand new ideas that they learn (Etsey and Ocran, 2002).

The cognitive psychologist believes in the Schema theory, which explains how our background knowledge is an important aspect that influences our learning of new knowledge and the way we interpret text that we read. The theory is of the view that all kinds of knowledge that a person acquires, either through experience or reading is packed in organized structures in our brains termed Schemata. This schema is described as an abstract knowledge structure that “exist in memory as something that a person knows” (Pearson and Anderson, 1984; Mayer 2002) cited in Etsey and Ocran (2002 pg.84).

The cognitive theory, also referred to as the Top-down model/Approach of teaching reading assumes that the reader relies heavily on his or her background or world of knowledge to help him process meaning from text. Cognitivist contends that one’s prior knowledge and experience play more important role in reading.



According to these scholars, when one reads a text, the words in the text do not have the meaning on their own, rather the background experiences that a reader brings to the text enables him or her to gain personal meaning of the text (Durkin, 2004). This implies that a reader understanding of the words of sentences in a text depends on the background knowledge and experiences he brings to the reading process.

The constructivist however, emphasizes the idea that reading is a process in which the reader actively search for meaning in what she reads. They believe that two different readers do not construct exactly similar meaning of the same text. Because each reader is influenced by his or her unique background experiences and intellectual make up, they can read the same text but come out with different interpretation (Etsey and Ocran, 2002).

From the explanation given above, I have realise that these two theories (the cognitive and the constructivist theories) will not help achieve the objective of this study. The reason being that early readers who are trained in this approach can over rely on their background knowledge and their opinions to overrule the meaning they construct of a text. Such readers can ignore the text and its contribution to overall meaning of the text.

However, this study intends to adopt the behaviourist-bottom-up/sub-skill approach to teaching reading. The reason being that unlike the other theories, the behaviourist theory emphasizes on the application of phonics and syllabic methods in teaching reading and this is the foundation up on which interventions in this study are based.

The behaviourist views reading as a matter of decoding single letters, words or focusing on areas such as eye-voice span speed of reading and lip movement during silent reading (Hebert & Raphael, 1996). The behaviourist embrace the saying that “teach children phonics



and they will be able to read”. The proponents of this theory believe that the first stage of reading development is the decoding stage.

According to them, the reader process text by first recognizing the lower level of units of language; the letters and their corresponding sounds and also by synthesizing these lower level units into more complex units. They explain this to mean that the reader first perceive and read letters and then continue to combine the letters into words, then synthesis several words to form phrase, clauses, sentences and then finally coming to processing a text, they hold the view that once the child masters decoding skills or can decode a text very well, using the knowledge of phonics, he or she will drive meaning of the text automatically.

The behaviourist contend that the best way to help non-readers learn to read is by directly and systematically teaching them phonetics or the ability to decode letters and sounds and then blend the sounds to form two, three or polysyllabic words.

According to Reutzel and Cooter Jnr. (2000), the behaviorist is of the conviction that efficient decoding leads to comprehension and that lack of phonics knowledge is the fundamental cause of reading disability. They even caution that allowing children to attempt to read books without knowing the letters and sounds they represent can lead to reading failure.

## **2.5 Theoretical Rationale**

The study assumes that the inability of pupils to read text in English is as a result of their inadequacy of knowledge in phonics. That the study is of the view that phonics play a critical in pupils inability to read. The study also assumes that before a pupil will be able to read fluently, mastering of the basic principles of phonetic is paramount. This view held by



the researcher is inline with the behaviorist approach to teaching reading. They believe that early reading intervention such as the introduction of phonics and syllabic instructions will help the pupils to read faster, this will go along way to benefit all other academics disciplines. The rational of the study is in consonance with the behaviourist approach to teaching reading, hence the logical choice for this study.

## **2.6 Definition/Concept of Reading**

The concept of reading is generally centered on meaning. Akubuilu et al. (2015) are of the view that reading is a receptive skill, which involves the ability to meaningfully interpret or decode written or graphics symbols of language. The reader must first convert the print on the page into a linguistic code: the phonetic code, the only code recognized and accepted by the language system. Shaywitz et al. (2004) agues that, unless the reader-to-be can convert the printers characters on the page into the phonetic code, these letters remain just a bunch of lines and circles, totaling devoid of meaning. Readers must discover that the words they hear come apart into smaller pieces of sound (Shaywitz, 2003). Sounds in words are linked to certain letters and letter patterns called the alphabetic principle. We are unable to read unless we decode single letters or words. The first stage of reading is the decoding stage. The reader processes text by first recognizing the lower level unit of language; the letters and their sounds and also synthesis these lower level units into more complex units. When pupils have difficulty in decoding and word recognition, they encounter reading difficulties but once the child master decoding skills or can decode a text very well, using the knowledge of phonics, the child will derive meaning of the text automatically. This conceptual framework is inline with the behaviorist theory. The behaviorist believed that the best way to help non-readers learn to read is by directly and systematically teaching them



phonics or the ability to decode letters and then blend the sounds to form words. They contend that efficient decoding leads to comprehension.

Smith (1978) suggested that any one definition of reading for example, decoding of written word into sound, is not adequate to describe its range and diversity.

Richard Anderson and the Commission on Reading in the U.S.A (2000) define reading as the process of constructing meaning from written text. They stated that skilled reading is:

- Constructive: learning to reason about written material using knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study;
- Fluent: Mastery of basic processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed from the analysis of meaning;
- Strategic: controlling ones reading in relation to ones purpose, the nature of the material and whether one is comprehending;
- Motivated: able to sustain attention and learning that written material can be interesting and informative; and
- A lifelong pursuit: continuous practices, development and refinement.

Reading is the act of getting meaning from printed or written words which is the basis for learning and one of the most important skills in everyday lives (Guthrie, Benneth and McGough, 2007).

Okyere (2006) also defines reading as “the skill or activity of obtaining meaning especially from printed or written words or symbols, from paper, news papers, magazines, journal and books”.



To acquire this skill of obtaining meaning from print, Susan (2007) emphasized that children need to practice reading constantly so as to develop and consolidate the necessary skills in reading faster. Susan further stated that once a person can do reading well, it becomes an endless source of pleasure and a key to every other sort of learning.

Diane (2001) also defines reading to be a multi-faceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Reading is making meaning of print, it requires that we:

- Read from left to right
- Scan silently
- Recognize different types of the print and hand writing.
- Distinguish between letters or words which are very similar
- Skim
- Go over the sentences with the eye without using the finger to trace the words.
- Recognize the punctuation marks involved.

According to Pemela (1993), reading is more than word recognition and gleaning of concept formation and idea from text.

In his view, Farr (2001) stressed that reading is the act of getting meaning from a printed or written word. It is basic to learning one of the most important skills in everyday life.

According to Gates (1949), reading is not a simple mechanical skill, nor is it a narrow scholastic tool properly cultivated. It is essentially a thoughtful process; however, to say that reading is a thought-getting process is to give it too restricted description. It should be



developed as complex organization of patterns of higher mental processes. Gates added that it should embrace all types of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem-solving.

Indeed it is believed that reading is one of the best media for cultivating many techniques of thinking and imagining. The reading programme should therefore make careful provisions for contribution as fully as possible for the cultivating of a whole array of techniques involved in understanding, analyzing, reflecting, imagining, judging, thinking and reasoning.

Gates explains further that reading is more than mental activity, that emotional responses are also required and the child does more than understanding and contemplating, his emotions are stirred, his attitudes and purposes are modified as well as his innermost being is involved.

From the view point of Smith, Goldman and Meredith (1976) there is no one single pattern of teaching reading which teachers should follow. According to them, most of the simple panaceas in reading instructions are not methods but sets of tactics that emphasize the learners use of one set of cues or group of related cues.

## **2.7 Benefits/Importance of Reading**

Reading is an essential tool to acquiring higher education. Pupils who are good readers are able to source information about themselves and their environment.

In the view of “Becoming a Nation of Readers”; The Report of the Commission on Reading (USA), reading is a basic life skill. The Commission explained that it is the cornerstone for a child’s success in school, and indeed, throughout life. It further stated that, without the



ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost.

To the educated person, the importance of reading cannot be over emphasized. According to Beryl and Marcelle (2004: Pg. 70) reading is one of the most beneficial, pleasurable and relaxing pastimes. They added that reading can never be replaced, even in this age of technology.

In the view point of Ghana Education Service/Teacher Education Division (GES/TDE, 2004:Pg190) pupils are able to gather information through reading. Reading also helps them to learn the other subjects in the school curriculum. It provides pupils with the means to endure their pleasure. GES/TED stressed that it is due to the importance attached to reading that is why we need to attach priority to the teaching of Beginning Reading. It is often said “teach the child how to read and write, and he can learn up to the moon”.

Charlotte (1967) stressed the importance of reading and proposed for the development of a well-organized program incorporating child’s literature directly in the Elementary School reading curriculum. Charlotte pointed out that children satisfy their desire for information and intellectual stimulation through reading. In her view, pupils discover specific facts through reading and present them clearly and in a meaningful way.

Durell (1956) brings the social-cultural importance of reading to the child. Durell stated that “the child with limited interest in reading is a danger to the society”. In our contemporary system of child upbringing, all children are expected to attend school and attempt to read. Society demands that the child should be a reader. A child, who cannot read risk insecurity, loses self-esteem and inability to pursue her interest to the fullest satisfaction.





Leland (1961) in Iris and Sidney (1967, pg 221) stated that literature and for that matter reading is entertainment. According to him entertainment is a noble end to education. He contends that unless children at school learn to love to read and enjoy reading for its own sake as entertainment, we will be missing one of our wonderful citizenship opportunities. He further stated that reading is a guidance resource. Reading makes it possible for a person to get insight into himself so that he can possible change behavior. Leland concluded his views on the benefits of reading by pointing out that reading stimulates creative activities. He explained that reading serves as a springboard to creative activities. Creative reading of literature, coupled with a rich program in the other arts, gets one art to feed the other. The richer the pupils' experiences in reading and dramatics, the richer they become in the creative aspect of living.

Beryl and Marcelle (2004) summaries the benefits of reading as follows:

- ❖ It provides entertainment and enjoyment,
- ❖ Reading provides information and expands ones mind
- ❖ Reading extends the pupils vocabulary by exposing them to new words
- ❖ It stimulates the pupils minds and keeps it active
- ❖ Reading develops pupils comprehension skills

It is therefore clear that reading is an indispensable component of our desire to achieve higher education.

## **2.8 The Nature of Reading**

Reading has to do with decoding text and symbols in order to get meaning or information.

Reading is an acquired skill and not a natural process (Wolfe and Nevills, 2004).



According to Wolf (2007, pg.3) in Grabe (2008) we were never born to read. He explained that human beings invented reading only a few 100 years ago. And with this invention, we rearranged the very organization of our brain, which in turn expanded the ways we are able to think, which altered the intellectual evolution of our species. Grabe (2008) contended that reading is something many people take for granted. According to him we read with little effort and with little planning. In his work, he pointed out that a remarkable number of the world's population can read. According to Elley (2001), Tucker (2000) and UNESCO (2007) cited in Grabe (2008), a little more than eighty percent (80%) of the world's population can read to some extent. Shaywitz (2003) stated that reading is the most complex of human functions. According to Wolfe & Nevills (2004) reading in any language poses a challenge, but reading in English is particularly difficult. For example some language systems such as the Japanese Katakana, are based on a system where each syllable is represented by a written symbol. When these symbols are learned, the child can read with relative ease (Snow, Burns, and Griffins 1998). According to these scholars spoken English on the other hand, has approximately 5,000 different possible syllables. Written English uses a system of letters –and alphabets – to make up a spoken syllable. A letter alone does not refer to anything. It must be combined with other letters to represent a word. The child must learn this complex alphabetic system in order to be able to decipher written words. According to Wolfe & Nevills (2004) reading in English is further complicated by its orthography-the spelling of words. In some languages, such as Spanish, one letter has one sound. In English one letter can represent several different sounds depending on its placement in the word.



## 2.9 The Reading Process

Reading is an interaction process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension. The text represents letters, words, sentences and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader uses knowledge, skills and strategies to determine what that meaning is (Heidi, 1998).

Psychologists tell us that although reading begins with our visual perception, it is our brain that interprets the shapes and patterns as letters and words (Nancy and Keith, 2009). According to Nancy and Keith (2009) the process of reading is not passive; words do not just jump from the page into our heads. Just like speaking and listening, we are actively involved in constructing meaning from these shapes. The models of reading (that is top-down approach and bottom-up approach) assist us examine how this happens.

According to Ruddell and Singer (1994), a reading model tries to depict how an individual perceives a word, processes a clause and comprehends a text. The top-down approach suggests that our understanding of text begins with the knowledge and experience we bring to reading. We use this knowledge to interpret the text in a way that is meaningful to us.

The bottom-up reading model, of which this study adopt, suggest that our understanding of written language (text) develops from learning to decode its rules when reading, the reader focus on the sounds of the alphabet and the smallest units, or phonemes, such as ou, ee, then words and then sentences. Textual features, including spelling, punctuation and grammar, play an important role in helping us to interpret text by providing clues to its meaning (Nancy and Keith, 2009: Pg.84-85).



## 2.10 Components of Reading

According to the National Reading Panel (USA, 2000), reading program for pupils at the basic level must focus on:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary and
- Comprehension

To be able to improve the pupils reading ability, I adopted these components of reading and gave particular attention to the phonics, phonemics awareness, vocabulary and the comprehension aspects of the components. According to the National Reading Panel (NRP-USA) phonemes are the smallest unit of sound in a word. For example the word 'fish' is made up of three sounds/ phonemes even though fish has four letters: /f/ /i/ and /sh/. In their view, (NRP-USA), phonemic awareness is the knowledge and manipulation of sounds in spoken words that is the pupils' ability to focus on and manipulate these sounds/phonemes in spoken words. The panel further explained that phonemic awareness is the knowledge that words are made up of combination of individual sounds. For example the word cat is made up of 3 sounds/phonemes /c/ /a/ and /t/. When these three sounds are combined, they make up the word cat. If a pupil knows that cat, car and carrot all have the same sounds at the beginning of the word, that pupil has phonemic awareness. That is, the pupil is aware that the /c/ sound/phoneme begins each of those words.



Phonemic awareness is more than just recognizing sounds (NRP-USA). It also includes the ability to hold on to those sounds, blend them successfully into words and then make them apart again. For example, in addition to the knowledge that the word cat has three separate sounds, the pupils should be able to blend these three sounds together to form the word ‘cat’ as well as separate the sounds within the word.

Teaching phonemics awareness to pupils significantly improves their reading development (National Reading Panel –USA). Phonic is one of the components of reading. It refers to the sounds of the letters of the alphabets in words. According to the NRP-USA, phonics is the relationship between a specific letter and its sound and the letter combinations and the sound they represents. When a pupil comes across an unknown word, with the knowledge of phonics, the pupil can try to read the word by focusing on the specific sound of each letter or combination of letters. For example, if a pupil does not recognize the word, “chant” the pupils might break the word apart into pieces such as /ch/ /a/ /n/ /t/ or /ch/ /ant/, assigning an appropriate sound to each separate letter or combination of letters. Phonics, according to the NRP-USA helps pupils develop proficiency in decoding, spelling and understanding words. The panel contends that failure to master phonics is the number one reason that pupils have difficulty learning to read.

Another important component of reading is vocabulary. Grabe (1991) describes vocabulary knowledge as knowing words and their meanings. It is the knowledge of words, their definitions and context. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2004), vocabulary refers to words in a particular language, books or branch of science. Vocabulary development is clearly connected to comprehension (National Reading Panel-USA). The panel further stated



that pupils need to hear, read, understand and use new vocabulary words in various contexts to build their comprehension levels.

Several studies that were done among native English speakers, English as a Second Language (E S L) and English as a Foreign Language speakers (E F L) identified vocabulary instruction as very critical to promoting English Language Learners (ELLs) reading comprehension (Drukar, 2003; Grabe, 1991; Fitzgerald, 1995, Coady, 1993, Rupley, Logan & Nichols, 1999, Stanovich, 1996) cited in Etsey and Ocran (2002 pg. 115).

According to Freeman & Freeman (2000) and Rupley et al (1999), research supports the pre-teaching of vocabulary before reading a text.

Another key component of reading is comprehension. It is the ability of a person to read and understand text. Young readers develop text comprehension through a variety of techniques including answering questions (quizzes) and summarization or retelling a story (NRP-USA).

The final of these components of reading is fluency. It is the ability to read with accuracy and with appropriate rate, expression and phrasing. The Panel sees it to be the ability to read as well as speak and make sense of the text without having to stop and decode each word. Research findings have shown that guided and repeated oral reading improves word recognition, reading fluency and comprehension in pupils (NRP-USA, 2000).

### **2.11 Causes of Pupils Inability to Read**

Children may struggle with reading for a variety of reasons, including limited experience with books, speech and hearing problems as well as poor phonic awareness (Lyon, 1997).



According to National Reading Panel (2000) failure to master phonics is the number one reason that children have difficulty learning to read. The panel is of the view that if a child learns to identify the relationship between the letters of the alphabet and their sounds the child will have an easier time identifying words leading to improved reading.

Children inability to blend sounds together to decode words and not being able to break spoken words into their basic sounds will delay or impede their success in learning how to read.

Given the important role that language abilities play in reading acquisition, some groups of children may be at a greater risk of developing learning difficulties in reading and spelling than others. Children with specific language impairment or communication disorders, for instance, often experience literacy problems (Bishop and Snowling 2004; Catts et al., 2002; Ricketts, 2011; cited in Susanne et al., 2014, pg.210).

According to Lyon (1997) children who have stimulating literacy experience from birth onward have an edge in vocabulary development, understanding the goals of reading and developing an awareness of print and literacy concepts. Conversely, children who are most at risk for reading failure enter KG and the Elementary grades without these experiences. Many poor readers have not consistently engaged in the language play that develops an awareness of sound structure and language patterns. They have limited exposure to bedtime and lab time reading.

Lyon explained that children raised in poverty, those with limited proficiency in English, those from homes where the parents reading levels and practice are low and those with speech, language and hearing handicaps are at increase risk of reading failure. However,



some children with robust oral language experience, average to above average intelligence and frequently early interactions with literacy activities also have difficulties learning to read.

According to Ding, Richardson and Schnell (2013), Klicpera and Gasteiger Kilicpera (1993), Scarborough and Parker (2003) and Stanovich (1986) difficulty in reading emerge at an early stage and affect early literacy development.

Difficulty with decoding is caused by having not acquired the phoneme-grapheme concept (how sounds correspond to letter patterns). One specific disability characterized by poor decoding is dyslexia, defined as brain-based type of learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read. These individuals typically read at levels significantly lower than expected despite having normal intelligence. It can be inherited in some families, and recent studies have identified a number of genes that may predispose an individual to developing dyslexia. Common characteristics among people with dyslexia are difficulty with spelling and phonological processing (the manipulation of sounds) (David 2017).

A study carried out by Vukovic, Lesaux and Siegel (2010), which examined the mathematical performance of students with reading disability found that students with dyslexia demonstrated the weakness mathematics performance due to their inability to read and comprehend mathematical problems.

**Short-term Memory weakness** has also been identified by scholars as casual factors that inhibit pupils reading ability. The scholars explained that as a person learns to read by decoding, the learner have to consciously think about each letter-pattern to sound relationship, store the sound for each letter pattern and then blend all those sounds into a





word. The learner then has to store that word and start the process again. Unfortunately pupils with weak short-term memory find this process very hard and laborious, sometimes to the point where learners of reading in English; despair of achieving progress (David, 2017).

David further stated that, **Auditory Processing Weakness (APW)** is also a number one cause of pupils inability to read. According to David (2017), Auditory Processing Weakness is an often overlooked cause of reading difficulties. It further stated that an estimated number of 5-10% of school-age children have some Auditory Processing Weakness (APW) and that this can significantly affect their ability to learn how to read. It explained that Auditory Processing Weakness (APW) is not an issue with hearing sound, but an issue of how the brain interprets the words that are heard. In the view of these scholars, the difficulties most often occur with spoken speech since the differences between sounds can be subtle and therefore more difficult for an individual with APW to detect. The study indicated that people with APW have difficulty distinguishing between similar parts of speech. As a result when a child with APW begins to read, they have difficulty learning the distinct sounds (phonemes) that are used to form words. Since such learners of reading in English often confuse similar sounds, it becomes very difficult for them to learn specific phoneme pronunciations. This causes great difficulty in learning how to decode the sounds that make up a word (David, 2017).

**Stress Sensitivity** is another cause of pupils inability to read.

Research has shown that stress sensitivity can make pupils lose interest in reading. According to Scholars when a person become stressed the body releases adrenalin and cortisol. These have a number of effects, but a critical one is shutting down the higher brain



function. When this happens, the person tends to simplify his or her reaction to things and also become immobile. Therefore, if a child tends to get stressed or frustrated when things do not go well, reading becomes hazardous. Inevitably there will be words that cannot be read. So the stress levels go up and chemicals are released. Those chemicals begin to shut down higher brain function and so reading becomes harder. This leads to more stress. The child then loses interest in the reading and refuses to continue (David, 2017).

Lack of well stock school and public libraries has also been identified as a factor that contributes immensely to pupils inability to read effectively. Many basic schools do not have libraries and the few that have are either not well stocked or are stocked with outdated books which content is not related to contemporary issues.

Gallo (2007) believes that books yield their best to pupils if they read them at the age at which each masterpiece can ideally be chewed and digested. Similarly, according to Deavers (2000) children who miss the opportunity of getting in touch with books in their early stages of life find it difficult to read effectively in their later years. The amount of time available for pupils to learn how to read also contributes significantly to pupils reading failure.

In 2003, a study in 37 countries by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) found that the most important factor for academic success was the amount of time pupils spent reading newspaper, books, magazines and websites (Susan, 2007).

Livingstone and Bovill (1999) contend that the amount of time available for reading (both in school and at home) is compromised by the availability of other competing media such as Television and the computer.



Palani (2012) in Owusu-Acheaw (2014) indicated that reading has lost its importance as both the old and the young are glued to the TV. Palani further explained that due to the influence of the mass media, people do not show much interest in reading books, magazines and journals. Many students prefer to watch movies and other shows on the TV, listen to audio-CDs, watching video CDs, among others (Issa et al., 2012). It is a fact that children spend hours trapped under derivative distractions such as TV, computers and associated technologies targeted to children. This makes it impossible for pupils to give enough time to do effective reading.

In 1999, Young People New Media found that in a national survey of 6 to 17 year olds, more households had TV than books. The unavailability of books and other reading materials as well as the inadequate time allocated for reading in basic schools and our homes will probably lead to generation that cannot read effectively.

**Teacher competence** and attitude is also a factor that can affect the child reading ability. Several studies, using different measures of teacher competence, mainly from the USA, but also Europe, indicate that teacher competence can have substantial effect on pupil achievement (Baumert et. al., 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond and Bransford, 2005) cited in Stefan et al., (2015).

According to Nye, Konstantopoulos and Hedges (2004) teacher competence can explain over 20% of the variance in pupils (reading) achievement. The teacher's pedagogical content knowledge can influence pupils reading ability.

Bell (1993) cited in Faidatu (2004) contend that poor teaching strategies can lead to reading difficulties among pupils. According to Bell pupils might go through all the activities that



will enable them to begin formal reading but the teachers teaching strategies, methods and techniques may cause inability to read.

Amlado (2015) in his article featured 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 observed that the way teachers in basic schools teach reading comprehension with their pupils in class do not promote reading. He further stated that, hardly do teachers teach reading as a major topic in class. He indicated that pupils depend solely on their English Comprehension Textbooks for reading; hence they hardly read novels, dramas or poems. In my view, this situation contributes immensely to pupils inability to read effectively.

The researcher has observed that in many of our public basic schools, the available reading materials including class readers are usually ignored due to the lackadaisical attitude of teachers towards teaching reading. This can be traced to the fact that teachers are more concerned about their student passing of examinations which makes them concentrate on teaching the content of examinable subjects and forego the teaching of reading. This practice negatively affects pupils reading ability as well as their performance in all the other examinable subjects.

**Weak socio-economic background** of pupils, physical abnormalities, mental imbalance, pupils unfamiliar with symbols or letters of the alphabet as well as teacher inability to help pupils to learn to read and the lack of interest in reading by pupils are all elements that impede pupils reading ability.

With regards to lack of interest in reading, Issa et al., (2012) indicated that the enthusiasm, associated with the urge to engage in reading practices voluntarily, pleasurably and extensively is most nearly absent among students/pupils in the schooling system today.



**Class size** can also be a cause to pupil inability to read, in a class where the pupils are over 50, it will be extremely difficult for the teacher to have effective teaching or supervision during reading lessons. It is even worse when more than two (2) pupils are using one book at the same time during reading lessons. In such a situation it becomes impossible for the teacher to assess the reading ability or the performance of each pupil in reading.

Poverty is also a serious issue that inhibits pupils reading ability. In most parts of the Western Africa, concerned parents are unable to afford to buy reading books and other learning materials/aids to their wards. Therefore pupils who find themselves in such unfortunate circumstance do not have ready access to age-appropriate reading materials to practice reading.

### **2.12 Effects of Pupils Inability to Read on Academic Performance**

Academic achievement means how much knowledge the individual has acquired from the school (Bshir and Mattoo, 2012.). Good reading habits determine the academic achievement of pupils to a greater extend. Reading makes way for a better understanding of one's own experiences and it can be an exiting voyage to self-discovery. Reading ability is best formed at a young impressionable age in school, but once formed it can last ones life time (Greene, 2001) cited Owusu-Acheau M. (2014). The ability of pupils to read, acts as a strong weapon for pupils to excel in life (Bashir and Mattoo, 2012).

There has been several studies conducted linking reading to academic success. The effect of reading ability on academic performance is especially clear in Shippen et al (2010). The study conducted in Alabama showed that none of the inmates' literacy levels were enough to



pass the General Education Development Test (an assessment taken to earn a certificate of high school equivalency) cited in Cimmiyotti B. (2013).

A study conducted by Vukovic, Lesaux and Siegel (2010) on the mathematical performance of students with reading challenges found that the reading disability group performed lower than the non-disabled group. This can be attributed to their inability to read and understand the demands of the questions.

Vilenius-Tuohimaa et al (2008) in Cimmiyotte (2013) indicated that the better a student reading comprehension skills the better the student performance (on mathematical word problems). They further explained that a reader with poor decoding skills struggles with the text itself and is not able to perform the tasks requiring logical reasoning strategies. It is therefore reasonable to say that students/pupils who struggle to decode text are going to perform poorly in all subject areas because they have more hindrances in comprehending text.

According to Palani (2012) in Owusu-Acheaw (2014) person's ability to read is important avenue of effective learning and that reading is interrelated with the total educational process and hence, educational successes requires successful reading ability.

Pupils inability to read is partly responsible for their poor performance in both internal and external examination. Perhaps, due to lack of good reading abilities among students academic performance with respect to their examination results has been dismal nowadays creating a great source of worry and concern for all stakeholders in the educational sector (Issa et al, 2012).



Reading appears to affect performance in all academy subjects as well as to impact vocational needs (Feagans 1983; & Hallaham et al., 1985) cited in Wanjiku (2015). Pupils inability to read have a substantial impact on their ability to master other subjects in school.

According to Ricket et al (1989), poor reading ability is a primary cause of school failure which leads to lowered self-esteem and serious emotional overlays. They further stated that pupils inability to read prevent them from achieving desired career goals and deny them the opportunity to read for pleasure and enjoyment.

Carmine et al (1997) also contend that reading difficulty is the principal cause of failure in school and that reading failure can lead to misbehavior, anxiety and lack of motivation for high academic achievement. Illiteracy can never be eradicated if reading is not enforced right from the early stage of our children.

Stanovich (1986) observed that readers who read early and successfully not only reap the advantage of early literacy but accumulate experiences with print that continue to differentiate and discriminate between good and poor readers throughout their academic careers.

Many students/pupils are not able to perform well in quizzes, tests and examinations because they are struggling to read and comprehend the test questions that they are being confronted with.

The absence of proficient reading skills is a considerable risk factor, associated not only with academic failure and school dropout but also with unemployment (Werner, 1993) in Houtveen et al (2012). Research shows that a broad range of graduates from universities



were unemployable as a result of their poor communicative skills which can be attributed to poor reading ability in basic schools (Amlado, 2015).

Despite the country's strategic position endowed with good resources and enhanced infrastructural facilities in its educational institutions as well as being blessed with writers and researchers such as Prof. Naana Jane Opoku Agyeman, the late Prof. Kofi Awunnor, Kofi Anyidoho, Ama Atta Aidu, Prof. Mike Oquaye, Prof. Florence Abena Dolphyne and many other renowned authors, academic performance in Ghana over the last decade has been below expectation.

Concerns have been raised about students inability to write, read and speak good English. West African Examination Council Officials and teachers of English have expressed their dissatisfaction about the kind of English students write (WAEC, 2008).

The falling standard of education in Ghana and Africa as a continent emanated from lack of effective reading, perhaps in public basic schools. Hardly do teachers teach reading as a major topic in class. Pupils depend solely on their comprehension text books for reading hence they hardly read novels and other literature. Research shows that our educational standard is declining as a result of lack of reading interest within the public basic schools pupils; which negative effects in tertiary institutions and job market are great worries to policy makers (Amlado, 2015).

Pupils inability to read have a substantial impact on their ability to master other subjects in school. According to Feagans (1983) reading affect performance in all academic subjects, learners with reading problems in English have problems in school performance in general (Njoroge, 2000).





Jordan et al (2002) agreed that reading ability is causal to academic performance because they found out in their study that reading disabilities negatively impact mathematics performance, while mathematics disability do not affect progress in reading. Learners with reading problems in English have problems in school performance in general (Njoroge, 2000; Wanjiku, 2015).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The researcher used action research in this study, since the study is to solve a particular classroom problem (i.e. poor reading abilities), the researcher see it to be in line with the main purpose of action research, that is solving a specific classroom or school problem or improve a practice. The goal here is to improve practice immediately within a classroom.

The choice of action research in this study did not only focus on new knowledge but also enabled the participant develop appropriate intervention strategies aimed at finding solutions to the identified problem.

It is important to state that action research is participative; it allowed the researcher and the other participant to be actively engaged in the research activity. This gave the participant opportunity to acquire a better understanding of his own practices.

The action research also helped the researcher acquaint himself with what really pertains or transpire in the teaching and learning process. Through action research, the class teacher was able to evaluate his teaching techniques as well as get a better understanding of the subject matter which eventually enable him adopt teaching methods that are appropriate to the level of the pupils concerned.

However, aside these benefits, this action research was time consuming, laborious, required a lot of justification or explanation for whatever the researcher did also the researcher did not have sufficient resources to cover a large respondents. As Asante and Evelyn (2015) put



it; “the library work for action research maybe more demanding” as compared to conventional research.

### **3.2 Population and Sampling Size**

The total population of the E.P. College of Education Primary School is 439. The Primary four “A” and “B”, of which the enrollment of Primary four (4) “A” is 55 and that of Primary four (B) is 57 pupils totaling 112 pupils.

However, the class under study is Primary four (4) “A” because the pupils the researcher initially interacted with which led to this study where in P4 “A”. Since it was not possible for every element of the target population in the research class to be assessed, a sample of thirty-five (35) pupils representing 63.6 percent of the target population was selected for the study. The sample size was chosen taken into account the cost involved and the time within which the study would be completed.

### **3.3 Sample Technique**

The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to select a sample size of thirty-five (35) pupils who have difficulty in reading. Since the purpose of this study is to help improve the reading ability of pupils, only pupils with reading difficulties were selected for the study. To achieve this, each pupil was given the opportunity to read the same passage aloud while the researcher observed and selected those with reading challenges. I was not able to use simple random sample because the outcome may include some or more able readers than those with reading challenges.



### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The study required the collection of both primary and secondary data to support the analysis, interpretations and conclusions. To achieve this, the researcher used observation, interviews and test.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

#### **3.5.1 Observation**

The researcher used unstructured observation. The reason being that unlike structured observation (using prepared checklist) this approach allowed the researcher the freedom to note down what he considered to be correct and relevant to the study (Asante and Bello, 2016).

I observed the class teacher's mode of lesson presentation, especially the methods and strategies use to teach reading. Particular attention was given to the use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs), how questions were distributed in the class and the pupils responds to questions. Special attention was also given to pupils participation in reading especially the slow learners. Word recognition, spelling and word pronunciation were also observed. I also observed the level of fluency of the pupils. At the end of the intervention pupils participation in English reading was observed to find out if and to what extent there has been a change.

#### **3.5.2 Interview**

With regard to the interview, the researcher sought permission from the head teacher to interact with him and the study class teacher with the help of interview guide to find out about the strategies or methods the teacher used to teach reading, whether there is enough



and accessible age-appropriate reading books and other reading materials available to the pupils and their impact on pupils reading abilities.

The pupils were also interviewed on whether they really have interest in reading, the number of books they read in a week, how much time they spend reading, their level of comprehension of the text they read and whether they have and use supplementary reading materials at home.

Through the interview, the researcher wanted to find out from the pupils whether they appreciate the methods and strategies their teachers adopt to teach reading. After the intervention, pupils were interviewed to find out the extent to which the pupils reading ability have improved.

The study class (P4) was chosen basically because it is the first point of transition between the Upper and Lower Primary and also it is the grade level where English Language is first used as the main medium of instruction. Also, as stated in the background of this study, the P4 pupils were the very pupils the researcher has a casual interaction with which led to the perceived problem which resulted in the researcher preliminary investigation into the issue. Time was also of essence the researcher did not have enough time and other resources to cover primary five (P5) and primary six (P6).

### **3.5.3 Test**

Pre-test was conducted to diagnose the extent of the pupils inability to read. Pupils were given short passage from the primary four English textbook to read within a specified time frame. This provided me with a sound base to select pupils who might need intervention in reading.



The researcher also used test when carrying out the intervention. This is to ensure effective monitoring of the progress of the intervention. The researcher intended to conduct a post-test after administering the intervention. This was done using the same passage as the one used in the pre-test to determine the effectiveness of the intervention, and to ascertain whether there has been a change or not.

### **3.6 Pre-Intervention**

At this stage the researcher intended to find out the nature of the pupils inability to read and to understand their problems or difficulties before coming out with the main intervention. To achieve this, the researcher did model reading and word spelling with the pupils and observed their difficulties in word recognition, pronunciation and spelling of words as well as sounds of alphabets. Each pupil was made to recite letters of the alphabet to ascertain whether they could produce the correct sounds of the letters of the alphabet.

### **3.7 Intervention**

#### **3.7.1 Introduction**

Research has shown that no single method has a complete solution to the reading problems of children. It is therefore necessary to combine the best practices in two or more methods. This gives the pupils a lot of room for innovation so as to make the child read successfully. According to Ghana Education Service/Teacher Education Division (2004 pg. 217) if we combine the teaching of ‘phonics’ and or syllabic methods with look and say (i.e basic sight words) learners will be able to read at ease. In view of this, the study employed a number of interventions.



The phonic and the syllabic methods helped pupils pronounce words without difficulty. A pronunciation problem that may arise with the use of phonics (i.e if pronunciation is done through sound of letters that forms the word) is the reason why I used the look and say method so that learners could see the words as a unit/whole. For instance, if pupils meet the word ‘movement’ in a sentence, they can apply phonic and or syllabic method to help them pronounce the word. But in a situation where they meet a word like ‘doubt or ‘cow or ‘thorough’, or ‘town’, or ‘through’ in a sentence the look and say method will help them out.

Earlier studies focused on the use of specific methods, but this study used a multi intervention approach or an integrated approach. By this approach the researcher used a combination of phonics, syllabic and look and say methods to improve the pupils reading abilities. However, other minor strategies such as Echo-Reading, Paired-Reading and Model Reading were also used.

To ensure the success of the intended interventions, the researcher first of all established a conducive and cordial teacher-pupil relationship which made the pupils feel free, comfortable and open up during the lessons. This was achieved through storytelling and narration of life experiences by both the researcher and pupils, playing games, interesting songs and picture description.

### **3.7.2 Main Intervention**

The main interventions used are the phonic method, the syllabic method and look and say method.



### 3.7.2.1 The Phonic Method

The phonic method involves the correct pronunciation of the names and sounds of the letters of the alphabets. According to Wendy and Lisbeth, (1990), phonic approach to reading is based on letters and sounds. They further stated that it basically has to do with teaching pupils letters of the alphabet, and the combination of letters, phonetically, so that the letter 'a' is pronounced /æ/, the letter 'b' is pronounced /b/, the letter 'c' is pronounced /k/, 'ph' is pronounced /f/ and so on.

The researcher achieved this by teaching pupils the letter names first, beginning with the capital letters followed by the small letters using appropriate TLMs such as letter cards and the alphabet charts. McCormick and Mason (1983) in Teale and Sulzby (1986 pg.95) emphasized that letter naming and consonant-sound identification is the single best predictor of achievement in beginning reading.

Pupils were engaged in groups to perform activities such as matching the capital letters with small letters. This was followed by teaching of letter sounds. These sounds were taught in context and not in isolation. According to Ghana Education Service/Teacher Education Division (2004 pg.217) if we teach a word or grammar item or sounds of letters in isolation they may not have any meaning and learners may forget what they were thought. The context in which the letters and sounds appear will make the pupils informed that the letters are combined to form words. The main aim is to help the pupils analyze the letter sounds of words and blend the sounds to read the words. I preferred the phonic method to other approaches because this intervention helps pupils to spell and pronounce words correctly as well as develop independent reading.





To achieve the objectives of using the phonic method as an intervention, the researcher adopted the following procedure to assist the pupils improve their reading abilities:

**Step 1:** I first of all taught pupils the names of the letters of the alphabet. I ensured that each pupil was able to identify and pronounce the name of each letter of the alphabet correctly.

To ensure that the pupils identify the letter of the alphabet without just reciting them, I employed the Matching Cards Techniques and the Alphabet Hopscotch strategy.

### **3.7.2.2 The Matching Card Technique:**

1. I displayed a mixture of upper and lower case letters
2. I told pupils to listen attentively as I pronounced the letter names.
3. Pupils were allowed to search for the same letter or the capital or small letter equivalent
4. Pupils performed this activity as they sang the song called A B C D, E F G H, I J K L, M N O P, Q R S T, U V W, X Y Z

As pupils performed this activity a number of times, it enabled them recognize the letters fast and also eliminate rote learning.

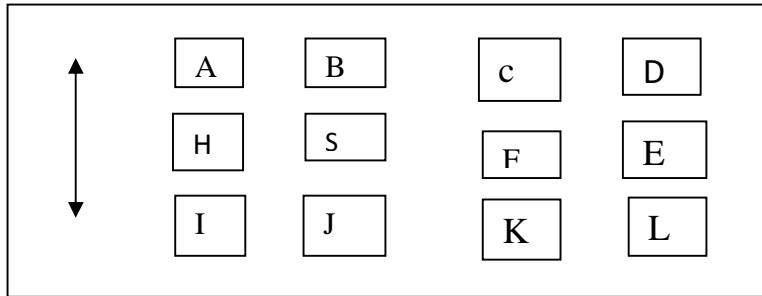


### 3.7.2.3 The Alphabet Hopscotch activity

The following steps were taken in this activity:

a. I drew the hopscotch chart on the floor of the classroom. Example:

**Table 3.1: Alphabet Hopscotch**



(GES/TED, 2004 pg. 211)

b. I assisted pupils to line up along the hopscotch chart.

c. I then mention the letters one at a time for pupils to hop on the letters mentioned in turns.

#### Step 2:

After I was successful with the letter names, the next step was to teach pupils the letter-sounds. For example /a/ /b/ /c/ /d/ /e/ /i/ ...../z/.

At this stage, I ensured constant practice by the pupils until each of the pupils produced the correct letter-sound.

#### Step 3:

I also assist pupils to match smaller letters with capitals letters.

#### Step 4:



The 4<sup>th</sup> step was to teach composite letter sound. The composite letters are two or three letters representing one sound. Example:

#### 3.7.2.4 Composite letters with only one sound value:

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Sound</u>	<u>Letter</u>	<u>Sound</u>
ck	As in: Pick	ph	as in: Phone, graph
le	As in: bottle	sh	as in wash, shut, short
ng	As in: sing	gb	as in Dagbani, Adangbe
ch	As in watch	qu	as in quick, sequence, queen,
quench			
wh	as in which	th	as in ; the, them, theme

#### 3.7.2.5 Composite letters that have two possible sound values

<u>Letter</u>	<u>Sound</u>
---------------	--------------

“ch”	as in chip, church, teach
------	---------------------------

“ch” can also represent the sound /k/ as in character, chorus, chord, technique Christmas, chlorine.

“gh” can represent /g /the sound at the beginning of a word as in ghetto, ghost, ghastly,

“gh” can represent the sound /f/ at the end of the word as in trough, tough, cough



“gh’ can also be ‘silent’ in a word eg: though, through, taught, draught (Joanne Kenworthy, 1987 pg. 103)

### **Step 5:**

The 5<sup>th</sup> step was to categorise the alphabet into vowels and consonants.

For example:

### **3.7.2.6 Vowels and Consonants**

#### **3.7.2.6.1 Vowels**

a, e, i, o, u

#### **3.7.2.6.2 Consonants**

d, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z

After introducing pupils to vowels and consonants, I then used each of the vowels-one- after the other to form a reasonable number of words with the pupils. I ensure that each of these words contained the particular vowel (sound). For example:

- /a/ as in Adam, Ant, act, want, hat, cat, an, bank
- /o/ as in boat, hot, pot, omo, note
- /e/ as in yes, empty, enter, engage, pet, tell, eye
- /i/ as in pit, in, bit, kit, fit, mine, indomi.
- /u/ as in put, suit



\*\*Both step 3 and step 5 deal with letter sounds, but in step 5 pupils produce the letter sound in context.

### 3.7.2.6.3 Vowel Letters and their Two Principal Sound Values

According to Joanne (1987 pg. 104) each of the single vowel letters, 'a, e, i, o and u' has two principal sound values which I practiced with the pupils in the following manner:

<u>Letter</u>	<u>sound 1</u>	<u>Sound 2</u>
a	/ei/ example hate, date bait, rate, table, same, cage	/a/example hat, cat, address, mat, alive, apple
e	/i/ example, Pete	/ɛ/ example pet, set, tent service, net, kettle, envy, pen
i	/ai/ example mine, time sign, bite, tight, sight, kite	/I/ example, fit, sin, single, kit
o dormitory	/ou/ example note, tone, soon, book phone, oven, motor, vomit, vocation	/ɔ/ example not, toy, joy, court, corn,
board		
u jump	/ju/ example, cute, queue, June, fuel funeral	/ʌ/ example, cut, nut, jungle, sun, fun, bug, dug, gun
function, run		

I also used word drills to ensure that pupils mastered and used the following rules for vowels: According to Joanne (1987, pg. 104) to define which of the two possible sounds a



letter (vowel) in a word stands for, we must look at the letters that follow the vowel letter in the word.

**Rule 1:**

If a single vowel letter is followed by a single consonant letter, then the vowel sound will be the one in **Sound 2** for example hop, bat, bit, nut, kid, kit, sit, set, bed, cat, red, sat, toy, run.

**Rule 2:**

If the single vowel letter is followed by two consonant letters, it will also have the sound in **Sound 2** for example, rest, past, must, cost, dust, film, farm, cross, half, bulb, lump, knock, address, dress.

**Rule 3:**

If the single vowel letter is followed by a consonant and the letter 'e' (at the end of the word) the single vowel letter will represent the sound in **Sound 1**. That is the sound of the letter 'e' will be silent and the sound of the single vowel letter will sound as its letter name when reciting the letters of the alphabet, that is a, b, c, d..... This means that only the sound of the first vowel is heard. Example hole, while, mute, cage, make, take, size, came, joke, June, like, hole, home.

**Step 6:**

I to repeated step 5 using consonants:

b/ as in bank, banker, bread, black, brush

/c/ as in car, cook, create, calendar, calculation, comb, crawl



/f/ as in fish, fetch, fan, fat, fast, effect

/g/ as in go, goat, engage

/h/ as in home, hand, hat, hen, heat

/j/ as in John, June, jump, jet, subject

/k/ as in Konkomba, Kwame , kettle

/l/ as in leg, look, laugh, balance, alarm

/m/ as in mother, market, template

/n/ as in name, night, neat, nice

/p/ as in pear, people, pant, paint, temple

/q/ as in quality, quench, cheque

/r/ as in rank, rake, read, run

/s/ as in some, story class

/t/ as in table, time, take, tank, television

/v/ as in van, vision, video, vehicle

/w/ as in woman, wound, work, watch

/x/ as in xylophone, exams, example

/y/ as in yes, yellow, yoke, yam



/z/ as in zoo, zone, lazy, crazy, zebra

**Step 7:**

**3.7.2.7 Alphabet Combination**

I introduced pupils to letter combination after the pupils were able to identify the letters of the alphabet by their names and also master the correct pronunciation of each of the alphabets. According to Paul and Jean (1965) cited in Iris and Sidney (1967 pg. 194) only after pupils have secured mastery of the sound-letter association should they be introduced to the graphic representation of vowels.

At this stage, I did not put emphasis on meaning but rather acceptable sound. To succeed in the letter combination activity I began with two (2) letter words example: fa, ba, so, at, sa, ca, go, my, be, he, ab, to, to, bu, me, bo, ta, ha, zo, zu, ma, no, on, up we, as, etc.

A lot of this letter combination were written on cardboards and chalkboard for pupils to practice. I then taught the two letter words that are real words separately, for example he, so, my, up etc. I continued with three letter words, proceed to four (4) letter words and then move to five (5) letter words in that order.

I used word drill at each stage to assist the pupils to pronounce a reasonable number of words at a time. According to Paul and Jean (1965) only as many words as the child can reasonably be expected to assimilate without confusion should be taught at any one period.





**Step 8:**

After forming words through letter combination with the pupils, and pronouncing those words correctly using word drills, the next step was to form short sentences using words that contained the letter-sound of the particular vowels or consonants stressing and emphasizing on the letter-sound of that particular vowel or consonant.

I started with the two (2) and three (3) letter words. Example:

1. Sam sat at the dam
2. The cat had the rat
3. I had jam in the can
4. Ben has a red pen

The next thing I did was to form sentences using four (4) letter words and above, for example:

1. The man works at the bank
2. Take your tank from the track
3. Birds need nest to rest
4. Fati and Fatawu can run fast
5. The fat man is fast
6. Pour the porridge in the pot
7. Sit on the seat for sometime

**Step 9:**

At this stage, I introduced pupils to the reading of short passages, for example:



One Thursday, my father and I visited the Post Office.

We went there to buy postal stamp.

We were introduced to the postal stamp sales personnel at the counter.

He sold two inland postal stamps to us which were affixed on our letter.

We then posted our letter and went home.

I will do word drill with the pupils using some of the words in the passage above.

**Step 10:**

At this stage, I adopted the modeling strategy to teach English words that do not follow sound patterns. The words were presented to pupils as they are for example: xylophone, wire, phoenix, iron, ion fire, file, mnemonic, gnostic, psychology, pneumonia, louvre, etc. Pupils were informed that these words do not follow the actual sound pattern.

**Step 11:**

**3.7.2. 8 The Value of ‘Silence Letters’**

At this stage, I created pupils awareness (through examples) that some letters of the alphabet are sometimes silent in the pronunciation of some words. For example in ‘knee’, ‘knowledge’, ‘knot’, ‘knife’, ‘knock’ and ‘kneel’, ‘k’ is not pronounced. Also in ‘gnostic’ and ‘gnaw’ the letter ‘g’ is not pronounced. In ‘mnemonic’ the ‘m’ is not pronounced. Similarly, the letter ‘p’ is not pronounce in the following words: ‘pneumonia’, ‘psychology’, ‘psalm’, ‘psychiatric’, ‘psychosis’.



I also assisted pupils to note that silent letters in the examples given occur before the letter 'n'. Pupils were made to remember that the consonant letter before the letter 'n' is silent at the beginning of a word.

**Step 12:**

**3.7.2.9 The Concept of the Magic/Silent 'e'**

I assisted pupils (through examples) to realize that some of the letters of the alphabet are sometimes used to signal something about another letter when they appear in certain positions in a word. They have no sound value themselves when they are functioning in this way. For example, the letter 'e' at the end of a word. Joanne (1987) explains that it tells the reader something about the value of the preceding vowel letter. This is called the 'silent e'.

Joanne cited the following examples which I used among other examples to explain the concept of the silent 'e' to the pupils.

**Example 1:**

In the word 'Pete' it signals that the preceding 'e' is pronounced as /i/ as in 'feet' (compare 'e' in 'pet'). Other examples of the silent 'e' are pole, same, some, pope, pipe, rope, hope, make, love.

I also assisted pupils to appreciate the fact that final 'e' is also used to signal some thing about a preceding consonant. For example in the word 'cage' it indicates that the 'g' has the value of /dz/ as in 'jet', not /g/ as in 'go'. In 'ice', 'substance', 'sentence' it signals that the letter 'c' is pronounced as /s/ (Joanne, 1987, pg. 95).



**Example 2**

I drew pupils attention (using examples on chalk board) to the fact that the magic ‘e’ make the letter ‘a’ take its other sound that is the alphabet sound and not the way it sound normally in words. I did practice the following examples with pupils: same, take, rake, cake, game, hate, gate, fate, tape, cage etc. that is consonant vowel, consonant vowel (cvcv).

I also assisted pupils to appreciate that the magic ‘e’ also influence the sound of other vowel(s). Example the magic ‘e’ makes the letter ‘i’ to be pronounced as it is done or pronounced in a, b, c,d,..... For example mine, dine, time, bite, ride, hide, sign, twine, wine, combine etc.

**Step 13:**

**3.7.2.10 Combination of Letters and how they Sound in Words**

At this stage I taught pupils the following combination of letters and how they sound in a word:

<u>Letter Combination</u>	<u>Sound</u>
ur	- sound like ‘air’ as in burn, church, turbine, nurse, turn further, fur, furniture, survey, survive, surface surprise, surgery.
ou/ow about	- sound like ‘aw’ as in cow, how, out, bow, our, house, count.



oi/oy joy,	-	sound like /ɔɪ/ as in soil, toil, foil, oil, coil, boil, coin,  toy.
al almost,	-	sound like /ɔl/ or /oʊl/ as in also, always, already,  alternative, all, alter, alright, although
fy	-	sound like 'fai' as in identify, rectify, simplify,
ir	-	sound like 'air' as in bird, girl, third, tired, wiring, their
ly	-	sound like 'li' as in socially, frequently, personally
ar and er	-	sound like 'aaa' as in far, car, bar, rather, father, trader,  weather, sister, founder, sender, November, speaker,  center, letter, helicopter, answer
ry	-	sound like 'ri' as in story history century, cemetery,  country, surgery, laundry
gy	-	sound like 'gi' as in technology, energy,
ture	-	sound like 'cha' as in vulture, denture, furniture, nature  culture, future, creature
oo	-	sound like 'uuu' as in food, book, room, soon, took,  cook, tool, wood, zoo.
tor protractor,	-	sound like 'tɔr'/ta as in calculator, terminator,  indicator
sion/tion	-	sound like 'shin' as in nation, tension, extension,  information, creation, television, junction, innovation, provision.
tive directive, selective,	-	sound like 'tiv' as in negative , positive,



		sensitive, alternative, native, effective
cial/tial	-	sound like 'shal' as in commercial, social, crucial credential, presidential, initial
my	-	sound like 'mi' as polygamy
cher	-	sound like 'cha' as in teacher, butcher,
un	-	sound like 'an' as in unemployment, unconscious
um	-	sound like 'am' as in umbrella.

**Step 14:**

**3.7.2.11 Consonant letters with Two Sound Values**

I brought to the notice of the pupils that the following consonant letters have two sound values as indicated by Joanne (1987 pg. 102).

<u>Letter</u>		<u>Sounds</u>
c	-	can be /k/ as in cat, tractor, car, carpenter, difficult, Calendar, corn, calabash Or /s/ as in cement, citizen, city, cemetery, center Census, centenary, cell, sentence, police, ice, silence, Slice, piece, peace

I used these and other examples to let pupils realize that the letter 'c' represents the sound /s/ when it is followed by 'i', 'e' or 'y' and represent the sound /k/ everywhere else.

<u>Letter</u>		<u>Sounds</u>
g	-	can be /g/ as in go, goat, game, gate, angle, google, luggage, jungle, language, engage, government, give, gain and glass



or /dz/as in cage, village, cottage, storage, engage courage, garage  
danger, engine, energy.

Again, I used these and other example to explain to the pupils that, the letter 'g' has the value of /dz/ when is followed by 'i', 'e' or 'y' and it represents /g/ everywhere else.

But I pointed out the following exceptions to pupils. That is the letter 'g' having the sound value of /dz/ when followed by 'i', 'e' or 'y' does not apply to the following words: 'give', 'girl', 'anger', 'eager', 'get', in these words the letter 'g' maintains its /g/ sound.

### **Step 15:**

At this stage, I did a lot of reading with the pupils applying the reading skills or techniques learnt.

### **3.8 Syllabic Method**

This method allows pupils to read by breaking the word into parts called syllables. For example the word '**destination**' can be broken into its syllabic parts as follows: **des-ti-na-tion**.

Eventhough, this approach may slow down reading, it enables pupils develop word-attack skills and also helps pupils to read words on their own.

With the syllabic approach, I used the following procedure:

1. I wrote the word(s) on chalkboard example reseat, random, practice, bamboo, mathematics, butterfly, crocodile cupboard, porcupine, periwinkle, temperature, principal, consideration, postman, aeroplane, polygamy, Bolgatanga, photograph, advertisement, institution.
2. I made each pupil try to pronounce the words one after the other



3. I then break the words into syllables example ma – the - ma – tics, mi – ni- mi –zes, po – ly – ga- my, af – ter - noon, com – mer – cial, cal –cu – la - tor, Bol –ga – tan- ga, post –man, pe- ri – win- kle, but – ter – fly, com – pu – ter, lap – top, ob – jec - tive, trans- por –ta- tion
4. I then read the syllables for pupils to hear.
5. I read the word by blending the syllables of the words.
6. I then practiced steps 3 to 5 with the pupils.

### **3.9 Look and Say Method**

This is the third and the last intervention I used to improve the reading ability of the pupils. The look and say method teaches the child to observe and pronounce the word as a whole without breaking it into smaller bits like letters. This method trains pupils to look at the graphic representation or form of print and then say or mention the whole word (Ghana Education Service/Teacher Education Division 2004, pg. 193).

The look and say technique also allows for the teaching of reading by associating pictures with words. When pictures are labeled with words or their names, children can easily make meaning out of printed words.

Eventhough, some pupils may sometimes find it difficult to read when the picture is not attached to the word, I still find this technique very useful for teaching reading because; it enables pupils develop sight vocabulary (i.e words that the pupil is familiar with and meet them often). Pupils can also deduce meaning from what they read with the help of the picture. It also enhances word identification skills since pupils are made to see the word several times in isolation and in context. This activity helps the pupils develop critical thinking that is the detail analysis of things.



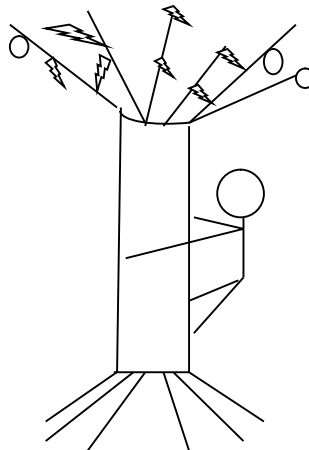


Using this method to teach reading, I performed the following activities with the pupils:

### 3.9.1 Associating a sentence with a picture

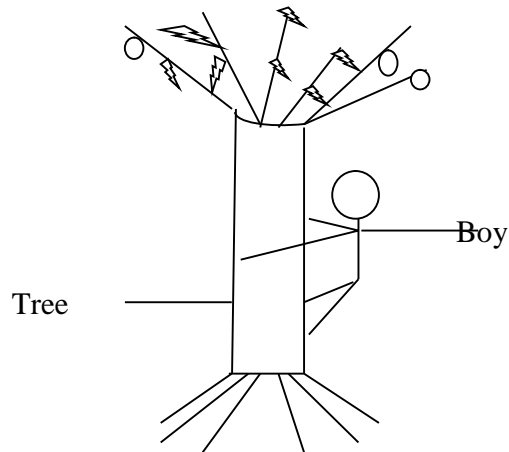
This activity enables the pupils to guess the sentence by looking at the picture. To carry out this activity effectively, the following steps were followed:

**Step 1:** I began by discussing with pupils a number of pictures that have no words attached to them. Pupils were assisted to look at these pictures and try to interpret or describe the picture. Example:

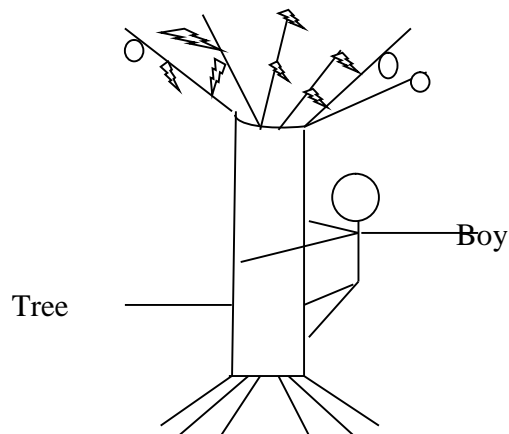


**Step 2:** I labeled the picture (s) with their names or with words (i.e picture with words).

Pupils were assisted to identify the words with the help of the picture. Example:



**Step 3:** At this stage, I labelled the picture with simple sentence. Pupils will be assisted to read these simple sentences in relation to the pictures they are attached to. Example:



**The boy is climbing the tree**

**Researcher:** What is the boy doing?

**Pupil:** The boy is climbing the tree.



**Researcher:** Now guide pupils to read the sentence that describe the picture by pointing to the words while reading the sentence.

### 3.9.2 Reading of Rebus

This activity enable pupils to replace pictures with words in a sentence. This activity was performed as follows:

**Step 1:** I first of all let pupils describe the picture (s) involve. Example a picture of a hunter and a rabbit.

**Step 2:** I let pupils identify the word card that bears the word “hunter” and another that bears the words ‘rabbit’.

I assisted pupils to match the correct word with the appropriate picture.

**Step 4:** Now I will wrote the sentence on chalkboard omitting the words ‘hunter’ and ‘rabbit’. Example: The ..... shot at the.....

**Step 5:** I then assist pupils to read the sentence.

**Step 6:** I asked pupils to tell which words are missing in the sentence.

**Step 7:** I made pupils point to the appropriate places in the sentence where each of these words should be written to make the sentence complete.

**Step 8:** Now I wrote the complete sentence on chalkboard without the pictures and assist pupils to read the sentence. For example: “the hunter shot at the rabbit”.

**Step 9:** I guided pupils to read the rebus or do such activities a number of times. This will help pupils develop word identification skills, hence improve their reading ability.

The last two activities I performed under the look and say method has to do with identifying particular words from group of words as well as in context.



With regards to the activity involving identifying particular word from group of words, I assisted the pupils using the following steps:

**Step 1:** I wrote the words on chalkboard

**Step 2:** I wrote the target word on the left

**Step 3:** I wrote four (4) other words of which one is the target word on the right of the target word with a yellow line separating the target word from the other four (4) words.

**Step 4:** I then asked pupils to identify the target words from among the group of words on the right, for example:

**Table 3.2: Identifying target words**

Laptop	Train	organize	Teacher	Laptop
	Bench	Card	Laptop	Transport
	River	Laptop	Mathematics	Computer
	Laptop	English	Duster	Television

### 3.9.3 Identifying Words in Context

The last activity is to assist pupils to identify words in context. The following procedure was used:

**Step 1:** I used some of the words in the activity above in context and then asked pupils to identify the words. For example: my teacher has a laptop

**Step 2:** I made pupils point to the target word (s) example laptop and teacher

**Step 3:** I wrote many of such sentences on chalkboard and assist pupils to identify or point to the target words (s) in turns or one after the other.



**Step 4:** I then assisted pupils to use the target words and any other words from the group of words to form sentences and read them to the class.

### 3.9.4 Minor Interventions

The other minor interventions or strategies the researcher adopted to enhance the literacy skills of the pupils as indicated in the introductory section of the intervention are Reading Aloud, Echo-Reading and Paired Reading (Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, 2014).

Pupils were put into groups with group leaders and each pupil had access to the reading material. The pupils were taken through prediction and vocabulary activities to enable them predict the content of the passage.

With regards to **Reading Aloud**, the class teacher did model reading by reading aloud a text or a sentence a number of times to the pupils. The pupils then listen and took part in pre- and post-reading discussions. According to Forrester (1964) in Harold (1965 pg. 320) the reading after teacher can be done in sections. Each section can be read in a whole paragraph, sentence by sentence or part of a sentence after the teacher. He further stated that the teacher can also do it row by row across the classroom, for example front row first sentence, second row next sentence and so on.

Pupils were also made to read sentences from substitution table, section by section for example:



**Table 3.3: Substitution Table**

I am	going to	listen to the radio	this evening
He is		play football	tomorrow
We are		buy some books	on Saturday

This will help the pupils develop vocabulary and for expressing themselves with some level of understanding. It will also enable pupils pronounce words correctly. Pupils were made to read smaller units at a time in order to enhance their understanding of the text. According to Harold (1965 pg 321) when teaching English as a second language, the problem of model reading is that if the reading text or paragraph is too long or lengthy, by the time the teacher has finished reading, the pupils have forgotten how they read the first sentence.

However, model reading provides for the active participation of everybody in the class and also individual mistakes can be noted and corrected.

**Paired Reading** allows the pupils to take turns in reading aloud in pairs; this strategy makes it possible for the more able reader to help the less able reader.

According to Susan (2007 pg.8) older or able readers can sometimes be moved by helping younger or less able students with reading difficulty. The older or able pupils can listen to the younger or the less able one read aloud to him or her or help with a book related activity. According to her the younger or less able one enjoys the individual attention and that the status of a reader-helper also work wonders for the self-esteem and confidence of the older or able pupils.



**The Echo-Reading** is a strategy to teach fluency. The researcher read a text or sentences a number of times and the pupils track the reading. The pupils then echoed or repeated, imitating the reader. The problem encountered was chorus reading.

The researcher also engaged the pupils in pre-reading and post-reading activities such as spelling of words, dictation, storytelling and retelling a story and conversation (for example by creating a market scene, singing, picture interpretation, question and answer exercise, discussion of titles and predictions) (Louisa et al., 2011). This enabled the researcher check for comprehension of the passage read. It also helped the pupils develop vocabulary for expressing themselves with some level of understanding. Again, it enabled the pupils pronounce words correctly.

The final intervention was to solicit parental support for the pupils to ensure effective learning. The researcher in collaboration with the class teacher discussed with some parents what their children usually learn in school and what follow up should be done at home. Parents were informed to help their children to read at home to accelerate their literacy.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter involves the presentation, analysis and discussion of research findings. The findings are presented in accordance with the research questions that were raised to guide the study.

#### 4.2 Presentation of Findings

##### 4.2.1 Reading and Comprehension Level of Pupils before and after the Intervention

**Research Question 1: What is the reading and comprehension level of pupils before and after the intervention?**

**(a) Table 4.1: Pupils reading and comprehension level before the intervention.**

Level	Number of pupils	Percent (%)
1. Those who could read primary 4 level passage fluently	0	0
2. Those who could read primary 4 level passage with difficulty	25	71.43
3. Those who could not read primary 4 level passage at all	10	28.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>





Results in Table 4.1 above indicate the observation made regarding the reading and comprehension level of pupils before the intervention. From the table, the first item was to find out those pupils who could read primary four (P4) level passage fluently. It was observed that none of the 35 pupils involved in the study could read the passage that was used to test their reading and comprehension level fluently. This figure represent (0%) of the sample, which means that not even one pupil could read fluently. Item two in table 4.1 indicates that twenty-five (25) pupils were able to read Primary four (P4) level passage but with difficulty. In percentage terms, it means that 71.43% of the sample could read but not without difficulty. The third item in the table shows that ten (10) pupils representing (28.57%) were unable to read the P4 level passage that was presented to them. The analysis of this finding shows that almost all the pupils were not able to read and comprehend the p4 level passage indicating that their reading and comprehension level was below the p4 grade. This finding agrees with the study done by Quirk and Beem, (2012). They also found out that over half of the students assessed had a significant gap between their reading fluency and comprehension.

A comprehension exercise was also developed using the same passage to assess the pupils level of understanding of the text they read. The researcher observed that only eleven (11) pupils representing (31.43%) were able to score the average mark of 5. The remaining 24 pupils representing (68.57%) scored marks below the average mark of 5.



**(b) Table 4.2: Pupils reading and comprehension level after the intervention**

<b>Level</b>	<b>Number of pupils</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
1. Those who could read p4 level passage fluently	22	62.9
2. Those who could read p4 level passage with difficulty	9	25.7
3. Those who could not read p4 level passage at all	4	11.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4.2 above illustrates the reading and comprehension levels of the pupils after the intervention. In this case the passage that was used to test the reading and comprehension level of the pupils before the intervention was the same passage the researcher used to conduct the post-intervention reading test to ascertain the reading and comprehension level of the pupils after the intervention. Results obtained from the post-intervention findings indicate that twenty-two (22) pupils, that is (62.9%) were able to read the P4 passage effectively as compared to the pre-intervention reading test where none of the pupils was able to read effectively as shown in table 4.1. This is an indication that there was an increase in the number of pupils who could read fluently. The finding also showed a reduction in the number of pupils who could not read the P4 level passage at all from ten (10) pupils to four (4) pupils, which is a reduction from (28.57%) to (11.4%).



The results also indicates that the number of pupils who could read with difficulty was reduced from 25 pupils, that is (71.43%) to nine (9) pupils representing (25.7%). A critical look at this finding revealed that the multi intervention approach or the integrated methods adopted in this study is an effective way of improving the reading ability of beginning readers.

Through the phonic method, pupils were able to pronounce the names and sounds of the letters of alphabet correctly. This made is easy for the pupils to combine two or more alphabet and pronounce the correct letter combination sounds, thus, making it quite simple for the researcher to introduce the syllabic methods and match easier for the pupils to breakdown words into syllabic forms and then blend the letters to pronounce the words correctly. Having learned the correct pronunciation and meaning of words, the pupils were able to associate these words with the pictures they were related to using the look and say methods. This is an indication that, the pupils ability to grasp skills in phonics made it easier for them to break words into syllabic forms and then blend the sounds to pronounce words correctly as well as associate words with pictures. This indicates that the multi-intervention methods used in this study complemented each other.



#### 4.2.2 Reasons that Account for Pupils Inability to Read

**Research Question 2: What reasons account for the pupils inability to read?**

**Table 4.3: Reasons that account for the pupils inability to read text in English.**

Reasons	Number of pupils		Total f(%)
	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	
1. Lack of exposure to reading materials	28 (80%)	7 (20%)	35 100%
2. Poor teaching Methods	16 (45.7%)	19 (54.3%)	35 100%
3. Poor knowledge of letter-sounds	30 (85.7%)	5 (14.3%)	35 (100%)

Table 4.3 seeks to find out the reasons that account for the pupils inability to read. With regards to the first item in the table, the intension was to find out whether or not these pupils have reading materials which they actually use to read both at home and in school. The results obtained from the interview with the pupils as shown in table 4.3 revealed that twenty-eight (28) pupils representing (80%) agreed that they did not have easy access to reading materials all the time. Only seven (7) pupils repressing (20%) disagreed. My further interaction with these seven (7) pupils revealed that even though they had some reading materials, they seldom read them.

The high parentage score (80%) representing pupils who agreed that they did not have access to reading materials all the time was actually confirmed by the p4 teacher's response during the interview and the researcher own observation during the study period. The



researcher noticed that apart from the fact that the English comprehension textbooks were inadequate (1 book for 3 pupils or 1:3), the books were also not readily available to the pupils. The pupils had access to them only during English reading period which is just twice in a week and each period last for thirty (30) minutes. In fact in all the cases observed not all the pupils had opportunity to read before it was time to change lessons. Even those who had opportunity to read were not given enough time to do effective reading. The researcher also found that the pupils were not allowed to send the English textbooks home for further reading. These were indications that the pupils actually had very little exposure to reading materials. Adequate literacy and non-literacy materials should be provided since reading is an important skill that not only helps the learners in the mastery of English but also enhances their performance in other subjects in the school curriculum (Carmine, Silbet & Kameenui, 1997) cited in Wanjiku (2015).

With regards to the second item in table 4.3 which is poor teaching methods, the interview item revealed that sixteen (16) pupils, representing (45.7%) agreed with the statement that they did not like the way their teacher teach reading in class. But nineteen (19) pupils, that is (54.3%) disagreed with that statement.

The third item was to find out pupils knowledge in letter-sounds. The results obtained indicates that only five (5) pupils representing (14.3%) disagreed that they could not produce the correct sounds of all the letters of the alphabet, while thirty (30) pupils, that is (85.7%) indicated that they had challenges and therefore agreed with the statement. This was confirmed by the outcome of the letter-sound familiarization exercise the researcher conducted. During the exercise the researcher observed that almost all the pupils had difficulty pronouncing the correct sounds of some of the letters of the alphabet, though they



had not much problem with the letter names. This observation is line with the findings of Houtveen and Van de Grift (2012). They cited that, learning to read is a complex task for beginners. They indicated that, an essential part of process for beginners involves learning the alphabetic system that is, letter-sound correspondence and how to apply this skill in their reading.

The analysis point to the fact that all the three items contributed immensely to the pupils inability to read. The continuous existence of these issues will mean that the literacy ability of the pupils will not improve hence, reading will continue to be a challenge to the pupils.

#### 4.2.3 Difficulties Pupils Encounter when Reading

**Research Question 3: What difficulties do pupils encounter when reading text in English?**

**Table 4:4: Difficulties pupils encounter when reading text in English.**

Difficulties	Number o-f Pupils	Percent (%)
1. Wrong pronunciation of words, skipping words and omitting letters	29	82.9
2. Ignoring punctuation marks and repeating of words	15	42.9
3. Substituting words and pointing finger at words when reading	6	17.14



During the reading lesson it was observed that all the pupils had mixed and varying reading difficulties. As indicated in table 4.4 above twenty-nine (29) pupils representing (82.9%) had difficulty pronouncing some of the words correctly, they also skipped words and omitted some letters. Fifteen (15) pupils were found ignoring punctuation marks and repeating words this figure represents (42.9%) of the sample.

It was observed that six (6) pupils representing (17.14%) were found substituting words that looked or sounded similar as well as pointing fingers at words when reading. This finding has revealed that almost all the pupils had difficulty in correct pronunciation of words as well as omitting of letter in words. This gives an indication that the pupils had poor knowledge in letter -sounds which is the basic tool in learning to read. Letter naming and letter- sounds identification is the single best predictor of achievement in the beginning of reading. McCormick and Mason (1983) as cited in Teale and Sulzby (1986, pg. 95). This poor knowledge of letter-sounds was actually confirmed by the class teacher as he indicated during the interview that he never taught the pupils letter-sounds since they entered P4 in the last two terms because it is assumed that they had learnt letter-sounds in the lower primary. The researcher also observed that these reading difficulties were as a result of inadequate time for reading lessons and insufficient comprehension exercises as well as lack of library lessons. This observation agrees with Runo (2010) recommendation that schools should have more library reading hours to expose pupils to new vocabulary, sentence structure and different registers.



#### 4.2.4 Effects of Phonic and Syllabic Instruction on Pupils Reading

**Research Question 4: What is the effect of phonic and syllabic instruction on pupils reading?**

**Table 4.5: Effects of phonic and syllabic instruction on pupils reading.**

Statement	Number of Pupils		Total f(%)
	Agree f(%)	Disagree f(%)	
1. Phonic and syllabic methods have helped improve my reading ability	23 (65.7%)	12 (34.3%)	35 (100%)
2. Phonic and syllabic instruction cannot help me to read	5 (14.3%)	30 (85.7%)	35 (100%)
3. I apply or use phonic and syllabic strategies to read	24 (68.6%)	11 (31.4%)	35 (100%)

The illustration in Table 4.5 represents the responses of pupils concerning the effects of phonic and syllabic instruction on the pupils reading. The statements in the table seek to find out how phonic and syllabic instruction had affected pupils reading ability. The first item in Table 4.5 showed that twenty-three (23) pupils representing (65.7%) agreed with the statement that phonic and syllabic methods helped improve their reading ability, while twelve (12) pupils who represent (34.3%) disagreed. With regards to item number two, the





intention was to find out whether phonic and syllabic methods could not help the pupils to read. Only five (5) pupils representing (14.3%) agreed with the statement that phonic and syllabic methods cannot help them to read and thirty (30) pupils which is (85.7%) disagreed. Item number three was to find out whether pupils apply phonic and syllabic strategies to read. The result indicated that twenty-four (24) pupils that is (68.6%) agreed with the statement that they applied phonic and syllabic strategy to read but eleven (11) pupils, representing (31.4%) disagreed with the statement. A critical look at this finding revealed that, even though 14.3% of the pupils agreed with the statement that phonic and syllabic methods cannot help them to read, it is still obvious from the table that the number and percentage score of pupils who agree that they apply phonic and syllabic strategy to read was almost the same as those who agreed that phonic and syllabic methods had improved their reading ability.

This implies that the improvement in the pupils reading ability was as a result of the application of phonic and syllabic knowledge in reading. This was an indication that phonic and syllabic instruction had positive effect on pupils reading ability. This further implies that the behaviorist approach to teaching reading as applied in this study has affected the pupils reading ability positively. This findings support the behaviorist belief that the best way to help non-readers learn to read is by directly and systematically teaching them phonetics or the ability to decode letters and sounds and them blend the sounds to form words.



#### 4.2.5 Proposed Strategies to Guide Teachers Teach English Reading Effectively

**Research Question 5: What other strategies or approaches can be proposed as a measure to guide teachers teach English reading effectively?**

The researcher had an interview with the study class (P4) teacher with regards to research Question five (5) and the following suggestions were made:

1. *Teachers should involve adequate and appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) in the teaching of English reading and ensure that these materials are effectively utilized. Example textbooks, pictures cardboards and other reading materials should be adequate and easily available to pupils both in school and at home.*
2. *Teachers should make the teaching of English reading Child Centered and Activity Base.*

**Researcher:** *Would you please explain what you mean by child centered and activity base?*

**Teacher:** *Child centered is where the child or learner is put at the centre of the learning process and the teacher becomes a facilitator or guides the learning process. The pupils are allowed to do the actual reading by themselves while the teacher guides them. With the activity base, it means the lesson should engage pupils in a number of activities and actions. Pupils should be made to dramatize the action in the passage being read, retell the story, assume the characters in the passage and perform role play. Pupils should be made to look at pictures in a story and predict what the story is about or predict the content of the story. This makes it easy for pupils to understand, remember and recall what they have learnt. It also enables*



*pupils develop vocabulary skills and makes learning participatory and lively as well as engages the child effectively in the learning process.*

3. *Teachers should ensure that pupils or beginning readers master letter – names and the correct pronunciation and use of letter-sounds.*

**Researcher:** *Could you please tell me what these letter names and letter-sounds are?*

**Teacher:** *Letter names refers to the names of the letters of the alphabet, that is a, b, c,d, ...z.*

*Letter-sounds refers to the sounds of the letters of the alphabet as they appear in words or how the letters of the alphabet sound in words for example /a/, /b/, /c/, /d/, /e/, /f/, /g/, /h/etc.*

4. *The fourth strategy I (the teacher) will recommend is the use of Paired –Reading, Echo- Reading and Role play.*

**Researcher:** *Please explain what you mean by Paired – Reading, Echo- Reading and Role play.*

**Teacher:** *Paired Reading – it is a reading strategy where learners are put in pairs to read in turns.*

*Echo – Reading – it is a strategy where an experience reader eg. A teacher reads a text a number of times as the pupils listen and then echoes or repeats the reader.*

*Role –play- it allows the pupils to assume certain roles of characters in a story and perform those roles.*



**Researcher:** *Please do you have a reason (s) for recommending the use of these strategies?*

**Teacher:** *Yes. Paired-Reading allows the more able readers to help the less able reader. Echo reading also helps pupils to read fluently and role- play aids pupils understanding and help them develop vocabulary.*

5. *The teacher also suggested that teachers should give enough comprehension exercise as well as allocate more time and adequate reading materials for reading lessons and library lesson. This suggestion by the teacher was in line with Carmine, Silbert & Kameenui, (1997) cited in Wanjiku (2015) that adequate literacy and non-literacy materials should be provided since reading is an important skill that not only helps the learners in the mastery of English but also enhances their performance in other subjects in the school curriculum.*



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to summarise the findings of the study, draw conclusions and make recommendations. The summary address the objectives of this study and the conclusions drawn are based on the research findings. A number of recommendations are also made in this chapter.

#### 5.2 Summary

This study was carried out to improve the English reading ability of p4 pupils of E.P. College of Education Primary School, Bimbilla. Action research was used in this study. A population of fifty-five (55) was involved. Out of this population, a sample of thirty-five (35) was involved in the study. The samples were mainly pupils. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the pupils. The main instruments used to collect data in this study were unstructured observation, interview and test. Reading comprehension test was conducted for pupils, they were also observed and interviewed. The teacher responsible for the class under this study was also interviewed by the researcher. It was found out that the reading and comprehension level of the pupils before the intervention was not good. None of the thirty-five (35) pupils could read the p 4 level passage fluently, this represent (0%), but 25 pupils, that is (71.43%) were able to read the p 4 level passage but with difficulties. Ten (10) pupils that is (28.57%) could not read the p 4 level passage at all.



However, after the intervention, it was established that twenty-two (22) pupils, that is (62.9%) were able to read the p4 level passage affectively. It was also found that the number of pupils who could read the p4 level passage with difficulties had reduced from 25 pupils to nine pupils. Also, the number of pupils who could not read at all had reduced from ten (10) pupils which is (28.57%) to four (4) pupils that is (11.4%). This was an indication that the intervention had positive impact on the reading and comprehension level of the pupils. Lack of exposure to reading materials alongside with poor knowledge of letter sounds were identified as the main issues that accounted for the pupils inability to read text in English.

The findings also established that pupils had difficulties in reading. Reading difficulties that were prominent during the observation had to do with wrong pronunciation of words, skipping words and omitting letters .The researcher also observed that pupils ignored punctuation marks and repeat words when reading.

Results from the findings also revealed that the activities in the intervention were helpful to the pupils as they were able to apply the techniques acquired to help them read.



### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it was noticed that pupils were not adequately exposed to reading materials. Activities that were conducted during the intervention (example alphabet hopscotch, substitution table and matching cards) made good use of reading materials such as alphabet cards, textbooks and pictures. During these activities pupils interest were aroused, they were happy and learning was effective as they interacted with the reading materials. This observation was in line with one of the recommendations made by the study class teacher during the interview. The teacher proposed that teachers should involve adequate and appropriate teaching and leading materials (TLMs) in the teaching of English reading. He added that teachers must ensure that these materials are effectively utilized by both pupils and teachers. This presupposes that pupils need to be exposed to reading materials so that they can have easy access to the reading materials and interact with them to improve their reading abilities. Therefore the lack of exposure to reading material can be a major hindrance to improving pupils reading ability. Lack of good knowledge of letter sounds was also another issue that contributed greatly to pupils inability to read. The findings also revealed that phonic and syllabic instruction had positive effect on pupils reading ability. Some reading difficulties were also discovered in the study. Prominent among them were omission of words and letters, substituting words, mispronouncing of words, ignoring punctuation marks and repeating of words. This situation was attributed to insufficient time for reading lessons, inadequate library time and comprehension exercises.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

The researcher made the following recommendations to make the teaching of English reading more effective and to improve on pupils reading abilities.



#### **5.4.1 Recommendation to the Study School**

The school authority in collaboration with parents (PTA) should initiate remedial lessons for struggling English readers to improve their reading abilities. The school should encourage parents through the school PTA to buy learning materials especially supplementary reading materials for their wards and supervise their usage.

The researcher also recommend for the school administration to allocate enough time for reading lessons on the school time table and ensure that teachers give adequate comprehension exercises, mark the exercises and correct errors on time. The school should regularly organize both inter and intra class reading competition for the pupils to unearth their reading talents. It is also recommended that the school should establish a well-stocked library facility and observe library lessons appropriately.

Teachers should embark on professional development through short courses, workshops, orientations and mentoring on effective teaching of English reading as well as learn the best practices of other educational institutions relating to the teaching of English reading.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendation to other Stakeholders**

Ghana Education Service (GES) should ensure that teachers at the basic school level are trained regularly to equip them with the requisite skills and effective methods of teaching English reading. The GES should devote more time and resources to the training programme through their budgetary allocation and donor partners. School authorities/teachers should identify children with reading problems early and provide them with appropriate early intervention





Ministry of Education (MOE) should ensure adequate supply of curriculum materials and equipment especially that of English. Charlotte (1967) proposed for the development of a well-organized programme incorporating child's literature directly in the elementary school reading curriculum.

MOE should develop deliberate policies that will enhance pupils reading abilities. For instance, the teaching of letter sounds should be made compulsory at the lower primary level. GES should encourage and expand the Reading/Spelling Bee programme to cover all basic schools in the country. In addition to this the GES should organize reading competition for schools at the circuit, district and national levels. To ensure the effectiveness, sustainability and success of this programme, the MOE should allocate adequate financial resources to support the programme.

Government should establish and encourage the patronage of mobile library in the country. In his view, Amlado (2015) agrees that the establishment of mobile libraries in the country appears to be one of the significant moves by policy makers to change most people's attitudes towards reading, and to ginger our young ones to read more and to promote extensive reading especially among pupils in public basic schools.

The GES should also ensure that private and public libraries are not only well-stocked with modern and relevant reading materials but also consider the establishment of e-libraries. This can be achieved in collaboration with donor partners.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) whose activities are related to education especially at the basic level should ensure adequate supply of reading materials and other resources as well as intensify monitoring and supervision.



#### **5.4.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

The Nanumba North District (NND) is quite large and has one hundred (100) public primary schools (NNDEO, 2017). This study covered only P4 pupils in one school in the district. Similar research should be done in other schools in the district and should not be limited to P4 only.

Further studies should also be carried out in the NND on the effects of pupils inability to read on their academic progression.



## REFERENCES

- Akubילו, F., Okorie, E.U., Onwuk, G., & Uloh-Bethels, A., (2015) Reading Readiness Deficiency in Children: Causes and ways of improvement. *Journal of Education and Practice*, V6 n24  
<http://eric.ed.gov/?q='''causes+pupils+inability+to+read&id=EJI...> Retrieved on June 16, 2016.
- Amlado, K. (2015), Poor Reading Habit Affects Quality of Education. Featured 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 20:44 CET. Accra: Modern Ghana Website.
- Allington, R. A. (1998), *Teaching Struggling Readers: Articles from the Reading Teacher*.
- Agyeman D.K., (2000). Review of Education Sector Analysis in Ghana: 1987-1988.  
[URL:http://www.adeanet.org/wgesa/en/doc/ghana/chapter5htm.\(2000\).](http://www.adeanet.org/wgesa/en/doc/ghana/chapter5htm.(2000).)
- Appleyard, N. & Appleyard K. (2009), *The Minimum Core for Language and Literacy: Knowledge, understanding and Personal Skills*. Learning Matters Ltd. 33 Southernhay East Exeter, UK.
- Asante, T. and Evelyn, K.Y (2015). *How to Conduct and Report Action Research Thesis*. Unpublished Thesis Writing Manual, Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies: Tamale.
- Asante, T. and Bello, M. (2016). *Conducting a Research Study One Step at a Time: Unpublished Guide for Students and Lecturers*, Faculty of Education, University for Development Studies: Tamale.
- Bashir, I. & Mattoo, N.H. (2012). A Study on Study Habits and Academic Performance Among Adolescents (14-19) years. *International Journal of Social Science Tomorrow*. Vol. 1.No.5, pp. 1-5.
- Baumert, J., Kunter, M., Blum, W., Brunner, M., Voss, T., Jordan, A., Tsai, Y.M. (2010). Teacher's mathematical knowledge, cognitive activation in the classroom, and pupil progress. *American Educational Research Journal*. 47, 133-180.  
doi:10.3102/0002831209345157.
- Beryl, L. and Marcelle, P. (2004) *English Handbook & Study Guide*. Heineman Educational Publishers, Jordan Hill, Oxford OX2 8EJ.



- Bishop, D. V. M and Snowling, M. J. (2004). "Developmental Dyslexia and Specific Language Impairment: Same or Different?" *Psychological Bulletin* 130 (6): 858-888 doi:10.1037/0033-2909.130.6.858.
- Burgoyne, K., Whiteley, H. E and Hutchinson, J. M. (2011). "The Development of Comprehension and Reading-related skills in Children Learning English as an Additional Language and their Monolingual, English-Speaking Peers." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 81(2), 344-35.
- Carleton, G. (1998). *The Politics of Reception. Critical Construction of Mikhail Zoshchenko*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.
- Carmine, B., Silbert, J. & Kameenui, E.J. (1997). *Direct instruction reading* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). New Jersey: Merrill/Prentice Hall.
- Castle, K. (2010), *Study Skills for your Masters in Teaching and Learning*. 33Southernhay East Exeter EX1 1NX: Learning Matters Ltd.
- Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Tomblin, J. B. and Zhang, X. (2002). "A Longitudinal Investigation of Reading Outcomes in Children with Language Impairments". *Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research* 45:1142-1157. doi:10.1044/1092-4388 (2002/093).
- Charlotte, S.H. (1967), *Planning the Literature Program for the Elementary School*. In I.M. Tiedt and S.W. Tiedt (eds). *Reading on Contemporary English in the Elementary School*. New Jersey PRENTICE-HALL Inc. Englewood Cliffs, P.205-213.
- Cimmiyotti, C. B., (2013), *Impact of Reading Ability on Academic performance at the Primary Level*. Master's Thesis and Capstone Projects. Paper 127.
- Coady, J. (1993). *Research on ESL/EFL. Vocabulary acquisition: Putting it in context*. In T. Huckin, M. Haynes, & J. Coady (eds). *Second language reading and vocabulary learning* (pg. 3-23). New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Teacher quality and student achievement: A review of state policy evidence*. *Educational Policy Analysis Archives*. 8(1). 1-44. Doi:10.1016/j.econedurev.2010.12.010.



- Darling-Hammond, L. and Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing teachers for a changing world: what teachers should learn and be able to do*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- David, M. (2017). *8 Causes of reading Difficulties-Helping Every Child to Read*. 29 Beaumont St, Oxford, OX1 2NP, UK.
- Deavers, R., (2000), *The Effects of Instruction on Early Non-word reading Strategies*. *Journal of Research in Reading*. No. 23, pp.267-286.
- Diane, H. L. (2001). *What is reading?* WETA, UK.
- Ding, C. L. Richardson, and Schnell, T. (2013). "A Development Perspective on Word Literacy from Kindergarten through the Secondary Grade." *Journal of Educational Research* 106 (2): 132- 145. Doi: 10. 1080/00220671.2012 667009.
- Drukar, M.J. (2003). *What Reading Teachers should know about ESL Learners*. *The Reading Teacher*. 5, 22-29.
- Durell, D.D. (1956) *Improving Reading Institution*, New York: Harcourt Bruce and World Inc. USA.
- Durkin, D. (2004) *Teaching Them to Read: 6<sup>th</sup>ed* Boston. M.A: Allyn and Bacon.
- Education Quality for All. NALAP Social Marketing Formative Research report. Accra, Ghana (2008)
- Elliot, J. (1991), *Action Research for Educational Change*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Etsey, K., Ocran, E. (2002), *English Methodology*. Cape Coast: CCEUCC.
- Ehri; L.C., Nunes, S. R., Stahl, S.A and Willows, D. M. (2001) "Systematic Phonics Instruction Helps Students learn to Read: Evidence from the National Reading Panel's Meta-analysis." *Review of Educational Research* 71 (3), 393-447.
- Faidatu, M. (2014). *Improving upon the Poor Reading ability of Class Three (3) Pupils*. Unpublished 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Project Work, IEDE, University of Education: Winneba. Pg. 7.



- Farr, B. (2001), A Proposal for Teaching Spelling (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) Hong Kong: London Press. Ltd.
- Feagan L. (1983). A current revenue of learning disabilities. *Journal of pediatric*, 5, 487-493.
- Fitzgerald, J. (1995). English-as-a second language learners' Cognitive Reading Process. A Review of Research in the United States. 65 (2)145-190.
- Forrester, J. (1964). Teaching English to Large Classes. In B. Harold (eds). *Teaching English as a Second Language*. McGraw-Hill, Inc. USA.
- Freeman, D. E. and Freeman, Y. S. (2000). *Teaching Reading in Multilingual classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ferguson, R. (2001). Closing the Achievement Gap; What Schools can do? A lecture delivered At New York University's Steinhardt school of Education, New York USA.
- Gallo, D. (2007) Reading Interests and Habits of Connecticut Students in Grades Four Through Twelve. *The Reading Matrix*. Vol. 2, Pg. 1-20
- Gates (1947), *Improving Reading Instruction*, New York: Harcourt Bruce and World Inc. USA.
- Ghana Education Service (2003). *Handbook on the teaching of English Language in Primary Schools*.
- Ghana Education Service/Teacher Education Division (2004), *Methods of Teaching English for UTDBE Programme*, Accra- Ghana.
- Grabe, W. (1991). Current development in second language reading research. *TESOL Quarterly*, 25(3), 375-406.
- Grabe, W. (2008), *Reading in a Second Language. Moving from Theory to Practice*. Cambridge University Press. Online Publication- Date: August, 2012- Retrieved by me- 03/03/16. Chapter DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139150484.004> Ebooks.Cambridge.org/chapter.jsf?bid=CBO781139150484&cid...
- Greene, B. (2001) "Testing Reading Comprehension of Theoretical Discourse with Close". *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24 (1) pg. 32-98.



- Guthrie, J. T., Benneth, L. and McGough, K. (2007). *Concept-oriented Reading Instruction: An Integrated Curriculum to Develop Motivations and Strategies for Reading*.
- Hallaham, D.P., Kauffman, J.M., & Lioyd, J.W. (1985). *Introduction to learning disabilities* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Hama, J. (1998). The role of professional development of teachers as a factor in educational assessment of pupils. *The Oguaa Educator*, 12 (1), 23-45
- Harrington, P. E. (2001). Attracting new teachers requires changing old rules. *The College Board Review*. 111 (1), 1-10.
- Hatcher, P.J., Hulme, C. and Ellis, A.W. (1994). "Ameliorating Early Reading Failure by Integrating the Teaching of Reading and Phonological Skills: The Phonological Linkage Hypothesis". *Child Development* 65:41-57. doi:10.2307/1131364.
- Hebert, E. H. & Raphael, T.E. (1996), *Psychological Perspectives on Literacy and Extensions to Educational Practice* . In D.C. Berliner & R.C. Calfee (Eds).
- Heidi, B. (1998). "Reading in the beginning and intermediate college foreign language Class". In Grace Stovall Burkart (eds). *Modules for the professional preparation of teaching assistants in foreign languages*. Washington, D.C: Centre for Applied Linguistics.
- Houtveen, T. & Van de Grift, W. (2012), *Improving Reading Achievements of Struggling Learners, School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 23:1, 71-93, DOI: [10.1080/09243453.2011.600534](https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2011.600534)
- Institute for Educational Development and Extension (2007), *Introduction to Research Methods in Education* BEC 158 UEW Benchmark Publishers, Kumasi.
- Institute for Educational Development and Extension (2011), *Principles and Practice of English Language Methods and Assessments*, UEW.
- Issa, A.O., Aliyu, M.B., Akangbe, R.B. & Adedeji, A.F. (2012). Reading Interest and Habits of the Federal Polytechnic Students. *International Journal of Learning & Development*. Vol.2, No.1, pp. 470-486.



- Iris, M. T. and Sidney, W. T. (1967). *Readings on Contemporary English in the Elementary School*. PRENTICE-HALL, Inc., Engliwood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Janacek, P. (2004). *Literarni brack. Operace vyloucení, operace nahrazení, 1938-1951*. Brno: Host.
- Johansson, S., Myrberg, E., & Rosen, M. (2015), Formal Teacher Competence and its Effect on Pupil Reading Achievement, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 59:5, 564-582, Doi: [1080/00313831.2014.965787](https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2014.965787)
- Johnson, W. A. (2002). "Reading Cultures and Education". In Patrikis P.C. (eds). *Reading between the Lines, New Perspectives on Foreign Language Literacies*. New Haven: Yale Universities Press.
- Jordan, C., Kaplan, D., & Hanich, L. (2002). Achievement growth in children with learning difficulties in Mathematics: Findings of a two-year longitudinal study. *Journal of educational psychology*, 94 (3), 586-597.
- Kenworthy, J. (1987), *Teaching English Pronunciation*. England, Longman Group UK Limited.
- Klicpera, C. and Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (1993). *Reading and Writing-Development and Difficulties: the Vienna Longitudinal Studies on Development Progress and Causes of Reading and Writing Difficulties in the Compulsory Education*.
- Leland J. (1961) *Give Children Literature*. In I. M. Tiedt and S.W. Tiedt (eds). *Reading on Contemporary English in the Elementary School*. New Jersey PRENTICE-HALL Inc. Englewood Cliffs, P.221-222.
- Lerner, J. (2006), *Learning Disabilities and Related Disorder: Characteristics and Teaching Strategies (10<sup>th</sup> Ed.)* Houghto Mifflin.
- Livingstone, S., and Bovill, M. (1999). *Young people, new media. Report of the research Project: Children, young people & the changing media environment*. London: LSE.
- Louisa, A.K., Sakyiama-Antiri, V.E., Ankomah-Appiah, K.A., and Stella, A.K., (2011). *Principles and Practices of English Language Methods and Assessment*, Institute of Educational Development and Extension, University of Education, Winneba.





Lyon, G. R. (1997). Why Some Children Have Difficulties Learning to Read. Report on Learning Disabilities Research, Congressional testimony.

McCormick, E. C and Mason, J. M. (1983), Intervention Procedures for Increasing Preschool Children's Interest in and Knowledge about Reading. In H. Teale, and E. Sulzby (eds). Emergent Literacy Writing and Reading. USA Ablex Publishing Cooperation. New Jersey 07648.

Ministry of Education., Ghana/Ghana Education Service (2014). An Integrated Approach to Literacy.

Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service (2014). An Integrated Approach to Literacy Primary Teacher's Guide 3.

Nancy, A. and Keith, A. (2009). The Minimum Core for Language and Literacy: Knowledge, Understanding and Personal Skills. 33 Southernhay East Exeter EX1 1NX: Learning Matters Ltd.

Nanumba North District Education Office (2017), Bimbilla.

Naomi, D., Shirley, G., and Anne, M. (2004). Reading for Pleasure? A summary of the findings from a survey of the reading habits of year 5 pupils, New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship, 169-188.

National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) Baseline Assessment (2009)

“National Reading Panel (NRP)-Summary Reports (2000)” National Reading Panel (NRP) Publications and Materials.

“National Reading Panel (NRP)-Reports of the subgroups”. National Reading Panel, 2000 (NRP)- Publications and Materials.

Njoroge, C.W. (2000). Factors affecting availability, acquisition and utilization of resources in the teaching of English in selected Kenyan Secondary Schools. A Masters research thesis. Kenyatta University.

Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L. V. (2004). How large are teacher effects? Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26, 237-257.

Okyere (2006), Golden English for Senior High School.



- Opoku-Agyeman, N., J. (1998). *A Handbook for Writing Skills*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press.
- Owusu-Acheaw, M. (2014). *Reading Habits Among Students and its Effect on Academic Performance*. Digital Commons, @University of Nebraska- Lincoln.
- Palani, K. K. (2012). Promising Reading Habits and Creating Literate Society. *International Reference Research Journal* Vol. 111 Issue 2(1) pg. 91.
- Paul, R.H. and Jean, S. H. (1965). *The Teaching of Spelling*. In I. M. Tiedt and S. W. Tiedt (eds). *Reading on Contemporary English in the Elementary School*. New Jersey, PRENTICE- HALL Inc. Engliwood Cliffs, P. 221-222.
- Potter, C. (2007). “Developments in UK Early Years Policy and Practice. Can They Improve Outcomes for Disadvantaged Children?” *Journal of Early Years Education* 15(2): 171 180.doi:10.1080/09669760701289052.
- Ricket, M.A., List, L.K., & Lerner, J.W. (1989). *Reading Problems. Assessment and Teaching Strategies*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Ricketts, J. (2011) “Research Review: Reading Comprehension in Developmental Disorders of Language and Communication”. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry* 52 (11): 1111-1123 dio:10.1111/j, 1469-7610.2011.02438.x.
- Reutzel, D. Ray, Robert, B, & Cooter Jnr. (2000) *Teaching Children to Read: Putting the Pieces Together: 3<sup>rd</sup>ed*. New Jersey: Von Hoffman Press.
- Roar, L. (2014). *Incompatible Reading Cultures: Czech Common Readers and the Soviet Mass Reader Concept in the Early 1950s*, *Scando-Slavica*, 60:1,108-127, DOI: [10.1080/00806765.2014.910004](https://doi.org/10.1080/00806765.2014.910004).
- Rose, J. (2006). *Independent Review of the Teaching of Early Reading: Final Report*, London: Department for Education and Skills.
- Ruddell, R., Ruddell, M. and Singer, H. (1994). *Theoretical models and processes of reading*. Newark DE: International Reading Association.



- Rupley, H. W., Logan, J. W. and Nichols, D. W. (1999). Vocabulary instruction in a balanced reading program. *The reading Teacher* 52(4), 336-346.
- Runo, M., N. (2010). Identification of reading disabilities & teacher-oriented challenges in teaching reading to standard five learners in Nyeri and Nairobi Districts. A Ph.D Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Scarborough, H. S. and Parker, J. L. (2003). "Matthew Effects in Children with Learning Disabilities: Development of Reading, IQ and Psychosocial Problems from Grade 2 to Grade 8" *Annals of Dyslexia* 53: 47-71. doi: 10.1007/s11881-003-0004-6.
- Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming dyslexia: A new and complete science- based programme for reading problems at any level*. New York: knopf.
- Shippen, M., Houchins, D., Crites, E., Derzis, N., and Patterson, D. (2010). An Examination of the Basic reading skills of incarcerated males. *Adult Learning*, 21(3-4), 9.
- Smith, Goldman and Meredith (1976), *Understanding Reading*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, New York: London. Press Ltd.
- Smith, F. (1978). *Reading*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S. and Griffins, P. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Stanovich, K. E. (1986). "Matthew Effects in Reading: Some Consequences of Individual Differences in the Acquisition of Literacy". *Reading Research Quarterly* 21:36-407. doi:10.1598/RRQ, 21.4.1.
- Stefan, J., Eva, M. & Monica, R. (2015). Formal Teacher Competence and its Effect on Pupils Reading Achievement, *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 59:5,564-582, DOI:[10.1080/00313831.2014.965787](https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2014.965787).
- Susanne, S. Seifert, S., & Gasteiger-Klicpera, B. (2014), *Improving Reading in Children with German as a First or Second Language*. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 22:2, 210-222. DOI: [10.1080/09669760.2014.909308](https://doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2014.909308) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09669760.2014.909308>. Retrieved: 26<sup>th</sup> September, 2015.
- Susan, E. (2007), *Encouraging Reading*. London, The Tower Building 11 York Road SE17NX.



Teacher Education Division/Ghana Education Service (2004), Methods of Teaching English for UTDTBE Programme.

U.S Department of Education (1-877-LED-PUBS).Free publications.

Vukovic, R.K., Lesaux, N.K. and Siegel, L.S (2010). The Mathematics Skills of Children with Reading Difficulties. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 20 (6), 639-643.  
DOI: 10.1016/j.lindif.2010.08.004

Wendy, A.S. and Lisbeth, H.Y. (1990). *Teaching English to Children*. Longman Inc., New York, USA.

Werner, E. (1993). Risk, Resilience and Recovery. Perspectives from the Kauai longitudinal study. *Development and Psychopathology*. 5, 503-515.

West African Examination Council, (2008). Chief Examiners Report Ghana.

Wolfe, P., & Nevills P. (2004) *Building the Reading Brain*. Prek-3 Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Wanjiku K., (2015), Effects of Reading Difficulties on Academic Performance among Form 3 Students in Public Secondary Schools. A Research Thesis. Kenyatta University



**APPENDICES**

**APPENDIX 'A'**

**INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

**APPENDIX 'B'**

**Interview with the Study Class Teacher.**

Q: Please what is the class size of P4 'A'?

A: 58 Pupils

Q: How many P4 English text books do you have?

A: 27 text books for both P4 A and P4 B

Q: In your view, are the English text books enough?

a) Yes                      b) No

Q: Please do you carryout reading lessons with you class pupils?

a) Yes                      b) No

Q: If yours answer is yes, how do you teach reading in class?

A: The P4 English textbooks are not enough, the ratio is usually three (3) pupils to 1 book (3:1). With this arrangement, not all the pupils have access to the reading material and pupils participation in reading may not be effective. Pairing two (2) pupils to a book will also mean that some of the pupils will still be left without books. To create equal



opportunity for all the pupils to have access to the reading text, I usually write the passage on chalkboard and assist pupils to read in turns.

Q: Please have you ever prepared lesson notes on letter-sounds and actually teach your pupils since they entered P4?

A: No

Q.: Can you please tell me why you have not taught them letter-sounds?

A: I assumed that they (the pupils) would have learnt it in lower primary

Q: Please do you think mastery of letter- sounds can help improve beginning readers ability to read?

A: Oh yes. It is the basic or the first thing they should know if not they cannot read.

Q: Please during reading comprehension lessons do you notice any reading difficulty in the pupils?

A: Yes

Q: Please tell me the common reading difficulties you found among you pupils.

A: What I can remember is that they usually do not observe punctuation marks, they mispronounce words and sometimes skip words and omit letters. They also have problem with word recognition.

Q: Please is there library in your school?

A: Yes



Q: Is the library well-stocked with relevant books

A: No

Q: How often do your pupils go to the library to read?

A: Not always

Q: Please do you have library time on your school timetable?

A: Yes

Q: Please do the pupils go to the library to read when it is library time?

A: Sometimes

Q: Do your pupils have access to the primary four (4) English textbooks all the time?

A: No

Q: Please may I know if you allow the pupils to send the English textbooks home for further reading?

A: No

**Is there any reason(s) why they are not allowed to send the books home?**

Oh yes, some pupils change school and do not return the books, others destroy the books, some also misplace or steal the books from their colleagues

Q: Please you have been following my presentation, do you think the strategies I used to teach reading can help improve the pupils reading ability?



A: Oh yes, it is just that they need more of such lessons.

Q: Please will you consider using it to teach reading?

A: Oh why not?

Q.: Please what other strategies /approach will you propose or recommend for teachers to use to teach English reading effectively?

A:

1. *Teachers should involve adequate and appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) in the teaching of English reading and ensure that these materials are effectively utilized. Example textbooks, pictures cardboards and other reading materials should be adequate and easily available to pupils both in school and at home*
2. *Teachers should make the teaching of English reading Child Centered and Activity Base.*
3. *Teachers should ensure that pupils or beginning readers master letter – names and the correct pronunciation and use of letter-sounds.*
4. *The fourth strategy I (the teacher) will recommend is the use of Paired –Reading, Echo- Reading and Role play.*
5. *Teachers should give enough comprehension exercise as well as allocate more time and adequate reading materials for reading lessons and library lesson (verbatim response from teacher). This suggestion by the teacher was in line with Carmine, Silbert & Kameenui, (1997) cited in Wanjiku (2015) that adequate literacy and non-literacy materials should be*





provided since reading is an important skill that not only helps the learners in the mastery of English but also enhances their performance in other subjects in the school curriculum.





## APPENDIX 'C'

### Interview with the Pupils

Please state whether you agree or disagree with the following statements

- 1) I do not have book(s) to read all the time
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 2) I sometime get books (s) to read when I am in school
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 3) I sometimes send the P4 English text book home and read
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 4) I usually go to the school library to read
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 5) I do not like the way my teacher teach English reading in class,
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 6) I cannot produce the correct sounds of all the letters of the alphabets.
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 7) Phonic, syllabic and look and say methods have helped improve my reading ability
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 8) Phonic, syllabic and look and say strategies cannot help me to read.
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree
- 9) I apply or use phonic, syllabic and look and say strategies to read. .
  - a) Agree
  - b) Disagree



**APPENDIX 'D'**

**Reading Comprehension Test 1**

**Use the words below to fill in the gaps.**

Name of students.....

One of the man's greatest enemies is fire. Fire outbreaks takes place from time to time in homes, at work places and in the .....

At home,.....or gas stoves can easily cause fires. Burning charcoal, wood-fires in the hearth, candle or lantern....., match flames and electricity can also easily cause fires. Again fires can easily start when petrol, kerosene and other oils get into.....with fire.

In order to..... fire outbreaks in our homes, we must very careful when cooking or ironing. We should also handle electric lights and lantern.....We can face the danger of burning ourselves to ..... or receiving serious burns.

To prevent fires in our homes we must obey the following rules:

1. Keep anything that can burn ..... from fires
2. Do not leave live electric wires expose
3. .... all burning wood and charcoal fires
4. Switch off all electric gadgets when they are not in use

**Missing words in the passage:**

Quench, carefully, death, prevent, flames, electric, away, fire, bush, contact.

