

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**POOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING AMONG BASIC FIVE PUPILS OF
KUKURANTUMI ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



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**POOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE READING AMONG BASIC FIVE PUPILS OF
KUKURANTUMI ISLAMIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, FACULTY
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Gloria Anom, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole; for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

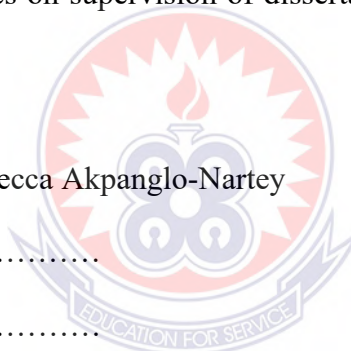
Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Mrs. Rebecca Akpanglo-Nartey

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DATE:



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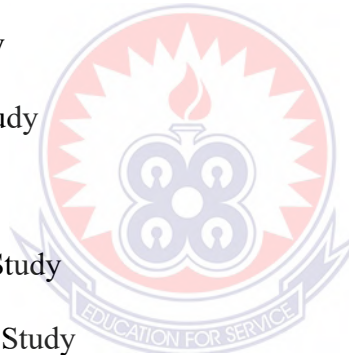
DEDICATION

To my children, Kwaku Antwi Agyena, Kofi Darko Agyena and Adepa Opokua Agyena



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate poor reading among Basic Five Pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. Action research design was employed for the study. The study sample was made up 30 pupils. Test, observation and interview were used to solicit information from the respondents. The instruments covered three main aspects: reading difficulties of pupils, causes of reading inability of pupils and strategies to curb the problem. The data collected were analyses using Statistics Products and Service Solutions (SPSS 16). Frequency counts and percentages were used for all the items. The responses from the interviewees were put into themes for analysis. The study revealed that prior to the intervention pupils found it difficult to reading well. This was ascertained during the pre-intervention results. The study attested to the fact that phonics pattern improved the reading skills of pupils. The post-test results indicated that the performance of pupils enhanced after the intervention. The study recommends that, children or pupils should be encouraged by their teachers to develop the habit of reading. The Ghana Education Service should intermittently organise workshop on modern methods of teaching to improve the teaching of reading by teachers. Finally, teachers should be encouraged to use the phonic method to improve the reading ability of pupils



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

A student's ability to further his education after Junior High School depends on the extent of interest he has developed in reading over the years. Yusuf (2015) observes that reading is critical for children's success in and outside school. In the views of Ogbonna (2014) reading literally refers to the ability to recognize and understand characters or speak words that may be printed or written on paper and other formats of recording human knowledge. It is the ability to obtain meaning from words. Consequently, a person who can easily read and write is said to be a literate person.

According to Bashir and Mattoo (2012) the 21st century demands that a literate person should possess a wide range of abilities and competencies such as the ability to: develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology; build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so as to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought; design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes; manage, analyse, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information; create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts and attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

The importance of reading among pupils in any society cannot be overemphasized as it is the key to academic, social and economic progression of children. For a society to grow, the teaching of reading especially using phonic and syllables must be effective. A reading society is likely to succeed in sustainable development as its citizenry will participate in decision making and economic development with an informed mind (Incoom, 2000). A lot of countries all over the world have one way or the other been compelled by circumstance to adopt English as a national language. English language became the only alternative as a national language in

Ghana unifying tool due to their long relationship with the British our formal colonial masters, (Adams, 1990).

Apart from formal education, English language enables us to communicate effectively with other users of the language throughout the world. English language is the medium of instruction and it is used in our Ghanaian schools from lower primary to the university level. The language serves as the medium for learning, understanding, gaining competence in all subjects in school curriculum. It has been the foundation for all academic work. The English language has become a lingua Franca and the official language of the press as well as commerce. It is against this background that learner's inability to pronounce English words correctly made it interested in investigating why learners of basic five pupils cannot pronounce English words correctly. Most of the school going children find it extremely difficult to express themselves effectively, master the English language and use phonic and syllabic methods. This is not because they do not have the ideas of what to say but how to say it has brought the barrier in communication. The problem of reading difficulty has become an issue among Basic 5 pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. Most class five pupils find it difficult to read effortlessly. This is affecting their performance academically since they are not able to read to understand certain basic concepts. This has necessitated this research into the causes, effects and strategies to improve poor reading among class five pupils of the school.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Ghana Education Act of (2008) (Act 778) by the end of primary education children should be able to read, write, understand numeracy and develop creative skills. The act states that pupils should be inspired with a desire for achievement and self-improvement both at school and later in life. This is aimed at equipping the learners with reading skills to live effectively in this modern age of rapid technological development. The skill acquired in reading can promote the acquisition of language skills like listening, speaking and writing. Primary 5 pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School in the East-Akim Municipality find it difficult to read

and understand despite the fact that reading is indispensable. Some show a carefree attitude towards reading. This problem is not peculiar to only primary five pupils, but pertains to all categories of readers in the school. Some Pupils lag behind in their ability to read. The effect is poor performance among pupils. The condition is so bad that some pupils find it difficult to read and understand a simple sentence. This situation has gingered up the researcher to investigate the causes, effects and strategies to improve the reading among pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary Five.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to find out the causes, problems of reading difficulties and strategies to improve the reading skills of primary five pupils in Kukurantumi Islamic School. The following specific objectives were set to guide the study:

1. To investigate the problems of reading difficulties among Primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School.
2. To investigate the causes of reading inability among primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School.
3. To identify strategies to improve the reading ability of pupils of Primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the problems of reading difficulties among Primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School?
2. What are the causes of reading inability among Primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School?
3. What are the strategies to put in place to curb the problem of reading inability of Primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School?

1.5 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the research would help teachers to improve their methods of teaching. Teachers will also know the importance of varying their teaching methods to meet the needs of pupils. It is hoped that educational policy makers in redefining the curriculum will consider the appropriate methods of reading that would help pupils to improve on their reading skills. It would also help in the improvement of educational practices in the school. Finally the findings of the study would also serve as a reference materials for academic purpose for future research in similar field.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The scope of study was delimited to Class 5 pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School in the East-Akim Municipality. The class was selected because it is one of the classes within the school where reading is a major problem among pupils. The study focused on reading inability among pupils as one of the major problem facing the school. There are many tools for data gathering but the researcher used questionnaire. In order to assure manageability of the collected data, survey instrument used only pre-determined items and not included open-ended response items.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study considered class 5 pupils and teachers of the school without including other classes who would also have given vital information about poor reading among pupils in the school. Due to the distinctive sample available for the study, results may not be generalized beyond the specific population from which the sample was drawn. Due to the failure of some respondents to answer with openness, outcomes might not exactly reflect the opinion of all members of the included population.

1.8 Organization of the Study

This thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and

delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 of the thesis focused on review of related literature to the study. Issues considered were both theoretical and empirical review related to the problem investigated. The methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study is presented in Chapter 3. The results of analyses from the study are contained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study including the major findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations.



CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to poor reading of English language among pupils. The areas that are discussed include: the concept of reading, causes of reading difficulties among pupils, effects of reading difficulty and the measures that can be taken to improve upon reading difficulties.

2.1 The Concept of Reading

For many years, three basic definitions of reading have driven literacy programmes in the United States (Foertsch, 1998). According to the first definition, learning to read means learning to pronounce words. According to the second definition, learning to read means learning to identify words and get their meaning. According to the third definition, learning to read means learning to bring meaning to a text in order to get meaning from it.

Although these definitions reflect long-standing views of reading, current literacy research such as Bainbridge *et al.* (2000, p.10) purports that “reading is the process by which we identify individual words from their printed and written form and by which we combine these words into simple ideas or propositions, in order to be able to form a mental model of the text based upon inferences that take us beyond the information given. Reading has so many component activities that have to take care to design tasks that as much as possible are targeted on the component interest”. Reading also can be said to transform written language into meanings, but it is only occasionally that students need to worry about the meaning of an individual word. Reading is always a continuously smooth activity, because when students do come across unfamiliar words students are disturbed by them and the calm flow of ideas is halted. It recognizes the importance of skill instruction as one piece of the reading process (Blair & Rupley 1998; International Reading Association and National Association for the Education of Young Children, Davies & Eric, 1998; Heilman, 1998;).

Reading has been seen to be an interaction between an author and a reader. The interaction includes an encoded message which the reader is expected to make meaning out of. According to Doft, “the interaction always includes three facts: materials to be read, knowledge and physiological and intellectual ability” (Doft, 1989, p.2). According to Wixon (1987) reading is the process of constructing meaning through dynamic interaction among the reader, the text and the context of the reading situation. The reading process involves visual motor skills and perception of the symbols by the brain. It is generally broken down into two components: ‘reading’ the words, or decoding and understanding what is read, or comprehension (Cooper, Warnoke & Shipman, 1988; Samuels, 1988).

Manzo and Manzo (1993, p.14) define reading as “the act of simultaneously reading the lines, reading between the lines and reading beyond the lines”. ‘Reading the lines’ is the process of decoding the words in order to reconstruct the author’s basic message. ‘Reading between the lines’ is the process of making inferences in order to reconstruct the author’s implied messages. This requires an understanding of the integral logic of facts presented as well as an understanding of connotative and figurative language. ‘Reading beyond the lines’ is the process of judging the significance of the author’s message and constructively applying it to other areas of knowledge and experience.

Reading is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Dadzie, 2008). This implies making meaning out of recorded information either printed or non-printed in the life of an individual. People read for different reasons and purposes, some of which include pleasure, leisure, relaxation, information and knowledge. Reading is the identification of the symbols and the association of appropriate meaning with them. It requires identification and comprehension. Comprehension skills help the learner to understand the meaning of words in isolation and in context (Palani, 2012). Palani is with the view that reading is a process of thinking, evaluating, judging, imagining, reasoning and problem solving. Terry (1976) also saw reading as the

interpretation of printed or written symbols into speech. Reading is the ability to interpret printed materials. Terry (1976) cited by Buzan (1987) purported that, reading is the decoding process by which written words are translated in order to gain meaning. According to Conge (1992), reading is a specialized and complex skill involving a number of more general or lesser skill. Reading is an essential skill for facilitating a multitude of day to day task and promoting an easily accessible means for creating today's society.

Reading is an essential tool for knowledge transfer and the habit of reading is an academic activity that increases skills in reading strategies. To know about the world and its environment, a child helps himself through reading books, newspapers and other magazines. Once the child has been taught to read and has developed the love for books, he/she can explore for himself or herself the wealth of human experiences and knowledge through reading. Children, who miss the opportunity of getting in touch with books in their early stages of life, find it hard to acquire good reading habits in their later years (Deavers, 2000).

Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning (reading comprehension). It is a means of language acquisition, of communication, and of sharing information and ideas. Like all language, it is a complex interaction between the text and the reader which is shaped by the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated. The reading process requires continuous practice, development, and refinement (Aim, 2010).

Brook (1989) sees reading as a mental process involving the interpretation of signs perceived through sense organs. Deavers (2000) supported the assertion put forward by Brook (1989). Deavers (2000) perceives reading as a mental process requiring accurate word recognition ability to call to mind particular meaning and ability to shift or re-associate meaning. This suggests that knowledge gained through reading can increase understanding and in turn influence social and personal adjustment, enrich experience and stimulate thinking. This also implies that reading enhances acquisition of knowledge thereby helping individuals to

socially, culturally and personally adjust to the society. Kolawole (2005) hold different perspective about reading in comparison to that of Deavers (2000). Kolawole (2005) sees reading as a process of interacting with language that has been encoded in print. Here, the controlled variable is the degree of interaction that is posited. This implies that during reading, one interacts with a word in print and this interaction eventually results in all increased understanding in the reader. According to Kolawole, reading helps to increase the comprehension level of the reader but Deavers sees reading as helping the individual to adjust to social environment. Operationally, from the perspective of the researcher reading is described as an information-processing task which enable students to acquire skills to process information.

According to Gallo (2007) reading is also viewed as a process of decoding written symbols working from smaller units (individual words) to larger ones (clauses and sentences). To him reading as a process involves two approaches and these are the bottom-up approaches and the Top-down approaches. The bottom-up approach deal with incoming message itself, decoding of sounds and words, clauses and sentences. This includes scanning the inputs to identify familiar lexical functions. The top-down approach process uses background knowledge to assist in comprehending or understanding the message. This is what is termed as meta-cognitive knowledge. Here the reader applies a kind of knowledge and experience that he or she has gained to the new material that he or she interact with. In this vain, meaning of what is read is derived from the previous knowledge of the reader. Aim (2010) and Gallo (2007) have similar perspective of reading. They all hold the view that reading is the process of decoding symbols in order to get meaning out of it.

Guthrie (2007) believe that “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 life. Singh (2011) further explain that reading is usually associated with books as only the written words provide a complete picture of the act of reading. It means that through reading,

the individual is able to build or fix things, enjoy stories, discover what others believe and develop ideas or beliefs of their own. Thus, reading provides the key to all forms of information necessary for our day-to-day survival and growth. From the aforementioned definitions and explanations of reading given by the various authorities the researcher also sees reading as the process of interpreting written language, symbols as well as a sign of measuring device. This is in line with what Aim (2010) and Gallo (2007) Purported.

2.2 Causes of Reading Problems

Reading difficulty is a worldwide phenomenon and not peculiar to pupils in the Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. Poor reading habits among students are a problem of concern to educators because it affect the communication development of individuals (Aim, 2010). There are many causes of poor reading in modern societies. Some of these causes include: pupils related causes, teacher related causes, home related causes, and reading resources use in school.

2.2.1 Pupil-Related Causes

One of the major causes of reading difficulties among pupils in our public schools is lack of adequate preparation of pupils to achieve reading readiness before being able to start reading. “An ill prepared pupil certainly would have problems in learning to read” (Heilman 1998:34). Johnson (1996) observed that in contextual reading, there is a relationship between word and recognition and comprehension. Recognition of words triggers comprehension and comprehension facilitates recognition. This implies that both comprehension and word recognition complement each other. The researcher observed that vocabulary weakness among Basic 5 Pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School interferes with their reading since words are the means by which ideas are conveyed. Reading consists of skills and sub-skills. Therefore, weakness in one or more of them could interfere with the reader ability to understand. Learning to read begins when children are four to five years old and beginning to learn letters. The central focus is on decoding and recognition of words, learning the alphabet and the sounds that letters

make, learning to distinguish sounds in speech, and learning to sound out words. At this stage children establish a foundation for a lifelong relationship with books, however, researchers such as Lerner (2000), and Dickinson and Neuman (2006), supported Johnson and purported that children who are exposed to books in their early years learn to read more easily. This exposure may be lacking to the majority of class five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School, due to different economic backgrounds and this consequently results in poor reading habits

One of the key factors of pupil-related causes of reading problems among class five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School is slow learning. I observed that some pupils are slow learners and this affect their reading ability. This is supported by Machando (1980). According to him, in every sample of one hundred pupils selected at random from elementary schools in the United State of America, there are at least twenty who must be regarded as slow learners. They are the ones who are left behind years after years. They are the ones who take up the energy of teachers. This assertion is supported by Wigfield (1997), who wrote that, statistics show that two out of every ten students in a class in Peru are slow learners.

The reading habit of Class Five Pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School affects their reading ability. The pupils have not developed the culture of reading, either for examination or for pleasure. This is in corroboration with research conducted by Emenyonu (1993). He study the reading habits of Nigerian students and concluded that their reading habit is poor because they read with only one aim in view that of passing examination, and not for pleasure. This shows that Nigerian students do not read for the purpose of pleasure but rather for examination purposes. Saka (2012) corroborate this view when he stated that school children read so as to pass examinations and to do assignment and that they read in classrooms and parlour of their respective houses.

2.2.2 Resources-related causes

To ensure effective teaching and learning, educational resources plays a major role. Lack of these resources affects the reading ability of learners. Resources-related causes of reading difficulties include:

2.2.2.1 Lack of appropriate text to read

Student's reading ability and desire to read is affected by the structure of the texts they read. If texts are well organized, have a logical flow, and include relevant information, they are inviting and reader friendly. Unfortunately, the quality of writing used in some content of textbooks found in classrooms today is considered deficient in some respects, (Taylor, Frye & Maruyama, 1990). Some textbooks are simply little more than loosely connected lists of propositions about a topic. The organization of chapters, the structure of expository text, and the language may be murky. Traditional expository structures such as cause- effects, temporal sequence, or comparison-contrast are seldom found. Students often find more clearly written expository text in good informational trade books than in textbook (Freeman & Person, 1992).

In Ghana, each class at the Primary, Junior High and Senior High Schools Have recommended textbooks. Theses textbooks, varying in content and structure, may not always be child friendly. Aaron and Joshi (1992) says though textbooks have improved greatly, the many changes in the world today introduce new ideas, new concepts and new vocabulary constantly. Aaron and Joshi (1992) to reinforce his stance said that unrealistic readability levels and limited comprehensibility of texts due to concept loading and related problems contribute to reading problems

Aim (2010) introduced another dimension to the nature of the reading material and said that fluent reading demands knowledge of conventions of the text from vocabulary and grammar to the narrative devices employed, this also affirms the fact that children need to know the structure of sentences in a book. If structures are familiar to the readers, the reader would have to read but if the reader does not have adequate knowledge about the structure used, then

the case would be different. It is interesting to note that readers particularly the struggling readers who find it difficult to read structures in a book are not motivated to read and are likely to develop negative behaviour towards reading as whole. This case is not different in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary five.

2.2.2.2 Lack of reading books

It is evident that there is not enough suitable reading material in the country. Without suitable and abundant supply of children's books written with African backgrounds, the problem of developing good reading habit will persist (Emenyonu, 1993). In Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School, lack of reading materials undermined the progression of reading by pupils. Parents find it difficult to purchase the needed reading materials for their wards because of financial constraints. Books provided by the government are inadequate for the learners. In a class of fifty-eight (58) the English text books provided from the government is just twenty and therefore you have to put them in groups which adversely affect educational delivery.

2.2.2.3 Lack of Physical facilities

Lack of physical facilities such as tables, chairs and good light needed for reading in basic schools is also a contributory factor. In some cases space needed to read and learn is not even available to the student (Kristy, 2002). This finding is in line with what pertains in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. The school do not have enough tables and chairs. This have led to overcrowding which affects class management as well as teaching and learning. Some pupils are compelled to write on their laps. This affect their handwriting and concentration.

2.2.3 Home-Related Causes

The primary socialization of the child begins from the home. There are some problems which are home based. Our pupils except a few come from homes devoid of books. Children from illiterate homes scarcely ever come in contact with books before they come to school. In such homes, parents do not read and so their children have no models to imitate. Ross (2002)

observed that children sometimes see their parent in jobs that do not require great deal of reading and get the impression that it is not necessary to read. Even for those that come from literate homes, their parents do not read for pleasure and so reading culture is not part of the family experience and practice. Sometimes the situation at home is not conducive to learning or to read (Debbie, 2002). According to Muogilim (2002) parents who are poor find it difficult to afford the high cost of books for their children and wards. Most parents manage only to purchase 1 or 2 textbooks out of the whole recommended textbooks.

2.2.4 Teacher-Related Causes

Researchers observed that some teachers are not knowledgeable about children's literature, they are not able to introduce students to the wealth of books available, and they may not recognize the effects of their teaching methods on students' attitude toward reading (Short & Pierce 1990). According to Kirigia (1991), a large number of pupils lack sufficient knowledge in English reading comprehension and also have difficulty comprehending English words because of the teaching methods of teachers. Kirigia (1991) furthermore argued that when the children are promoted to secondary school level, such students meet teachers who are not ready to teach reading due to the negative attitude of teachers of English. They believe that teaching reading should be done in primary level by primary school teachers. Lerner (2006) supported this assertion by purporting that the available reading materials are often ignored due to the wrong attitude of teachers towards teaching reading. According to Lerner, teachers forego teaching reading which in turn affects the performance of all the other examinable subjects.

According to Gargiulo (2006) poor teaching involves far more than an inappropriate match between the school's curriculum and the pupils' needs. It also involves the kind of expectations that the teacher communicates to pupils, the teacher's ability to deal with special needs in the classroom and his or her knowledge of normal child development. The teacher sensitivity to pupils' different learning and behavioural styles and understanding that when English is the child's second language, conversational fluency does not equate to academic

language proficiency. Gargiulo (2006) further stated that when teachers do not personalize instruction to accommodate individual differences, the number of children identified as learning disabled increases. Gathumbi, *et al.* (2009) supported the assertion made by Gargiulo (2006) by stating that, poor teaching not only aggravates existing learning problems, but increase the number of children erroneously identified as learning disabled. This happen when children fall behind because they have not had the right learning opportunities. The discrepancy between their intellectual ability and achievement is really pseudo discrepancy that would not have occurred if teaching had been personalized and effective. Gathumbi *et al.* (2009) further asserted that poor instruction leaves a child without the necessary neural substrate to support academic progress.

Experts in reading agree that there is no best method to teaching reading (Goodman, 1990 Lerner, 2000; Snow, 1998;). Goodman (1990) opposes the phonics method, believing it to be less engaging, with endless sounds to learn and simple books to read using regular words. They state that children like to read books by themselves. In line with the assertion above, it is vital that beginner learners should be exposed to variety of reading materials to practise reading on their own. Goodman (1990) supports the whole language method to reading, believing it can produce learners who understand the meaning of the words they are reading and so tackle more interesting books early on. However, Lerner (2000) and Snow *et al.* (1998) criticise it for leaving learners guessing when faced with an unfamiliar word, and for the limited number of words they can memorise. While it is evident that teacher training institutions prepare student teachers in all these approaches, methods and techniques outlined in this chapter, it has been observed in some studies (Hartney, 2011; Junias, 2009;) that once these student teachers graduate and are in the field they hardly follow them and in the case of teaching reading skills, particular attention is needed in preparing learners to acquire them so that numerous reading difficulties are avoided. It is not known whether teachers in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School apply all these approaches, methods and techniques in their reading lesson delivery to

establish possible causes of reading difficulties which learners face. This study has identified this as one aspect which needs investigation, so as to identify the causes of reading difficulties learners face and which could be sources for poor reading habits experienced by many learners.

2.3 Nature of Reading Difficulty

All readers need to develop fluency, comprehension and motivation to read in order to become successful readers. When students are not able to read smoothly or find it uneasy to interpret a text which commensurate with their level, it is perceived that such students have reading difficulty. Reading difficulty may differ from person to person but may show up in different ways which include: poor phonological awareness, poor oral language development, slow reading, regression, skipping of words and overlook of punctuation marks.

2.3.1 Poor phonological awareness and ineffective decoding of written words

I observed in my teaching that Class 5 Pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School have weakness in phonological awareness which affect their reading skills. The pupils do not understand the alphabetic principle of English and fail to develop adequate decoding (letter to sound) skills for reading or encoding (sound to letter) skills for spelling. Mann, Cowin and Schoenheimer (1989) and Runo (2010) confirm this by saying that students are unable to produce good invented spellings because they do not have the requisite skills necessary to segment words into sounds and map those sounds onto the appropriate letters. Such students tend to rely on their knowledge of words memorized as “sight words” and attempt to read new words based on context or by guessing based on partial letter cues (such as the first and last letters of the word). They may not recognize the common spelling patterns in words so do not benefit from the regularities that exist in the English language. Deficits in decoding (and encoding) are the most critical factors in poor reading for the majority of students.

Studies by Luckasson (1995) Samuels (1988), Santos, (1989), and Smith clearly indicate that a major portion of the difficulty students have in reading comprehension is related to inaccurate identification of the individual words encountered which is in turn, strongly related

to decoding skills. It is of course, possible to read words accurately and still have problems with comprehension and this is an area which is now being studied more carefully. This is typical of Class 5 pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. The pupils struggle to read passage of their level. Recognition of words and pronouncing the words is even difficult for them.

Decoding words is a very important aspect of the reading act, without which reading comprehension is impossible. This explains why some children in Ghanaian schools can read but not understand what they are reading. Decoding is a pre-requisite skill to reading, and the lack of it presents L2 learners with difficulties when reading in English. This is the case of class five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. The few of them who can read find it difficult to understand what they read. Murray and Johnson (1996) caution teachers against using long sentences with beginners, asserting that when reading letter-by-letter and word-by-word s/he might not be able to hold all the information in short memory long enough to understand the sentence as a whole. This would imply that if one decodes letter-by-letter one would not find out what the word is. People can read a text aloud without actually understanding what it means, as Leech (2010) observed in Namibian schools. Thus, the researcher sought to find out the causes of reading difficulties in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) attribute ineffective decoding to weak visual processing, faulty recognition and naming, poor phonological awareness, memory dysfunction as well as limited access to word meaning. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) maintain that decoding problems are often aggravated by lack of practice, however, they caution teachers against trying to detect exactly where and how the breakdown in decoding occurs and act appropriately. On the other hand, Buzan (2010) noted that ineffective decoding is a result of poor phoneme-grapheme awareness, and that some children lack sufficient awareness of sound units in words. He emphasises that this makes it hard to learn to read.

I observed that, because the learners struggle to read they find it difficult to understand what they read. Lerner (2000) is of the view that if learners are struggling to understand what

they read because of difficult words, concepts, or sentence structure, they will not be able to read quickly. Many learners and students studying through the medium of a second language spend much of their time struggling to read books which are above their level of language proficiency.

2.3.2 Poor oral language development

There is connection between oral language and early reading, therefore, prior oral knowledge of English language is one of the factors contributing to the reading difficulties experienced by learners in the Kukurantumim Islamic Primary School. Pang, (2003) observe that real progress in reading depends on oral language development, an observation that suggests that children learn to read by associating the written form with speech. For children to know how to read they must learn the vocabulary, grammar and sound system of the oral language in which the reading takes place. Dickinson and Neuman (2006) Reading, as a language-based activity (Lyon, 2000), does not develop naturally, and for many children, decoding, word recognition, and reading comprehension skills must be taught directly and systematically. If a child's knowledge of English is poor the reading skill as well as reading comprehension will also be poor (Baker, 2006).

Cummins (2000) postulated the “developmental interdependence hypothesis” suggesting that a child's L2 competencies are partly dependent on the level of competence already achieved in the L1. This is because bilingual students draw some knowledge when performing reading (Baker, 2006). Cummins further asserts that once the reading ability has been acquired in the L1, it is available for use in the L2. If the L1 is poor, it will prove difficult for skills to be transferred to L2. Similarly, Ellis's (2000) Nativist theory confirms that learners' inputs conform to their own internalised view of what constitutes the L2 system. They simplify the learning task by forming a hypothesis based on the knowledge process of their L1.

The majority of the children in kukurantumi speak Twi, Krobo, Ewe or Hausa as their primary languages. However, when they start school they are taught Akuapem Twi and

subsequently English as a second language. These languages are quite different in numerous linguistic terms, and this would suggest poor transfer of reading skills. In view of this, Cummins (2000) posits “the thresholds theory”, which suggests a linguistic level for a child to reach in the prime language and so avoid the negative consequences of the L2. The question is whether most primary five pupils in Kukurantumi Islamic primary school have acquired relevant skills in reading Twi, which is not the L1 of some of them to scaffold reading in English.

In the same vein, Lerner (2000) argues that when a person attempts to speak a language in which s/he has not yet become automated, s/he will necessarily have to divide attention between the content of the message and the language itself. This also applies to reading and if the skill in reading is automated it will not be disrupted by concurrent processing of the language because this does not take up the attention resources. She stresses that a person in whom the language is not automated will read with great difficulty, being forced to pay all the attention to word recognition and none to decoding the written word, thus impeding comprehension.

2.3.3 Slow reading

One observation made is that pupils make several stops while reading and pronounce individual words instead of reading according to sense group. It might sound strange that some of these pupils who are described as struggling readers cannot read as fast as their fellows who are not struggling readers. This observation confirms that slow reading is an example of reading difficulty among the target group.

Slow reading is a reading difficulty to many struggling readers. According to Miedema (2009) reading a text one word at a time decreases a person’s reading speed and understanding of the material. He further purported that a child becoming a slow reader is fostering a negative attitude towards reading. This is supported by Newkirk (2011). He opined that children who think that reading is boring will not be able to read faster. Newkirk says that slow reading may be an impediment when it reduces comprehension. However, not disputing the view of

Newkirk, slow reading could also be attributed to readers' inability to read words unfamiliar that seem difficult to them when reading. During reading, they are likely to stop when encounter difficult words. In an attempt, they may pronounce the individual word instead of reading and sometimes mispronounced the word. Comprehension of the text is affected at the long run. It is apparent that pupils who tend to stare at individual words cannot move faster.

2.3.4 Regression

The researcher observed that pupils had the habit of reading and going back immediately. The pupils read a portion two or more times because he/she could not move effectively from one line to the next. Booth (2013) purports that the standard text reading involves frequent eye movements that go against normal reading order. According to him regressions allow for the rereading of previously fixated words. Altman (2014) also opined that regression allows a reader to stop the forward motion of the eyes across the word, drag them backwards and re-read the same words. The reader do this sometimes once, twice or many times depending on how tired or bored with what the reader is reading. Richardson and Spivey (2000) are on the view that average slow reader will re-read as much as one-quarter of a page again. According to them the reader make conscious decision to retrace and re-read the words that he/she has just read. This is because the person have the feeling he/she did not understand the words that the eyes have just move over. Baidoo (2003) says, regression certainly wastes reading time and causes early exhaustion and frustration and finally, it reduces understanding and retention. When regression is not deliberate act to retract or retain information or to ensure comprehension, then it becomes reading difficulty that needs to be addressed.

It is essential therefore to say that regression among class five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School is not deliberate neither is it seen as a means to retract information. The reading difficulty put some of the pupils off when they are called to read. I believe that some pupils show signs of regression not because of exhaustion and frustration or lack of

concentration alone as other researchers have said but they may also be having problem with their vision and the ability to coordinate the movement of the eye from left to right.

2.3.5 Skipping words

Reading involves moving from one word to an immediate one. The sequence of words in a sentence must be read as such. Skipping is a sign of reading difficulty that must be avoided because skipping of words leads to omission of word or words. Skipping and possible omission of words inhibit proper interpretation, understanding and explicit meaning of a text. Newkirk (2011) writes that reading faulty can be described as inaccuracies in reading and may include: ignoring initial and final consonant clusters. A consonant cluster may be two or more phonetic consonants found at a particular region of a word. The word “stream” /strim/ has three initial consonants: /s/, /t/, /r/. When the /t/ and /r/ are omitted, the same word may sound “seam”- /si:m/.

Some pupils also ignore words endings; generally termed inflectional morphemes. Inflectional morphemes generally show the grammaticality of the word. Altman (2004) explained that inflectional morphemes mark plurals, verb tense form and comparisons of adjectives and adverbs. For example the verb “want” becomes wanted in the past. The noun “girl” becomes “girls” as plural whereas the adjective “fast” forms the comparative as “faster”. When the inflection “ed”, “s” and the “er” are not sounded when reading, it means part of the word is ignored and meaning is altered. This is typical of pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School.

2.3.6 Overlooking punctuation marks

When a reader overlooks punctuation marks, comprehension of a text becomes difficult and the essence of the text is lost. Punctuation marks used in a sentence structure may point to series of items or ideas. For example (,) may be used in place of “but” to show a contrast. Example Yaw came with his children, Kwasi came alone. Lawrence (2001) admits that a comma in the following pair of sentences gives a different interpretation, “In the garden eggs

are gold” and “In the garden, eggs are gold”, the first structure means that there is gold in the garden eggs whereas in the second, the structure means eggs are precious as gold in the garden. Punctuation may indicate a long or short pulse. It may also mark the end of a phrase or a sense group. Since comprehension of a text depends on the ability to read according the sense group, students who ignore punctuation marks would have difficulty in comprehension. Since some of the pupils in the target group overlook some punctuation marks, they find it difficult to grasp the meaning of what they read.

2.4 Effects of Reading Difficulties

Reading difficulties have a plethora effects on learners. Scholars and researchers have identify numerous effects of poor reading on learners. These include:

2.4.1 Poor academic performance

Carmine, Silbert and Kameenui (1979) purported that reading difficulties are the principal causes of failure in school. This is supported by Lerner (2006). He asserted that 80 percent of children with learning disabilities have their primary educational problem in the area of reading. The reading problems of all these students have a substantial impact on their ability to master other subjects in school. A study done by Runo (2010) on identification of reading disabilities and teacher oriented challenges in teaching reading concludes that the learners who scored poorly in the wordlist and reading passage were equally poor performers academically in primary schools. The purpose of reading is comprehension and many students with reading difficulties lack that aspect of comprehension which poses a big problem to teachers trying to teach them. Learners with reading disabilities have problems with reading and spelling and find comprehension a challenge. They also find it difficult to transfer their thoughts to paper when answering comprehension questions (Chiuri, 2009).

According to Yilmaz (2000), people who do not learn to read through an intensive phonic programme often have one or more of the following symptoms:

1. Below grade level reading achievement

2. Slow reading
3. Poor comprehension
4. Fatigue after reading only for a short while
5. Poor spelling skills
6. Lack of enjoyment from reading

Taylor Hulme, & Welsh (2010) tested 26 8 to 12 year-old poor readers in mainstream classrooms for their self-concept in scholastic competence (academic self-concept), social acceptance, athletic competence, physical appearance, and behavioural conduct. Compared to 23 children with no learning disability, the poor readers only had poor scores for academic self-concept. Similarly, Snowling, Muter and Carroll (2007) tested twenty-one 12 to 13year-old poor readers for their perceived scholastic competence (academic self-concept), social competence, and athletic competence. They too found that, compared to age-matched typical readers (N = 17), poor readers scored poorly on academic self-concept alone. Thus, studies of self-concept in poor readers to date have produced mixed findings, suggesting that poor readers are at increased risk for various types of low self-concept, particularly low academic self-concept.

2.4.2 Poor socio-emotional adjustment

Poor reading ability has been repeatedly theorized to negatively impact children's socio-emotional adjustment (Spear-Swerling & Sternberg, 1994; Spira & Fischel, 2005). Stanovich (1986) hypothesized that early reading failure results in increasingly more generalized "behavioural/cognitive/motivational spinoffs" (p. 389) that further constrain children's cognitive growth and academic achievement. These spinoffs constitute "poor-get-poorer" or negative Matthew effects (p. 389), in that poor reading ability initiates and then reciprocally interacts with negative emotions (e.g., frustration, anxiety) and behaviours (e.g., task avoidance, withdrawal) to further reduce children's involvement in reading activities and so maintain their reading failure. Thus, early reading failure may initiate "a causal chain of escalating negative

side effects” (p. 364) that can become increasingly more generalized - “seeping into more and more areas of cognition and behaviour” (p. 390) - as the developmental cycle continues.

Empirical studies have examined if poor reading negatively impacts “proximal” feelings and behaviours that are closely related to reading activities (Aunola, & Nurmi, 2009; Chapman, Lerkkanen, Prochnow, Tunmer, 2000,; Poikkeus, Viljaranta,). Poor readers have been reported to feel less competent in reading, consider it to be difficult, be less motivated to read, and hold generally more negative attitudes towards learning to read (Chapman & Tunmer, 1997; Gottfried, 1990; Lepola, Salonen, & Vauras, 2000). The relation between poor reading ability and these negative reading-related perceptions steadily increases as children age (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995). Poor readers are also less likely to complete reading activities in classrooms (Morgan, Fuchs, Compton, Cordray, & Fuchs, 2008) or independently practice reading at home (Juel, 1988). This is in line with what pertain in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. Poor readers are disinterested in reading and most often put up negative attitude and awkward behaviour. Studies have evaluated whether poor reading ability negatively impacts “distal” feelings and behaviours that are not specific to reading activities. Poor readers have been reported to be more likely to act out or be aggressive (Morgan, Farkas & Qiong, 2009; Trzesniewski, Moffitt, Caspi, Taylor, & Maughan, 2006), distractible or inattentive (Goldston et al., 2007; Morgan, Farkas, Tufis, & Sperling, 2008), and anxious and depressed (Arnold et al., 2005; Carroll, Maughan, Goodman, & Meltzer, 2005). These increasingly generalized negative Matthew effects should occur as children age (Stanovich, 1986). This happens because children begin to avoid reading activities both at home and in school, thereby further constraining growth in their basic reading skills, comprehension, and, eventually, cognitive functioning (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1991; Echols, West, Stanovich, & Zehr, 1996; Griffiths & Snowling, 2002; Guthrie, Schafer & Huang, 2001; Senechal, LeFevre, Hudson & Lawson, 1996).

2.4.3 School dropout

Poor reading skills lead more students to drop out of school than poverty. A recent research study from the American Educational Research Association (2016) discovered some startling facts about how low reading skills affect graduation. The most surprising discovery of the research study is that low reading skills causes more students to drop out of school before receiving a diploma than poverty. A study conducted by Edmond and White (1998) examines the factors that causes students with reading disabilities to drop out of school. From this research, it was found that students who are not proficient in reading are disinterest in schooling and finally dropout of school. The successful completion of high school is a fundamental criterion of success in American society. For this reason, school dropout is a national concern with broad economic and social consequences for adolescents and society alike. At the individual level, adolescents who drop out of school are at significant risk for delinquency and criminal justice system (Bridgeland *et al.* 2006).

Poor reading may have important effects on school dropout. Reading ability is intimately involved with success in adulthood. Verbal ability encompasses the skills needed for language comprehension and expression and is profoundly important throughout the life course in academic and social settings (Bridgeland *et al.* 2006; Coleman 1994; Luria 1961). Having poor verbal skills may contribute to difficulties in variety of situations, leading one to experience feelings of academic and social failure. For example, if an individual possesses poor receptive vocabulary, they may not be able to understand directions or comprehend content necessary to succeed in an academic or social setting. Persons may become easily confused or overwhelmed by simple directions or content they are responsible for learning. Children and adolescents who fail to acquire adequate reading ability or who are deficient verbally are at risk of dropping out of school (Dionne 2005).

2.4.4 Child delinquency

Every young life starts out with promise and the adults who love child yearn for that child to have a bright future. Difficulty in reading is a barrier (Stick & Miles, 2006). According to Smith (2013) poor reading skill is a predictor of, among other things involvement in the juvenile justice system. He purported that there is a clear correlation between a grade-level reading problem and, later on, incarceration in the juvenile justice system. Wang (2012) investigated the link between reading and behaviour. He found that students who have reading problems also have behaviour problems. He stressed that poor reading is highly connected with delinquency. Wang's finding is contrary to that of Sara (2013). She cautioned that poor reading does not cause delinquency.

Research conducted by the National Centre on Literacy (NCL) (2015) indicates that poorly developed reading skills are heavily correlated with juvenile delinquency. This is supported by Brett (2016). He conducted a reading screening examination and discovered that 50% of the boys who had reading problems had delinquent problem. A classical study conducted by Zaba (1989) shown that poor reading is the only cause of child delinquency. However poor reading cannot be overlooked as a key ingredient of delinquent behaviour of children. Nearly everything a child is asked to do in the classroom depends on reading skills. The US Department of Education (2010) has estimated that: 75% to 95% of all classroom learning comes to the students via reading. If there is any interference with this pathway, the students will experience difficulty with learning tasks. The US Department of Education further posited that there is link between delinquency and reading problems. This is in corroboration with what is happening in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. Class five pupils who find it difficult to read shows aggression and put up delinquent behaviour.

A study conducted by Duke (2016) examines the relationship between reading and delinquency of seven-grade African-American and Whites boys. He found out that reading was correlated with delinquency. Although more African-Americans boys were delinquent than

White boys, the likelihood of delinquent for boys with lower reading performance was the same in each ethnic group. Older boys with poor reading performance did not have a higher probability of delinquent than younger boys with poor reading performance. Thus, the association between reading performance and delinquency appears constant. Gonzalez (2016) supports the findings of Duke. He conducted a research in Peru among some selected students and found that there was correlation between poor reading and delinquent behaviour among students.

2.5 The Importance of Reading

Reading plays a vital role in every facet of human institution. There have been numerous empirical studies and theories on the importance of reading which include the following:

2.5.1 Reading improve academic performance of students

The importance of reading cannot be overemphasized, that is why Babbie (2005) emphasized that reading has a direct influence on the performance of any student, be it for the purpose of passing exams or for leisure. To kolawole (2005) reading is basic to learning, and so the child's ability to read is the centre of his educational process. Nkiko and Yusuf (2006) asserted that reading is one of life's greatest pleasures that open the door to culture, knowledge and independence. Kenya Institute of curriculum development, secondary education syllabus volume one (2002) also supported this assertion. According to the Institute the ability to read fluently is vital both in school and for life. Good reading skills will improve performance in all school subjects. Reading helps in information gathering and learning of concepts. Through reading, the learner is exposed to new vocabulary, new sentence structures and different registers. Reading also acquaints the learner with good models of language use. A good foundation of reading should be laid in primary school. This is because reading is a very important component of language learning. It will also help in the study of all other subjects.

Because of the role that reading plays in learning situations, Deavers (2000) is of the view that once a child has been taught how to read and develop the love for books, he can explore for himself the wealth of human experience and knowledge. Also Gallo (2007) posits that once students get accustomed to reading they become better students, they will be able to learn fast, understand better, and acquire new knowledge and skills more rapidly and are better equipped for their chosen careers. Greene (2001) when explaining the benefit of reading said that a reader can learn new skills, become more knowledgeable about the whole world and can be stimulated to both thoughts and emotions. Good reading skills, especially in a phonics reading programme, improve spelling. As students learn to sound out letters and words, spelling becomes easier. Also, reading helps to expand the vocabulary. Reading new words puts them in their mind for later use. Seeing how words are used in different contexts can give a better understanding of the word usage and its definitions rather than just the cold facts of a dictionary (Deavers, 2007).

Reading opens the door to your child's **early academic success**, imparts a **love of learning** and leads to **higher grades** in every subject. Numerous studies have shown that strong oral language skills are the basis for literacy development. When children learn to read at an early age, they have greater general knowledge, expand their vocabulary and become more fluent readers. They also have **improved attention spans and better concentration**. Early readers can recognize a larger number of words by sight, which enables them to learn more from and about their environment (Gargiulo, 2006). This was supported by Gathumbi (2009). He posited that proficiency in reading enables them to comprehend more of what they are reading. They also become competent researchers, who are able to study effectively and extract relevant and necessary information from books, magazines, websites or other sources of information. Only by mastering effective reading strategies can the child pick up the necessary knowledge and information, which will enable him or her to excel scholastically in the future. It is interesting to note that early readers not only become lifelong readers, but also lifelong

learners. Longitudinal studies have shown that early readers continue to get higher grades than their peers through grade school.

2.5.2 Improve socio-economic and technological development of a nation

Iheanacho (2007) opined that a healthy reading culture has a pivotal role to play in the social, economic and technological development of any country. Reading is a very essential commodity in the task of nation building. It is a main political weapon in the development of any nation. Development countries of the world were able to attain that height because, at a point in their history, they were able to give themselves too much reading and research. Countries like Japan, America, and Britain etc. took to reading and research to achieve technological breakthroughs. Most developing countries do not have a healthy reading culture hence they lack substantial information that could be utilized for national development. If these countries can reorient their citizens to have a change of attitude towards reading as well as research we can be rest assured that it is just a matter of time before the dividends of an informed people will begin to manifest in such countries.

According to Ilegogie (2005), reading helps in the development of one's communications skills and intellect. Development through reading is more progress engendering, lasting, effective and beneficent to mankind when held. To Holte (1998), the importance of reading is essential to full participation in modern society because it adds value to life and provides access to culture and cultural heritage. Reading empowers, and emancipates citizens, and brings people together. It can be thought as a factor, which has important role to play in fulfilling the multicultural structure of a country.

2.5.3 Self-improvement and relaxation

As human beings there are different reasons why we read and different kinds of materials we read. Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe and Adedeji (2012) gives reasons why students read to include: self-improvement, pleasure, and relaxation and also feeling of pride and prestige. According to Bhan and Gupta (2010) reading fires children's imagination and encourages quick

learning as well as widens their views, expands their horizons and helps readers learn about present times. He further stressed that reading encourages imaginations, curiosity and the ability to handle complex ideas. Furthermore, Carver and David (2012) affirm that through reading humans have the tools to transmit knowledge to succeeding generation. A survey carried out by Book Aid International (2003) in Spear-Swearing (2004) revealed that children in developed countries read for relaxation.

2.5.4 Neurological Development

Reading helps to develop a young child's brain. In the first six years, children learn at a much faster pace than at any other time in their lives. Vital connections in the brain are made very early in life (Cromwell, 1987). Kirk Gallager and Anastasion (2003) supported the assertion made by Cromwell. They purported that at birth, a healthy baby is born with approximately 200 billion active brain cells or neurons. Given the right kind of stimulation, each of these brain cells is capable of sprouting up to 20,000 different dendrites / branches and synapses / connections between them which store additional information. These connections, which are a direct result of stimulation the child receives through early experiences, form the basis of all future learning and intellectual ability.

According to Malatesha and Aaron (2007), as parents talk, sing and read to their children, existing links among brain cells are strengthened and new links are formed. At a younger age, learning is faster than it will be as the child grows older. When a child is taught to read, the process of learning has a profound influence on the entire functioning and development of the brain. You can play a critical early role by inculcating not only reading skills and ability but more importantly, instilling a lifelong love of learning and reading

2.5.5 Psychological Importance

A child who learns to read joyfully at home, at an early age, with a loving parent or caregiver, grows in self-confidence and independence. Reading promotes greater maturity, increases discipline and lays the basis for moral literacy. It sparks curiosity about people, places, things and also satisfies the child's curiosity by providing explanations of how things work. It

exposes the child to a range of problem-solving techniques. In addition, early reading ignites the child's creativity and imagination (Adams, 1990).

Wasson and Wasson (1984) were on the view that young child who is a reader is able to channel physical energy, when he or she chooses to sit down to read a book. This quiet time improves the relationship between parent and child or teacher and child, from an early stage. Such a child is also at a distinct advantage over his or her peers. When a child starts learning to read as a baby or at the age of 2 or 3, there is no psychological pressure. The formal school system has yet to kick in, in most parts of the world. Children can be taught how to read each day, in a leisurely manner. Parents can foster a love of the game of reading in the child from the start. Child can take the time to treat reading as an exciting adventure, rather than a bothersome chore. Compare this to the child who must try to learn in a crowded classroom, competing with his or her classmates for the personal attention of the teacher or teacher's assistant. Imagine the effect on the child's ego, on seeing others picking up this skill, while he or she lags behind. Which child is going to have a stronger self-image? Which child is going to be more self-confident? Which child is going to be a leader versus a follower in the classroom? Clearly, the one whose parents taught him or her reading early, at a young age, at home.

2.6 Strategies to Improve Reading Skills

There various strategies to improve reading among pupils which include:

2.6.1 Classroom Environment that Supports Literacy Development

Hall, Burns and Edward (2011) argue that it is particularly important when working with marginalised readers and helping them gain full access to classroom reading practice. Learners perceived as struggling readers are often treated as if they have little or nothing to offer in school. The learners are then likely to believe that their participation will not be valued and as a result minimise their involvement in reading. Similarly, Moats and Foorman (2003) write that if the struggling readers believe their ideas about text are heard and respected, they are more likely to participate. On the basis of these findings it is required that teachers treat all

learners similarly in order to boost their interest and participation in class activities. In order to avoid such a situation in classes, Murray and Johnson (1996) advise teachers to study their classroom ‘climate’, and their assumption about both struggling and good readers: “the language we use with our students, the book we select, and how we invite participation all send a message about who should participate, how often, and what the result should look like” (p 324). Therefore, the classroom environment has the potential to build up struggling learners or to reinforce their status.

Creating a positive classroom environment for struggling readers means appreciating their diverse social and cultural backgrounds and how these might usefully contribute to their self-identification as readers (Hall, 2011, p.31). Thus, it is the duty of the teachers to help struggling readers feel more secure in participating in the classroom practice. Hall (2011) add that students who engage or attempt to engage with the texts in the same ways valued in a classroom often receive a positive response, while those who do not are marginalised. Teachers should be cautioned that the language used in the classroom communicates to students not only what one believes they need to do in order to succeed but also what they need to do in order to achieve high social status in the class. An aim of this study is to establish if these aspects are being followed in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School.

2.6.2 The Role of Teaching and Instruction with regard to Learners Reading Difficulties

Good reading instruction is required for beginners to learn to read, however, it is not easy to accomplish this task. Lyon (2000) stresses that many children in lower primary or beyond will require explicit instruction to develop the necessary phoneme awareness, phonics, spelling and reading comprehension. Lyon further suggests that young children with difficulties in learning to read should be taught the foundational skills to ensure a sufficient level of fluency, automaticity, and understanding.

Teaching of reading and language has been compared to ‘rocket science’ (Moat, 1994), with reading seen as a process which requires various inputs. Drummond and Marshall (2005)

point out that although there are different reading components it can be difficult for teachers to diagnose learners' reading difficulties and find appropriate techniques to remediate them, a dilemma that has a diverse effect on learners' future reading. To be successful, the teachers require a strong and deep understanding of reading theories and practice. An understanding of theories shall then be used as the basis for improving the techniques of teaching reading. However, children are individuals, learn differently, and have their own learning style and pace. This suggests that teaching to read is not a uniform process but rather a matter of trying different approaches. This study was undertaken as a way of establishing, inter alia, the existence or non-existence of such a dilemma in Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School.

2.6.3. Different Teaching Methods

There are a number of different teaching methods from which teachers can choose. However, the question of which is the most effective continues to concern teachers. According to Gonzalez et al. (2006), all methods have shown some success, a number of which are summarised below.

2.6.3.1 Phonics

Phonics is a method whereby “the speech is broken into individual sounds and represented letters” (Alderson, 2000, p.132). It teaches the correspondence between letters and the sounds they represent. Children are taught to look at individual letters or groups of letters, recognise the sounds and blend letters to form a fluent sound. For example, in the word /cat/, children are taught that the sound represented by the word “cat” are k which is a glottal sound, then a /ei/ and t which constitutes k-a-t. According to Lerner (2000), there are two approaches to teaching phonics. In the first, analytical phonics, learners are taught to look initially at the whole word and then break it down to compare parts for the letter-sound relationships they came across previously. In synthetic phonics they are taught to link an individual letter or letter combination with its appropriate sound then blend the sound to form words. They are

systematically taught letters of the alphabet and the combination of letters used to represent each sound, for example the combination of letters f-a-th-e-r gives the word “father.”

2.5.3.2 The ‘look and say’ or whole-word method of reading

According to Levine (1994), ‘look and say’ or whole-word method of reading method teaches children to read through pattern recognition rather than decoding the word into letters. Flashcards with words and an accompanying picture are often used with this method, until they memorise the pattern of letters, words or sentences as help in building up high-frequency sight vocabulary. For example, a picture of a ball is given to learners without the accompanying letter representing it. Learners are asked to say what they see, and name it, after which the teacher places the letters string (b-a-l-l) beneath the picture. The activities can be extended to other objects begin with the same letter sound, and even to sentences.

2.6.3.3 The whole language method of reading

According to Lerner (2000), underlying whole-language are the unity and interrelationship of oral language, reading and writing. Unlike the phonic method, which puts the focus on letter-sound relationships, it emphasises that active expression in writing and oral language improves reading skills. Lerner (2000) adds that the whole language method is based on the belief that all children will learn to read naturally, as they learn to talk and walk. Goodman (1990) initiated the whole language method based on a belief that an emerging reader needs little direction to decode the letters, creating sentences representing pictures and sounds of language. The whole language approach to reading focuses on meanings, not on correspondence between sound and symbols, so that children start reading stories immediately without resorting to phonics. The whole language method posits that children be immersed in good books for them to become fluent readers, with interesting and fun books to excite them so that and through play they memorise the many words they see in them.

2.6.3.4 Combining phonics and whole-language in teaching reading

Proponents of combining the phonics and whole-language approaches, Reutzel and Cooter (2010), Stanovich (1980), Rumelhart (1977) suggest that phonics be taught separately, directly, and systematically to learners, and not in the context of reading literature. Reutzel and Cooter (2010) believe that learning to read is accomplished by placing the emphasis on mastering the three skill areas of decoding, vocabulary, and comprehension, assumed to lead to competent understanding, and consequently enable skilled and independent reading. Rumerhalt (1977) claims that while processing features of letters, and spelling patterns, at the same time a reader is also attending to general context, syntax, and the semantic and syntactic environment in which the words occur. However, Stanovich posits that for learners to master reading skills they need daily exposure to good literature through reading aloud, discussing stories, and being introduced to new knowledge and vocabulary. Phonics should be taught first, followed by regular reading practice so that learners become skilled readers.

2.6.3.5 Choosing appropriate methods of teaching reading in English

Experts in reading agree that there is no best method to teaching reading (Goodman, (1990). Goodman (1990) Lerner, (2000) Snow, (1998) opposes the phonics method, believing it to be less engaging, with endless sounds to learn and simple books to read using regular words. They state that children like to read books by themselves. In line with the assertion above, it is vital that beginner learners should be exposed to variety of reading materials to practise reading on their own. Goodman (1990) supports the whole language method to reading, believing it can produce learners who understand the meaning of the words they are reading and so tackle more interesting books early on. However, Lerner (2000) and Snow et al. (1998) criticise it for leaving learners guessing when faced with an unfamiliar word, and for the limited number of words they can memorise.

While it is evident that teacher training institutions prepare student teachers in all these approaches, methods and techniques outlined in this chapter, it has been observed in some studies (Hartney, 2011; Junias, 2009) that once these student teachers graduate and are in the

field they hardly follow them and in the case of reading teaching reading skills, particular attention is needed in preparing learners to acquire them so that numerous reading difficulties are avoided. It is not known whether teachers in the Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School apply all these approaches, methods and techniques in their reading lesson delivery to establish possible causes of reading difficulties which learners face. This study has identified this as one aspect which needs investigation, so as to identify the causes of reading difficulties learners face and which could be sources for poor reading habits experienced by many learners.

2.7 Conclusion

There is evidence from the literature that reading helps in information gathering and learning of concepts. Through reading, the learner is exposed to new vocabulary, new sentence structures and different registers. Reading also acquaints the learner with good models of language use. This is because reading is a very important component of language learning. It will also help in the study of all other subjects. Learners with reading difficulties find it difficult to adjust to the school environment. That is why the researcher in this study wished to establish the causes effects and strategies to overcome poor reading among Basic 5 pupils of Islamic Primary School in Kukurantumi.

With the basic understanding of the theoretical basis of the traditional, cognitive and the balanced theories, it is imperative that teachers apply these theories regarding teaching reading in English. However, it is a daunting task for teachers to decide on the most suitable approach that benefits all learners in the class, because relying on one theory might cause problems.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology explains how the study was conducted. It describes the procedure followed in carrying out the study. The areas considered include the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, intervention processes and data analysis plan.

3.1 Research Design

Research design refers to the way information is gathered from the subjects. It is described as the overall plan for collecting data in order to answer the research questions formulated to guide the study. It is also the specific data analysis techniques or methods that the researcher intends to use (Sarantakos, 2007). According to Mitchell and Jolley, (2004) research design is the blue print or plan specifically created to answer the research question and to control variance. Action research was employed for the study. One of the founding figures of action research, Sarantakos (2007) remarked that research which produced nothing but books is inadequate. Action research is a powerful tool for change and improvement at the local level. Action research is intended to change the life chances of disadvantaged groups in terms of housing, employment, prejudice, socialization, and training.

The scope of action research as a method is impressive. Action research may be used in almost any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for solution, or where some change of feature results in a more desirable outcome. It can be undertaken by the individual teacher, a group of teachers working co-operatively within one school, or a teacher or teachers working alongside a researcher or researchers in a sustained relationship, possibly with other interested parties like advisers, university departments and sponsors on the periphery (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005).

Action research was used so that a problem identified in the class may be solved. Also action research helps the teacher to understand what actually goes on in teaching-learning

situations. Also finding from action research provide teachers with the opportunities of acquiring a better understanding of all aspects of their own practice, be it in relation to subject, content, the curriculum or the methods appropriate to the level of their pupils in the class. Action research is used in the study to find an immediate solution to a local problem. Action research was used because of its open mildness about what counts as evidence. It involves not only keeping records which describe what is happening as accurately as possible, but also collecting and analysing our own judgment reactions and impression about what is going on. Also action research is a systematic learning process in which people act deliberately through remaining open to surprises and responsive to opportunities. According to Kemmis and Taggart (1992), action research is not individualistic. Furthermore, action research is participatory. It is research through which people work toward the improvement of their own practices (and only secondarily on other people's practices). Action research is a form of collective self-reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.

3.2 Population

The target population for the study was made up of class five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School in the East-Akim Municipality. The overall population for the study was fifty-eight (58).

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for the study was made up of thirty (30) pupils. Fifty-two percent of the population was used for the study. This is in agreement with Sarantokos (2007). According to Sarantokos, for population of 58, a sample size of 30 is enough for action research. Simple random sampling method was used in selecting the subjects for the study. This is the best and the most scientific method of sampling from a population because the method ensures that at each point of selection there is an equal and independent opportunity for each member of the

population to be included in the sample. Within this method every member of the population was numbered and each number was thoroughly squeezed and put inside a box. The box was thoroughly shaken and mixed before an independent observer who was blind folded was asked to randomly pick one number at a time from the box until the required number representing the sample was picked.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

To obtain data for the study the following tools were used

3.4.1 Test

Tests, are designed to objectively measure the academic aptitude of pupils from varying social backgrounds and with different educational experience. Educational institutions use the results of standardized tests to evaluate a student's academic performance (Sarantakos, 2007). The test enable the researchers to assess the reading ability of the learners in order to put intervention in place to solve the problem.

Tests are designed to assess current performance in an academic area. Because achievement is viewed as an indicator of previous learning, it is often used to predict future academic success. An achievement test administered in a public school setting would typically include separate measures of vocabulary, language skills and reading comprehension, arithmetic computation and problem solving, science, and social studies. Individual achievement is determined by comparison of results with average scores derived from large representative national or local samples. Scores may be expressed in terms of "grade-level equivalents"; for example, an advanced third-grade pupil may be reading on a level equivalent to that of the average fourth-grade student (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005).

3.4.2 Interview

Interview was used by the researcher to collect data for the study. As a research method, the interview is a conversation carried out with the definite aim of obtaining certain information. It is design to gather valid and reliable information through the responses of the interviewee to the planned sequence of questions (Sarantakos, 2005). In obtaining the data the interviewees were asked questions which were in line with the research questions formulated to guide the study. The interviews were recorded and written down by the interviewer in other to avoid errors. In order to ensure validity of the interview, the researcher confined her entire attention to one task at a time.

An interview is a widely used data-gathering technique. It has the advantage of being direct, personal, and flexible. It allows interviewers to gather subjective data on values and attitudes because it is possible to probe and ask interviewees to clarify statements. As long as questions are not intimate and repulsive, an interview can be a very promising means for obtaining useful information. However, an interview is time-consuming and maintaining the individual's anonymity may be an issue. It is also difficult to quantify results of interviews. Interviews can also be costly due to the required effort interviewers must commit and the demographic diversity of the interview locations. Interviews may be used in conjunction with questionnaires or used as a secondary means to clarify unclear information found in the questionnaires (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005).

3.4.3 Observation

Observation is one of the central technique of data gathering. Observation entails gathering data through vision as it main source. It may be used as the only technique of data collection, or jointly with other techniques, such as interviewing, documentary study or case study (Sarantakos, 2005). Observation can study all observable social phenomenon, as long as they are accessible. According to Cohen, (2005) observation is the act of recognizing and noting facts or occurrences rather than asking people about the activities they perform. The observation enables researchers to understand the context of programmes, to be open-ended and inductive,

to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data (e.g. opinions in interviews), and to access personal knowledge. The researcher observed pupils throughout the intervention stage.

3.5 Pre-intervention

The pre-intervention is the procedure that researchers apply in trying to define or diagnose the perceived problem before the actual intervention. The researcher assessed the levels of pupils reading ability through test. The pupils were given short paragraph from a passage in their course book, to read individually to the researcher. It was realized that some could not mention even a word correctly in the paragraph and others could not go beyond a sentence. This gives a clear indication to the researcher to identify some of the causes or factors of pupil inability to read and this paved way for the intervention.

3.6 Intervention

The intervention is a series of concrete measure or approaches or method put in place to solve a specific problem. The researcher used four weeks to carry out the intervention. In all, 30 pupils were used for the study. They were put into two group of fifteen each in a group. The phonic method was used for implementation of the intervention. Each group was taught on different days to ensure that there was ample time for every pupil to have trials of reading. During the intervention period tests was the major instrument used in collecting data (Appendix B). The types of phonic techniques used for the intervention were basically vowel phonics patterns, consonant phonics patterns, synthetic phonic and analytical phonics. The treatment process lasted for four weeks. During this period one major parameter was the focus of the study. That is reading skills. This skill is crucial, as far as literacy is concern. Under reading sub-skills like fluency in reading, pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition skills were assessed.

Week one

3. 6.1 Vowel phonics patterns

For the first week the researcher introduced pupils to vowels. The researcher show them the visuals for the vowels and a shortened version of the story for each letter. For the visuals to be effective the objects were made to match the shape of the letter. The visuals worked beautifully to help cement the sounds of the vowels. These are the five single letter vowels, a, e, i, o, and u. They produce the sounds /æ/ as in cat, /ɛ/ as in bet, /ɪ/ as in sit, /ɒ/ as in hot, and /ʌ/ as in cup. In teaching the short vowel alphabet teaching cards were used. This include basic vowel and consonant sounds and activity on the reverse of each card. The alphabet teaches hand motions and stories.

3.6.2 Week two

Again pupils were taught long vowels. The researcher pinpoint to them that, these are homophonous with the names of the single letter vowels, such as /eɪ/ in baby, /i/ in meter, /aɪ/ in tiny, /oʊ/ in broken, and /ju/ in humor. Schwa is the third sound that the researcher considered. Schwa is the third sound that most of the single vowel spellings can represent. It is the indistinct sound of many a vowel in an unstressed syllable, and is represented by the linguistic symbol /ə/; it is the sound of the *o* in *lesson*, of the *a* in *sofa*.

Week three

3.6.3 Consonant phonics patterns

The pupils were introduced to consonant phonics patterns. Consonant digraphs are those spellings wherein two letters are used to represent a consonant phoneme. The pupils were taught the most common consonant digraphs which include: ch for /tʃ/, ng for /ŋ/, ph for /f/, sh for /ʃ/, th for /θ/ and /ð/, and wh for /hw/ (often pronounced /w/ in American English). Letter combinations like wr for /r/ and kn for /n/ were also taught. Short vowel+consonant patterns involve the spelling of the sounds /k/ as in peek, /dʒ/ as in stage, and /tʃ/ as in speech were taught. These sounds each have two possible spellings at the end of a word, ck and k for /k/,

dge and ge for /dʒ/, and tch and ch for /tʃ/. The spelling is determined by the type of vowel that precedes the sound. If a short vowel precedes the sound, the former spelling is used, as in *pick*, *judge*, and *match*. . If a short vowel does not precede the sound, the latter spelling is used, as in *took*, *barge*, and *launch*.

Week four

3.6.4 Synthetic phonics

Synthetic phonics method was employed to teach phonics to children to learn to read. This method involves examining every letter within the word as an individual sound in the order in which they appear and then blending those sounds together. For example, *shrouds* would be read by pronouncing the sounds for each spelling "/ʃ, r, aʊ, d, z/" and then blending those sounds orally to produce a spoken word, "/fraʊdʒz/." The goal of synthetic phonics instruction is that pupils identify the sound-symbol correspondences and blend their phonemes automatically.

Week five

3.6.5 Analytical phonics

Pupils were asked to use the analytical phonics to analyze sound-symbol correspondences, such as the *ou* spelling of /aʊ/ in *shrouds* but students do not blend those elements as they do in synthetic phonics lessons. Furthermore, consonant blends (separate, adjacent consonant phonemes) are taught as units (e.g., in *shrouds* the *shr* was taught as a unit).

3.7 Post intervention

At the end of each week pupils were tested to measure their progress in the reading skills. The post-intervention evaluates the outcome of the action taken. It ascertains whether the pupils have improved upon their reading. A post-test was administered with pupils after the intervention. The post-test showed that there have been a change in the pupils as far as English reading is concerned (Appendix C).

3.8 Data Analysis

The data collected has been subjected to analysis of the parameters by the SPSS- version 17 software. Frequency tables and percentages were used for the analysis. Data was perused to ensure that responses given by respondents are complete and relevant to the study. Descriptive statistics consists of tools and issues involved in describing collections of statistical observations (Loether & McTavish, 1993). It is a measure of a characteristic or property of a sample of statistical observations.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the analysis of data obtained from the study. The analysis was done using the version 17 of SPSS software. A total sample of 30 pupils was used in the study. Specifically, they were primary five pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic School in the East-Akim Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Random sampling was employed to arrive at the samples. Pre-intervention and post intervention test were given to the pupils. Emanating from the core objective of this study, the tests given to the pupils were meant to obtain data for objective analysis of the reading skills of the pupils. The study was to ascertain whether using phonic method significantly promotes reading skills of the pupils. The analysis focused on the pre-test and post-test interventions.

4.1 Pupils' performance in the pre-test

The researcher assessed the levels of pupils reading ability through test. The pupils were given short paragraph from a passage in their course book, to read individually to the researcher.

Table 1. Pre-test Results

Marks obtained	No. of pupils	Percentage (%)
10	10	33
20	10	33
30	8	27
40	2	7
Total	30	100

Table 1 shows that 10 pupils, representing (33%) scored 10 marks, 10 pupils representing (33%) obtained 20 marks, 8 pupils (27%) also scored 30 marks while two pupils (7%) obtained 40 marks. This shows that, pupils' performance in the pre-test was poor. According to Spreque (2005) the use of inappropriate method and technique made it difficult for pupils to improve on their reading skills. He further supposed that most pupils' interests and concentrations are not aroused when the right method is not used. According to Heilman, Blair and Rupley (1998) reading difficulties among pupils in our public schools is lack of adequate preparation of pupils to achieve reading readiness before being able to start reading. This might be a key reason for the poor performance of pupils during the pre-test.

It is evident that there is not enough suitable reading material in the school. Without suitable and abundant supply of children's books the problem of developing good reading habit will persist. In Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School, lack of reading materials undermined the progression of reading by pupils. Parents find it difficult to purchase the needed reading materials for their wards because of financial constraints. Books provided by the government are inadequate for the learners. In a class of fifty-eight (58) the English text books provided from the government is just twenty and therefore you have to put them in groups which adversely affect educational delivery.

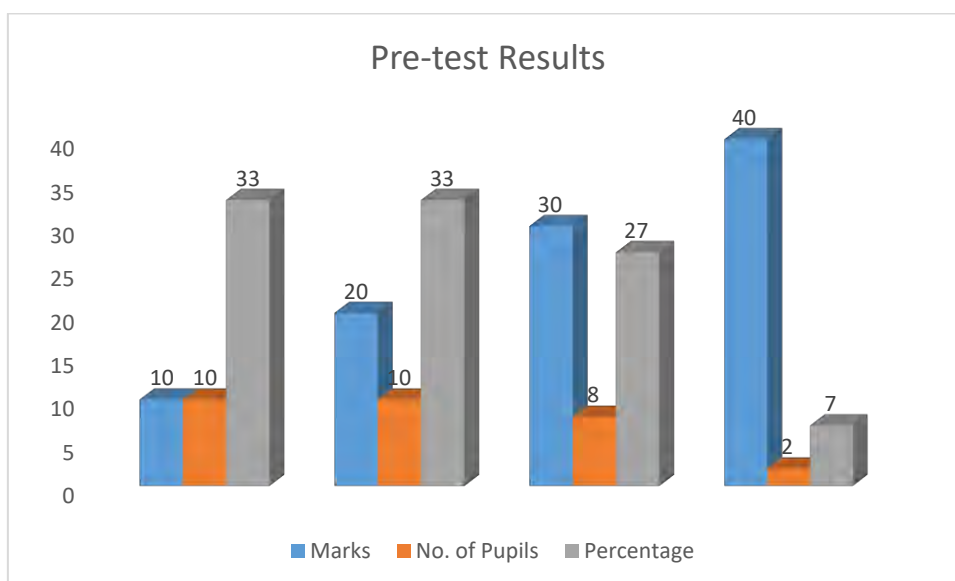


Figure 1: Pre-test Results

Figure 1 shows that majority of the pupils representing 93% had marks between the ranges of 10-30 while, only two of the pupils had 40 marks. This is clear indication that the performance of the pupils before the intervention was poor. This also testify that the reading ability of the pupils was abysmal.

4.2 Pupils' Performance after the Post-Test

At the end of the intervention pupils were tested to measure their progress in the reading skills. The post-intervention evaluates the outcome of the action taken. It ascertains whether the pupils have improved upon their reading. A post-test was administered with pupils after the intervention. The post-test showed that there have been a change in the pupils as far as English reading is concerned.

Table 2. Performance after interventional activities

Marks obtained	No. of pupils	Percentage (%)
50	2	7
60	4	13
70	8	27
80	9	30
90	7	23
100	-	-
Total	30	100

Table 4.2 shows that two pupils (7%) scored 50 marks, four pupils representing (13%) obtained 60 marks, eight pupils (27%) also scored 70 marks, nine pupils representing (30%) scored 80 marks while seven pupils (23%) obtained 90 marks. This shows that, pupils' performance in the post-test was very tremendous. This is in support of Harris & Hodges (1995). According to them, phonics instruction is designed for beginners in the primary grades

and for children having difficulty learning to read. The primary focus of phonics instruction is to help beginning readers, in this case, children understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns and to help them learn how to apply this knowledge in their reading. It also confirms the research conducted by Roberts (1999) where vowel phonic patterns, consonants phonic patterns, synthetic phonics, analogy phonics and analytical phonics were used to improve the reading ability of pupils. According to Alderson (2000) phonics teaches the correspondence between letters and the sounds they represent. Children are taught to look at individual letters or groups of letters, recognise the sounds and blend letters to form a fluent sound. He further posited that this help pupils to improve on their reading ability.

Mann, Cowin and Schoenheimer (1989) purported that students with weaknesses in phonological awareness found it difficult developing reading skills which impact their ability to develop beginning reading skills. Such students do not understand the alphabetic principle of English and fail to develop adequate decoding (letter to sound) skills for reading or encoding (sound to letter) skills for spelling. Runo (2010) confirms this by saying that students are unable to produce good invented spellings because they do not have the requisite skills necessary to segment words into sounds and map those sounds onto the appropriate letters.

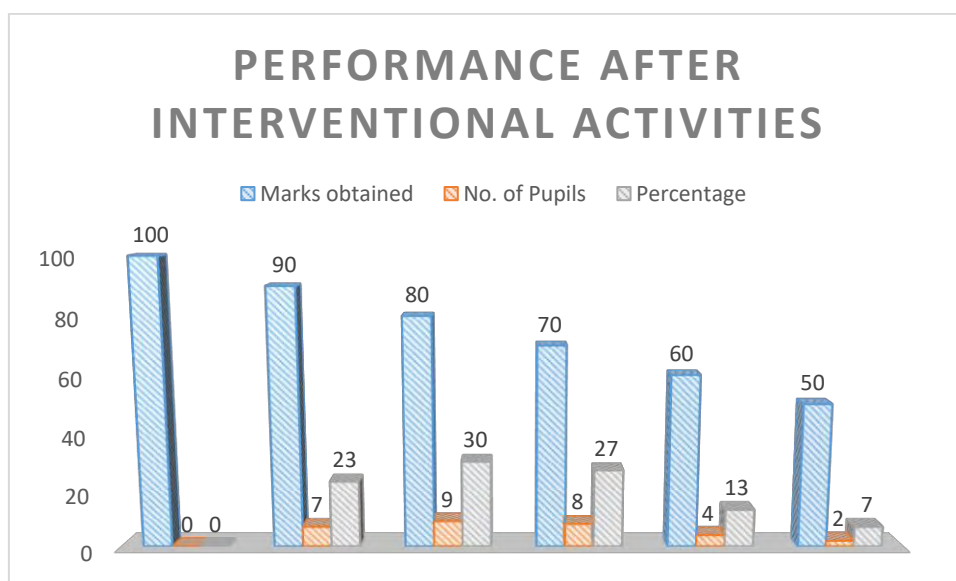


Figure 2: Performance of pupils after the intervention activities

Figure 2 clearly depicts that the performance of the pupils was very encouraging after the intervention. Even though, none of the pupil obtained 100 marks, 24 of them had between the ranges of 70-90 marks representing 80% of the total population for the study. This shows that the intervention process was successful and it helped the pupils to improve on their reading ability.

4.2 Interview response

Pupils reported that the phonic has improved their reading skills. Five pupils recounted that, they had not experienced the use of the phonic before and they were very happy for been given the opportunity to experience this learner centered method. A pupil justified her satisfaction by saying ‘I initially felt shy reading but was encouraged by members in my group’. Pupils reported that they experienced difficulty getting assistance from their colleagues but later it was okay for them. They further purported that the phonic helped to improve their academic performance. They now understands whatever they are taught. They can now read fluently and pronounce words correctly without much difficulty. Some of the pupils were on the view that the games added interest to what they initially felt bored to read or learnt.

4.3 Observation

During the intervention process, a number of observations were made. They are as follows:

1. Motivation: I observed a very high level of motivation among pupils during the intervention process. This was reflected in their attendance. According to the attendance register, their attendance to lessons was very good. Punctuality to the venue for our meetings, and good class participation were good signs of motivation exhibited by pupils. The use of the phonics and the way they were organized might have accounted for this level of motivation. This also goes a long way to agree with the findings of Lerner (2000) who reported that phonic method help to improve the reading skills of pupils.

2. Improvement in reading: After the use of the phonic method I observed that the fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary used by the pupils has improved. I also observed that the communicative skills of the pupils has improved.
3. The phonic method enhanced cooperative learning and pupils participation in the teaching and learning.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the study. The chapter first looks at the study in summary, and then derives conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study. The study was meant to find out Poor English language reading among Basic Five Pupils of Kukurantumi Islamic Primary School. Action research design was employed for the study. The study sample was 30. Test was conducted to solicit for information from the respondents. The data collected was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. (SPSS 17). Frequency counts and percentages were used for all the items.

5.1 Summary of Major Findings

Based on the analysis undertaken the following findings were made:

1. Pupils found it difficult to read when the appropriate method is not employed.
2. Lack of reading materials undermined the progression of reading by pupils
3. Parents find it difficult to purchase reading materials for their wards
4. English textbooks provided by the government are not enough
5. After the intervention it was revealed that there had been improvement in the pupils learning outcome
6. The study found out that the phonic method is appropriate for class five pupils.

5.2 Conclusions

From the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

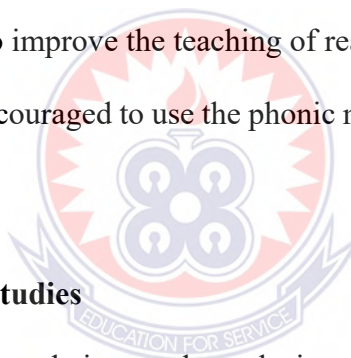
Teaching phonics has a good effect in improving pupils reading skill. This could be proven by the fact that pupils who are treated by teaching phonics could read and recognize words

without much difficulty. It Provides opportunity for every pupil to participate in all the activities within the period. Inadequate reading materials affect the reading ability of learners.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The child's level of ability should be considered before choosing a suitable teaching strategy and learning material for a lesson.
2. Activity based learning method should be adopted when teaching at the primary school level because it enhances active participation by pupils.
3. Children/pupils should be encouraged by the teachers to develop the habit of reading.
4. The Ghana Education Service should intermittently organise workshop on modern methods of teaching to improve the teaching of reading by teachers.
5. Teachers should be encouraged to use the phonic method to improve the reading ability of pupils



5.4 Suggestions for further studies

Based on the findings, recommendations and conclusions drawn from the study, the researcher wishes to suggest that:

Further research should be conducted on the use of phonic method to improve the reading skills of the pupils.

I would also wish that research should be conducted on the use of syllabic method to improve the reading skills of pupils.

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