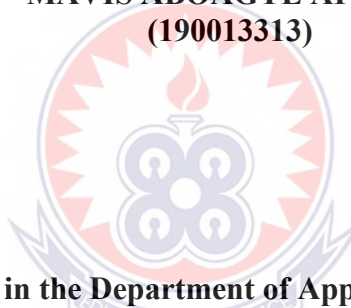


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**READING COMPREHENSION CHALLENGES AMONG STUDENTS OF
HUNI – VALLEY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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(190013313)**



**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication,
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Teaching English as a Second Language)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

OCTOBER 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Mavis Aboagye Appiah declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which all have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original 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 this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. KWAKU OFORI

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my husband Mr Charles Amankwah and my kids Rhoda Adwoa Amankwah, Ebenezer Opoku Yeboah Amankwah and Emmanuella Yeboah Amankwah for their sacrifice and support for this work. This work is also dedicated to my late mum Madam Helena Korankye Yeboah whose advice and support has made me come to this soothe.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give thanks to God Almighty for His blessings, divine favour and mercies bestowed upon me, and for giving me the opportunity to begin and complete this program successfully. Climbing once again the ladder of learning has just been the grace of God. This dissertation would not have been completed without the assistance and support of some people. First of all, my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Kwaku Ofori for painstakingly reading through my script and for his professional guidance and unwavering support during the production of this dissertation. My thanks to the Headmaster of Huni – Valley Senior High School, Mr. John Aidoo who granted me the permission to conduct this research in the school. Also, many thanks to the entire teaching staff and students of Huni –Valley Senior High School for their cooperation during the collection of data to complete the study. To all who have contributed in diverse ways to the success of this project especially to Mr. Samuel Anyimah, I say a big thank you and God bless you.

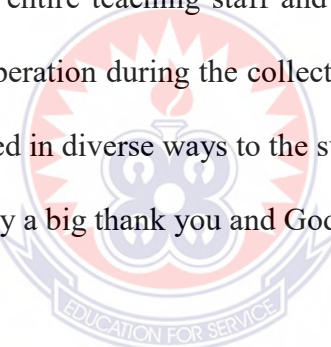
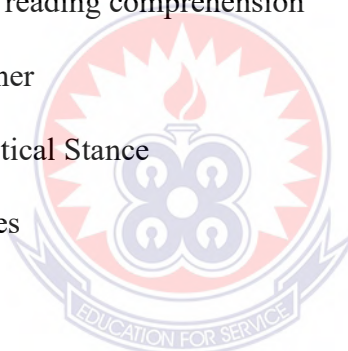


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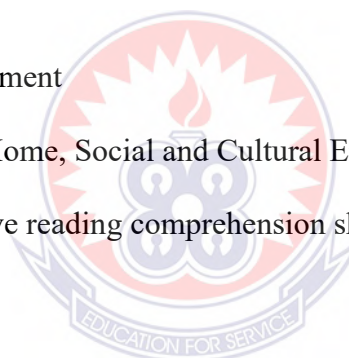
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the reading comprehension challenges among students of Huni – Valley Senior High School. The study was conducted on 50 sampled students and their ten teachers. Descriptive research design was employed. Teacher and student questionnaire, classroom observation, and oral interview were used to gather the required data. The study found that most of the SHS2 students were not able to read and comprehend as expected at their level. As they read, they committed errors such as skipping or repeating words, reading individual words and reading very slowly. The study also found that the classes were overcrowded with higher student-teacher ratio; hence teachers did not have time to attend to students with reading comprehension challenges. It was further found that some of the textbooks used are not suitable to the level of the students and were also inadequate. The study also found that students reading comprehension challenges could not be attributed to only poor teaching methods, but also parents' inability to support their wards' literacy efforts at home. Teachers' methods of teaching were found to be inadequate to improve the students reading comprehension performances. The study recommended that large classes be reduced and parents should reduce the workload of their wards.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the research work. It gives a general view on reading. It brings to light the background of the study, statement of the problem and scope of the study. This chapter further highlights the purpose of the study and research questions. Finally, the significance of the study, limitations and the organization of the study have also been captured in this chapter.

1.1 Background of the study

One of the important ways through which one can upgrade himself in this generation is through education. The basic skill that one needs to possess in order to make it through to the academic ladder is reading. Reading is a very important aspect of literacy, without reading students cannot understand any subject they are taught in the school. Reading plays an essential role in creating a new generation. Morrison (1993, p. 170-186) states that:

“The future of our nation depends on our ability to create and to be creative. During the coming decades of our most important national resources will be human resources. If our nation is to continue to meet the challenges of the future, today’s schools need to develop creative leaders.”

Reading forms the foundation for all further learning and without the ability to read effectively and understand, a child will experience difficulty in learning. It is the expectation of every parent to see that his or her child speaks fluently, writes very well and reads accurately. Also, society’s cherished expectation is to have an

intellectual who would be able to handle resources available to them for the growth and development of the society.

However, in recent times the educational system of had been faced with reading comprehension challenges most rural areas of Ghana. This problem threatens the very foundation system to an extent of lowering academic standard in the country and consequently poor performance is schools. According to the chief examiners report (2007-2015) on the performance of core English language, it was stated that the candidates command of the language is poor leading to their inability instruction such as vocabulary and grammar resulting in poor performance (West African Examination Council Media report 2007-2015).

In Ghana, the illiteracy rate is a bit high with 74.1% of adult being literate and this makes it difficult for illiterate parents to supports their children with reading material as well as reading assignment at home (Population and Housing Census 2010: p.35).

Even though this has persisted for several years in the country, yet much has been done such as designing programmes or special training of teachers in order to curtail the fast growing number of children with reading comprehension challenges. Educational authorities on their various platforms acknowledged the fallen standard of education at the senior high level but do not take pain to trace the root cause of the problem and what constitutes reading comprehension challenges since a weak foundation cannot hold up huge building.

The inability to read is typical example in Ghanaian schools in recent times and many people at different positions as well as different levels have expressed dissatisfaction

with the situation. Some of the factors identified among other things as the cause of poor performance of students are:

1. Lack of pre- reading skills on the part of students because they were not expose to literacy early.
2. Literacy is not properly taught in the school system. This research therefore investigated the challenges affecting Huni-Valley Senior High School at Prestea Huni- Valley municipality.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Lerner (2016), a number of learners, for unexplained reasons are unable to use reading as a tool for learning, getting new information, ideas, attitudes and values from standard upwards. Even after they have been taught, it is quite unfortunate that a large number about (17.5 percent) of them are unable to read efficiently at higher class levels (Lerner, 2016). According to Mercer and Mercer (2011), between 10% and 15% of school-going learners have reading difficulties. Lerner (2016) notes that, more than 17.5 % of learners have reading difficulties. The government of Ghana planned to achieve education for all (EFA) by 2020 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2030 through provision of quality education that is accessible and relevant to the lives of all children including those with special needs (MOEST, 2009) as many children experience learning difficulties and thus special educational needs at some time during pre-service training programmes should provide a positive orientation towards special needs to all teachers

(Salamanca, 2014). Possessing this knowledge, the researcher found out what happens to such learners after they were promoted to secondary school levels into various district in the country.

Reading comprehension challenges had been the causes of poor performances in most Senior High Schools. This is because all subjects offered in the schools have to be read well and be able to comprehend well before they can write.

Moreover, reading comprehension challenge might have been a contributing factor to the many dropouts in the country since the students cannot excel in any school subjects.

During a reading comprehension lesson in Huni –Valley Senior High School, the researcher observed that, the students in S.H.S 2 find it difficult to read at least a paragraph fluently without making mistakes. It was observed that, some students omitted certain words, made many pauses, and even pronounced words wrongly. Hence, the evaluation tends out to be poor since some students themselves could not understand what they had read.

These and other observations aroused the interest of the researcher to find out the causes of reading comprehension challenges among Huni-Valley Senior High School at Prestea Huni–Valley Municipality in the Western Region.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify the causes of reading comprehension challenges among students of Huni – Valley Senior High School. Also, it seeks to ascertain obstacles that contribute to poor reading comprehension among the students.

Again, the findings of this research will help teachers to address students having challenges in reading comprehension with care by using the appropriate strategies to teach reading comprehension.

1.4 Research objectives

Since reading comprehension challenge is a circumstance that threatens the future of this country and is becoming serious among Senior High students. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To identify the causes of reading comprehension challenges among S.H.S 2 students of Huni-Valley Senior High School.
- ii. To investigate the quality of reading materials supplied to the schools and how they are promoting reading or retarding the progress of reading and to consider some activities needed for successful reading.
- iii. To identify ways to assist the students of Huni- Valley S.H.S 2 to overcome reading comprehension challenges and develop the habit of reading.

1.5 Research Questions

The following three (3) research questions were raised to address the problem:

- (1) What are the reading comprehension challenges among students of Huni-Valley Senior High School?
- (2) What are the causes of reading comprehension challenges?

(3) What are the best techniques that could be used to solve the problem?

1.6 Limitation

It will be difficult for the researcher to observe teachers in this work. Since the teachers are colleagues at work, they would not be at ease having the researcher observe their teaching. Besides, some teacher and students may not see the need to answer the questionnaires, and there may not be cooperative.

1.7 Delimitation

The researcher seeks to investigate into the cause of reading comprehension challenges among students of Huni- Valley SHS 2 and also ascertain any contributing factors to the poor reading comprehension of students. The research work also aims at identifying appropriate techniques of helping students of Huni-Valley SHS 2 to overcome their reading comprehension challenges.

1.8 Significance of the study

Reading comprehension challenges differ from person to person and they are seen at different levels of students' life. When the nature of reading comprehension challenges of students are identified and appropriate interventions are used, students will be anxious to develop their reading skills, improve academically. Teachers of English Language will use appropriate strategies to teach reading comprehension and tackle the problem right from the scratch. It will also help curriculum designers to give more consideration to reading comprehension at the senior high level.

1.9 Organization of the study

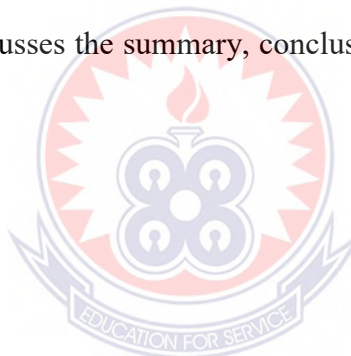
This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one talks about the introduction to the study, the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of

the study, research questions, limitation, and delimitations, significance of the study and the organization of the study.

Chapter two reviews the related literature on reading comprehension challenges. Chapter three discusses the methodology used in the study. It deals with the target research design, population of the study, sample and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection, validity and reliability data analysis and problems encountered during administration of the questionnaire.

The chapter four examines the research findings and analysis and it seeks to answer the research questions.

Finally, chapter five discusses the summary, conclusions as well as recommendations for future research.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Reading comprehension challenge is one of the great problems of many students in the country. Students of Huni-Valley Senior High School also face similar problem of reading comprehend challenge. Some people attribute the problem to the teachers who have been handling the students and others claimed that it is the making of the students themselves.

This chapter however presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature in an attempt to position the study in an appropriate conceptual and theoretical framework. The chapter discusses findings of related researches obtained from relevant articles, textbooks, journals, speeches, websites and other credible sources of information to this study. This chapter also presents the works that have been done by other researchers which were considered relevant for the subject of study. It covers such topics under the following sub headings.

1. Factors affecting reading comprehension
2. Challenges of reading comprehension
3. How to improve reading comprehension

2.1 The concept of reading

“Reading is the business of making meaning with text” (Goud et al 1990). According to (Anderson et al 1984, pp.255-292) “reading is the process of making meaning from written texts”. It can be observed from the two definitions that a reader must have contact with a text, which may be a sentence or a printed page. However,

there certain activities that may precede the child's contact with the printed material. Before a child makes meaning out of a text, he or she might have familiarized with letters and words at his or her level. However, if it is not so, children become handicapped in reading and comprehension. A lot of students find it difficult to make meanings out of text read because they encounter challenges in the cause of their reading, in which Huni- Valley Senior High SHS 2 students are no exception. This has attracted the attention of researchers to study into student's inability to read in schools.

According to Wixson, Peters, Weber, and Roeber (1987), reading is the process of creating meaning that involves: (a) the reader's existing knowledge; (b) the text information; and (c) the reading context. Grabe (1991 as cited in Alyousef 2005) defined reading as an interactive process between readers and texts that result in reading fluency. Readers interact with texts as they try to extract meaning from the text. There are different types of knowledge: linguistic or systemic knowledge (bottom-up processing) and schematic knowledge (top-down processing). Ahmadi & Pourhosein (2011) stated that the main goal of reading is to gain the correct message from a text that the writer intended for the reader to receive.

2.2 Definition of reading comprehension

According to RAND Reading Study Group (2002), comprehension is the process of eliciting and making meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. McNamara and Magliano (2009) emphasized that this process is a task of both reader and text factors that happen within a larger social context. Duke (2003) stated that comprehension is a process in which readers make meaning by interacting

with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the views of readers related to the text.

Kintsch (1998) and Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) defined reading comprehension as the process of creating meaning from text. The purpose is to get an understanding of the text rather than to acquire meaning from individual words or sentences. The outcome of reading comprehension is the mental representation of a text meaning that is combined with the readers' previous knowledge. This is called a mental model (Johnson-Laird, 1983) or a situation model (Kintsch, 1998). This model defines what has been learned (RAND Reading and Study Group, 2002). Keenan, Betjemann, and Olson (2008) expressed that reading comprehension needs the successful expansion and arrangement of a lot of lower-and higher-level processes and skills. Accordingly, there are many sources for possible comprehension break and these sources are different based on the skill levels and age of readers.

Pressley (2000) and Birsch (2011) defined reading comprehension as the ability to get meaning from what is read. Reading comprehension needs different reading skills such as word recognition, fluency, lexical knowledge, and pre-existing knowledge to be undertaken quickly so that the reader gets knowledge from text. According to Block (2004) and Graves, Juel, and Graves (1998), reading comprehension is a complicated process in which readers have an important role in making meaning from the text through applying existing skills.

Rayner et al. (2001) and Tompkins (2011) defined reading comprehension as the level of comprehending a text. This comprehension arises from the interplay between the written words and how they elicit knowledge outside the message. Tompkins (2011) expressed that comprehension is a creative process that hinges on four skills called

phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. According to Marilyn McCord (1994), proficient reading is dependent on the capability to recognize words easily. It is identified by individuals' cognitive growth which is the structure of reasoning processes.

2.3 Kinds of reading

There are two different kinds of close reading. They are extensive reading and intensive reading.

2.3.1 Extensive reading

There are different definitions for extensive reading. Hafiz and Tudor (1989 as cited in Alyousef 2005) expressed that extensive reading involves exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and fascinating materials and activities which will have a significant impact on the learners' knowledge of L2. It involves learners reading texts for enjoyment and to develop general reading skills. Learners can be encouraged to read extensively by setting up a class library, encouraging review writing and incorporating reading of books into the syllabus and dedicating some class time to quiet reading.

Hedge (2003) declared that extensive reading differs based on learners' motivation and School resources. A highly motivated and well-trained teacher can certainly select appropriate materials and activities for their own learners. Hedge (2003) stressed that because extensive reading assists in expanding learners' reading skill, it should be incorporated into the EFL/ESL programmes provided that the chosen texts are valid and classified. In addition, extensive reading helps learners to gain their independency through reading either in class or at home.

According to Carrell and Eisterhold (1983 cited in Alyousef, 2005), extensive reading activities can be beneficial in aiding learners to become self-directed individuals who are searching for meaning provided that they are based on student-selected texts that learners will be interested in what they are reading. The process of choosing reading texts will be done according to content, level of difficulty, and length. Hedge (2003) mentioned the benefits of extensive reading as follows: Students can make their language proficiency, advance in their reading skill, become more independent in their learning, learn cultural knowledge, and expand confidence and incentive to continue their own learning. A lot of schools in Ghana of which Huni –Valley Senior High School is part do not attach seriousness to extensive reading because it is seen a time consuming hence most students have reading comprehension. One other importance of extensive reading is to help learners to understand language faster and better but when they have difficulty in reading and understanding what they read, speaking of the language will be a challenge.

Teachers in Huni–Valley Senior High School put extensive reading into use by asking students to write reports or make presentation on selected topics as post reading activity. Apart from this, teachers can tell the learners to keep a diary on a given book as they read it and discuss with their classmates. Students can also copy some interesting and new words and write some useful expressions in their notebooks.

2.3.2 Intensive reading

In this type of reading, learners read a page to find the meaning and to be familiar with the strategies of writing. Through this reading, students can get fundamental practice in performing these strategies based on a series of materials. These strategies can be either text-related or learner-related. The first involves recognition of text

organization and the second involves strategies such as linguistic, schematic, and metacognitive strategies (Hedge, 2003). Yang, Dai, and Gao (2012) expressed that intensive reading is useful to develop reading comprehension. According to Waring (1997), intensive reading is very important for learning vocabulary and understanding how text is formed. Stahl (2003) found that, there is relationship between intensive reading activities and language proficiency. According to Paran (2003), teachers need intensive reading to increase the three phases of learning called pre, during, and post-reading for better language readiness, retention, and activation strategies. Pollar, Durodo, Gonzalez, Simmons, Kwok, Taylor, Davis, and Simmons (2011) said that intensive reading is considered as a significant instrument for improving reading comprehension.

2.4 Models of Reading Process

There are three models for the second-language reading process: the bottom-up model, the top-down model, and the interactive model.

2.4.1 The Bottom-up Model

This is a reading model that emphasizes the written or printed text, it says that reading is driven by a process that results in meaning and that reading proceeds from part to whole.

Carrell (1989 as cited in Ahmadi & Pourhosein 2012) said that the main focus of this model is the smaller units of a text like letters, words, phrases, and sentences. The reader reads all of the words in a phrase, or a sentence before understanding it. This model starts with decoding the smallest linguistic units, particularly phonemes, graphemes, and words and then makes meaning from the smallest to the largest units. The reader uses his/her background knowledge to the information that they find into

the texts. There are some difficulties in this model. One of the drawbacks is that the reader is successful in reading when he/she deciphers the linguistic units and understands the connection between words.

The reader is not able to keep in his/her memory the meaning of every word. The other difficulty is that it is not possible to connect one word to the other words. When students are not able to read smoothly or find it uneasy to interpret a text which they read, it is perceived that such students have reading comprehension difficulty. Reading comprehension difficulty may differ from persons to persons but they show up in different ways; slow reading, difficulty in recognizing word, skipping and ignoring words, mispronunciations of words among others. When teachers do not start the teaching well at the beginner's level it tends to affect their reading comprehension since the bottom-up model only builds literal comprehension of a text. Teacher in the researcher's school do activities which include skimming text to get information to answer summary, scanning a text to match headings to paragraphs and then reading them carefully to put them into the correct order.

2.4.2 The Top-down Model

A top-down reading model is a reading approach that emphasizes what the reader brings to the text, it contends that reading is driven by meaning and proceeds from whole to part. It is also known as concept-driven model. Goodman (1967 as cited in Ahmadi & Pourhosein 2012) stated reading as a "psycholinguistic guessing game" in which readers apply their previous knowledge to relate with a text and to connect these to new information found in the text in order to understand it. The readers do not read every word of a text but they focus on identifying the next words. They try to guess the meaning of words or phrases. Readers begin forecasting from the title of the

reading text that permits them to restrict the scope of their reading. Then they assume the message the writer wants to transfer and change their hypotheses based on what they read in the text. Comprehension starts with higher levels of processing and continues to the application of the lower levels (Nuttall, 1996 cited in Ahmadi & Pourhosein, 2012). Top-down processing therefore, allow the understanding of an ambiguous text because it activate high level of schemas that guide the reading process. In this way, a prior knowledge and reader expectation becomes essential elements in the comprehension process.

2.4.3 The Interactive Model

According to Rumelhart (1977), Nunan (1990), and Grabe (1991), the effective reading needs both top-down and bottom-up decoding. L2 readers can use top-down reading to make up for deficits in bottom-up reading. To obtain meaning, they apply their schemata to make up for the absence of bottom-up knowledge (as cited in Ahmadi & Pourhosein 2012). According to Stanovich (1980 as cited in Ahmadi & Pourhosein 2012), this model is based on information from various sources like orthographic, lexical, syntactic, semantic knowledge, and schemata. While readers are reading, decoding processes support each other. If they do not understand texts, they should apply their previous knowledge to help them.

Readers who are dependent on top-down model use textual signs and infer the meaning but they should make up for deficiencies like weaknesses in word identification and lack of effective bottom-up processing. This model results in the most effective processing of texts. Teachers should find reading instructions according to this model to boost L2 readers' skills. The mutual teaching method is a

reading instruction that is based on the interactive model. It involves four principal reading strategies.

2.5 Theories of Reading Comprehension

There are three types of theories of reading comprehension. They are mental representations, content literacy, and cognitive processes.

2.5.1 Mental Representations

Oostendorp and Goldman (1998) expressed that when a reader is reading a text, he can create a mental representation of the text that explains how the reader understands the text. According to Kintsch (1998), when a reader is reading a text, three various levels of mental representation are created. They are the surface component, the text-base, and the situation model.

Kintsch (1998) continued that when the words and phrases and not the meaning of the words and phrases, are encoded in the mental representation, this is defined as the surface component of mental representation. The text-based indicates the meaning of the text and is composed of those parts and connections that are arose from the text itself without increasing anything that is not clearly identified in the text. A text-base can be made without any memory of the accurate words or phrases from the text. In a pure text-base, the reader applies previous knowledge to create a more perfect and consistent mental representation.

According to Kintsch (1998), the situation model is a structure that combines the text-base and the related features of the reader's knowledge. In order to create a text-base, some previous knowledge is required but this knowledge is a more general one that is

necessary for decoding texts in general, while the previous knowledge in the formation of a situation model is more specific regarding the content of the text.

2.5.2 Content Literacy

Content literacy is the ability to read, understand, and learn from texts from a particular matter. There are three types of content literacy: general literacy abilities, content-specific literacy abilities, and previous knowledge of content. The general and the content-specific literacy abilities indicate some more general type of knowledge that does not hinge on the detailed content of a particular text. This knowledge is applied to make a text-base in the mental representation (McKenna & Robinson, 1990). Previous knowledge of content is the knowledge that is related to the content of a particular text and is applied to make a situation model in the mental representation. For example, it is not obvious that mathematics makes a necessity for content-specific literacy abilities and the reading comprehension in mathematics hinges on more general literacy abilities and previous knowledge. It can be stated that the symbolic language in mathematics is the main cause for the need of content-specific literacy skills (McKenna & Robinson, 1990).

2.5.3 Cognitive Processes

The application of syntactic and semantic rules together with the activation of more particular previous knowledge occurs automatically and unconsciously. Various cognitive processes are more or less conscious. Perception is defined as the highly automatic and unconscious processes. For instance, when we see a dog and directly know it as a dog; we are conscious of the outcome of the process but there aren't any active and conscious thought processes for this identification (Kintsch, 1992). Problem solving deals with active thinking when we want to remember the name of a

person we see and know. Accordingly, when we read a text without having any difficulties in comprehending what we read, the process is related to perception than problem solving because the process of comprehending is unconscious. This comprehension is located somewhere between perception and problem solving (Kintsch, 1992).

2.6 Factors affecting reading comprehension

2.6.1 Role of the Teacher

The first key factor in learning comprehension strategies is the teacher. In 1997 the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future stated, "It is recognized that good teachers are the most important element in learning. The single most important strategy for achieving America's education goals is to recruit, prepare and support excellent teachers for every school" (J. J. Pikulski, personal communication, May 2, 2002). Teaching reading in a class of diverse learners requires considerable knowledge and skill. The teacher must be able to tap a considerable personal knowledge base to effectively motivate and guide each student.

According to Ahmadi & Pourhosein (2012) because of negative school experiences associated with reading, many adults choose not to read books once they leave high school. Therefore, it is imperative that the climate of the classroom encourages students to believe that they can be readers and writers. ' A friendly and good-natured atmosphere fosters enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment. As Merrill states, "A good classroom is characterized as warm, supportive, and pleasant" (1989, p. 154). Along with providing an environment conducive to learning, a teacher that encourages and enjoys the improvements that each child makes is helping children to believe in their own capabilities to succeed (Anderson, 2003). These teachers have

high expectations for every student. Learners are more likely to engage in a task if (a) they feel capable, (b) they believe the task has potential value, or purpose and use for them, (c) they are free from anxiety, (d) and demonstrations are given by someone they like, trust, respect, admire, and would like to emulate (Bell, 2009). In addition, teachers should endeavour to motivate their students to read more, especially in the area of extensive reading. According to Ahmadi & Pourhosein (2012), extensive reading is reading done for sheer enjoyment, whereby the teacher is not directly involved in the process. The authors state: Extensive reading is very important. Some claim that it is the most important activity in the acquisition of reading comprehension. One learns reading by reading and, the more one reads the better reader one becomes. Readers who enjoy reading read faster and have fewer problems than those who don't. As a result, they also read more. Since they read more, their comprehension improves and their enjoyment increases. (p. 11)

Among a substantial body of research, the (Bell 2009) further explains that students tend to become motivated to read and will read for longer amounts of time when they are given opportunities to choose reading materials that reflect their interests and abilities and learning styles. The Reading/Language Arts Framework for (Bell 2009) recommends a large portion of time be spent on instruction that is relevant to literacy: At the primary level a minimum of two and half hours of instructional time are allocated to language arts instruction daily. This time is given priority and is protected from interruption.

In grades four through eight, two hours of instructional time are allocated to language arts instruction daily through daily core instructional periods or within a self-contained classroom.

During this allocated time for literacy, Alyousef (2005). State that teachers may support comprehension learning in:'

1. The way they prepare students for reading.
2. The kind of materials they select for classroom instruction.
3. The kind of questions they ask.
4. The kind of modelling behaviour they provide.
5. The kind of feedback they give.
6. The kind of incentives and reinforces they use.
7. The kind of atmosphere they establish for taking risks. (p. 19)

In addition, the teacher should scaffold instruction for students. According to Anderson & Pearson (1984) scaffolding is: support for learning and problem solving. The support could be clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example or anything else that allows the student to grow in independence as a learner. (p. 49)

This provides the learner with the opportunity to implement partial strategies on their own, until they are able to fully implement them independently. Positive feedback is also a productive approach that helps students to identify when and why an error occurred, so they can learn more appropriate strategies (Bangert- Drown, Kulik, Kulik and Morgan, 1991). Rather than struggling, students need help figuring out why their interpretations are incorrect. Furthermore, activities that foster "deep discussions" where the focus is on asking and answering important questions, will expand and deepen students' understanding of texts (Diamond & Mandel, n.d.).

2.6.2 Teacher's Theoretical Stance

Throughout the last century the debate has raged on what is the best way to teach reading. Most philosophies fall in one of two camps as Weaver (1998, 2002) describes them: The Part-Centred Skills approaches or the Socio-psycholinguistic approaches. Each group has its proponents, research and detractors. Through the last century each has had its heyday when it has been touted as the silver bullet to slay the beast of illiteracy. Yet, research has been unable to prove the claims of any teaching stance as the best way to teach children to read.

Part-Centered Skills Approaches

This philosophical premise focuses on the idea that if children understand the distinct parts that make up the process of reading they will be able to read. These approaches emphasize phonics or learning the letter/sound correspondences to be able to decode the learning and internalizing of regular spelling/sound patterns or word families is emphasized without specific concern for comprehension. Those who share this philosophy claim a concern for meaning tend to focus on the sight word aspects of this theoretical stance, believing that once individual words are recognized, understanding will be a natural by-product (Birsch 2011).

Each of these strategies has been used independently or in conjunction with the others. Most traditional basal programs follow this philosophical approach (Birsch 2011). These approaches follow Edward Thorndike's "Laws of Learning" as stated by Weaver: The law of readiness: *Learning is ordered; efficient learning follows one best sequence.* This law results in readiness materials and the tight sequencing of skills. The law of exercise: *Practice strengthens the bond between a stimulus and a*

response. This law results in drills and exercises through direct instruction, workbooks, skill sheets.

The law of effect: *Rewards influence the stimulus-response connection*. This supports the idea of first learning words and skills and then "rewarding" the learner with the reading of more complete, more meaningful texts. The law of identical elements: *The learning of a particular stimulus-response connection should be tested separately and under the same conditions in which it was learned*. This law results in the focus on isolated skills in testing, and in the close match between items in the exercises and items in the tests. Teachers who follow this stance carefully control the curriculum and sequence within the classroom. As students' progress even comprehension skills such as cause and effect, main idea, recognizing inferences are taught in isolation through worksheets. The emphasis on discrete skills, in a tight sequence, taught in isolation reflects a "part-to-whole conceptualization of teaching children to read" (Birsch 2011), which defines these approaches. Socio-Psycholinguistic Approaches. These approaches emphasize the construction of meaning, drawing on what the individual reader brings to the text, their own unique schema, experience and background. These approaches seek to guide the child to discovering aspects of language and reading through experiencing the process of reading and writing. The teacher guides the student through ever increasingly more difficult experiences "supporting students in developing as independent readers, writers, and learners" (Birsch, 2011).

2.6.3 Support Structures

The second key factor in learning comprehension strategies is the support structures that are put into place. According to National Reading Panel (2000), support means

"to encourage; to help; to uphold; to maintain" (p. 601). The following section will describe various support structures that benefit both teachers and students. Literacy teachers can increase effectiveness of classroom instruction by gaining the support and directing the active participation of resource personnel, classroom aides and volunteers. They can take an instrumental role in initiating and supporting the home-school connection through regular communication with parents about classroom activities and their expectations of the students and parents (Cain, & Oakhill 2011).

2.6.4 Scaffolding

Scaffolding refers to the gradual release of control and support as a child gains proficiency with a given task. The teacher divides the task into simple and accessible pieces. The teacher focuses the child's attention on the pertinent features of the new task and offers the student a proficient model. The task is kept at an appropriate level of difficulty so that the child can accomplish it (Cain, & Oakhill 2011). Scaffolding is based on Vygotsky's theory of the "zone of proximal development" which is defined as: The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Cain, & Oakhill 2011). The teacher must assess what the child is capable of on his own. Then, the teacher must provide tasks and support for those tasks that are just beyond the student's capability to accomplish on his own. The student is not a passive participant. Both teacher and student share knowledge and responsibility for the task. In this way, teacher instruction pulls development along. Through scaffolding the student is able to perform tasks that otherwise would be beyond the zone of proximal development.

2.6.5 Funds of Knowledge

Teachers cannot rely solely on manipulation of the curriculum and classroom resources. To increase student learning, collaboration between teachers and families is necessary. (Moll et al.1992) writes about this as tapping into the family "funds of knowledge" to develop novel classroom practices that involve strategic connections between home and school (Hansen, & Pearson 1983). The term "funds of knowledge" refers to the accumulated knowledge and skills that are necessary for the household or individual to function well. They may include a wide variety of areas from household repair, to herbal medicine, to religious moral and ethical codes.

The multidimensional relationships that develop between each member of the family create an understanding of the student as a whole person instead of the one-dimensional, passive learner that the teacher is usually involved with. The child is motivated by his own needs and interests to acquire this knowledge. It is not imposed upon him. This has powerful implications for the classroom. As Boyd-Batstone states:

Exploring funds of knowledge calls on the teacher to step outside the classroom environment and to look for the knowledge students bring from their homes and other aspects of their lives Bringing the teacher back into the learners' community opens up new possibilities for instruction . . . Then the teacher and student can collaborate in developing instruction that actually draws on prior knowledge and experience, thus creating mediated and literate relationships within the classroom setting (Hansen & Pearson 1983).

2.7 Effective Strategies for Reading Comprehension

There are a lot of strategies for reading comprehension. These strategies are explained in detail in this section.

2.7.1 Activating and Using Background Knowledge

In this strategy, readers activate their background knowledge and apply it to aid them comprehend what they are reading. This knowledge consists of individuals' experiences with the world together with their concepts for how written text works, involving word recognition, print concepts, word meaning, and how the text is formed (Anderson & Pearson, 1984).

Schema theory is very important in the comprehension process (Anderson & Pearson 1984; Anderson, Reynolds, Schallert & Goetz 1977). This theory is based on how people form and activate their previous knowledge. This theory explains that as persons learn about the world, they create a series of knowledge structures or schemas. These schemas develop and shift as the persons learn new information through experience and reading. For instance, a child's schema for dog can involve his or her comprehending of the family pet such as white, furry, and fun. When the child gets more experiences with a lot of dogs in different environments, the dog schema develops and can be improved. It can relate to other schema-kinds of dogs like colours of dogs; foods that dogs eat; places where they stay when the family is on holiday; and dangerous dogs.

Cognitive scientists stated that successful readers permanently relate their prior knowledge to the new knowledge they face in texts. Good readers activate their schema when they start reading. The first schema impacts how readers comprehend and react to a text (Pichert & Anderson 1977). Schemas are particularly significant to

reading comprehension. When learners have knowledge of a text's organization, this can help them to understand better that text (Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertag 1987). When students make connections to the text they are reading, their comprehension increases and they constantly try to make sense out of what they read by seeing how it fits with what they already know. This theory can be applied in the classroom to provide learning experiences for students. In order to do this, students should be encouraged to activate relevant knowledge before they begin reading. Teachers should help students to do this by providing necessary prerequisite knowledge. Teachers should also ask themselves some questions like; will this reading material interest my students, will this material cause cultural conflicts in the classroom, how can students be motivated and involve themselves in reading materials before deciding on which materials to be used in the classroom.

2.7.2 Generating and Asking Questions

Asking questions is a comprehension strategy that helps students clarify and comprehend what they are reading. In this strategy, readers ask themselves pertinent questions in reading the text. This strategy assists readers to combine information, recognize main ideas, and summarize information. Asking appropriate questions permits successful readers to concentrate on the most important information of a text (Wood, Woloshyn & Willoughby 1995). Creating relevant questions helps good readers to concentrate on difficulties with comprehension questions and to take the necessary actions to solve those problems (Pressley, Symons, McGoldrick & Snyder 1995). This strategy helps the teachers know how far students have understood the text read.

2.7.3 Making Inferences

Inference in reading is the ability to understand the meaning of a passage of text without all the information spelled out. From context clues within a passage, the author gives information about plot, characters, setting, time period and other elements of story by the things he or she infers.

Readers assess or draw conclusions from information in a text. In this strategy, writers do not always provide full information about a topic, place, personality, or happening. Instead, they provide information that readers can use to read by making inferences that integrate information of the text with their previous knowledge. Through this process, readers can improve their skills to make meaning. Being able to make inferences is an important factor for readers' successful reading (Anderson & Pearson 1984; Hansen & Pearson 1983).

2.7.3 Predicting

In this strategy, readers are able to gain meaning from a text by making educated guesses. Successful readers apply forecasting to make their existing knowledge to new information from a text to obtain meaning from what they read. Before reading, readers may apply what they know about a writer to forecast what a text will be about. The title of a text can operate memories of texts with the same content, permitting them to guess the content of a new text. During reading, successful readers can make predictions about what will occur next, or what opinions the writer will offer to support a discussion. Readers try to assess these predictions ceaselessly and change any prediction that is not approved by the reading (Gillet & Temple 1994). This encourages students to actively think ahead and ask questions. It allows students

understand the text better, make connections to what they are reading, and interact with the text thus improving reading comprehension.

2.7.4 Summarizing

It is a technique that enables students to focus on key words and phrases of an assigned text that are worth noting and remembering. Readers combine information in a text to elaborate in their own words what the text is about. Summarizing is a significant strategy that allows readers to remember text rapidly. In this strategy, readers can be aware of text structure, of what is significant in a text, and of how opinions are related to each other. Effective summarizing of explanatory text includes things like condensing the steps in a scientific process, the steps of development of an art movement, or the episodes that result in certain important historical happenings. Effective summarizing of narrative text includes things such as connecting happenings in a story line or recognizing the elements that stimulate a character's activities and conduct (Honig, Diamond & Gutlohn 2000). It teaches students how to recognize the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information, and combine the central ideas in a meaningful way. Teaching students to summarize improves their memory for what is read.

2.7.5 Visualizing

Readers can make mental picture of a text to comprehend processes they face during reading. This skill shows that a reader perceives a text. Readers who form a mental image as they read are better able to remember what they have read than those who do not image (Pressley 1976). Visualizing is very important when it is used for narrative texts. When readers read narrative texts, they can easily understand what is happening by visualizing the place, personalities, or operations of a plan. It can also be used for

the reading of expository texts. Readers visualizing steps in a process or stages in a happening or forming an image that help them to recall some abstract ideas or significant names (Gambrell & Bales 1986). Visualizing makes students feel connected to the material, and create a more personal experience. Teachers should teach visualizing by starting with small bits of text and then gradually add more as students get more familiar with the strategy. This method is an ideal strategy to teach to young students who are having difficulty in reading.

2.7.6 Comprehension Monitoring

In this strategy, readers have the ability to know when they comprehend what they read, when they do not perceive, and to apply suitable strategies to make better their understanding.

Successful readers know and check their thought processes as they read. Strategies that successful readers use to improve their understanding are called “fix-up” strategies. Particular repair strategies involve rereading, reading ahead, explaining the words by looking them up in a, or asking someone for assistance (Paris, Wasik, & Turner 1991).

Successful readers try to use different strategies to make meaning as they read. They do not use similar strategies; instead, they like to expand and practice those strategies that are beneficial to them. Moreover, they are very flexible in the application of their strategies, they change from strategy to strategy, and they apply various strategies with different types of texts (Paris, Wasik & Turner 1991). The important point here is that successful readers can make good decisions about which strategies to apply and when to use them. A lot of students can gain from explicit instruction that teaches them to apply particular strategies for understanding a text. The other point is that

particular comprehension strategies can be taught and learned and that their conscious use can help readers to ameliorate their comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000)

2.8 Reading Comprehension Challenges

The term difficulty refers to the problems associated with reading, whether it is with the mechanical skills of reading process or reading comprehension of what is read, within the context of study.

The word difficulty is associated with uneasiness to perform a task. Reading comprehension is understood to be uneasiness to read fluently and interpret what is being read. Bryant and Bradley (1985) states –All readers needed to develop fluency, comprehension and motivation to read in order to become successful reader“. When students are not able to read smoothly it uneasy to interpret a text commensurate with their level, it is perceived that such students have reading comprehension challenge. In fact, many Senior High School students often find the difficulties in reading comprehension. These difficulties result the student's poor performance in reading test Thus, from these factors arise some difficulties in reading comprehension.

Factors that bring difficulties faced by students can be divided into external and internal. Internal factor includes intellectual, and psychological. While external factors include family and school environments (Rahim 2006). There are some internal factors that influence the students in reading comprehension, that are generally found by the reader during reading, namely; difficulty in understanding long sentence and text, difficulty that is caused by limited background knowledge, difficulty in using reading strategies and difficulty in concentration.

2.8.1 Difficulty in understanding long sentence

It is a common problem that most of students find difficulty in understanding the long sentence with complicated structure. It is supported by report of Barfield (1999) that shows almost 12 percent of students had difficulty in understanding long sentences in graded story and 20 percent in academic text. Therefore, the effect of this problem is the students who cannot comprehend long sentences they fail to understand the main idea presented in the text. The researcher observed that students read individual words instead reading according to group sense. It might sound strange that, some of these students who are described as struggling readers cannot read and comprehend as effective as their counterparts. This observation shows that difficulty in understanding long sentence is a typical example of reading comprehension challenge among the target group.

2.8.2 Difficulty in Using Reading Strategies

Reading strategies is the broad term used to describe the planned and explicit actions that help readers translate print to meaning. The students who lack reading strategies often fail in understanding the text. The students who are not familiar with reading strategies such as skimming and scanning will feel down and frustrated because they lack tool necessary to succeed in reading comprehension test (Duarte 2005). There are characteristics of the students who lack in the use of reading strategies. First, the students read word by word within the text, relying too heavily on their visual information, which greatly impedes their reading speed and hampers their reading comprehension. Second, the students spent a lot of attention on detail with the result they often miss the main idea of the text. Third, they just focused too much attention on form of the expense meaning. Furthermore, the students who do not possess effective reading strategies may find difficulty to deal with reading comprehension

test. (Mei-yu 1998 as cited by Fajar 2009). It is therefore necessary to say that difficulty in understanding reading strategies is a problem that contributes to reading comprehension challenge thus affecting the academic performance of the students under study.

2.8.3 Difficulty in Concentration

Difficulty in concentration during reading can be caused by a psychological factor. Bad concentration will lead the students fail to comprehend the text. It can be worse when the students do reading test. Difficulty in concentration is another reason for students' poor reading because concentration is an important factor for a good and effective reading. Shaw (1959) states that comprehension of a text results from reading with concentration. But students, in most cases, cannot or do not concentrate properly while reading.

According to Peter (2001), external factors that influence the students in reading comprehension are reader environments. The environment factors can also influence the students in mastering and in learning English. Home and school are the two kinds of learners' environment that can influence their learning reading achievement. Students who have difficulty in concentration normally end up in regression which is a sign of reading difficulty. Some students of Huni-Valley Senior High School deviate in reading comprehension exercise because they are not able to concentrate when reading a text. It is necessary therefore to say that the regression among the target group is not deliberate neither is it seen as a means to retract information. The reading comprehension challenge put them off when they are reading. However, the researcher believes that some students show these signs because of difficulty in concentration.

2.8.4 House environment

It cannot be neglected that parents play important role in the home. Freeman and Long (1990) stated that every student needs attention from their parents to reach their learning achievement. Since learning English is not the same as learning their various L1, children's need parents or his/her family attention to learn about English. Learning reading without family attention will make students feel difficult in learning. They can feel down if no one supports them to learn the English text. Some of the students who have their parents support are able to do much better than those whose parents show little or no interest in their studies. This becomes obvious during reading comprehension.

2.8.5 School environment

The school environment also can be a cause of students learning difficulties in reading comprehension, such as school with lack of learning media. The lack of learning media such as English books, magazines or newspapers make reading learning process become ineffective and will be impeding students in understanding the material. When students are put in large groups, it becomes a problem for single teacher to attend to the needs of the students. On the other hand, students who feel neglected may pay little attention during instructional time. Aaron and Joshi (1992) state that a crowded classroom hinders the teacher who tries to adjust his or her instructional time to meet the individual needs. With the English text books and other reading materials not being enough in the school, the students are likely to develop negative behaviour towards reading as whole. This case is not different in Huni-Valley SHS, where the researcher intends to study and suggest remediation.

2.9 Measures to improve reading comprehension

There is a positive relationship between learners' reading strategies and their reading comprehension skill. Brookbank, Grover, Kullberg, and Strawser (1999) indicated that the application of various reading strategies increased learners' reading comprehension proficiency. Golinkoff (1975) showed that poor readers read different texts similarly and did not try to learn through reading strategies. Ahmadi & Pourhossein (2012) represented that strategy has a positive effect on the reading comprehension proficiency of readers. Reading strategy ameliorated the reading skill of proficient and less proficient readers.

Readers applied different reading strategies and knew what, when, how, and why to use them in their reading comprehension process.

Ahmadi & Pourhossein (2012) stated that learners who learn reading strategies try to recognize the main point of a paragraph, to elaborate unclear words, phrases, or sentences, and to summarize their reading. These strategies aid readers to solve their problems when reading texts and assess their planning and its result. Cziko (1980) stated that ESL/EFL lower proficiency learners hinge on orthographic qualities of the text words while advanced proficiency learners depend on syntactic, semantic, and discourse cues. According to Gu (1994), good and weak learners were different in using strategies in reading comprehension.

Chia (2000) said that readers intended to use more local reading strategies than global strategies. Parry (1996) expressed that her learners strongly applied bottom-up strategies than top-down strategies because it was related to their traditional approaches. The impact of reading strategies on the learners' reading proficiency was investigated by Su (2001). The results obtained from this study represented that

readers' reading strategies are very useful to make better their reading skill. A study was done about reading strategy training by Song (1998). The findings indicated that reading strategy is one of the powerful factors in improving reading comprehension skill. The findings also revealed that foreign language reading should incorporate explicit strategy training.

If readers want to read various kinds of texts they should use different reading strategies. Good readers interact with texts to expand an understanding of the information before them. Some good reader strategies are predicting, forecasting, deducing, summarizing, examining, and evaluating. There are a lot of tasks that teachers can use them to help with reading strategies in particular content areas. The application of effective comprehension strategies is very important when learners want to improve their reading comprehension skill. These strategies provide particular instructions for expanding comprehension skills (Cain & Oakhill 2009). There are some useful strategies for improving reading comprehension skill. They are reciprocal teaching, instructional conversations, visualization, partner reading, multiple reading strategies, assessment, and running records. In the following section, these strategies are explained in detail. According to reciprocal teaching, teachers teach learners to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for parts of a text. These strategies have been regarded as effective strategies for developing learners' reading comprehension skill. That is, learners will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if teachers give them mental instruments for understanding a text (Pressley 2006).

According to Goldenberg (1991), class discussions help learners produce opinions and new questions. He continued that all of our knowledge results from questions

which are another way of telling that question-asking that is our most significant mental tool. There are different kinds of questions that teachers should consider. They are remembering, testing understanding, application or solving, invite synthesis or creating, and evaluation and judging. EFL teachers should form these kinds of questions by “think-aloud” before, during, and after reading a text.

When learners relate a passage to an experience, another book, or other facts about the world, they are “making a connection.” Making connections aid learners understand the writer's intentions. Visualization is a mental image created in a readers' mind while reading a text which brings words to life and helps them improve their reading comprehension skill. Asking sensory questions can help learners become better visualizers. Partner reading is a strategy that is created for pairs. Teachers select two suitable books for their learners to read. Learners should first read their own book. Once they have finished this, they are given the chance to write down their own general questions for their partners. Learners read books out loud to one another and ask one another questions about the book they read. This strategy can provide a model of fluent reading and helps learners learn decoding skills by presenting positive feedback and direct chances for teachers to circulate in the class, watch their learners, and present individual corrections (Bell 2009).

Tompkins (2011) expressed that there are informal and formal assessments to check an individual's comprehension skill and utilization of comprehension strategies. Informal assessments are done by observation and the use of instruments such as story boards, word sorts, and interactive writing. Formal assessments are district or state assessments that assess all learners on significant skills.

Learners should develop their background knowledge, teach text structures to them, and persuade them to prepare for, monitor, and evaluate their own reading comprehension skill. They should teach their learners how to use reading comprehension strategies appropriately and effectively. They have the responsibility of teaching reading comprehension strategies to their learners either separately or in combination. They should teach their learners to recognize and apply the text's organizational structures to understand, learn, and remember content. They should explain EFL learners how to establish and relate the sections of a text and teach general structures of informational texts. They can guide their learners by high-quality discussion on the meaning of texts. They can choose appropriate texts to support comprehension development in learners. They should teach reading comprehension skill with many types of texts. In addition, they can choose texts with word recognition and comprehension difficulty that are suitable for the learners' reading ability and the educational tasks, and finally they can help their learners find the goals and advantages of reading comprehension.

2.10 Reading Comprehension at Senior High School

Reading comprehension means to understand what has been read. English has been taught as a foreign language in Ghana. However, it does not mean that the result of teaching English in the school was satisfying, even though the fact is teaching reading process are continuously being taught within three years at Senior High School. Reading makes students enjoy their learning process and gives several advantages in finding some information that is needed. It is an unlimited area that makes students learn about many things, such as education, politic, social, culture, religion, and health. All of that information can be obtained by reading.

Nowadays, at Senior High School, teaching reading intends to develop students' skill in reading comprehension. The students are expected to comprehend social function, text structure, and language features in reading descriptive, narrative, recount texts, expository texts and so on in oral and written form. However, in a real situation, the students do not achieve the curriculum expectation and have lower ability in reading comprehension. In addition, to overcome the difficulties of students in reading, teachers must first find out or know what difficulties are experienced by students during the reading process and factors that cause difficulty in reading.

2.11 Conceptual framework

This study has its theoretical basis in the learning theories of Dewey and Slavin, as well as findings introduced by Yousefvand. Reading is a complex activity. A significant element of reading comprehension is the reader's capacity to incorporate current information mentioned previously in the text (Yousefvand 2010). Dewey as cited in Jenlink (2009) argued that students need to be active recipients of information by discussing and deliberating in groups and collectively participating in the learning procedure together rather than passively receiving information. Dewey argued that the education process should concentrate on the subject material to be taught. He held that content must be depicted in a way that lets the students relate the information to prior knowledge. He recommended a hands-on approach to learning or a down-to-earth education interconnected with experiential learning.

Dewey as cited by Jenlink (2009) also stated that the teacher an active role in the learning process and should be a guide and mediator for the actively participating student. For Dewey, the teacher should not stand in front of the class and lecture to passive students, but should become an active partner with the students in the learning

process. It was Dewey's contention that the teacher should also inspire self-reliance and self-motivation in the students to investigate the topic. This viewpoint has been very influential in education, and now, even a century later, it is currently employed with increasing fidelity in elementary and preliminary programs. Slavin (2012) noted disparities between English learners and English-proficient students, and explained that educators must focus on the reading abilities of English learners in more effective ways to guarantee their success in the future. He also stressed that the most important component in the education of English learners is the teacher's level of the training and proficiency in instructional methods and strategies. Furthermore, Slavin argued in favor of professional development, collaboration, cooperative learning, tutoring, parent support teams, and supervision of completion and conclusions for instructors.

2.12 Conclusion

In conclusion several factors that influence the ability to read and comprehend effectively have been outlined by the researcher in this chapter. Factor such as the teacher, learner, pedagogy, environmental and socio economic situation, language facility and methodology all play part in making the student read and comprehend appropriately. Fluent reading in English is the most important skill that the student has to acquire in order to progress in ladder since reading cuts across every part of the school curriculum. It thus remains the rock of basic education in the country.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, the population, sample and sampling, techniques, instrumentation, methods of data analysis as well as problems encountered during the administration of the questionnaires.

3.1 Research Approach

The research approach is a plan and a procedure that consist of the steps of broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation. It is therefore based on the nature of the research problem being addressed. It is the overall decision that involves a particular topic (Creswell, 2013).

In selecting a suitable approach to apply in research, there are some criteria to be taken into consideration. For instance, the nature of the research problem, the purpose of the project, availability of resources, time and financial background as well as the sensitivity of the issue at hand, the discipline of the study, the researcher's skills, personal interests, and experiences (Grover, 2015).

In order to study the reading comprehension challenges among students of Huni – Valley Senior High School, the study adopted a sequential explanatory qualitative approach for the research. Qualitative approach entails the collection and use of a variety of forms of empirical data. The obtained data allow researchers to acquire increased knowledge of the subject matter (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2009). Qualitative approach does not generate definitive deductions and can only be used to disclose how people comprehend and state their opinions and thoughts about a problem or subject. In qualitative approach, research bias throughout the process can

pose a problem in that researchers can bring their own point of view and assumptions, however unconscious, to the gathering and interpretation of data. For this reason, the conclusions drawn from qualitative methods cannot be broadened to widespread populations with the same degree of conviction that quantitative analyses can, as the findings are not tested to determine whether they are statistically substantial or due to chance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)

Because qualitative research approach is often dependent on researcher's individual conclusion and is dependent on researchers' interpretations, qualitative researchers must safeguard against being influenced by personal bias. Since qualitative researcher results cannot be easily generalized to other populations, qualitative research approach is often explorative and adapts to the prerequisites of a single population (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegle 2010). In this study, the findings might be generalized across Huni – Vallay Senior High School and potentially to other similarly areas, but they do not necessarily apply to all areas with reading comprehension challenges.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher intends using descriptive method in this work. The work is to identify the problem through the use of observation, interview and questionnaires. Random sampling was used to retrieve the necessary information needed for the study. The researcher used Huni- Valley Senior High School for the case because that where the researcher has observed cases of reading comprehension challenges among the students. S.H.S 2 students of Huni- Valley Senior High School were used for the study because that was the class where the researcher identified the problem. Some

teachers responded to questionnaires. The researcher notified the headmaster of Huni-Valley Senior High School verbally to gain access to research in the school

According to Gay (1987) cited in Bala (2007) the descriptive research involves the collection of data in order to test hypothesis or answer questions concerning the problem. It involves random selection of sample and then generalizing the results of sample in the population from which the sample was drawn.

This design was adopted because of its simplicity in terms of data analysis. This method helped the researcher to organize and summarize the data in meaningful forms such as tables and charts. Among other reasons for choosing the descriptive survey was the fact that it provides the means and available information for decision making for further research work on the subject under study.

3.4 Population

Since the focus was to identify reading comprehension challenges amongst S.H.S 2 students, the research targeted only Huni-Valley Senior High School because it comprises of all kinds teachers equally good qualification. It is therefore expected that students in such school do well in reading comprehension. This was mentioned because it is one of the Senior High Schools in the municipality which used to excel in the WASSCE exams but their performance keeps on declining especially in English. It is becoming a worry since the decline is not known.

The student population of Huni-Valley High School is 1300 with 400 being form two students, 430 form threes and form ones being 470 students. Out of this number, fifty students from the second year group were selected for the study of which thirty (30) are females and twenty (20) are males. The population also consists of 73 teachers

including the headmaster and his two assistants. With this number of teachers 13 of them being English.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

The selection of the fifty students for the study was done through the simple random sampling technique. According to Godwin (1995) “the simple random sampling is often an effectively practical way to create a representative sample.”

It is done in a way that, in selecting the fifty students for the study, the researcher wrote “Yes” or “No” on pieces of papers kept in a box and asked sixty students to pick from it. The students who picked “Yes” were selected at random to respond to the questionnaire. The same procedure was used for the teachers as well to ensure that effective sample and sampling method continued the desired number of respondents for the study.

3.6 Instrumentation

The researcher used observation, informal interview and questionnaires for the study. Two sets of questionnaire were given; one of the questionnaires was given to the students and another to the teachers to respond. Aside that, both teachers and students were observed and the students were interviewed. These instruments helped the researcher to obtain the needed information from the students as well as teachers.

3.7 Data Collection Protocol

The researcher had a discussion with the headmaster of Huni-Valley Senior High School verbally after that a letter was sent to him to seek permission officially to conduct the research in the school. He granted the permission which gave the

researcher the privilege to explain the purpose of this study to the teachers who will be involved in the study. They also willingly welcomed it.

The researcher also had interaction with the class and it was explained to them the essence of the study, thus to find out the causes of their reading comprehension challenges and to find possible solution to them.

3.8 Data Collection Process

Before the researcher carried out the study she had met selected student and had a reading comprehension lesson with them in the form of intervention. This was to confirm the problem of reading comprehension challenges in the class she handled, she first asked some students to read aloud individually and the students could not read all the passage given to them.

After all the students had had turns in reading, the researcher commended the class and assured them that she would help them to overcome their reading comprehension challenges. This exercise continued for some weeks and the researcher met the students three times a week after class at the school premises.

During the week after the students had been met for the first time and their needs assessed, the researcher prepared various comprehension tasks ranging from reading aloud to extensive reading. The mechanics of reading comprehension was also reviewed with the students. The reading comprehension task is found in the appendix. Each task took some days for the students to have practices and build their self confidence in reading which contributed positively towards their reading comprehension challenges.

3.8.1 Reading Aloud of Passage

The researcher asked students to read unit (3) from their English Text Book where some key words were selected. The researcher went through the words with the students of the pronunciations of the words, the meaning of words in context of the passage and then used them in sentence of their own. After several practice of these words, the students mastered the pronunciation of words and how their meaning be deduced from the passage.

3.8.2 Silent Reading

During the intervention with students, the researcher also introduced the students to do silent reading and explained to them the importance of silent reading. To the researcher, silent reading helps students to extract meaning directly from the written passage without passing through the sounds.

Again, it helps learners to read faster than reading aloud. The reading mechanics of using the reading eye span effectively and faster. The researcher asked students to read silently and go through the question raised under the passage. To test whether, they have actually read, some questions can be found at appendix.

During this intervention, the eclectic approach of reading was applied. Here, students were made to read silently for ten (10) minutes and related questions were assessed by the researcher for effective reading comprehension.

3.9 Administration of Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data were observation, informal interview and questionnaire. These strategies were carried on different occasions and on different days.

3.9.1 Observation

The researcher joined students and teachers in normal classes and observed them during a reading comprehension lesson. The researcher observed that some students could not read even a paragraph of the comprehension passage fluently when they were invited to read aloud individually. The researcher observed their deficiencies in reading individual words instead of reading according to sense groups, ignoring word endings and skipping of words.

The researcher also observed teachers in the staff common room discussing these some problems of reading when they were marking students' exercises.

When these observations were discussed with the teachers, they reiterated similar shortcomings of the students in class during lessons. They acknowledged that the students have reading comprehension challenges when it comes to reading their text books, summarizing and responding to questions on comprehension passages.

The researcher observed how students read and how the teachers responded to students' reading challenges. Again, the researcher observed how students use the English language in interacting with their friends on campus, outside the classroom. These observations were done in a conducive atmosphere.

3.9.2 Interview

In addition to the observation, interview was used. The interview was conducted orally for teachers and students. Some of the interviews were conducted in the classroom and under the tree. It was conducted in a 'face to face' manner. The process taken was informal which was characterized by free discussions, notwithstanding the set of questions involved. No rigid rules were involved. Time was allotted for the interviewees to give responses. Whenever the interview questions pose problems of misunderstanding to the respondents, the researcher repeats or reframes the question to suit the understanding of each category of respondents. The responses given helped the researcher in analyzing and interpreting the data.

3.9.3 Questionnaire

The third instrument used was questionnaire. Two sets of questions were administered, one to students and another to teachers. The first set of questionnaires was given to S.H.S students. There were 10 items. The questionnaires were designed with alternatives to choose from. The researcher gathered the students and the questionnaires were read and explained to them. They were left to complete the form independently. This use done so that students would understand and respond well to each items.

The second sets of questions were given to 10 teachers from the language department. The structure of the questionnaire followed the pattern set for students. Teacher's questionnaires were used to identify how teachers identified learners with reading comprehension challenges and their comments with regards to that. There were 10 items in all. However, was available to clear any doubt. These tools helped to bring

out the causes of reading difficulties among students. Both teachers and student's questionnaires are found in the appendix.

3.10 Validity and Reliability

According to Gesell (2005) cited in Bella (2007), "the goal of any good research is to have measures that are reliable and valid; validity is the extent to which a test measure what it purports to measure."

The researcher used three different instruments to test the quality of students reading comprehension; the researcher observed different lessons and saw that students read key words, sentence and passage from a text book, and also observation of students as they read items from the questionnaire. These observations about students reading comprehension were confirmed by the responses students gave to the interview questions and the questionnaire. The researcher further tested for validity of student's responses through open discussions with teachers. The responses of teachers to questionnaire enclosed the sentiments expressed by the students.

From the result obtained, the researcher can conclude that the researcher instrument provided valid and reliable information needed for analysis and interpretation.

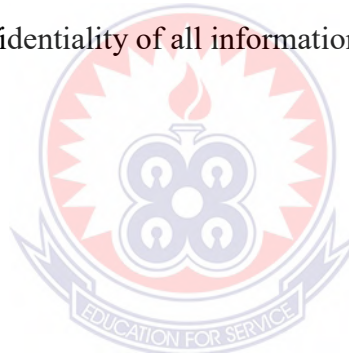
3.11 Data analysis

The completed questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency before processing the responses. The questionnaires were sorted. The questionnaires were categorized on the basis of similarities of information provided by respondents. The organization of data was done according to research questions from which the conclusions were drawn. The information was tabulated and analyzed using

descriptive statistics, namely number of persons and percentages. The information was later presented using tables for ease of understanding and analysis.

3.12 Ethical consideration

A written informed consent for the study was also obtained from the authorities of Huni – Valley Senior High School. Some teachers who offered to help as research assistants were trained to assess client's ability to comprehend in plain language information about the study and to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained after comprehensive explanation of the purpose and procedure of the study from participants. Participants were informed about their right to withdraw or refuse to be part of the study at any point in time and that would not affect them negatively and were assured of confidentiality of all information that were to be obtained.



CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Having dealt with the research methodology in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the findings of the study to identify factors contributing to the reading comprehension challenges among the S.H.S 2 students of Huni-Valley Senior High School. Children usually get ready to read before the initiation of formal instruction. They bring literacy to school, literacy that has emerged through the influence of the family and the community during early years. They are aware of print. Some can read common signs and labels and can write their names (Lerner 2000). Reading is known to be taught at the early stages in the school curriculum so it is assumed that by the time a child completes his basic education, he /she would be able to read. However, when the situation is on the contrary, it sometimes puzzles and surprises many to attract concerns. Huni – Valley Senior High School is no exception to such problems.

The analysis is mostly based on the research questions in chapter one as the major headings for the analysis. In order to ensure that information collected on the reading comprehension challenges of Huni –Valley S.H.S 2 students under investigation was reliable and consistent, data was collected through questionnaires which were distributed to the respondents thus, the students as well as some of the teachers. The data was presented in accordance with the types of questions posed and the response the students and the teachers gave. However, observation was done, and oral interview was also conducted for students. Furthermore, the researcher also analyzed the questionnaires in relation to the statement of the problem, objective of the study and the review of the related literature.

The findings are presented under the following headings:

1. The nature of the reading comprehension challenges
2. Causes of students comprehension challenges
3. Appropriate techniques to improve the students reading comprehension challenges.

4.1 The nature of the reading comprehension challenges

The study found out that most of the students could not read and understand at their level. As they read, they committed reading errors such as: skipping of the words, mispronouncing words, reading individual words instead of reading according to sense group and making several stops resulting in slow reading, word recognition, reading comprehension among others. The number of students who read well from teachers.

Teachers' questionnaire

Question 1: How many students read well?

Table 1: Good readers

Responses	No. of teachers	Percentage (%)
0- 10	3	30
11- 20	6	60
21 -30	1	10
31 – 40	-	-
41-50	-	-
Total	10	100

From the table, the number of students stood at 50 and was grouped into five ranges: zero to ten (0-10), eleven to twenty (11-20), twenty-one to thirty ((21-30), thirty-one to forty (31-40), and forty-one to fifty (41-50). Six teachers out of ten teachers representing 60% indicated that a maximum of eleven to twenty students read well. Three teachers representing 30% also said that between ten students could read well and only a teacher who represents 10% said twenty-one to thirty students could read well. It is obvious that a high number of students that is more than half of the class could not well and that is a big problem in the school. Teachers were further asked about the nature of the reading comprehension challenges in the school.

Teachers' questionnaire

Question 2: What is the nature of the reading comprehension challenges?

Table 2: Nature of Reading Comprehension Challenges

Responses	No of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Mispronunciation of words	4	40
Misunderstanding of passages	3	30
Unable to answer comprehension questions	2	20
Ignore word endings	1	10
Total	10	100

Also, the teachers responded to the nature of reading comprehension challenges. Four of the teachers thus 40% reiterated that students mispronounce words. Three teachers representing 30% also indicated that students misunderstand passages given to them to read: two of the teachers which are 20% again pointed out that students are unable

to answer comprehension questions. One of the teachers representing 10% responded that students ignore words when reading.

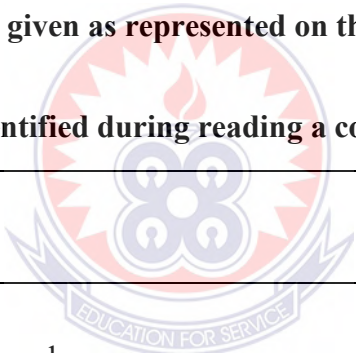
Again, the researcher wanted to find out from the students themselves difficulties they notice when reading.

Students' questionnaire

Question 1: Which of the challenges do you identify when reading a comprehension passage?

When students were asked about the kind of difficulties they encounter during reading, responses were given as represented on the table below.

Table 3: Challenges identified during reading a comprehension passage



Response	No. of students	Percentage (%)
I read very slowly	6	12
Sometimes I skip/repeat words	5	10
Sometimes I read but do not understand the passage.	29	58
I sometimes find it difficult to answer comprehension questions	10	20
Total	50	100

From the students' responses, about 29 of the students themselves representing 58% admitted that they do not understand the passages they read, 10 of them representing 20% indicated that they, find it difficult to answer comprehension questions, 6 of the students representing 12% read slowly but 5 of them representing 10% responded that they skip or repeat words.

4.2 Causes of students reading comprehension challenges

According to the study, there are number of reasons that lead to students reading comprehension challenges. Some of these can be attributed to teachers, the reading materials, the learner, school and home environment and other socio-cultural factors. These are analyzed below:

4.2.1 Teachers

There seems to be a lot of opinions of causes of reading comprehension challenges are. Scholars have pointed out that so many factors of which the researcher thinks cannot be left out. Reading comprehension challenge can be as a result of inadequate teaching skills. Reading achievement is related to the skill of the teacher, and that the students taught by teacher who do not have much knowledge in the language tend to be especially backward in reading. (Reid & Donaldson 1977, p. 62). Depending on the kind of course and training the teacher received, they might or might not be able to identify students reading comprehension challenges, and to help them overcome it. Most students require close supervision if they are to perform better in academic work. Teachers have a lot of work in teaching literacy skills so that a lot of students would become fluent readers who understand what they read.

Though the researcher did not actually ask of teachers' professional qualification, it was observed that some of the teachers in the school, did not actually offer language courses but upon their arrival in the school and there were not enough language teachers, they were made to teach English. This is because they did communication skills in their tertiary education. Most of these teachers offered secretarial and business courses but because of their knowledge in business they teach languages precisely English.

As pointed earlier on, teachers play a very vital role in the students reading skills development. Students' readings skills development does not just happen unless they are assisted by competent teachers, it is a fact that education is a phenomenon where many ideas, strategies, methods do emerge every now and then. So, it is important that teachers upgrade their knowledge to embrace new methods and strategies in teaching, particularly reading. The researcher believes that if more professionally trained teachers are recruited into the school and teachers upgrade their teaching methodologies, it will go a long way to develop the students reading skill and improve upon their performances. The researcher wanted to find out from the students, the teachers who engage them in reading.

Students' questionnaire

Question 2: Which subject teachers engage students to read in class?

Table 4: Some teachers who engage students to read in class.

Responses	No. of students	Percentages (%)
English	34	68
Social studies	14	28
Integrated science	2	4
I.C.T	-	-
Total	50	100

From the data, it's realized that the English teachers are the ones who engage students mostly in reading. 34 students representing 68% indicated that English teachers engage them to read in class. 14 students which represent 28% confirmed that social studies teachers invite them to read, 2 students representing 4% indicated that

integrated science teacher call them to read in class but students did not indicate that I.C.T teachers make them read in class. It is obvious that some teachers show little interest in developing students reading skills.

Almost all subjects revolve around reading. In academia, reading is the pivot. When teachers involve students in reading even when they are teaching non- reading subjects. I think they are not far from right. But from the data above, students responded that some teachers do not invite students to read in class at all, especially the I.C.T teachers whose subject is also reading inclined. English teachers whose major responsibility is to enhance reading skills, even though they are doing well needs to do more than what the data presents. This brings the issue of competency and experience on the part of language literacy teachers. Teachers should design varied strategies in the class to help improve upon the students reading ability. Headmasters have the responsibility of employing the right frame of methods to allocate subjects for teachers who are qualified, have the adequate skills and experience to handle certain areas.

The researcher wanted to find out the reaction of teachers when they are not able to read and explain what they have read well.

Students' questionnaire

Question 3: What do your teachers do when you are not able read and explain what you have read?

Table 5: Ways teachers correct students

Responses	No. of students	Percentage (%)
Some teachers ridicule me	36	72
Some teachers help me to explain by giving clues	8	16
Some call other students to read and explain it.	6	12
Some teachers break the sentences in bits	-	-
Total	50	100

Some teachers are inefficient on how to assist poor readers because they lack the skills to do so. However, the responses above from the students attest that teachers are not adequately prepared to handle all the students according to their needs. 36 students representing 72%, which is more than half off the class indicated that teachers ridicule them for reading poorly; 8 students of about 16% responded that some teachers help them to explain by giving them clues; 6 of them representing 12% of the students responded that some teachers call other students read and explain for them when they are not able to do it. None of the students responded that some of the teachers break the sentences in bits for to read. If students are ridiculed for not being able to read well and explain then there is a problem with the methods teachers use in helping their students to read well and understand. As pointed earlier in the literature review, children are of unique differences. Since there are some children with high

intelligent Quotient's (IQ), however there are others too with low IQ. It is very common in a classroom situation to find both slow and fast learners. Some are good in reading while others are poor readers. In this situation, it is the teacher's duty to use appropriate method of teaching to absorb all children whether good or poor readers into the teaching strategies in order to improve on the poor reading habits.

Unfortunately, most of the teachers do not have adequate knowledge on how to help such learners with special needs. The training that some teachers get sometimes does not adequately prepare them to handle all students according to their needs. As result, even though a teacher identifies a student who is poor reader, he or she is not able to help.

From this scenario, it can be said that teachers use the same method of teaching for all students in the classroom despite one being a good or poor reader. All necessary materials can be in place but this will not help improve the skills of poor readers so long as the teacher who is the key in this whole process is not competent enough to help poor readers. This means that the good reader have advantage over the poor reader since the latter is not given the chance to improve themselves where reading is concerned and he or she is left out of the learning process.

4.2.2 The Reading materials

As is the case with most learners, slow readers learn most comfortably with materials that are written on their ability level (Clark et al., 2008). The reading level is of primary concern, but teachers can help their readers to select helpful material in other ways, choose stories or books with a smaller number of difficult words, short passages that deliver clear messages, subheads that organize the flow of ideas and helpful instructions.

The reading material given to students to read also form part of students' inability to read properly and understand well. Teaching and learning normally starts with the known, smallest and easiest things then latter children learn to read longer and more complicated things. Learning to read and comprehend is a gradual process. It starts by learning the alphabet, learning to read words, then sentences and so on. It is important to note that most of the textbooks used in our schools are not suitable of the level of the students. The concepts, structure and vocabulary are sometimes beyond the capabilities of students. Lamb and Arnold (1980 p.415) in a bid to find reading challenges have identified unsuitable reading material as a problem. They suggested that if children continue to experience challenges due to materials which contain vocabulary and concept beyond their levels of understanding, they lose interest in the reading entirely. Whatever children students read must suit their level in order to develop positive interest toward reading. A provision was made to find out from teachers the kind of reading material their students read in class.

Teachers' questionnaire

Question 2: What do they read in your presence?

Table 6: Reading Materials

Responses	No. of teachers	Percentage (%)
Text book	7	70
Library books	-	-
Chalkboard summary	-	-
Copied notes	3	30
Total	10	100

According to the data, 7 teachers representing 70% responded that the students read textbook and 3 of the teachers representing 30% indicated that students sometimes read copied notes. None of the teachers mentioned library books and chalkboard summary because there is no time allocated on the timetable for library. Even where there is library period, some teachers want to use to teach or do something else. Therefore, textbooks are the common materials used in schools. Ghani (1993) indicated that most teachers might have problems in finding the right reading materials for their students from their environment. He further advised that teachers should strike a balance between content and language when preparing reading materials for their learners. Therefore, the curriculum planners and the textbook authors in charge of preparing the textbooks for the students should ensure that the language used in the book corresponds with the reading and cognitive ability of the students at the students at that level.

Again, the researcher wanted to find out what drives students away from reading.

Students' questionnaire

Question 4: What discourages you from reading?

Table 7: How students are discouraged from reading

Responses	No. of students	Percentage (%)
Some of the words are difficult to read	31	62
The text books are inadequate	5	10
Some of the passages are lengthy.	14	28
Total	50	100

From the study, when students were asked why they discouraged from reading, about 31 students representing 62% of the students indicated the difficulty of word structure and vocabularies used in their books. 14 students which represent 28% percentage also responded that it's because of the lengthy passages given, and the remaining 5 students thus 10% reiterated that textbooks are inadequate in the schools. Some of the textbooks used in the schools contribute to the students challenges in reading comprehension. Passages given are sometimes not pertaining to the students' environment so therefore the students are unfamiliar with the words. Having been discouraged from reading due to the difficulty content of texts in lengthy passages, students sometimes are paired to share a single textbook due to inadequacy of textbooks which also contribute to ineffectiveness in reading comprehension. The researcher believes that the Ghana Education Service curriculum designers and that matter teachers, should consider the selection of adequate and appropriate materials for various classes. Slow readers succeed with the same pace as faster reader as long as all the stakeholders maintain positive attitude and select materials and approaches that accommodate the student's learning speed.

4.2.3 The learner

A positive attitude on the part of the learner is also crucial to the treatment of challenges in reading and learning. For learners to feel successful, they need to be aware of their unique learning strength, so that they may apply them effectively while working to strengthen the lagging areas (Webb 1992). The learner needs to feel loved and appreciated as an individual, whatever his or her challenges in school. Students were asked about what they actually do when there is no teacher in class.

Students' questionnaire**Question 5: What do you do when there is no teacher in your class?****Table 8: What do students do when there is no teacher in class?**

Responses	No. of students	Percentage (%)
I play	14	28
I talk with friends	29	58
I read	5	10
I leave the class	2	4
Total	50	100

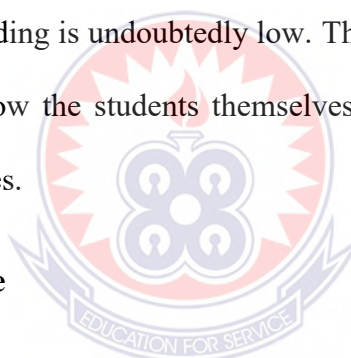
From the above data, it's very apparent that students resort to other things other than learning. When teachers are not around, they tend to spend their leisure time on non-educative things. About 5 students representing 10% only read in the absence of their teachers. About 29 students representing 58% of the students just talk with their friends when there is no teacher. 14 of them representing 28% of the students resort to playing in the absence of their teachers and 2 of the students which represent 4% even take their of the class as indicated above.

Another question was asked to find out whether students like reading.

Question 6: Do you like reading?**Table 9: Reading in class.**

Responses	No. of students	Percentage (%)
Yes	11	22
No	39	78
Total	50	100

Most students do not show interest in reading for one reason or another. Only 11 students representing 22% responded that they like reading. The rest of the students sincerely responded no. this clearly shows how students' reading ability is affected since their interest in reading is undoubtedly low. The researcher again wanted to find out from the teachers how the students themselves contribute to their own reading comprehension challenges.

Teachers' questionnaire**Question 6: How do students contribute to their reading comprehension challenges?****Table 10: How students contribute to their challenges**

Responses	No of teachers	Percentage (%)
Lazy to read	7	70
Inattention in class	2	20
Indifference to education	-	-
Peer pressure	1	10
Total	10	100

According to the above data, the teachers indicate that some learners do not read well because they feel lazy to read. 7 teachers out of the 10 teachers representing 70% attested to that. 2 other teachers representing 20% said students are inattentive in class when it reading comprehension lessons and 1 teacher which represent 10% feels students are influenced by their peers on their reading. On the whole, as indicated from the data above, students themselves contribute to their own inability to read.

4.2.4 School Environment

Some of the school practices can contribute to students reading comprehension challenge. Students reading comprehension challenges are often not practicing enough to improve three reading comprehension abilities due to large class size. Students who do not read well and understand certainly stand the chance of being poor readers in the continuous classes. This is because the learners are many in class and teachers are also supposed to finish a certain scheme of work within a stipulated period. Also, it is interesting to note that students who use the language proficiently are automatically good readers. In the same way, when students are not able to express themselves in the language which is used as medium of instruction, they would definitely not be familiar with the vocabulary and that will also affect their reading comprehension. From the researcher's observation, hardly would one find students of Huni-Valley Senior High communicating in English which is supposed to be the official language in the school. This does help to improve their reading comprehension ability.

Provision was made to find out how the subject contributes to students reading comprehension problems.

Teachers' questionnaire

Question 4: In ways does the school contribute to the poor reading comprehension?

Table 11: Causes of Poor Reading

Responses	No of students	Percentage (%)
Large class	6	60
Poor methods of teaching	1	10
Lack of effective supervision	-	-
Inadequate reading materials	3	30
Total	10	100

When learners are grouped into large classes, it becomes difficult for teachers to attend to all the learners needs individually. Often instructions for solving reading comprehension challenge are ineffective due the large class size and students do not much in such schools.

Large class size contributes to students' inability to academically perform well. From the data, 6 teachers representing 60 percentage attributed some of the students reading comprehension inefficiencies to large class size, 3 of the teachers representing 30% reiterated to the inadequate reading materials in the school is also a factor to students' reading comprehension challenges. The reading materials which should to help to widen students' vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension abilities is not enough in the school. Unfortunately, 1 teacher representing 10% indicated that poor methods of teaching are a causal factor of reading comprehension challenges in the school.

4.2.5 Factors in the Home, Social and Cultural Environment.

The home, social and cultural environment where learners grow also influence their ability to read. Homes that are plagued with poverty and family instability and neighborhoods where violence is common, produce learners who are “at risk” of school failure. The combinations of individual and environmental causes produce an increased risk for reading comprehension challenges. Learners who are hungry and homeless have little energy to focus on education. Their overburdened, often uneducated parents and guardians may lack the time and skills to nurture literacy by reading books with them, encouraging them to read and do homework or communicating with their teachers. Learners who grow up in a healthy and stimulating learning environment will always have advantage over those who come from less stimulating conditions.

The researcher wanted to find out from teachers on how parents or guardians of the students also play part in their wards inability to read and comprehend.

Teacher’s questionnaire

Question 5: How do parents or guardians contribute to the problem?

Table 12: Why parents contribute to students’ challenge

Responses	No of teachers	Percentage (%)
Indiscipline	1	10
Uncooperative attitude of parents	4	40
Child labour	-	-
Indifferent towards education	5	50
Total	10	100

It is rather unfortunate that some parents do not see the need to even educate their wards so they don't show interest their wards education. Due to the high economic problems in the country, most parents live home early in the morning and come back very late in the evening, and others do not have formal education so they do not have time to monitor their wards progress in school or even at home. According to the data, 5 of the teachers representing 50% responded that parents have indifferent towards education. 4 of the teachers representing 30% indicated that parents do not cooperative to help improve their wards reading challenge. The remaining 1 teacher representing 10% also indicated that parents are indiscipline towards their ward's education. Learners from poor, undereducated and uneducated home are heavily affected.

Students' questionnaire

Question 7: What do you do after school?

Table 13: Things students do after School

Responses	No of students	Percentage (%)
I sell items	24	48
I help in house chore	13	26
I do extra classes	4	8
I am free to do whatever I like	9	18
Total	50	100

It could be inferred from the table that most of the students are engaged in trading after school. About 24 of the students representing 48% responded that they sell things after school. 13 of them representing 26% replied that they help in house

chores and 9 of the students representing 18% said they are free to do whatever they like. Only 4 of the students representing 8% do extra classes after school. Generally, the assertion is that these students have a huge responsibility after they had closed from school leaving no time to bear. Their academic life is heavily affected since they have little time to read. From the data, it is very pathetic that out of the 50 students in the class, 24 of them which is almost half of the class are engaged in selling after school. This is due to poverty in the homes in which these students belong; their educational carrier therefore comes under threat.

4.3 Ways to improve reading comprehension skills

Reading comprehension challenges present serious and potentially lifelong problem. Children who do not read well are more likely to be dropped out of school, become teen parents, or enter the juvenile justice system. Thus, remediating reading comprehension challenges early in the learners' school carriers has potential long-term benefits to the individual as well as society. The school, teachers and parents can help in various ways to help improve students reading comprehension abilities. The researcher wanted to find out from teachers ways that could help better students reading skills.

Teachers' questionnaire**Question 9: What must be done to improve readings comprehension skills?****Table 14: Improving Reading skills by the school.**

Responses	No of students	Percentage (%)
Teachers must use the right method of teaching reading comprehension	2	20
Students must make reading their habit.	6	60
The school must provide good book in the library	2	20
Total	10	100

From the data, two of the teachers representing 20% out of the seven responded that adopting the right method of teaching reading comprehension can help improve students reading comprehension ability. 6 teachers representing 60 percent said student should make reading their habit. This habit will help them acquire more vocabulary, improve on their fluency and also rectify their reading comprehension challenge. Finally, two of the teachers responded that more good books should be provided at the school library for students to read. Story books for instance widen student's horizon. Therefore, furnishing library with variety of reading books will make students develop interest in reading comprehension.

4.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, teachers suggested some remedies that, the school, parents and other stakeholders could do to better the reading comprehension of students as follows;

Firstly, every school could be allowed to draw a suitable timetable that would factor in more reading. Meanwhile, all teachers, not necessarily teachers of English language, should encourage students to read. Students must also be given reading assignment regularly. English language teachers should increase their comprehension test for students.

Secondly, parents should keep their wards busy on their books, provide material and emotional support to students and motivate teachers to do their best. Students should be using their leisure to read and avoid mocking at their friends' reading problems. They should be interested in reading library books, newspapers and learn to communicate in English.

Books developers must develop community-based books. This would sustain the interest of learners and would push them to read more. The electronic media should develop movies, films, documentaries in English.

Finally, the Government should give priority to reading and give the teachers the necessary push to teach reading comprehension effectively. All teachers perceived that students stand the chance to benefit greatly if they can read and interpret what have read. Their academic performance and advancement to higher education would be brighter. Again, the students' morale would be enhanced. Hence, they should be self-discipline so as to enjoy proper report with their teachers and parents.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATION, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the findings of the study were discussed with reference to the research questions and the literature review. In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented, conclusions are drawn down on the basis of research questions and findings of the study and recommendations are made.

5.1 Summary of findings

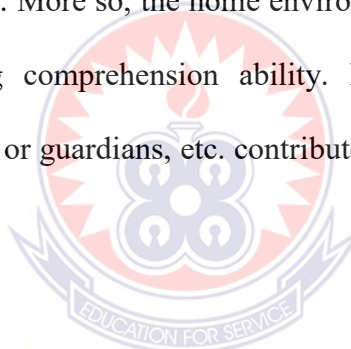
Reading comprehension is essential to success in a society. A society suffers when citizens cannot read and understand. People with low reading comprehension levels comprise of the many unemployed, high school dropouts, the poor and those convicted of crimes. The growth of poverty and the loss of family values all show some association with poor reading (Richeck et al. 1996, p. 3). The purpose of the study was to identify the causes of reading comprehension challenges among S.H.S 2 students of Huni – Valley Senior High School. it was also to identify ways to assist students of Huni – Valley SHS 2 to overcome their reading comprehension challenges and develop the habit of reading.

Findings of this study indicated that students of Huni – Valley S.H.S 2 have reading comprehension challenges. Some of these challenges include reading very slowly, skipping words, understanding passages and finding it difficult to answer comprehension questions. This is a big challenge for teachers who handle these learners. This can be very frustrating for both the teachers and learners especially

where the teachers do not understand the causes of reading comprehension challenges and how to help them out.

According to the findings of this study, teachers' competence and methods of teaching contribute to the students' inability to read and understand. In addition, learners' attitude to learning negatively affects their reading comprehension skills development.

The research also reveals that some of the textbooks used in schools are not suitable for the level of students; this contributes to students' inability to read well. School factors such as large class size greatly contribute to the students reading comprehension problems. More so, the home environment of students also negatively affects students reading comprehension ability. Many factors such as poverty, illiteracy level of parents or guardians, etc. contribute to learners' inability to read and understand.

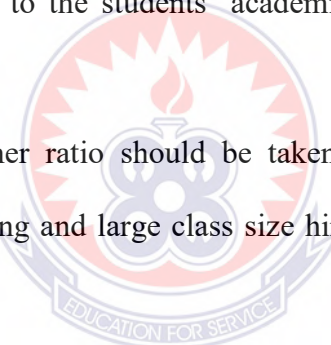


5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

- Teachers who have little knowledge of the methods of language teaching but are made to the subject must upgrade themselves to enrich their teachings methodologies.
- Through workshops, teachers should be exposed to methods of diagnostics assessment of reading so that they would be able to identify those learners with special needs such as reading comprehension challenges early enough and provide effective remediation.

- Parents, teachers and even friends should be able to identify learners with reading comprehension challenges in order to assist them to overcome their problems. These learners with such challenges should be encouraged by teachers to read different reading books, story books and give reading assignment every day. Students who do well in their reading comprehension assignments should be motivated.
- Parents should be educated by teachers on the effects of students' involvement in too many household chores on their ward's studies.
- The Ministry of Education and other stakeholder should provide sufficient and relevant teaching material to support teaching and learning. Textbooks supply should correspond to the students' academic level to encourage students to read.
- The teacher- learner ratio should be taken into consideration. This would reduce overcrowding and large class size hinder proper attention for students with special needs.



5.3 Suggestion for further research

The researcher makes the following suggestion for further research. This study only covered on district so similar study should be carried out in other districts since Prestea Huni – Valley is just one district amongst another district in the Western Region. A study on in-depth cause of social and emotional problems affecting students reading comprehension abilities in Ghana is suggested to be undertaken where students would be involved to give out their views. This study mainly concentrated on reading comprehension challenges. Sometimes reading comprehension challenges may occur alongside writing challenges while they may

sometimes occur independently. Therefore, more studies are recommended to cover writing challenges, difficulties to do with other subjects.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that reading strategies have great impact on the students' reading comprehension ability. Students are not just passive receivers of information but they are active makers of meaning. From this research work, the researcher discovered that when students were introduced to reading comprehension strategies, they read with better understanding by applying the interactive strategy. Students who can read and understand well make their parents and teachers happy. Therefore, teachers and parents should do well to help students cultivate good reading comprehension culture.



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APPENDICES

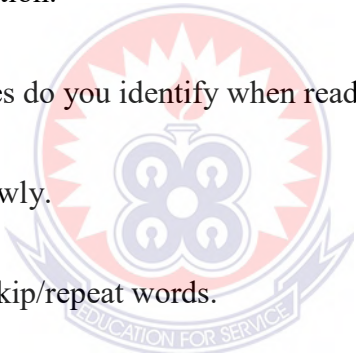
APPENDIX A

Questionnaire for students

I am conducting a research into factors that leads to student's comprehension challenges in Huni -Valley Senior High School with regards to S.H.S 2. As you learn English as a subject and involves in reading activity your responses to the questions below are of great help for the success of my study.

I therefore kindly request you to give genuine responses that will be kept confidential. As you give your responses, you are not required to write your name. thank you in advance for your cooperation.

1. Which of the challenges do you identify when reading a comprehension passage?

- 
- (a) I read very slowly.
 - (b) Sometimes I skip/repeat words.
 - (c) Sometimes I read but do not understand the passage.
 - (d) I sometimes find it difficult to answer comprehension questions.

2. Which subject teachers engage students to read in class?

- (a) English teacher.
- (b) Social Studies
- (c) Integrated Science teacher.
- (d) I.C.T teacher.

3. What do your teachers do when you are not able to read and explain what you have read?

- (a) Some teachers ridicule me.
- (b) Some teachers help me explain by giving me clues.
- (c) Some call other students to read and explain it.
- (d) Some teachers break the sentence in bits.

4. What discourages you from reading?

- (a) Some of the words are difficult to read.
- (b) The text books are inadequate.
- (c) Some of the passages are lengthy.

5. What do you do when there is no teacher in your class?

- (a) I play
- (b) I talk with friends
- (c) I read
- (d) I leave the class

6. Do you like reading? YES () NO ().

7. What do you do after school?

- (a) I sell items
- (b) I help in house chores.

(c) I do extra classes.

(d) I am free to whatever I like.

8. Is there anyone who encourages you to read at home? YES () NO ().

9. Which of the materials do you read at home?

(a) Story book/newspaper.

(b) School textbooks.

(c) Notes given by teachers

(d) Bible/Quran.

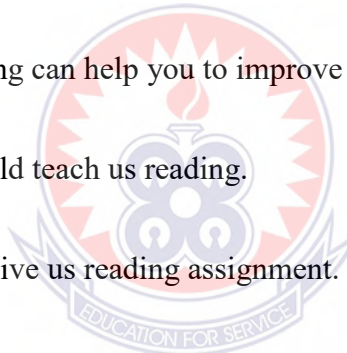
10. Which of the following can help you to improve your reading. (Tick only one)

(a) Teachers should teach us reading.

(b) They should give us reading assignment.

(c) Teachers must help us to form reading groups.

(d) Teachers should not should not disgrace us in class for poor reading.



APPENDIX B

Questionnaire for Teachers

Thank you for your acceptance to respond to this questionnaire, please be informed that your response to the questions would help me identify the reading comprehension challenges among S.H.S students and your suggestions would also be taken in good faith, under no circumstances would your response would be use against you as well as any other person. I therefore request that you give genuine response. There is no need to provide your name. (Tick what you consider necessary).

1. How many students read well in your class?
(A).31-40 (B).21-30 (C).11- 20 (D). 0-10
2. What do they read in your presence?
A. text book.
B. library books
C. chalkboard summary.
D. copied notes.
3. What is the nature of reading comprehension challenges?
A. mispronunciation of words.
B. misunderstanding of passages.
C. unable to answer comprehension questions.

D. ignore word endings.

4. In what ways does the contribute to poor reading comprehension?

A. large class size.

B. poor methods of teaching.

C. lack of effective supervision.

D. inadequate reading materials.

5. How do parents/guardians contribute to the problem?

A. indiscipline.

B. uncooperative attitude of parents.

C. child labour.

D. indifferent towards education.



6. How do students contribute to their reading comprehension problems?

A. lazy to read.

B. inattention in class.

C. indifference to education.

D. peer influence.

7. What negative effect does poor read comprehension have on your students?

A. low academic performance.

B. disrespect for teachers.

- C. high school dropouts.
- D. poor command in English.

8. Which of the following could help students better their comprehension skills?

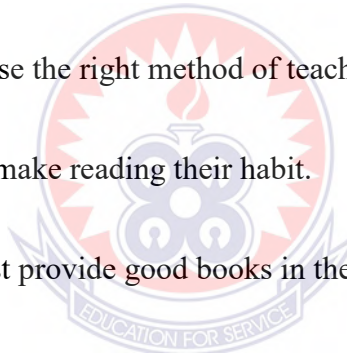
- A. small class size.
- B. reading competition.
- C. use of print and audio books.
- D. use of reading specialists.

9. What must be done to improve reading comprehension skills?

- A. teacher must use the right method of teaching reading comprehension.
- B. students must make reading their habit.
- C. the school must provide good books in the library.

10. What benefits can students enjoy for reading comprehension well?

- A. their morale is enhanced.
- B. academic performance and advancement would be brighter.



APPENDIX C 1

English for Senior High Schools, Book 2

Comprehension

Read the following passage carefully.

Controlling One's Temper.

When David stopped at the traffic lights, cars quickly pulled up to his left and right and, of course, behind him. The vehicle in the left lane **abreast of** David's car was one of the latest all-wheel-drives, and it had its glasses rolled all the way up; it was fully air-conditioned. David's was not. He wondered why on such a breezy morning, someone could decide to be cooped in such a box. He looked with **disdain** at the occupants. They were both ladies; one was in a military uniform and the driver was in a T-shirt which was bright red. He turned and looked at the traffic lights. The red was on.

Then he heard the tooting of the horn. He looked in the direction of the ladies again and saw that they were smiling at him. He had no doubt that he didn't know them. He looked to his right; perhaps they were trying to catch the attention in the lane farther from them. The taxi in the other lane was already **inching** forward even though the red light was still on. **Impatient** out, David thought and shifted gears too.

The lady-driver to his left tooted her horn again, and beside her rolled the glasses all the way down and the driver pointed to him and smiled broadly. The only that suggested he might know the lady was the gap in her upper teeth. But then, he still couldn't make either of them out.

Just then, he heard the taxi zoom off and he followed suit. The sleek car quickly moved abreast of his in the twinkling of an eye, and the girl in military fatigue was signaling him to stop, rather **officially**.

–What did I do that was wrong“, David thought, now a little apprehensive.

He pulled up at the nearest bus stop and the all-wheel-drive pulled up in front of his car. The young woman in military fatigue jumped out and was standing in front of his car as though to prevent him from driving off. She was smiling, but she said quite seriously: –Hey, man, you are under arrest!“

This time, it was anger welled up. He opened his door and was out of his car. He was a few centimetres taller than the soldier- girl and the girl had no gun. He felt the heat behind his ears that he always felt when he was angry.

–who does this girl think she is? Gosh! David thought, as he unconsciously clenched his hand into a fist and moved **threateningly** towards the lady.

–Yes David you are under arrest“, the other lady was his left then and was smiling broadly.

The other lady had mentioned his name and this armed him. Then it clicked; the gaps in the upper front teeth. –Hey! You are Dora?“ he asked and held out his hand for a handshake.

The lady grabbed his hand and pulled him to her for a hug. Now, David was embarrassed. And then the other lady came to his rescue by pulling them apart.

–Hey, David she said, as David gasped for breath. –Remember Helen?“ Dora asked pointing at the lady in military fatigue.

–Yeah, Helen of Troy. Was in the Adichire Playgroup. One year our junior ... and“
David was excited. Helen hugged him too.



APPENDIX C2

Sample Questions Students answered after silent reading.

1. What was David's first attitude to the air-conditioned car?
2. Impatient loud". Whom did David use this expression to describe? Why?
3. What did David feel when the lady in military uniform said that he was under arrest?
4. What does this action suggest about David's temper?
5. How did David's confrontation with the ladies end?

