UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

INFLUENCE OF EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS ON THE CHILD'S LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGONA WEST DISTRICT

CHARLES ABEIKU FORSON

MASTER OF EDUCATION

2022

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**INFLUENCE OF EMERGENT LITERACY SKILLS ON THE CHILD'S
LITERACY DEVELOPMENT IN THE AGONA WEST DISTRICT**

**CHARLES ABEIKU FORSON
(200052086)**

**A dissertation in the Department of Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School
of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Early Childhood)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

JUNE, 2022

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **Charles Abeiku Forson**, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.
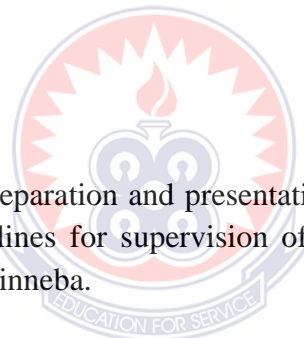
Signature: ………………………………….

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 dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Mrs. Patricia Ananga (Supervisor)

Signature: …………………………………..

Date: …………………….…………………

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Prof. Kwesi Yankah, Former Minister of State in Charge of

Tertiary Education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the influence of emergent literacy skills on literacy development among pupils in Basic Schools. The study adopted the qualitative case study for the study. The population used for the study comprised all basic school pupils in the Agona West District in the Central region of Ghana. The study adopted the maximum variation (heterogeneous) type of purposive sampling technique to select 20 pupils (4 males, 16 females) from four schools in the District. This study used observation and interview to examine the influence of emergent literacy on literacy development. Thematic analysis was used for the data analysis. The findings revealed that the home environment and "technology" plays a very crucial role in learners' literacy development. The study revealed that good interactions with parents and other members of the family contribute a greater part of the participants' literacy development before their first school entry. The results were analysed using thematic analysis which mainly comprised qualitative content and data triangulation. This research suggested strict parental involvement and home environment interactions as the bases for literacy development. In addition, this study provides preliminary evidence that close and trusting relationships between parents and teachers can foster children's school readiness skills. The results can be used to develop more effective school readiness interventions for families of young children.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the Study

Exposure to forms of literacy forms the basis for the beginning of every successful academic life. Earlier, literacy was basically thought of or assumed to be the ability to read and write (Van Daal & Sandvik, 2012). According to Acheampong (2017), phonology transformed the conception of the term literacy to include the ability to use or express a body of knowledge in terms of speech. For years, the concept has been interpreted as the capacity to read, write and use language orally.

Reading can be said to be an activity of getting information from books. According to Van Daal and Sandvik (2012), reading is a skill that is taught once in the first few years of the child. It is basically not a straight forward process of lifting the words off the page, but it takes recognized processes for children to acquire the skill of reading and writing. The ability to read and process information is a necessary part of individuals' educational experience.

The teaching of reading and writing is key for the formation of literacy as young children attend school, through adolescence, and finally as they emerge as competent and educated adults. High-quality basic education is the essential goal of formal education as it enhances the development and well-being of the individual and society (Acheampong, 2017; Anamuah-Mensah, Koomson, & Godwyll, 2016). Therefore, education being equitable develops human competence and potential both for the individual and the society.

An early introduction to reading before the elementary school years can greatly increase literacy development and reading comprehension. Literacy scholars advocate

1

that, reading to pre-schoolers helps prepare them for greater success in school (e.g., Anderson & Cheung, 2013). Moreover, an early introduction to reading fosters the development of a positive attitude towards reading (Lawson, 2012).

Explanations and the definitions of literacy have been done in various ways and from different perspectives depending on the studies of transformation of language. Kasper (2018) defines literacy as a particular way of using language for a variety of purposes, as a socio - cultural practice with intellectual significance.

The composition of our ability to read, write, speak and decipher information is largely based on our educational experiences. For this reason, reading and writing instruction undoubtedly becomes the major vehicle through which young children acquire literacy (Antilla, 2013). In light of this, one can confidently say that literacy development is very crucial in the academic lives of students. This reiterates that literacy, which is synonymous to education and wealth, can influence the course of a person's life (Bond, 2011). Parents, countries, individuals, stakeholders are all striving to get access to the available literacy as early as possible for their wards, citizens, themselves and for other people. This is because of the benefits that come with it. One's ability to read, write and process information informs his or her communication skills. Literacy is so important that a decline in literary reading for children and adults can affect their abilities to take part in classrooms, workplaces and civic institutions (Bond, 2011).

A good interaction in the home environment gives an indication of the rate of literacy. However, Bond (2011) asserts that a student from a family of high socio-economic background with all the necessary inputs for learning is likely to attain a reasonable level of literacy comparatively and vice versa. Again, diverse cultures among learners

determine the success of literacy instruction and its development alike (Rowsell & Walsh, 2011). The relationship between these factors and the pace at which these relationships keep strengthening demand that literacy instruction and literacy development become the centre of attraction as far as the learners and their society are concerned. This implies that any societal transformation relating to the cultural, social and economic backgrounds of children automatically affect their literacy development in diverse ways.

Rowsell and Walsh, (2011), postulate that shaping and transcending literacy skills go beyond reading and writing abilities that include one's ability to understand, manipulate and make meaning from a particular text. Literacy, just like education, is perceived from the social setting as an instrument and means for societal change. It defines and underscores effects on human living.

In the same vein, one cannot delve into literacy issues without relating to both socio-cultural and socio-economic background of those they wish to train. The socio-cultural definition of literacy centres on Discourses. The manner in which one exhibits his or her character or attitude towards people and things in order to get endorsed into a socially recognized group as well as the socially accepted ways of using a language, gestures and other semiotics (Lankshear, & Knobel, 2013). This assertion is affirmed when Hull and Moje (2019) stated that "Historically, socio - cultural studies of literacy have highlighted how differences in cultural practices between home and school shape children's' success in learning and direct teachers' perceptions of whether and how well children can acquire knowledge." This implies that literacy formation works hand-in-hand with all the experiences that learners go through both at home and in the society at large (Knobel, 2017). It is important to note

that an emergent literacy skill that includes phonological awareness, phoneme blending, segmenting skills and knowledge of print concepts has a crucial role to play in the child's literacy development. Phoneme awareness is also increased by parental teaching, TV and computer activities that build on these early reading and writing skills.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Learning to read and write has been discovered as the central learning activity undertaken by children during the first few years of school and the ability to read, is the traditional criterion of beginning school achievement and is basic to success in school (Perfetti, 2016). It is seen as the core of human learning experiences. Nurturing reading and writing abilities in individuals is a matter of time just as (Kasper, 2018) posits, that "indeed, the development of literacy is 'a dynamic and ongoing process of perpetual transformation' whose evolution is determined by a person's interests, cultures and experiences." Nevertheless, there have been countless efforts by stakeholders, governments, teachers and parents to improve literacy among kindergarten and lower primary school pupils in Ghana (Acheampong, 2017). Despite these attempts to develop literacy, pupils are still faced with some forms of literacy issues as they constantly associate themselves with the activities and practices in the home and the society (Acheampong, 2017). Therefore, they enter school with limited knowledge in emergent literacy skills which can lead to future problems with conventional reading and writing (Colton, 2013).

Studies conducted on literacy instruction laid emphasis on the recognition and enhancement of the thought processes as well as ways to read printed texts (Hull & Moje, 2019). UNESCO's Education for All Global Monitoring Report (2016)

explains that literacy in the late twentieth century was perceived as being the skill to recognize text in reading and writing whereas its general meaning of being an expert or elite in a specific line of study is maintained. It basically refers to observable skills relating to one's intellectual ability to read and write in the learning process of a child.

In contrast, some studies show that many children from low-income families have fewer experiences with reading and writing at home than children from middle-class families (Colton, 2013) that fosters human interaction which is a requisite for language learning and literacy acquisition. Other studies on the other hand have also indicated that emergent literacy can only be fostered by teachers' delivery as far as literacy development and language learning are concerned (Colton, 2013). This indicates that literacy and language learning is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

The student populations of schools in the district also vary tremendously and individual teachers hold broadly divergent philosophies regarding learning, literacy, and human ability (Agona West District [AWD] Education Office, 2015).

Acheampong (2017), Anamuah-Mensah, Koomson and Godwyll (2016) have looked primarily at the state of academic performance of students on literacy development in different study areas. Little is known about the influence of emergent literacy skills on literacy development among lower primary pupils especially at the Agona West District (Anamuah-Mensah, Koomson & Godwyll, 2016). Thus, it is very critical to conduct this study on the influence of emergent literacy skills on literacy development among lower primary pupils of Agona West District. The major question that this study sought to answer is: What influence does emergent literacy skills have on the child literacy development?

5

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate emergent literacy skills among children in the Agona West District and its influence on their literacy development.

1.4   Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Identify the sources of emergent literacy among children in the Agona West District.

2. Find out the role emergent literacy skills plays on learners' literacy development among children in the Agona West District.

3. Explore the influence of emergent literacy on the child's literacy development in the Agona West District.

1.5   Research Questions

1. What are the sources of emergent literacy among children in the Agona West District?

2. What role do emergent literacy skills play on learners' literacy development in the Agona West District?

3. How do emergent literacy skills influence the child's literacy skills among lower primary pupils in the Agona West District?

1.6   Significance of the Study

The findings could contribute to existing knowledge and literature on the influence of emergent literacy on literacy development.

The study could generate interest for further research into other aspects of literacy development in Ghana and the world by other research institutions.

The solution to the problem in question will help Ghana especially, the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service to have a relatively strict structured long term educational development plan, a published document that will be put into practice to ensure better literacy development avenues among pupils and a recommendable educational output and to help policy makers to understand the need to undertake learners' emergent literacy development as a pre-requisite tool for good literacy development in children in basic schools in Ghana.

1.7 Delimitations and Scope

The study was delimited to three selected public basic schools in the Agona West District. It only focused on emergent literacy skills among learners and its influence on their literacy development.

1.8 Operational definition of Terms

Emergent literacy: It is a fairly new term used to conceptualize early reading and writing development.

Emergent Literacy Skills: The skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are necessary for the development of reading and writing.

Home Literacy Environment: the experiences, attitudes, and materials pertaining to literacy that a child encounters and interacts with at home.

Literacy: a comprehensive set of skills involving the ability to use and comprehend printed information.

Phonological Awareness: the understanding that oral language is made up of sounds or groups of sounds.

Reading: a process rather than a set of skills to be mastered.

Reading Recovery is an early intervention procedure designed to accelerate the reading progress of the lowest achieving first graders and to prevent future failure.

1.9   Organization of the Study

The research adopted a five-chapter approach to the study. Chapter one dealt with the introduction to the research study and it contained among other issues, the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, scope of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter two consists of the review of related literature which was congregated under concepts, theoretical framework, conceptual frameworks and empirical studies. This contains a review of the key concepts with reference to the research topic. Chapter three consists of the research methodology which sets out the details of the procedures and tools to be used to collect data for the study. Chapter four deals with the data analysis and discussions. Summary, conclusions and recommendations made were contained in Chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0   Introduction

Research by scholars such as (Carroll, 2013) among others have revealed that home environment and other social practices play a very important role in early literacy acquisition therefore, there is the need for all stakeholders in education - Ghana Education Service (GES), teachers and parents to establish some school-home-community collaboration so that useful home and school interventions can be salvaged for children's language and literacy development. If parents and teachers are educated on the usefulness of their interactions in literacy development especially in reading and writing, they will go all out to give the needed literacy support to learners both at home and at school.

The theory that underlines this study is Vygotsky (1978) and relevant literatures in some selected areas concerning background knowledge of the research questions and objectives.

2.1   Socio – Cultural Learning Theory

Socialization is one theoretical perspective in which it is viewed that children adopt the immediate behaviours of their culture, Ásgeirsdóttir (2011). This perspective branches out into various, more explicit theories on children's development of language. Linguistic socialization, from a social interactionism perspective, which sees language acquisition as both biological and social, emphasizes the individual development through interaction, between adults and children, as well as the importance of the "ability to use language appropriately in the community" (p. 253). Traditional socialization theories, behaviourist and psychodynamic, which argue that

9

language learning is encouraged with imitation and reinforcement (Crystal, 2016; Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011) has been challenged in socio - cultural theories by highlighting "social, cultural and historical forces and their varying effects on individual development" Ely and Gleason, (2016, p. 252) and Ásgeirsdóttir, (2011). However, there is one prominent name Lev Vygotsky within socio - cultural theories whose main emphasis in language studies was the relevant correlation between thought and language (Crystal, 2016).

Vygotsky was a Russian scholar whose works in developmental psychology, education, and psychopathology came to be highly influential. Especially significant are his ideas on the relation between thought and language, which were not translated into English until the 1960s, ultimately emerging as a theory of intellectual development (Bruner 2019; Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011). Vygotsky discusses two previous theories of child language development, their strengths and weakness, and combines them with his own arguments. His discourse revolves around Jean Piaget, and his contribution to psychological approaches on child language. Vygotsky criticizes Piaget for relying on "pure empiricism" (Vygotsky, 1978 p. 10; Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011). i.e. experimental facts, and for his attempts to refrain from theory which is, to Vygotsky, an unrealistic approach. For Piaget, "language must be viewed within the context of the child's cognitive development as a whole" (Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011). Children's thoughts are initially governed by their egocentric nature, to serve immediate satisfaction, until logical thought and social attitudes develop from social pressure.

Piaget argues that this cognitive development follows certain periods of age and that social thought begins to emerge only after age seven or eight. Vygotsky praises

Piaget's work but disagrees with his view that egocentric speech has no distinct influence on the child's behaviour. According to Vygotsky, child egocentric speech "early assumes a very definite and important role in the activity of the child" in that it "becomes an instrument of thought" (p. 16). Furthermore, Vygotsky stresses that Piaget's discourse lacks inclusion of social environment. Although approaching philosophical discourse, Vygotsky also raises highly insightful questions about the child's mental process in language development.

However, the extent to which caregivers 'fine-tune' (i.e. model their linguistic input) their speech may not correlate to the pace of the child's lexical development. While linguistic input may have a crucial role in establishing initial use of words, further development may rely on both internal and external cognitive processes (Radford, 2014). Nevertheless, results from of a variety of studies explicitly foreground that frequency of 'motherese' and repetitive exposure to words are interconnected factors of the language acquisition process. Furthermore, the first words children utter are usually words they have frequently been exposed to (Snow, 2016). Language socialization research has not specifically touched upon grammatical development, however, (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2016) offered a discourse, from a language socialization perspective, in which the model for grammatical development "takes an informed look at ideology and social order as forces that organize children's use and comprehension of grammatical forms" (p.73). Thus, a child's grammatical development can be viewed as a result of socio - cultural contexts where the child is an active participant in social events, where language is held highly and language learning is encouraged. In view of this, according to Colton (2013), the teaching of Literacy has become a prominent focus of early childhood education in recent years as educational researchers daily discuss the importance of reading and writing in

children's education. Classroom teachers, who often feel inadequately prepared to teach low-achieving students effectively, refer such students for private home based studies, remedial reading or special education testing. Evidently, learning environment in early childhood centres is seen as the ideal context in which the development of literacy knowledge is very appropriate, literacy rich" environment (Colton, 2013) and "scaffold" (Vygotsky, 1978). The term scaffolding is described as a support system for helping children achieve success on a task that would be too difficult for them to accomplish on their own (Bruner, 2019). The number of children qualifying for some kind of support because of reading and writing difficulties in the early primary grades is increasing (Lyons & Beaver, 2015) and the search for valid, educational solutions is intense. In addition, little is known about how emergent literacy interventions affect the behaviours of individual preschool children. According to Dyson, (2013), it seems reasonable to anticipate schools would teach students to "manipulate language in astute ways in varied situations to improve pupils' literacy skills.

2.1.1   Language and Literacy Development Stages

Each child's progress in acquiring language and literacy development is affected by both biological and environmental factors (Berk, 2015; Alitiparmak, 2011). In this section, milestones of language and literacy development during early years are examined. The early years categorized three distinctive age periods 0-3 years old 3-5 years old and 6 years old.

2.1.2   From Birth to Three Years -Infancy and Toddlerhood

Very young infants are sensitive listeners and this ability helps them to read situations and facial expressions. The new-born infants are capable of discriminating voices from other noise and rapidly respond to the particular voice of their constant caregivers, mostly their mothers (Alitiparmak, 2011). In the first few months of infancy, oral language consists of a child's experimenting or playing with sound through crying, babbling, gurgling, or cooing (Morrow, 2017). Adults in many countries speak to young children in child-directed speech (CDS), a form of language made up of short sentences with high-pitched, exaggerated expressions, clear pronunciations, distinct pauses between speech segments, and repetitions of new words in variety of context (Berk, 2015; Alitiparmak, 2011). Studies showed that CDS support early language development. For example, Tamis-LeMonda and Baumwell (2011); Alitiparmak, (2011) found that toddlers whose parents frequently offer verbal prompts and imitate and expand their utterances during play make faster language progress during the first two years.

Children increase their language-related abilities dramatically during the first two years of life. By the end of their second year, children are expected to begin to comprehend word meanings as well as use preverbal gestures such as showing, pointing to communicate with their main caregivers as well as begin to speak their own first words, taking turns in games such as 'peekaboo' and producing two-word sentences (Berk,2015). Children between the ages of one and two are able to differentiate between writing and drawing; even well before this ages, they have capacity to recognize many features such as produce certain features regarding writing and reading Knobel, (2017).

13

Throughout the period of 18 months and 3 years, children develop rapidly not only cognitively and physically but also in terms of literacy skills (Hee, 2014). Their curiosity enables them to explore the environment and their environment feed their hunger for learning. They begin to display effective conversations, producing sentences in the right order of words as well as appropriate grammatical markers (Berk, 2015; Girard, 2013). Pence and Justice (2018) stated that children are able to pronounce about 80% of all words correctly as well as to ask simple questions and clarifies and request clarifications during the conversations.

It is significantly important to be exposed to early literacy experiences for children below three years of age. The reason behind this claim is the fact that first three years of life are a period of incredible growth in all areas of a baby's development. A new-born's brain is about 25 percent of its approximate adult weight however, by age 3, it has grown dramatically by producing billions of cells and hundreds of trillions of connections, or synapses, between these cells (Berk, 2015; Girard, 2013).

There is another significant fact about the brain development is that the early experiences can determine how proficient a child becomes in her native language (Saracho & Spodek, 2011; Girard, 2013). Researchers found that when mothers frequently spoke to their infants, their children learned almost 300 more words by age 2 than did their peers whose mothers rarely spoke to them published in Zero to Three Journal Starting (Girard, 2013). Similarly, it was found that children below the age of three years actively produce and interpret different levels and kinds of written language.

14

2.1.3   From 3 to 5 years Preschool Period

Between the ages of 3 and 5 years old which, is preschool period, children experience many remarkable "firsts" in their lives. Compared with the first three years' pre-schoolers accomplish a lot in a day (Pence & Justice, 2018; Hong, 2012). Pre-schoolers acquire a great deal of literacy knowledge informally as they participate in everyday activities involving written symbols (Berk, 2015; Hong, 2012). Between the ages 3 and 4 years, children can talk about what they do as they are doing it. They often talk to themselves while they are playing (Morrow, 2015; Hong, 2012). Language skills develop rapidly during the preschool years. By the age of five years children can acquire almost 80% of the syntactic structures they use as adults (Hong, 2012).

There are three significant emergent literacy components that pre-schoolers easily achieve, which are alphabet knowledge, print awareness and phonological awareness (Pence & Justice, 2018). During the preschool years, most children recognize some letters especially in their names; show interest to the environmental prints and signs; begin to imitate the letters (Pence & Justice, 2018; Hong, 2012). Experiences with print give preschool children and understanding of conversations, purpose and function of print (Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 2015; Hong, 2012). Through print awareness children develop interest in and appreciation for print. A study revealed that when adults use print during story-reading, children are eager to ask more questions about story (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, 2017). Phonological awareness - the ability to reflect on and manipulate the sound structure of spoken language, as indicated by sensitivity to changes in sound within words, to rhyming, and to incorrect pronunciation- is the third emergent literacy component children can accomplish during the preschool years (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman,

15

2017). Gunn, Simmons and Kameenui (2015) highlighted that the emergent literacy component which children begin to acquire during the preschool period are the key components of children's later literacy development of reading and writing skills at school.

Carroll, (2013) therefore summarized the literacy skills of children in preschool periods as follows: children increase their vocabulary from 900-1000 words to 2100-2200 words and start creating 3-4 word sentences. They like to play with words and sounds. Pre-schoolers can easily participate in rhyming games and make some letter-sound matches (Carroll, 2013). The year old can follow two-step and later at the age of 5years follow three-step commands, and play games involving directions. They talk about the present, and they swear and begin to understand most questions about the immediate environment; however sometimes they have difficulties to answer why and how questions. Pre-schoolers enjoy listening and discussing storybooks (Carroll, 2013). As a sign of advanced emotional development, they are able to discuss feelings. Berk, (2015) and Carroll, (2013) stated that during preschool period, children begin to adjust speech to fit the age, sex and social status of the speakers. By the age of 5, children sound very much like adults when they speak (Carroll, 2013). And this predicts the child's social life of discourse in the society.

2.1.4 Six Years Kindergarten Year

Children do certainly not acquire language overnight. As has been discussed, language acquisition is a process involving different developmental levels. Because 6-year-old vocabulary is quite large, parents may not notice the growth during this period (Carroll, 2013). However, children at the age of 6 years have expressive 2600 words, receptive of 24000 words, define those words by function. While their

vocabulary increase, syntactic complexity of their language also increase (Morrow, 2017). Kindergarteners are able to use many complex grammatical forms, although they make predictable errors (Berk, 2015). By the age of 6 years, children become aware that a word can have more than one meaning. While they are talking, they may make mistakes such as using wrong word or grammatically inappropriate sentences; then prefer to say something silly or try to be humorous (Carroll, 2013). Through their better fine-motor abilities as well as eye-hand coordination, kindergarteners enjoy using different kinds of writing materials, engaging in crafts (Carroll, 2013). Morrow (2015) pointed out that kindergarteners can enjoy being read to and themselves retell simple narrative stories using descriptive language to explain and explore. Since at this age children are capable of developing basic concepts of print; children are interested in writing their own names, letters of alphabet and some high-frequency words (Morrow, 2017).

One of the other characteristics of kindergartners' language is that they realize that they can manipulate the others through use of language. They are more capable of participating in conversations, asking questions to continue and end conversations Carroll (2013) reported that in the spring of the children's pre - kindergarten and kindergarten years, they remarkably increase their knowledge about print (e.g., knowing various print conventions or uses of printed materials), their phonological awareness (e.g., recognizing which words begin with the same sounds, producing rhymes) and their narrative competence (e.g., telling a story or understanding questions about a story). Pence and Justice (2018) summarized the developmental timeline for 6-year-old children as follows: in phonological terms, children can manipulate phonemes in words and blend and segment individual sounds; for the syntax and morphology skills, they are able to produce some sentences with passive

17
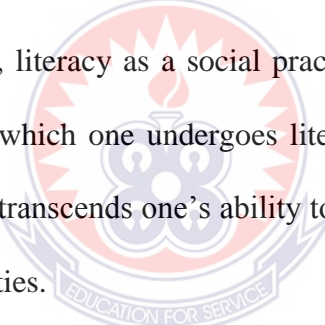
voice; and begin to use morphology to infer the meanings of new words. For semantic and pragmatic abilities, they can learn to read by decoding and use mostly direct request, produce at least four types of narratives, and use repetition for conversational repair.

In sum, there are critical periods for children to be able to accomplish some literacy skills. Children acquire language by moving through predictable stages that are based on their maturity. Educator's state that although there are stages of language and literacy growth, the pace of the development may differ from child to child (Carroll, 2013) underscored the importance of individuality for the literacy development. Giving the number of forces and factors that influence early literacy, we can safely say that no two children are alike; with each literacy experiences, every child exhibits an increasingly complex weave of literacy knowledge.

2.2   Review of Literacy Concepts and Theories

Leu, Kinzer, Coiro and Cammack (2014) state that, "Historically, the social forces affecting the nature of literacy have had diverse origins." Literacy in the past was perceived as the ability to read and write (Van Daal & Sandvik, 2012). However, this believe changed when other studies in relation to language emerged. Phonology for instance, transformed the conception of the term literacy to include the ability to use or express a body of knowledge in terms of speech. For years, the concept has been interpreted as the capacity to read, write and use a language orally. It is seen as a cultural literacy that involves more than one kind of literacy, and that knowledge of the written language is one of them (Leu, et al, 2014). Clearly, Language learning involves several factors of which reading and writing forms the bases put together to affect human life. Lankshear and Knobel (2013) state emphatically that "From a

18

socio-cultural perspective, literacy is a matter of social practices. Meaning one cannot expatiate on literacy issues without making reference to both socio-cultural and economic background of the child involved. Lankshear and Knobel (2013) again argue that literacy "is best understood as shorthand for the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing. Literacy is not only about having the knowledge to encrypt specific type of text but possessing also the skill to apply this knowledge anytime, anywhere when necessary. Perry (2012) confirms that "Literacy, as one form of language use, therefore reflects all of this 'other stuff' (Gee, 2016): social relations, cultural models, power politics, perspectives on experience, values and attitudes likewise things and places in the world, but it can at least demonstrate the type of knowledge and skill required so one can efficiently involve in certain literacy activities. In simple term, literacy as a social practice has to do with the variety of reasons and purposes for which one undergoes literacy activities (Perry, 2012).This denotes that being literate transcends one's ability to manipulate book technology and other environmental activities.

Literacy, therefore in simple term is seen as a social practice has to do with the variety of reasons and purposes for which one undergoes certain activities. It has however been positioned as the ability to read, write and interact with print even before the child formally enters school (Wayne, 2013). It is therefore arguably true that the rate at which students can read and write highly determines their acceptability in the educational society. Therefore, the exposures to literacy experiences help children develop concepts that are fundamental to future reading and writing success.

Crawford (2015) postulates that, all children pass through a series of stages that cannot be hurried. Maturation occurs as a result of a biological process of neural ripening, like blossoming of fruit. It was thought that nature must be free to take its

course and damage might occur if children were taken into reading in a quick manner. The general assumption was that young children were not ready to learn to read until a mental age of six (Crawford, 2015). Therefore literacy development of a child does not really consider the role parental involvement in early literacy as paramount. On the contrary from the developmental perspective, he says the foundational age when the process of discovering symbolic systems begins is about 2 years old for most children (Bruner, 2013). Advocates for literacy education heavily promote introducing literacy concepts to children as young as one-year-old. This gives the notion that literacy is a social life of an individual considering the various stages of the child's learning process. Teachers in the pre-school and elementary grades focus on developing oral language skills coupled with emergent literacy skills that have been shown to facilitate the reading process, because studies have shown that reading problems are usually first seen in the very early stages of reading acquisition and they are very hard to overcome (Developing Emergent Literacy, 2013).

Teale and Sulzby (2017) recognize that young children learn from their interactions with others in the environment. Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev and Miller (2013) assert that Vygotsky's theory strongly believed in the intimate connection between learning and development and in the socio - cultural kind of the two. They explain that when learning is well structured, it is seen in the socio - cultural theory as an agent of development instead of learning experiences. Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev and Miller (2013) state that, "Vygotsky perceived intellectual development in terms of intellectual tools such as language, that we amass as we mature in a society and that arbitrate the sort of awareness or understanding we can create or construct." They argue that successive language and literacy development depends largely on the language one uses in the environment.

20

The home environment status according to Walker-Dalhouse (2013), however, is the single best predictor of school reading achievement, from which low achievers seem to suffer disproportionately. Documented concern for the achievement of children from low-income families has existed since the beginnings of the scientific movement in education during the 1920's (Chall, 2013), although literature has long been rife with examples of concern for the "less fortunate."

According to Stanovich (2016), soon after experiencing greater difficulty in breaking the spelling-to-sound code, poorer readers began, in fact, to be exposed to less text than their peers. It was also discovered that the poor reader who reads less text may become less and less able to read appropriate material, contributing to distaste for reading, low achievement, and a sense of diminished self-esteem, (Chapman & Tunmer, 2015). Again, students who start school without a literacy-rich background might profit from increased time with books as well as phonological awareness, rapid naming, sentence imitation and letter identifications encompass both early literacy skills and oral language skills and literacy development, (Allington, 2013). The home environment has a greater impact on the well-being of children and families living in different settings.

Chapman and Tunmer (2015) identified that stresses and the hardship parents encounter influences the family system, especially parents' mental health, quality of parenting, and home literacy processes. Therefore young children who do not have access to educationally stimulating experiences and materials because of ineffective parental interactions at home are more likely to show deficiencies in basic literacy skills upon entering school and consequently disadvantage compared to children who had the exposure to such skills. Extra attention and help are a necessity for those

pupils struggling with reading and writing as essentials during the very first years of education.

Teale and Sulzby (2017) summarized six conclusions about emergent literacy as;

1. Literacy development begins long before children starts formal instruction. Children use legitimate reading and writing behaviours in the informal settings of home and community.

2. The second is listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities develop independently and concurrently, rather than sequentially.

3. Their research also identified Literacy development in real-life settings for real-life activities in order to "get things done". Therefore, the functions of literacy are the integral part of learning about writing and reading during early childhood as the forms of literacy.

4. Children have critical cognitive work in literacy development from birth to age six.

5. Children learn written language through active engagement with their world. They interact socially with adults in reading and writing situations, they explore print on their own, and they profit from the modelling of literacy, particularly with their parents.

6. Children can pass through the stages of literacy in a variety of ways and at different ages. Any attempt to "scope and sequence" instruction should consider this developmental variation. The term emergent literacy acknowledges that children learn a great deal about literacy before the onset of formal schooling.

Whitehurst and Lonigan (2018) classified conceptual literacy behaviours as outside-in processes (e.g. understanding of the conventions of print, reading environmental print, vocabulary, and narrative construction) and they classified procedural literacy behaviours as inside-out processes (e.g. letter-name and letter-sound knowledge, phonetic spelling, and language-based components such as phonological and syntactic awareness). In their classification of emergent literacy, Mason and Stewart (2013) differentiated oral language skills such as vocabulary from literacy skills such as alphabet knowledge, decoding, and knowledge of print conventions. Instead, they interleave aspects of language, meta-linguistic skills, and literacy across the two components of their classification systems of emergent literacy. There is some evidence suggesting that the distinction between conceptual and procedural knowledge would be helpful in understanding children's acquisition of literacy.

Research suggests that procedural and conceptual emergent literacy tests measure different emergent literacy skills (Whitehurst, Epstein, Angell, Payne, Crone, & Fischel, 2014) and procedural and conceptual literacy skills each have different links to reading at the end of first grade (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2013). Phonological skills, which are part of procedural skills, are critical in first grade when reading primarily involves learning to decode words, while conceptual knowledge plays a significant role in the higher grades, when comprehension processes are involved in fluent reading (Whitehurst et al., 2014). Some researchers propose that language, Meta-linguistic skills, and emergent literacy are distinct skills. Sénéchal, LeFevre, Smith-Chant, and Colton's (2011) proposed model expanded on differentiating oral language, meta - linguistic skills, and reading within the emergent literacy paradigm. Similarly, Mason and Stewart (2013) proposed that emergent

23

literacy is composed of two distinct components—children's conceptual knowledge (print) and children's early procedural knowledge of reading and writing.

However, Sénéchal et al. (2011) hypothesized that emergent literacy is distinct but related from oral language and meta-linguistic skills. Children's conceptual knowledge about literacy might be closely related to children's oral language. Early procedural knowledge may play a role in the development of phonological awareness. Sénéchal et al.'s (2011) model did not specify the relations that the two proposed components have with oral language, Meta-linguistic skills, and reading nor does it specify whether these relations change over time. For instance, measures of pre-schoolers' skills in syntax exhibit statistically significant positive and moderate correlations with concurrent code-related skills in rhyme and alphabet knowledge (Burgess & Lonigan, 2018).

2.3   Historical Perspective of Literacy

Over the past thirty years, views of early literacy have changed dramatically (Wayne, 2013). Once guided by the maturationist perspective, current views of early literacy are based upon the constructivist perspective. Over time, the various perspectives on how children learn to read and write have guided educational programs and governmental policies (Wayne, 2013).

The concept of "reading readiness" was the basis of traditional reading instruction practices (Wayne , 2013). Based upon the maturationist perspective, the ability to read was believed to develop through direct, explicit instruction on decoding skills when children were physically and mentally "ready". Early views of readiness neglected to recognize the skills and learning that preceded conventional reading. It also neglected to recognize reading and writing as a related process (Wayne , 2013).

It was not until the late 1960's and early 1970's that interest began to shift to studying reading development prior to formal schooling. Researchers like Marie Clay, Frank Smith, and Kenneth Goodman began to examine young children's behaviours while engaging in literacy activities (Wayne , 2013). They found that even before children reached the period of "readiness" they possessed some knowledge about reading and writing. During the 1970's and early 1980's there was an increase in studies that examined literacy before formal schooling (Hall, 2017) The results of these studies led to the assumption that reading and writing develop along a continuum that begins in early childhood and that young children play a significant role in developing literacy knowledge. The term "emergent" was used to refer to the process of literacy development and the various forms of literacy behaviours that develop in young children before they begin formal schooling (Wayne , 2013)

The belief that children play an active role in developing literacy knowledge was based upon the Constructivist theory (Hall, 2017; Wayne, 2013; Carroll, 2013). Constructivists believe that children construct knowledge through experiences with the environment, and that cognitive development occurs within a social context. Reading programs that are guided by constructivism provide children with meaningful opportunities to construct literacy knowledge and provide adult mediation to help children develop more specific skills (Carroll, 2013). As the emergent literacy perspective gained prominence, research in this new area of literacy continued to develop. The following section details the research of emergent literacy and its influence on literacy development.

25

2.4   Emergent literacy Skills and its Influence on Literacy Development

The term "emergent literacy" often refers to the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that precede conventional forms of reading and writing (Lonigan, 2016; Wayne, 2013). The specific skills and areas of knowledge that compose emergent literacy vary according to the authors. For example, one article identifies oral language as an area of knowledge (Smith, Brooks-Gun, & Klebanov, 2017) while another identifies the relationship between speech and print as an area of knowledge, Gunn, (2014). Although there are similarities between some terms, they often do not measure the same skill.

Emergent Literacy was first used by Marie Clay in 1966 to explain the gradual process children go through as they develop the understanding of written language (both reading and writing) (Clay, 1966). A key to the term literacy is the interrelatedness of all parts of language: speaking, listening, reading and writing. In 1966, New Zealand, researcher Marie Clay introduced the concept of emergent reading, using it to describe the earliest behaviours and concepts young children employ in interacting with books even before they are capable of reading in the convectional manner. The 1970s and the early 1980s saw robust research activity in children's early language development, early childhood education, and re – examination of the concept of reading readiness. The work resulted in Teale and Sulzby assembling a book authored by various leading researchers of the time that proposal captures what happens from birth to the time when children read and write conventionally as a period of emergent literacy.

Marie Clay used "emergent literacy" replaced "reading readiness" as the prevailing theory of literacy development. She was considered by many as the maven of

emergent literacy, began a line of research that, decades later, still stands as a model for how to examine young children's progression from non-readers to readers. According to Clay (2011), children develop processing systems (e.g. the syntax of oral language; meanings of words; visual forms of objects, pictures, scenes; making sense of daily activities, and understanding stories) as a consequence of early life experiences. However, to read print successfully, Clay (2011) theorized, children must develop processing systems needed to decode graphic symbols. Children should also arrive at formal literacy instruction with the developed systems based on earlier experiences. Emergent literacy however derives its emphasis on children learning and discovering literacy through their own attempts at reading and writing (Ferriero, 1986) such that children are active participants in their own learning.

Consequently, young children developing the linguistic and social skills become necessary for later success in school in these contexts. It's indeed true that pupils right now require a repertoire of both home and print literacy practices for their future workplace and life. This has often been discussed by scholars in American, British, and Australian schools in contrast to postcolonial settings which increasingly, though, continue to use English not only in the academic domain but also in business and political spheres as a result of both globalization and the attendant use of English as an international language (Afful, 2017). However, early researches suggest that exposure to books and the home environment develops emergent literacy skills. Research also does seem to support emergent literacy skills such as vocabulary, alphabet knowledge, and writing skills are predictors of later reading development (Weinberger, 2016). For example, McCormick (2014) followed thirty-eight children in kindergarten into first grade on a number of measures. Each child was tested with uppercase and lowercase letter-identification tasks and sound awareness tasks (e.g.

27

identify beginning sounds of words) throughout their kindergarten year and first grade.

2.5 Home Literacy Environment

Actively, adults and family members can enrich the lives of their young children by addressing life experiences familiar to them and building on the foundation of what children know. Research into the home literacy environment reveals that this environment is very crucial for children's reading development. Home problems that were identified at the beginning of kindergarten have a negative prediction on reading (Mason, Stewart, Peterman, & Dunning, 2012). There are different groups of home literacy environments (HLE) that impact children's development of emergent literacy skills and oral language (Rodriguez & Tamis-LeMonda, 2011). These groups differ on frequency of shared reading and literacy teaching activities and are related to socioeconomic status, to family living circumstances, caregiver stress, and caregiver reading ability (Phillips & Lonigan, 2019). In a study that compared different conceptualizations of the HLE, Burgess, Hecht, and Lonigan (2012) found that the HLE aspects that were characterized as active were more likely to be significantly statistically related to emergent literacy skill development. The active HLE conceptualization included parental efforts that directly engaged the child in literacy activities (e.g. rhyming, games, shared reading) designed to foster literacy or language development. These active home literacy environments accounted for 12% of child language after the effects of caregiver IQ and education were controlled in a hierarchical regression analysis (Payne, Whitehurst & Angell, 2014).

There are many facets of the preschool home literacy environment that leads to the development of decoding and comprehension skills. One facet is the literacy

opportunity, which refers to the degree to which the home environment provides possibilities for interaction with literacy materials (De Jong & Leseman, 2011). The second facet is the quality of parental guidance during literacy interactions with their children (De Jong & Leseman, 2011). De Jong and Leseman (2011) conducted a longitudinal study that examined the influence of the pre-school home literacy environment on the development of reading, word decoding, and reading comprehension through first and third grade in a sample of Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch, and Turkish-Dutch children. They discovered that the relationship of the HLE to word decoding and reading comprehension changed differentially over time. For word decoding, there was an overall decline in the size of its relationships with the home literacy environment from the end of first grade to the end of third grade. The preschool HLE did not have further effects on the development of word decoding after the first year of instruction.

2.6   Impact of Parental Beliefs

Research on parents' literacy beliefs states clearly that parents have perceived different views about children's early literacy development and that these beliefs are related to home literacy practices. Weigel, Martin, and Bennett (2016) investigated the literacy beliefs of parents of pre-school aged children and examined how those beliefs were related to aspects of the home literacy environment and to children's emergent literacy skills. In their investigation, two profiles of parental literacy beliefs were identified. The first profile, labelled facilitative, included mothers who believed in taking an active role in teaching and reading to their preschool aged children. They believed that providing their children with learning opportunities would later help and guide them in school. They also believed that children could learn general knowledge and specific skills through reading books. These parents were excited reading to their

29

children and their children enjoyed having books read to them by their parents too. These mothers tended to have higher education levels and read more than other profiles of parents. Facilitative mothers took a more active role in their child's education and consequently their children displayed more advanced print awareness and more interest in reading.

The second profile gave description of mothers who believed that they could do little to prepare their children for school, and that the school system rather than parents are responsible for teaching their children and it was labelled as conventional. This cluster of parents also reported numerous challenges with reading to their children, such as resources, space, and time. They also reported that reading was difficult with their children. A pivotal study by DeBaryshe (2015) examined 60 low-income families and 56 working-class families' maternal beliefs about reading aloud to their children. Measures included two surveys given to the mothers, measures of children's language skills, and audio taped samples of parent-child book reading. DeBaryshe found that parents who hold strong beliefs about the importance of early literacy exposure tend to practice what they preach, engaging in shared reading practices that are broader, more frequent, and more interactive than children with parents who hold less strong beliefs. Debaryshe did not find an effect of reading aloud on the development of oral language skills. This may be because very few mothers asked open-ended questions or asked higher-level thinking questions. These mothers did not use some of the strategies that have been linked to children's oral language development. Although interest in books was strongly correlated with facilitative mother reading practices, the study found inconsistent support that facilitative reading practices increased motivation.

Again, individual differences in parental literacy beliefs have consequences and adverse effects on what children do and learn. Therefore parental beliefs about literacy influence their own behaviour in how they help their children learn to read and write. Parents identified as holding more holistic beliefs about reading development (i.e. emphasized their knowledge of the world in relation to the context of the passage and focused on meaning) were more likely to give their child more exposure to literacy development through a variety of methods than those parents with more skills-oriented beliefs who were more likely to engage in the direct teaching of literacy skills through workbooks or rote memorization of words and did not focus on reading stories to their children (Lynch, Anderson, Anderson, & Shapiro, 2016).

DeBaryshe (2015) found that parents who had knowledge or literacy beliefs that were aligned with whole language approaches (i.e. meaning-orientated) experienced more frequent modelling of reading and more frequent mother-child writing series. These children also wrote more frequently. Children of mothers who endorsed the code-orientated approaches had children who had more developed early literacy skills in the areas of vocabulary development, story grammar, and conventionalized reading and writing skills. Mothers who did not endorse either code-or meaning-based strategies showed the least developed literacy skill.

According to DeBaryshe, Binder and Buell, (2016), parents who endorsed both beliefs endorsed optimal practice. These studies provide support for the notion that the beliefs parents have about how children learn to read are related to the approach they take to teaching their children to read. These beliefs have later consequences for children's literacy development success.

31

2.6.1 Shared Book Reading

Scarborough and Dobrich's (2014) database of 659 parents mainly from South - Western Ontario, 72% of parents reported reading five or more days a week to their child. Dickinson and Tabors (2011) reported that in low-income families in the United States, about half of children under age 4 years are read to daily. While reading, parents and teachers intentionally focus their book-related talk on meaning-related rather than code-related information (Hindman, Connor, Jewkes, & Morrison, 2018). Correlation research also suggests that broad exposure to book reading throughout the preschool years is associated with stronger print awareness, later reading comprehension (DeBaryshe, 2013) and oral language skills such as vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, and phonological awareness (Sénéchal et al., 2011). Children who are exposed to books and reading in the preschool years have better reading outcomes in later grades than children who were not exposed to reading at an early age. Children who were poor readers entering school had accumulated substantially less experience with books and reading than those who became better readers (Scarborough, Dobrich, & Hager, 2011).

Research into the quality of shared book reading interactions has led to a large research base known as "dialogic reading" (Whitehurst & Lonigan 2018). A vivid was made that Dialogic Reading Parents may frequently engage in shared book reading with their children because they may believe that the experience will foster their children's literacy development. During parent – child shared reading, parents often do not draw the children's attention to features of the print or provide feedback so the children most often will attend to the illustrations and not to the print (Phillips, Norris, & Anderson, 2018; Stoltz & Fischel, 2013).

32

More research needs to be done with dialogic reading interventions or the quality of parents/child reading interactions because this meta-analysis included only a small set of studies and a moderate number of participants. Furthermore, many studies lacked control of what actually happened in the experimental and control reading groups. Data describing the behaviour of the control group and/or intervention group were often missing or scant. The effects of parental intervention training may have more impact on the long term than the short term effects of their children's academic success. Drouin (2019) studied 77 preschool children in a two-year longitudinal study that examined the effects of parental involvement in an emergent literacy intervention. The children were divided in three groups (school intervention with parent and teacher training, school intervention with teacher training but no parent training, and a control group). At the end of four weeks, both intervention groups made equal and significant progress in letter identification and beginning sounds.

2.7   Child Literacy Interest

Few researchers have investigated how children's interest to read or learn emergent literacy skills play a role in emergent literacy models. Some research supports that for elementary aged children, motivation, achievement and child behaviour outcomes are related (Sommer, 2017; Carroll, 2013). Children's interest in reading at kindergarten age is correlated with number of books they own, how often they were read, and the amount of television they watched (Morrow, 2015; Carroll, 2013).

However, Mason, Stewart, Peterman, and Dunning's (2012) researched four-year longitudinal study of 127 children from kindergarten through third grade found that children's early interest in reading and involvement in literacy predicts gains in reading comprehension in third grade. The few research studies that examined early

child interest in literacy demonstrate that preschool attitudes and behaviours toward books and reading have been found to predict later literacy achievement. Carroll (2013), observed in a three-decade review of early emergent literacy research that pre-schoolers who display greater interest in literacy are also likely to read to more frequently than other children and these children are likely to exhibit superior literacy skills during the preschool and school years. This may be due to children's behaviour having an impact upon mothers' reading styles and behaviour (Morgan, 2015).

Girard (2013) investigated the family reading behaviour of 233 preschool children from low-income backgrounds who were attending Head Start. Parents completed a survey of their family reading behaviour. They assessed the children's receptive vocabulary, story and print concepts, letter knowledge, and general emergent literacy skills in the autumn of their preschool year. Results indicated that children's interest in reading was a significant predictor of letter knowledge. In addition, results indicated that children's interest was positively correlated with frequency of storybook reading. That these two dimensions of family reading behaviour were both related and support some existing research (Girard, 2013). Nevertheless, parental involvement plays a key role in developing children's interest in reading and writing. Parents who believe that reading is pleasurable convey that belief to their children (Baker & Scher, 2012).

2.8   The Emergent Literacy Perspective

It is clear that reading acquisition cannot be viewed as an isolated developmental stage, beginning only when children enter the educational system. The emergent literacy perspective (Hamilton, 2013) conceptualizes reading acquisition as part of a developmental continuum, with its roots in the earliest years of children's lives as

34

they learn to understand and produce language. From this perspective, then, there is no clear boundary between pre- reading and reading. A central idea of emergent literacy is that children begin to acquire knowledge of written language concurrently and interdependently with oral language during the preschool years, in the social contexts which bring them into contact with the printed word (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2018; Hamilton, 2013). Central amongst these social contexts is the home literacy environment, in which children are exposed to literacy-related materials and experiences in interaction with family members: parents, older siblings, grandparents and other caregivers. The emergent literacy perspective, then, draws on social constructivist theory, viewing knowledgeable others as mediators of children's interactions with the environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Hamilton, 2013). It is in the context of these child-adult-environment interactions that cognitive development takes place.

Emergent literacy comprises a set of developmental precursors to reading and writing. A number of systems have been proposed to classify these early skills. Mason and Stewart (2013) and Hamilton (2013), identified four key domains of emergent literacy; namely the 1. concepts and functions of literacy, 2. writing and composing, 3. knowledge about letters and words, and 4. receptive language, including listening comprehension. Whitehurst and Lonigan (2018) divided these components of emergent literacy into two broad domains. 'Outside-in' factors relate to meaning and context, and include conceptual knowledge (the semantic representations onto which phonological and orthographic representations are mapped), oral language skills (vocabulary, morpho-syntax and pragmatics) and understanding of story-reading conventions (e.g. that text reading begins at the top of the page, proceeds from left to right, and so on). Conversely, 'inside-out' factors refer to the building blocks of

decoding, specifically phonological awareness, letter-sound knowledge and invented spelling. Whitehurst and Lonigan (2018) demonstrated that inside-out skills are strongly related to reading in Grade 1, when decoding print is typically the key learning objective. However, as decoding becomes increasingly automatic and the focus of literacy education switches to comprehension in Grade 2, outside-in skills are predictive of reading attainment.

2.9   Emergent Literacy Interventions

The preschool years have been identified as an important period of emergent literacy growth because it is the time when children develop fundamental literacy knowledge and skills (Hee, 2014). Justice and Pullen (2013) and Hee, (2014) identified the preschool years as critical to the development of emergent literacy skills. Based on this assumption, it is reasonable to target the preschool years for emergent literacy interventions.

Emergent literacy skills develop within a child's social and cultural contexts (Alitiparmak, 2011). Ideally, the environment and the people within the child's environment foster and promote literacy development. However, some children enter school with limited literacy experiences that put them at risk for developing later difficulties with literacy (Copeland & Edwards, 2015). Oral language impairments, developmental delays, and low socio- economic status have been associated with emergent literacy difficulties (Justice, Ezell & Pullen, 2013). Snow, Burns, and Griffin (2018) suggest implementing preventive intervention for children at risk for developing reading difficulties.

Many intervention studies were designed to determine the relationship between specific literacy skills or experiences and future reading achievement. One of the most

36

researched emergent literacy skills is phonological awareness (Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 2015). Several studies have shown a relationship between phonological awareness skills and future success in conventional reading and writing (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 2012; Carroll, 2013). Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley (2012) conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on the correlation between phonological awareness and future reading achievement. Six years following intervention, preschool children that received small-group phonological awareness instruction continued to show higher reading achievement than preschool children who received small-group vocabulary instruction. Few longitudinal studies have measured the relationship between emergent literacy skills and future reading achievement. Early experiences with books (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2012; Carroll, 2013) and early phonological skills are two emergent literacy skills that have been associated with future reading achievement.

2.10   Environment Modification and Teacher Mediation Interventions

The classroom environment can contribute to the development of literacy concepts in young children (Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011). Research has indicated that manipulating classroom environments can encourage literacy-related play, which results in an increase in children's emergent literacy knowledge (Justice, Ezell & Pullen, 2013; Ásgeirsdóttir, 2011). According to them, the classroom environment should support literacy-related play because it gives children an opportunity to practice and extend emergent literacy skills. Including literacy props in centres provides children with natural, meaningful opportunities to learn about literacy. Play-based emergent literacy interventions have focused on three areas: physical arrangement of objects in the environment (Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, 2017).

Many studies have examined the relationship between literacy props and adult mediation (Neuman & Roskos, 2013; Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, 2017). The interventions in these studies mainly target literacy behaviours in the dramatic play centre in preschool classrooms. The effect of environmental changes and teacher behaviours on voluntary literacy behaviours was measured in a study of preschool and kindergarten classes (Morrow & Rand, 2016). Literacy behaviours were divided into three categories: reading, writing, and paper handling. Thirteen classrooms were assigned to one of four groups: new paper, pencils, and books with teacher guidance; new veterinarian dramatic play centre with teacher guidance; new veterinarian dramatic play centre without teacher guidance; and a control group. The two groups that received teacher guidance along with the new materials showed significantly higher numbers of literacy behaviours than the other two groups. This led the researchers to the conclusion that the teacher plays an important role in supporting literacy activities (Morrow & Rand, 2016).

2.11   Review of Related Empirical Research on Emergent Literacy

The term emergent literacy, first used in 1966 by Marie Clay, is used to describe behaviours seen in young children when they use books and writing materials to imitate adult reading and writing activities, even though the children cannot actually read and write in the conventional sense (Johnson, 2019; Hamilton, 2013). Review of research reveals numerous but complementary definitions of emergent literacy. Researchers agree that emergent literacy begins during the period before children receive formal reading instruction, (Teale & Sulzby, 2017; Van Kleeck, 2020; Carroll, 2013) that encompasses learning about reading, writing and print prior to schooling is acquired through informal as well as adult-directed home and school activities and to facilitate acquisition of specific knowledge of reading.

Research in emergent literacy differs from research in conventional literacy as it examines the range of settings and experiences that support literacy, the role of the child's contributions (i.e., individual construction), and the relation between individual literacy outcomes and the wide range of experiences that precede those outcomes.

Research revealed that there is general agreement amongst scholars that although most preschool-age children cannot read and write in the conventional sense, their attempts at reading and writing show steady development during this stage (Hiebert, 2018; Gunn, Simmons & Kameenui, 2015) note that reading research in this developmental period has focused on discrete skills that are a prerequisite to reading, such as letter-sound correspondences and letter naming. In contrast, the emergent literacy perspective takes a broader view of literacy and examines children's literacy development before the onset of formal instruction.

Ethnographic studies, for example, have described literacy artefacts in preschool children's environment and provided details about the literacy events to which they are exposed and in which they participate. Such studies are useful as they have provided information about the literacy experiences of children from various cultures and backgrounds. Some examples of ethnographic observation are those cited in (Hiebert's 2018; Carroll, 2013) overview of emergent literacy research, including studies examining the role of word games (Hiebert, 2018; Carroll, 2013).

Girard, (2013), asserts that the primary aim of this thesis was to examine two aspects of early child development, namely emergent literacy skills and social-behavioural development. An examination of these two aspects of development occurs at the within child-level factor and the within-family level factor. Specifically, we seek to examine the effects of the family literacy environment in predicting 4-year-old

children's emergent literacy skills at entry to Junior Kindergarten. Additionally, we seek to examine the interrelationships between children's social behaviours and phonological awareness skills across the academic year. The final aim was to examine the relationship between teacher report and direct observations of children's social behaviours.

In an observation study, the linguistic and socio-emotional quality of shared storybook interactions was found to be equivalent between FR and TD mother-child dyads. Children's orientation to print at age 4 predicted word reading ability a year later, and interactional affective quality predicted children's oral language skills. These findings are discussed, with a focus on the potential for rich early literacy-related experiences in the home to act as a protective factor in the literacy development of children at elevated risk of reading difficulty. Spedding, Harkins, Makin, & Whiteman, (2017), claimed that his report provides a comprehensive review of Australian and international research into the relationship between family and community and children's early literacy learning. The report presents the evidence for intervention in the vital birth-3 years' age group. It discusses the differing concepts of 'emergent literacies' and 'early literacy behaviours' and highlights the diversity of literacy behaviours ('multiliteracies') that can be demonstrated by early literacy learners. Findings are presented on the importance of oral language proficiency and the interrelationship of orthographic awareness and phonological awareness as the basis of literacy learning. The authors report on a range of research that examines evidence of the connection between socioeconomic status and children's literacy performance, and of performance in the early years as a predictor of later literacy attainment. They bring attention to a range of early literacy interventions in Australia

and other countries and suggest ways of enhancing effectiveness through greater involvement of the family and community.

Finally, they remind us of the need to challenge the deficit view of families and ensure they are supported and affirmed in their role as children's first literacy educators and equal partners in supporting children's early literacy learning.

Alitiparmak, (2011) postulated in a further research to investigate parents' perceptions on emergent literacy. More specifically, the perceptions of parents on emergent literacy and the frequency rates of the home literacy activities that parent engage in spending with their children at home to encourage emergent literacy through a questionnaire, which was developed by Nebrig (2017). Translation and reliability checks and a pilot study were implemented before the actual study was conducted. Parents were asked to complete the "Home Literacy Activities" questionnaire which consisted of 45 home literacy activities that parents can engage in or provide for their children to encourage emergent literacy.

The findings were that all the preschools investigated had low literacy support as a result of limited language and literacy opportunities for the children and paucity of learning and play materials. Lack of the preschool teachers' appreciation of emergent literacy rendered them unable to fully provide environments and practices that support emergent literacy.

Hee (2014), abundant studies conducted with monoracial Caucasian and minority families have shown that home environments play an important role in the success or difficulty children experience when they begin formal schooling. However, little is known about the home environment of multiethnic and Hawaiian families. The

41

current study examined variations in home environment, including family background, the home literacy environment, and parenting stress in relation to emergent literacy skills (i.e., print knowledge, definitional vocabulary, and phonological awareness) in multiethnic Hawaiian and non-Hawaiian kindergarten children.

Future studies should continue to explore the role of the home literacy environment and parenting stress on children from a Hawaiian cultural community with a larger sample size and should examine how culturally relevant practices at home might influence the development of children's emergent literacy skills.

Eighty parents of Preparatory year children from three Catholic schools in low income areas in the outer suburbs of a metropolitan city were trained to deliver specific shared reading strategies in an eight-week home intervention. Parents read eight books to their children across the period of the intervention. Each book was requested to be read at least three times a week. There were 42 boys and 38 girls ranging in age from 4.92 years to 6.25 years (M=5.53, SD=0.33) in the sample. The families were randomly assigned to three groups: Dialogic Reading (DR); Dialogic Reading with the addition of Print Referencing (DR + PR); and a Control group. Six measures were used to assess children's language skills at pre and post, and follow-up (three months after the intervention). These measures assessed oral language (receptive and expressive vocabulary), phonological awareness skills (rhyme, word completion), alphabet knowledge, and concepts about print.

Results of the intervention showed that there were significant differences from pre to post between the two intervention groups and the control group on three measures: expressive vocabulary, rhyme, and concepts about print. The shared reading strategies

42

delivered by parents of the dialogic reading, and dialogic reading with the addition of print referencing, showed promising results to develop children's oral language skills in terms of expressive vocabulary and rhyme, as well as understanding of the concepts about print. At follow-up, when the children entered Year 1, the two intervention groups (DR and DR + PR) group had significantly maintained their knowledge of concepts about prints when compared with the control group. Overall, the findings from this intervention study did not show that dialogic reading with the addition of print referencing had stronger effects on children's early literacy skills than dialogic reading alone.

The research also explored if pre-existing family factors impacted on the outcomes of the intervention from pre to post. The relationships between maternal education and home reading practices prior to intervention and child outcomes at post were considered. However, there were no significant effects of maternal education and home literacy activities on child outcomes at post. Additionally, there were no significant effects for the level of compliance of parents with the intervention program in terms of regular weekly reading to children during the intervention period on child outcomes at post. These non-significant findings are attributed to the lack of variability in the recruited sample. Parents participating in the intervention had high levels of education, although they were recruited from schools in low socio-economic areas; parents were already highly engaged in home literacy activities at recruitment; and the parents were highly compliant in reading regularly to their child during the intervention.

Findings of the study did show that training in shared reading strategies enhanced children's early language and literacy skills. Both dialogue reading and dialogic with

the addition of print referencing improved children's expressive vocabulary rhyme and concepts about print at post intervention. Further research is needed to identify how, and if, print referencing strategies used by parents at home can be effective over and above the use of dialogic reading strategies. In this research, limitations of sample size and the nature of the intervention to use print referencing strategies at home may have restricted the opportunities for this research study to find more influence on children's emergent literacy skills or for the effectiveness of combining dialogic reading with home environment strategies. However, these results did indicate that there was value in teaching parents to implement shared reading strategies at home in order to improve early literacy skills as children begin formal schooling.
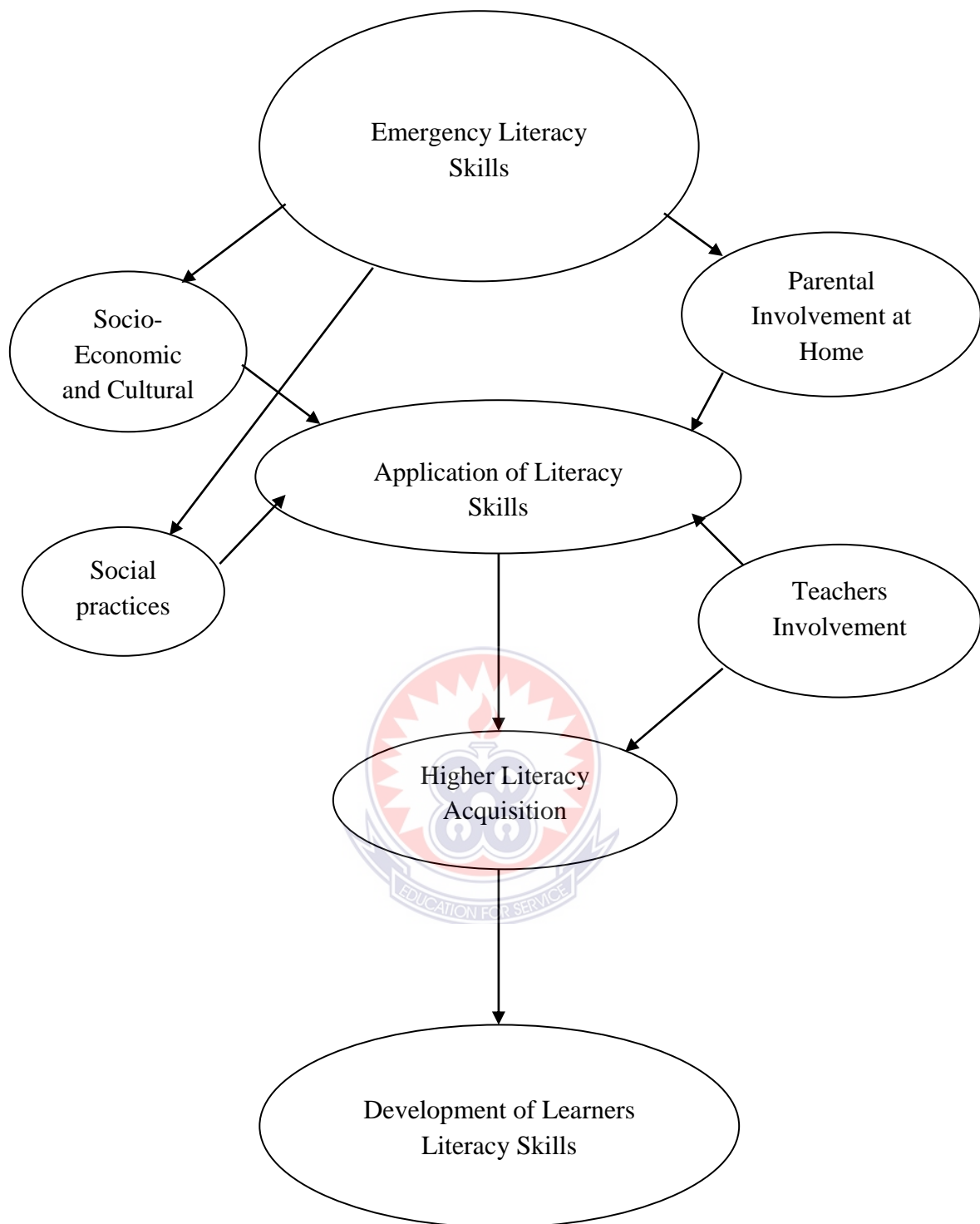
Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of emergent literacy skills on literacy development
Source: Researcher's Conceptualisation (2021)

2.12   Summary

The present study reviewed the socio – cultural learning theories and conceptual framework. The study looked at socio - cultural theory and its relationship to the home environment and social practices, especially emphasizing on parental involvement in the home environment. It also focused on empirical studies highlighting on wide range of literacy, home environment and social practices studied as well as the various aspects of positive and quality interaction between the key findings.

Review of the emergent literacy literature suggested that early childhood literacy experiences affect successful reading acquisition along several dimensions. These literacy experiences are, in turn, influenced by social contexts and conditions as diverse as the individual literacy outcomes they help to shape. The challenge for the preschool or elementary classroom teacher is clear: They are charged with designing and delivering reading instruction that not only builds on what the individual child knows, but also accommodates the myriad individual literacy backgrounds present in the classroom.

The following themes come to play in the development of the child's literacy, (home environment; parents and family members, social practice; television, radio, public address system, mobile phone and computers). It was revealed that the quality of parental involvement at school is seen to be positively related to children's academic skills and social competence. Furthermore, it is expected that, collaborative relationships between teacher and parent will be positively associated with children's outcomes.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Overview

This chapter covers the research method taken to solve the research problem and how data were gathered to answer the research questions. It involves the philosophy, the research design, study type, study area, study population, sampling size and sampling technique, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis method as well as ethical considerations.

3.1   Philosophy of the Study

Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained philosophy as something that deals with the nature, source, and development of knowledge. Similarly, Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that "Philosophy is concerned with the very materials of thought, with ideas and their foundations and asks fundamental questions about the nature of things" (p. 172).
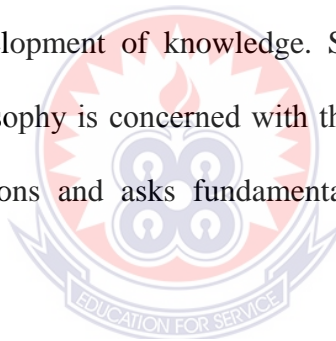
This study pivots on an Interpretivist paradigm. Interpretive paradigm allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. The researcher uses those experiences to construct and interpret his understanding from gathered data. Interpretivists believe that an understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is critical to the interpretation of data gathered (Willis, 2007). In order to explore understandings of participants, an interpretive methodology provides a context that allows us to examine what the participants in the study have to say about their experiences.

47

According to Willis (2007), interpretivism usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed.

Interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative (and these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings). The knowledge acquired is socially constructed rather than objectively determined. The inquirer takes a subject posture, the knower and the known are inseparable, and research is value bound. The study explored the multiple perspectives of respondents from the different category of schools. These perspectives were also dependent on other factors such as culture, systems and structures in place.

3.2   Research Design

Hatch (2012) related that case studies are "a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualised contemporary phenomenon within specified boundaries" (p. 30). Jones, Torres, and Armino (2016) contended that the "single most defining characteristic of a case study methodology is the emphasis on the bounded system or the case" (p .55). This means that the unit of study or the case is defined by certain boundaries. These boundaries, Merriam (2019) expounded, can be in the form of the people involved, a programme, a policy, an institution or a community. Applying these considerations to this study, the unit of analysis used for this study was selected schools in Agona Swedru in the Agona West District.

A qualitative case study materialises as the suitable method for this study. Moreover, Merriam (2019) revealed that the results derived from case studies are assumed to be evidence-rich-accounts, and can impact policy, practice, and future research.

48

A justification for the choice of qualitative case study for this study was based on the view of Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative case study collects data from relevant respondents and it investigates phenomena in their natural settings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative case study can usually be conducted relatively faster and are inexpensive, the designs provides information about the prevalence of outcomes or exposures and the designs may be useful for planning, monitoring, and evaluation.

3.3   Setting of the Study

The research took place in Agona West District in the Central region of Ghana, precisely Swedru and its environs. It is located at the southern part of Central region of Ghana. The District has 6 circuits and 207 basic schools out of which 31 are public and 176 private schools spread across eight (8) circuits (AWD, 2015).

3.4   Population

According to Welman (2012) a population is the study object, which may be individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. The target population for the study comprised all basic school pupils in the Agona West District. It was chosen because the researcher has been working in the district for over a decade. Besides, the researcher understands the literacy needs of the pupils in the district and is very familiar with their literacy habits. The study population comprised pupils between the ages of 3 – 11 years in the lower primary and the kindergarten schools of Agona West District in the Central Region, teachers and parents.

3.5   Sampling and Sampling Technique

The sample was chosen from the Agona West District in the Central Region of Ghana. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 4 circuits for the study. Again, simple random sampling technique was adopted to choose the 4 participating public basic schools. The lottery method was used to select 4 participating public basic schools from the 4 circuit. A list of all the kindergarten schools in the 4 circuits was obtained from the Early Childhood Education Unit of the Agona West District. The names of the various schools were written on pieces of paper which were then put into the bowl for selection. After mixing the papers thoroughly, 4 names of public basic schools were picked at random for the study. The technique helped the researcher to focus on participants he thought would be most likely to experience, know about, or have insights into the research topic.

Twenty (20) participants were chosen from 4 participating schools in the district for the study. The total number of participants was composed of 5 teachers, 5 parents and 10 pupils (6 females and 4 males). The study adopted the maximum variation (heterogeneous) type of purposive sampling technique. This is a type of purposive sampling technique in which a researcher selects respondents to provide a diverse range of cases relevant to a particular phenomenon or event (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Furthermore, the reason for this type of purposive sampling is on the basis that, the researcher decided on what is needed to be known and sets out criteria to find people who can and are prepared to provide the information by their capacity, knowledge or experience (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Although purposive sampling has a target number, this is not usually predetermined. The number of sample units that may be

50

covered when employing purposive sampling in a study would depend on the theoretical saturation of data, and other research challenges such as available resources and time (Patton, 2015). Unlike probability sampling, purposive sampling does not require drawing a relationship between the sample unit and the populations from which it is being drawn (Welman, 2012).

3.6   Research Instruments

This study used interviews and classroom observations as the instruments for data collection.

3.6.1   Interview guide

The instruments adopted for the study were interview guide. For the purpose of this study, the researcher relied on information from the District Education Office, heads of the selected schools and English teachers and the parents of the respondent in the sampled schools. Moreover, the researcher used semi-interview guide to gather data from respondents because of its flexibility. The instrument gave participants the opportunity to come out with their own decisions. The items in the interview are constructed to find out emergent literacy on pupils' literacy development. Each item on the guide was constructed to reflect the speech and writing skills which pupils are required to acquire as specified in the English language syllabus for primary schools. The interview guides developments were driven by the framework as proposed by (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

3.6.2   Classroom Observation

Observation is a method of data collection in which researchers observe within a specific research field. It is sometimes referred to as an unobtrusive method (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Emerging Literacy Classroom Checklist was used to describe

classroom practices in terms of literacy richness of the environment, reading practices, variety of literacy activities, and the usage of teachers' knowledge on literacy. This tool was adapted from the 2004 Early Literacy Checklist of the Ministry of Education, Early Years Branch, Ontario, Canada, and has been modified to suit the Ghanaian classroom.

3.6.3   *Trustworthiness of instruments*

Trustworthiness is one way researchers can persuade themselves and readers that their research findings are worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) refined the concept of trustworthiness by introducing the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility

Guba and Lincoln (1989) claimed that the credibility of a study is determined when co-researchers or readers are confronted with the experience, they can recognize it. Credibility addresses the "fit" between respondents' views and the researcher's representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested a number of techniques to address credibility including activities such as prolonged engagement, persistent observation, data collection triangulation, and researcher triangulation. Credibility was established in this study using triangulation of sources and member checking.

Triangulation of sources in this study involved utilising different data sources within the same method. This could be the used for two different populations, interviewing people at different points in time or comparing people with different perspectives. In this study, the researcher used teachers, parents and pupils for data collection. Thus, the study used three sources of data collection and this approach helped in checking

the consistency of the findings. It also made it possible for the study to gain a more complete understanding of the problem being studied. Furthermore, they were used to make sure that the research findings were robust, rich, comprehensive and well-developed.

Transferability

This means to extend the degree to which the results can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Transferability refers to the generalisability of inquiry. In qualitative research, this concerns only to case-to-case transfer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher cannot know the sites that may wish to transfer the findings; however, the researcher is responsible for providing thick descriptions, so that those who seek to transfer the findings to their own site can judge transferability (Tobin & Begley, 2004).

One way to ensure transferability in a study is by purposeful sampling to form a nominated sample. For this purpose, the maximum variation (heterogeneous) type of purposive sampling technique was used to select teachers, parents and pupils for data collection. Detailed description of results is another way to ensure transferability in qualitative studies. Therefore, this study described not just the behaviours and experiences of pupils, but their context as well. In this sense, the researcher believed that the experiences of pupils would become meaningful to an outsider.

Dependability

The idea of dependability emphasises the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. To achieve dependability, researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). When readers are able to examine the research

53

process, they are better able to judge the dependability of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To achieve this, the study described the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the researcher approached the study. Also, the process within the study was reported in detail, thereby enabling future researchers to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results.

Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989), confirmability is established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are all achieved. Koch (1994) recommended researchers include markers such as the reasons for theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices throughout the entire study, so that others can understand how and why decisions were made.

There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Another researcher can take a "devil's advocate" role with respect to the results, and this process can be documented. The researcher can actively search for and describe and *negative instances* that contradict prior observations. And, after the study, one can conduct a *data audit* (audit trail) that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgements about the potential for bias or distortion.

54

Among these, the study used audit trail. To achieve this, the researcher detailed the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data. Also, the researcher recorded issues that were unique and interesting during the data collection, wrote down the researcher's thoughts about coding, provided a rationale for merging some of the codes together and also explained what the themes meant. Audit trail was used since it is incredibly useful when writing up the results chapter as indicated by Tobin and Begley (2004).

3.7   Data Collection Procedure

In choosing the sample size for the study, the researcher visited the schools with official letters from the University of Education, Winneba, and sought permission from head teachers to allow respondents to be interviewed. The researcher also established a very cordial relationship with all respondents in the various schools, thereby amassing the relevant assistance and support needed to carry out the research. The semi-structured interview guide designed to find out the influence of emergent literacy on literacy development was used to interview all pupils who participated in the research. Series of conversations between pupils, teachers and parents were also closely observed.   Again, the researcher had the opportunity to examine pupils' marked scripts, work books and continuous assessment.

Pupils' responses during the interview gave the researcher insight into gathering information on their literacy behaviours and their frequent participation in home and the school activities. More so, the outcome of pupils' conversations assisted the researcher in obtaining some data regarding the study. Lastly, pupils' documents proved helpful to the researcher since the researcher was also able to gather information relating to pupils' literacy development and the use of emergent literacy.

The interview guide for pupils and teachers had seven sections: Sections A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Section A deals with the pupils/family information. Section B deals with storytelling, Section C also deals with reading ability of the child while Section D deals with watching/sight of the child, Sections E, F and G deals with listing, writing and library respectively. Each interview lasted for 15 minutes in schools.

3.8   Data Analysis

The research sought to find out influence of emergent literacy on literacy development among basic school pupils. In this study the researcher went through pupils' (participants') responses, and particular set of behaviours were closely observed and recorded. Participants were coded whereas their responses to interview questions and behaviours recorded were all subjected to thematic analysis which mainly comprised of qualitative content analysis.

Qualitative analysis was employed to demonstrate the influence of emergent literacy on pupils' literacy development.   The analysis also showed the kind of help stakeholders ought to provide pupils in the study of English language and literacy acquisition for that matter and to devise means of enriching pupil's literacy skills at the primary school level.

Thematic analysis was used for the data analysis. Again, recordings from interviews were played back and carefully listened to severally, and afterwards transcribed. There were also verbatim representations of pupils' view which the researcher carefully and patiently took notes of. Thematic analysis was used to illustrate the kind of literacy behaviours that have emanated among pupils by virtue of emergent literacy and emergent literacy skills pertaining to their literacy.

56

3.9   Ethical Consideration

Ethical issues considered in this study included: a) access to participants; b) informed and voluntary consent; c) confidentiality of information shared; d) anonymity of research participants.

Access to participants

The researcher applied for an introductory letter from the Head, Department of early Childhood Education, University, of Education, Winneba after the research supervisor had approved the interview guide. The researcher was then given this letter which gave him easy access to teachers and parents. With the help of this letter, the participants believed that the study was for academic purposes.

Informed and voluntary consent

The cornerstone of ethical research is 'informed consent' (Patton, 2015). The term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration, that is, 'informed' and 'consent'. For this purpose, participants were fully informed of what would be asked of them, how the data would be used and what (if any) consequences there could be.

Participants were also made to understand their rights to access their information and the right to withdraw at any point. The informed consent process can be seen as the contract between researcher and the participants. The aspects of 'informed' in this study included clear explanation on: Who the researcher was, what the intent of the research was, what data to be collected from participants, how the data were be collected from participants, what level of commitment required from participants, how the data were to be used and reported and what the potential risks of taking part in the research were.

Confidentiality of information shared

This principle is also concerned with offering respect and protection to research participants through assurance of confidentiality of information shared. Participants were assured that the information shared would be between the researcher and participants only. However, if there would be a third party, it would be the researcher's supervisor. This would help the supervisor to guide the researcher to write the research report well.

Anonymity of research participants

Participant anonymity means the participant's identity are unknown to the researcher (for example, when using anonymous surveys, the participant identity is truly unknown to the researchers). Anonymity can be ensured by not revealing the identity of the individuals and institutions involved in a study. Typically, anonymity is provided through the use of pseudonyms. In discussing the themes derived from the data collection, participant's identities were hidden by using pseudo names.

No harm to participants and reciprocity

The researcher needs to consider the potential of harm to the participants, the researcher, the wider community and the institution. The harm can range from physical, resource loss (including time), emotional and reputational. When considering the potential for harm, the approach should be, in descending order, to eliminate, isolate and minimise the risk, with the participants being fully informed on what the risks are.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DATA PRESENTATION

4.0   Overview

The goal of this study was to investigate emergent literacy among children in the Agona West District and its influence on their literacy development. This chapter presents the analysis of field data collected and the discussions of findings by the researcher. The researcher used interview, participant observation for the data collection. The results of the findings are outlined under the following themes:

1. Demographic information of participants

2. Observations made

3. Interviews conducted

4. Emergent literacy activities and literacy skills

5. Pupils and emergent literacy exposure

6. Parents and emergent literacy

7. Teachers application of emergent literacy

8. Positive influence of emergent literacy on literacy development

4.1   Demographic Data of the Pupils

Twenty (20) participants were chosen from 4 participating schools in the district for the study. The total number of participants was composed 5 teachers, 5 parents and 10 pupils (6 females and 4 males). The ages of all the 10 pupils ranged between 4 and 10 years. Pupils' ages were relevant in order to establish conformity between the proposed age for lower primary school by the Ghana Education Service and that of respondents used for the study. Again, pupils ranging between the disclosed ages were selected because they were observed or seen as having regular encounter with a number of major literacy activities such as home interactions, peers, mobile phones,

59

radio, public address system, television and computers.

Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristics of Pupils

Variable	Details	Total
Ethnicity	Fantes	6(30%)
	Voltarians	7(35%)
	Northerners	1(5%)
	Gas	2(10%)
	Asantes	4(20%)
		20(100%)
Sex	Male	4(20%)
	Female	16(80%)
		20(100%
Exposure to another language	Yes	6(30%)
	No	14(70%)
		20(100%)

Source: Field data (2021).

Table 4.1 indicates that, out of the 20 children, 6(30%) were identified by parents as Fantes, 7(35 %) as Voltarians, 1 (5%) as Northerners, 2(10%) as Ga and 4(%) as Asante. Also, 16(80%) were females and 4(20%) were males. Again, 6(30%) children reported having exposure to another language at home, reflecting the multicultural mosaic typical of a large urban place just like the study area. The languages spoken in the homes included English, Arabic, Fante, Ewe, Ga, Asante Twi and Dagati.

4.2 Research Question One: What are the sources of emergent literacy among children in the Agona West Districts?

From the literature, several themes showing how emergent literacy occur or develop among children exist. These themes or sources range from natural to others which are artificial in nature.

It is instructive to know that preschool school children continue to enjoy songs, nursery rhymes, finger plays, rhymes, and dances. These activities help children develop language, as they acquire new vocabulary and practice speaking and listening

in a fun way. Such activities allow for children to practice motor skills and burn off excess energy; interactions with parents, reading, storytelling, watching, listening, writing and speaking.Talking to children is an essential activity that should take place throughout the day. From the time children are born, they are receptive to language and hunger for constant human interaction A series of close participant observations were made in relation to research question one above to find out how pupils' acquire literacy consciously or unconsciously. An example of the results from the observation can be found in the dialogue between two children who were playing on their way home from school that the researcher closely observed. The conversation was done in, two of the local dialect, Fante and Twi but was recorded and literally translated as seen below:

Observation 1

Observation made in a different school to obtain information regarding the study also revealed that participants saw literacy as an ability that goes beyond merely reading or writing. Participants used expressions such as these during a school recess play time to show how vocabularies are acquired through songs:

Dialogue 1

> Child 1: Lets' form a "Circu"
> Child 2: Yes; Ccircre Circre, yooyoyooyo!
> Child 3: "Circle Circle……."
> Child 2: "Circre Circre…."
> Child 1: We say "Circu Circu and not Circre Circre".
> Child 3: You are lying, we say circle circle.
> Child 1: You are lying. Let's go and ask madam.
> Child 1: Madam, my friend say, we say "CircreCircre".
> Child 3: Please Madam, I say that, we say "circle circle' and not what my two friends are saying.
> Madam: Yes, You are right. We say Circle Circle. And we report by saying; I said or my friend said" and not 'say'.

The above interesting conversation was captured during play time of the participants. It was revealed that, two of the children pronounced the word 'Circle' wrongly and to confirm the correct pronunciation, one of the respondents, led them to their teacher. And the teacher being a facilitator tutored them on the correct pronunciation of the word and introduced them to the past tense of 'say as said'. The conversation depicted that, some kind of language acquisition has taken place.

Observation 2

The themes being discussed under the study led me to a school during a listening and speaking lesson delivery session. And below is what transpired in the classroom; teacher shows word cards with pictures for identification and makes a short song from it.

Roll, roll, roll, roll your boat gently on the Stream.

Merilly, merrily, merrily, merily, Life is not a dream.

Dialogue 2

 Madam: What do you see in the picture?
 Child 1: I see boat and water
 Madam: Very good
 Madam: Class, pronounce boat.
 Class: Boat
 Madam: What do you see again?
 Child 2: A man in the boat
 Child 3: Madam please, do we sell boat on the sea?
 The class burst into laughter.
 Madam: No, I said 'sail'. The boy responded to it.
 Madam: The whole class
 The class responded 'Sail'.

The teacher shows a word card showing both the word and its picture on it. The teachers then explained the difference between a boat and a canoe as a boat being bigger than a canoe and sails deep into the sea. Another word which was introduced

62

triggered a question by a participant. The teacher writes it on the board and explains by comparing it to how humans walk. The observations revealed that participant was confused with the words "Sail" and "Sell". The above conversation also concludes that, the whole class has been introduced to two vocabularies that were not directly involved in the rhyme. However, the classroom was already flooded with exciting pictures.

Observation 3

The study led me to a listening and speaking class of my participants in a different school. Fortunately, the researcher had the opportunity to meet them on a story telling lesson where the participants were obliged to share with me whatever they had heard from the story. Only one among them was from the Northern region who had just joined the class and couldn't express himself either in English or the local language and that drew my attention to him. The researcher watched on, and took detailed notes of almost everything the pupils were doing. Expressions used by participants in conversations showed that their notion about literacy was not exactly about reading and writing abilities alone because they seemed to have been exposed to other forms of literacy which fell outside these skills; listening and speaking.

Dialogue 3

> Child 1: Madam said the cat and the Mouse were friends
> Child 2: I heard that the cat was wicked
> Child 3: The cat was running after mouse
> Child 4: The mouse went to hide in empty drum
> Child 2: Madam, I heard that the cat was very angry
> Child 5: I also heard that the cat forgave the mouse but warned him not come out

Observations made at Home

The researcher made a follow - up to the homes of participants at different locations. As the researcher watched closely, series of conversations between participants and other members at home especially parents were recorded. The basis for the observation was to find out whether and how participants' are exposed to some form of literacy per their activities at home.

As the researcher observes closely, the conversations below emerged between some participants and their parents:

Dialogue 1:

> Parent 1: Where are the things that I bought from market?
> Child 1: Sir, did you buy my Kalypo for me?
> Parent 1: Hey! Give me way.
> Child: He begins to cry.
> "I will tell daddy that you didn't buy the Kalypo for me".
> Parent 1: You think there is nothing good for me to use my money for the participant start removing the said items from his mothers' basket. They were vegetables.
> Parent 1: Yaw, send the things into the freezer.
> Child 1: Sir, what?
> Parent 1: The tomatoes, onions, the cucumber and the other vegetables.
> The child picks the cucumber, shows it to the mother and asks;
> Child 1: Sir, what is this and do we eats?
> Parent 1: Yes, it is called cucumber; we use it in the preparation of salads.
> Child 1: Have I eaten some before?
> Parent 1: Yes you have.

Dialogue 2:

The researcher knocks!

> Parent 2: Somebody is at the door?
> Child 2: Sir, Sir.
> Parent 2: Welcome!
> Child 2: My homework!
> Parent 2: Get her a glass of water
> Child 2: Sir, water!
> Parent 2: Send the water back and put it in a serving plate.
> A sister comes for the water to put it in serving plate.
> Child 2: Sir, my homework, can you do it for me please.
> Parent 2: Aaaba! Your teacher said you should draw a parrot. Can't you?

64

Child 2: I don't know 'carrot'
Researcher: Parrot is a bird. Carrot is a vegetable. And your teacher is asking you to drawbirds of which parrot is part.
Child 2: So where can I see parrot?
Parent calls for the participants' reading books for reference.
Child 2: Aaaaaa! This is a parrot?
Researcher: Yes.

The researcher deduced from dialogues 1 and 2 that participants have acquired some form of literacy outside the classroom. It was revealed that participants' access and interacting with their parents' at home was very crucial. The participant in the first conversation was introduced to a new words like "cucumber" "salad" and "vegetables". It was also explained to him that vegetables of which cucumber is part can be used in the preparation of salad whilst the second conversation also introduced 'parrot' and its pronunciation as well. The researcher realized that the home environment also gives more exposure to certain forms of literacy which is outside the classroom (Hong, 2012). The researcher's second observation noted series of conversations and activities in the homes of these participants.

Expressions such as these were noted in conversations:

1. "What is this"?

2. "Cucumber"

3. "What do we use it for and do we eat it."

4. "I don't know a Parrot!"

5. "A parrot is a bird"

These expressions were used in the conversations that took place among participants, parents and other members of the family. The observation process led the researcher to the home of one of the participants. A closed participation discovered that the participant is staying with his grandfather who is a retired educationist. The

conversation that transpired between the participant and his grandfather indicated the amount of vocabularies the participant had by using polite words when conversing. It was revealed that the grandfather had new words for the participant to acquire whenever he comes home from school and it has affected the participant in his conversation with his grandfather and other members at home. It was also recorded that the participant had learning materials that facilitate his literacy acquisition at home. Therefore, literacy acquisition and development largely depends on the physical interaction between learners' learning abilities and their environment. Below is what transpired in the home of the participant.

Dialogue 3:

> Grandfather: Bring your homework books please
> Child 3: They are here please
> Child 3: Grandpa, please can I go and 'wiwi'?
> Grandfather: No, say it well before you go
> Child 3: Grandpa, Please
> Grandfather: Alright go and come
> Grandfather: What did you go there to do?
> Child 3: I went to 'wenirate'.

The grandfather writes the new words on the board fixed in the sitting room. Example: (Urinate, Lie, Bend, Squat, and Doze).The grandfather takes the participant through the new words to correct what the participant pronounced wrongly.

> Child 3: So Grandpa, It is 'Urinate' not 'wenirate?
> Child 3: Grandpa, Thank you.

The conversation ended with the participant learning new words and getting the right pronunciation of the word "Urinate" and spelling as well.

However, considering the homes the observatory activities took place, it was seen that participants' settings more or less defined their literacy. This is because the kind of

66

activities and interactions available at home influenced their literacy skills hence literacy acquisition among participants. This further confirmed the notion of Scott and Palincsar (2015), who believe that the surroundings of learners play crucial role in the learning process, and that working tools such as conducive home environment for respondents to express themselves are all meant to support intentional learning.

Conclusion was finally drawn based on the findings that literacy may come in diversity among Basic School pupils in the Agona West District depending on socio - cultural and socio - economic backgrounds. However, literacy should not be limited to certain type of skills only but rather should be seen as a social practice.

4.2.1   Interview

There exists a plethora of platforms and other language devices through which these can be logged on today. Monica-Ariana and Anamaria-Mirabela (2014), say these come in many forms which include internet forums, social blogs, music, videos, mobile phones, radios and many others, unlike back in the days when staying connected Television, radios and mobile phones was rare, expensive and limited to some particular programme.

In all, twenty (20) participants were sampled and interviewed from the four schools. Out of the total number of participants interviewed, majority of them said that the nature of literacy has always been the same among Agona West District.

The table below demonstrates other language learning sources that also account for emergent literacy development

Table 4.2: ***Demographic Data of other Language Learning sources***

No. of Pupils	Source	Percentages %
8	Television	40
4	Radio	20
5	Mobile phones	25
3	Public address system	15
Total		**100**

Soured: Field data, 2021

Interview made at school: 1

The basis for this interview was to find out pupils literacy level when they were enrolled.

One teacher participant said:

> "*the parents of the children are the first point for literacy acquisition. And the teacher serving as a facilitator to build upon what the child had already acquired before school entry. We also don't have the corresponding materials for teaching and that makes teaching and learning ineffective. The teachers are doing their best, there is still more to be done by the stakeholders. I would also want to add that, some parent don't actually know what goes on with their children after seeking admission for them. I am putting this across because most children return to school with their home works undone. Parents are always on the run because of the cosmopolitan nature of Swedru, carrying out their businesses to the detriment of the child's education. I believe we should all come together help these young ones*" (Tr 4).

The researcher noted from the series of interviews that, though teachers are teaching, there is still much to be done. Materials for teaching literacy acquisition were merely not available for use. The participants also came out freely to say that they had no idea of 'Emergent Literacy' and that affects their activities with the pupils at their first grade. The researcher noted that some parents don't enough to help their children in

68

the acquisition of the literacy skills and all that is paramount to them is to out there to look for money.

The following comments and responses were made by a session of the parents interviewed:

One of the participants commented that:

> *"The only academic tools for my children are books and even with that one, I normally pick them from my elder sisters' children since they are now older and would be using such books any longer. I believe books are the only ideal source of enhancing reading and writing of kids since anytime I try using toys with them in the house they tend to lose focus on the real deal of reading and writing."(Prt 1)*

Another participant shared this by saying that:

> *"My children always love to go to school and I have tried my best to get them some books and other learning materials with even academic videos to guide them improve on their reading and writing abilities. However, my children complain about them not interested in what have been given them and because of that, hardly would you find any of them using it." (Prt 2)*

Another participant added that:

> *"My children are the ones who normally show me what to use in guiding their academic life with more emphasis on their reading and writing skills. They have books full of writings and pictures and are allowed watching television, which they like very well and I believe it's really helping too, since most advertisements coupled with other television programs are very educated. I also share time with them in storytelling which is very exciting and during weekends, there is this Government library in town where I send them since the library is filled with other educating resources I lack in the house."(Prt 3)*

This study revealed that, there is lack of resources, lack of interest in resources available, and no home support especially from parents or guardians. Another participant also confirmed the good interpersonal relationship with her children and that goes a long way to improve their literacy development. It was also established

69

that assisting in literacy development is to offer books that are relevant to the students and their lives.

Book-Handling Knowledge

Book-Handling Knowledge is a formal interaction that determines what a child knows about reading material. Book-Handling Knowledge was administered to evaluate the student's areas needing further support. But in this context, book handling does not cover bound books or novels only but also tabloids, magazines, newspapers.

The book-handling assessment was administered to assess the child's knowledge about the functions of books, the routines that are used to share them, the oral discourses used to discuss them and finally the concepts and strategies needed to construct a meaningful text (McGee, 2015). When presented with various directed questions and requests, pupils demonstrated an understanding of book handling skills. All the pupils were able to communicate that books and other reading materials are for reading and correctly show the various elements such as locating a page and the cover of the book. They were aware of how books are held and book directionality and, demonstrated this knowledge by indicating the top and bottom of the page along with identifying the cover correctly when the book was presented to them upside down. When asked to show where we begin reading, they correctly pointed to the first word on the page. Most of the pupils continued to demonstrate their knowledge of book directionality by showing the researcher with their fingers that we read from left to right. The following is an excerpt of the Book-Handling Knowledge assessment administered to Evans Okyere at the age of four:

> Researcher: Read the book to me.
> Evans: I can't.
> Researcher: Pretend to read the book to me.
> Evans: Okay…. well…. I don't know the words.

Here the participant held the book, flipped to the page that he was instructed to open and couldn't mention a word. It was realized that the participant had interest in reading but the skill of phonemic awareness and spelling was missing. The preparedness of the child was seen and the researcher believes that such children can be encouraged to read by providing a literacy rich environment for language development, (Adusei, 2016).

Some discussions made to solicit the root course of the child's inability to read and write revealed that, he doesn't have books for exercises, no story books, no Television at home and no siblings to help. And one interesting thing that was captured was that both parents are illiterates. And that had gone a long way to have adverse effect on the child.

The researcher also realised that, even though the pupil could handle the book perfectly, he couldn't read but could copy what is in the book on a blackboard. This study discovered most pupils' with similar background and this indicated that, most teachers give much attention to alphabet knowledge and not with word knowledge.

On the other hand, the researcher following the literacy level of the participant also discovered that the parents didn't have much information on importance of education so the child's academic performance was not part of their top priorities. The father added that, "he doesn't have enough money" to help him cater for all the child's educational needs.

In summary, the researcher gathered that, some parents do not have their children's education at heart. All that they know is to send their children to school and that ends their responsibility, leaving the children in the hands of the teachers alone without

71

providing the needed materials for learning. It is therefore necessary to work on parental responsibilities in the child's literacy development.

4.3 Research Question Two: What role do emergent literacy skills play on learners' literacy development in the Agona West District?

The study revealed that, the literacy learning context in the home has a different influence on which emergent literacy skills acquire by children. The result suggests that direct teaching of literacy related skills in the home environment fosters children's ability to be good readers in early stages of education. It was also revealed that, siblings at home highly influence the literacy development of these children. It was predicted that book exposure at home only predicts receptive vocabulary and oral expression whereas parental teachings during shared book reading and giving commands at home predict alphabet knowledge and print awareness but not oral language ability. This gives an indication that more research needs to be done on parent literacy teaching which does not have direct effect on receptive vocabulary.

However, discussions were made with participants to find out how emergent literacy improves leaner's literacy skills.

One participant stated that:

> *"Actually, as a mother, I am able to find some time to read with my kids in the house but frankly speaking, it's quite not frequently because of the nature of my work. My kid's other siblings don't read and assist him privately in the house, I only see them assisting when he comes home with an assignment or homework. I have never tried telling him stories but I encourage him to watch television since he is more comfortable with watching than listening. I normally see him writing but don't encourage that in the house because he tries to write on anything which at times is not appropriate. There's no library in this locality but I have some books used by his elder siblings to assist him on his reading and writing skills. Aside all these experience, I can say my child can say some rhymes, say and write all the alphabets and can*

72

> *also write his full name coupled with some short words which I believe*
> *it has only been possible by the help of his teachers".(Prt 4)*

This finding regarding the role of parental literacy teaching differs from Sénéchal's (2016) and Hood, Conlon and Andrews (2018) whivh states that, parental literacy teaching predicted alphabet knowledge and print awareness. The findings from the study were expected to extend Sénéchal's (2016) and Hood, Conlon and Andrews (2018) results to children from low-Social –Economic Status families. Sénéchal's (2016) and Hood, Conlon and Andrews (2018) found that storybook exposure shows significance in children's oral language skills but not in their print knowledge. It was also found out that parental teaching and directives also showed a remarkable impact in children's print knowledge skills but not in their oral-language skills. This current study confirms Sénéchal's (2016) and Hood, Conlon and Andrews (2018) findings that storybook exposure, listening to radio, watching television and playing with friends in the home environment contribute to children's oral language and writing skills.
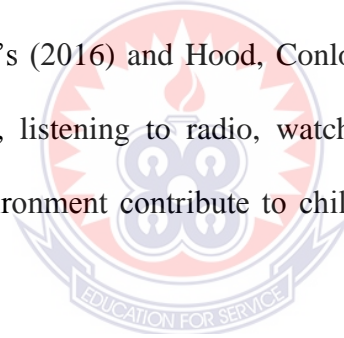
Another participant expressed her view on how emergent literacy skill improves her child's literacy development by sharing her experience that:

> *"I have never gone to school and for that matter can't read or write*
> *but thanks to the teachers of my child for their knowledge, skill and*
> *expertise in impacting such ability to kids. My child now sings*
> *(Rhyme) in English and act to it. His older siblings do help him*
> *especially on weekends but he likes playing with his other friends than*
> *reading books. He can read his book only twice within the whole*
> *weekend very particular with television especially with those cartoon*
> *videos. My child likes to see his elder siblings writing with ink but he's*
> *not comfortable using pencil, so have been forced to buy him ink*
> *pens".(Prt 5)*

The study revealed that, the literacy learning context in the home has a differential influence on which emergent literacy skills children acquire. The result suggests that

direct teaching of literacy related skills in the home environment fosters children's ability to be good readers in early stages in education.

Not all believe that teaching styles have an effect, either positive or negative, on learning capacity. Some feel strongly that there will be no significant difference in the pupils learning capacities. Yet results suggested that intervention delivered by kindergarten teachers can be an effective way to improve the literacy outcomes of children. The job of the kindergarten teacher is to help each child continue developing as a reader and a writer (Hong, 2012).

Over a period of three days, during the pupils' regular centre/play time, each sample spent one day working and role playing with the researcher. Before the start of role-playing, during the morning circle time, the big book *Mrs. Wishy Washy*, by Joy Cowley was read to them. The book was discussed and the illustrations were analysed. During centre on that day, regularised copies were put out for the children to read on their own. During the afternoon circle the next day, the class helper re-read Mrs. Wishy Washy. Each child had a part in the role playing. Our sample goal was to re-enact the book as closely as possible to the actual story.

The study revealed that, there was smooth rendition and they (pupils) knew the part to play, and knew their parts very well. Their acting was suiting to the lines and their motions were very creative. They performed the sketch three times so that they could each try new parts. They were very proud of their own work and it appeared to be a truly positive experience. They were solely responsible for picking what part they wanted to play and how they were going to act it out.

The pupils were divided into two groups with one group having a teacher and parent guidance and the other group with a little help and guidance from teachers and

parents. A mathematics and English test was conducted to analyse their achievement after the activity.

True, some pupils were helped a great deal by both the teacher input and the input of their cooperative groups (Researcher and her team). Yet a few pupils in the non-cooperative, non-teacher instructed samples, scored better than anyone in the samples that received help and guidance. Overall, the groups fared well, they knew their math. However, it was noted that, the samples that had explanations had what appears to have been a higher level of confidence and self-worth.

The study also revealed that, the pupils' levels of learning varied from sample to sample depending upon the type of activity assigned. The various teaching styles required differing levels of instruction based on the requirements in addition to the skills needed. The sample receiving teacher guidance and independent study using cooperative learning and hands-on activity produced significantly better scores on most of the informal measures used.

4.4   Research Question Three: How does emergent literacy kills influence the child's literacy skills in the Agona West District?

The results showed that home-based interactions with letter and sound activities played a significant role in predicting a specific inside-out skill at entry to Junior Kindergarten (i.e., alphabet knowledge). With respect to the relationships between social behaviours and phonological awareness, support was found for a bi-directional relationship between specific social behaviours and phonological awareness skills longitudinally.

The study revealed that most teachers do not undertake any proactive position by encouraging, supporting, and educating parents in their role as their children's first

75

and most important teachers. Therefore, parents lack ways to improve parent involvement in the primary classroom by building strong home - school connections.

When teachers were asked to describe the way they organize their lessons they all referred to two or three – day units in which they teach each letter. It is interesting to note that although all teachers described how they follow such a structure (with the exception of a teacher who did not refer to one), not all claimed to carefully plan it explicitly ahead; thus for some teachers the notion of lesson plans seemed to be irrelevant, with the teacher claiming that her planning although explicit is somewhat intuitive.

The discussion between the researcher and the participant gave a clear indication that the teacher does not have enough resource materials in the preparation of her lesson notes and that may consequently affect lesson delivery. It was also stated categorically that her knowledge in emergent literacy was inadequate.

Participant said that:

> *"I prepare a lesson plan daily, I know that people with experience often tend to skip this part, but although this is my fifth year in Year 1, each day I need to make a programme, because I think this is necessary for me".(Tr 2)*

Interestingly, the data revealed that, the coordination of teachers with other colleagues in Year 1 classrooms is more useful than the submission of lesson plans on a weekly or monthly basis, a process that can end up being rather tokenistic.

Some participants stated that:

> *"Although I am very much against submitting a weekly or monthly planning to the head (you copy and paste from others anyway) having each other to see who proceeds and who delays and having the textbooks in the back of our minds to know at which point we should*

76

> *approximately be that's very useful, without which we would be direction – less" (Tr 3and 5)*

Another close participant observation was carried out in a different school. It was realised that pupils' literacy transcended the abilities to read and write. This observation was done during the researchers' visit to the school's listening and speaking lesson. It was observed that participants were exhibiting behaviours that showed that they had quite a considerable understanding of how poems and rhymes influence their literacy development.

However the teacher matched the children's developing abilities and level of emergent literacy acquired from home by using word cards, picture cards, miming and blackboard illustrations in the lesson delivery process. It pre supposes that effective teachers of literacy knowhow to design developmentally appropriate experiences and how to accommodate instruction to meet children's needs. Holdaway (2019) argues that teachers cannot meet each child's unique needs all the time, every day. Instead, they can create the necessary conditions for developmentally appropriate learning by creating literate environments and giving children sufficient instructional support to help them learn to read or write successfully.

4.6   Summary

The results of this study show that preschool second language learners can develop oral language skills that will support their early writing skills, and that a theme based on children's literature is one way to overcome the low language proficiency that is deemed to hold children back. Furthermore, the findings suggest that a child's language skills, both oral and written, can be very successfully developed in play activities, and that the role of the teacher in this area is crucial.

Literature suggested that early childhood literacy experiences affect successful reading acquisition along several dimensions. These literacy experiences are, in turn, influenced by social contexts and conditions as diverse as the individual literacy outcomes they help to shape. The challenge for the preschool or the elementary classroom teacher is clear: They are charged with designing and delivering reading instruction that does not only build on what the individual child knows, but also accommodates the myriad individual literacy backgrounds present in the classroom.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0   Introduction

This is the final chapter, which comprises an ephemeral overview of the study, emphasising the major findings to draw conclusions. This chapter also deals with the recommendations of the study and suggested areas for future research.

5.1   Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate emergent literacy among children in the Agona West District and its influence on their literacy development. The findings were the highlight of issues that were revealed during the research. Just as poverty is expensive, so are the costs of poor early literacy in terms of risks to long-term educational outcomes and life opportunities. Literacy skills increase the probability of school success, opportunities for employment, economic security, and enjoyment in life (Bird & Akerman, 2015). Persisting educational inequities among indigenous children indicate a need for intensified, thoughtful efforts to ensure that children receive culturally meaningful supports for their emergent literacy, starting with collaborations with parents and other caregivers with family as well as community settings.

The study revealed different sources of literacy learning such as the watching TV, interacting with friends and family print rich environment and books contribute to emergent literacy. It was also revealed that some parents simply do not have the economic means to provide educational materials the way that many middle-class families can.

79

It was realised in the study that participation in home environment themes could prove useful or detrimental or even both to literacy development among lower primary pupils in the Agona West District. It was seen that the home environment and socio – cultural activities have greater influence on major literacy skills like reading, writing, speaking, listening and thinking among pupils who participate in them. The study revealed also that the influence of these themes is as a result of how intensified the relationship between pupils and parents is.

Teachers did influence their learners with emergent literacy skills though their knowledge on emergent literacy was so limited. Most teachers also admitted that lack of resources, inadequate content, and large class size also affects their delivery.

All in all, barriers to parental involvement are a critical piece to the puzzle of children's math, science, and literacy development. Unfortunately, many parents have a strong desire to help their children to learn at home, but don't know how. Others feel they cannot help their children because they do not speak or read English well enough. Some parents have employment commitments that preclude them from participating during regular school hours. It is important that parents feel comfortable enough to come to school and meet with their children's teachers. This is a critical first step to strengthening parent-child interaction in the home.

5.2   Conclusions

Early literacy acquisition plays an important role and has lasting long term effects of the academic development of a child. Receiving early literacy developmental activities in the home, prior to kindergarten, provides a child with the proper preparation for learning in the formal educational environment. If early literacy activities are not part of a child's home experience, they will not be fully ready to

begin school and will immediately fall behind their peers who experienced early literacy in the home. For educators and educational leaders, this creates circumstances that warrant much needed attention in the field of education and educational reform concerning the best interest of each child in the educational setting. Educators at every level must be prepared to integrate developmentally appropriate literacy interventions to help struggling pupils achieve grade level knowledge and content.

5.3   Recommendations

1. Educational leaders must promote early literacy practices in the home and make connections with families, even before the child begins formal education. Educational leaders also must ensure that successful literacy interventions are implemented in the school curriculum. Depending on the social and demographic data of the district, educational leaders and teachers will have to decide which interventions will promote the most student success and achievement in the district and commit to implementation.

2. Providing teacher training and support is a critical factor for literacy intervention implementation to be a success. Creating nurturing relationships between the school and home is also fundamental in increasing parental involvement and support to increase student achievement gains. Educational leaders, teachers, and parents must all work together for the most optimal learning experiences for the pupils'.

3. Reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety serve a significant role in successful early grade literacy acquisition. In particular, materials with appropriate stories to read aloud to children, and those which are used for shared and paired reading, enhance language and literacy development. Such materials not only guide the student through the learning of essential reading

and writing skills, they also provide the student with a crucial link between skills acquisition and meaningful use of literacy throughout the student's life. Therefore, educational stakeholders are to ensure the provision of adequate resource materials in our various schools for effective teaching and learning.

4. In the area of parent involvement, it is important for teachers to look to their own classrooms as a starting point to begin strengthening home-school connections and improving parent child interaction. The teacher's sphere of influence may seem small at first just the twenty to thirty children in the class that year, but it is actually much larger than that. As teachers work to improve the lives of their pupils', parents should feel welcome to come and observe their child's class. This is a good time to address questions, comments, and concerns. The study therefore suggest parents to be made to feel they and the teachers are partners in their child's education, it is much easier to address concerns that come up as the school year progresses.

5. Teachers and parents are not the only ones who have a responsibility to address this issue. Schools, Ghana Education Service, Universities, and Government can provide monetary and other resources to help educate parents as to the role they play in their children's education from the very start of their lives. As far as the government is concerned, this could mean a community awareness program, perhaps including billboards or TV commercials educating parents about the importance of positive parent-child interaction. It is therefore recommended as far as schools in the district are concerned, teacher in-service training, perhaps in the form of workshops, grants, and availability of needed materials and child – parents interactions should be given considerations to promote literacy development.

82

5.4   Suggested Areas for Future Studies

Emergent literacy research in Ghana is limited and future research following from this study could help build on the knowledge base here in Ghana. Further research could involve following an increased number of children into school to observe reading acquisition and to examine which emergent literacy skills correlate with later reading success. Thus, a qualitative research that would examine the different factors of successful literacy interventions, teaching style and methodology should be undertaken.

Although research has documented the influence of literacy materials with teacher support, more research is needed on the specific components of teacher mediation that best support literacy behaviours. For example, how frequently should teacher mediation occur and how invasive should it be (should teachers only extend children's literacy behaviours when they occur or cause them to occur through modelling or suggestions)? Future research should also examine the long-term benefits of literacy behaviours during play. More specifically, what knowledge and skills are gained through literacy-related play and how do they relate to future reading success?

It is recommended that research be pursued to determine what methods are in place in schools to monitor the progress of the lowest-achieving students regularly. Since education is a collaborative effort among many, is there a difference in the reading achievement of children in schools whose principal, guidance counsellor, speech, reading, and special education specialists, physical therapist, social worker, and psychologist meet frequently to review the growth of individual students, who struggle?

5.5   Study Limitations

The current study provides important information about themes of emergent literacy skills that constitutes learners literacy development. However, the study is limited in terms of the generalization of its findings due to several factors. First, data used in the current study are based on pupils, parents and teachers self-reported literacy behaviours, and thus the accuracy of these parent reports cannot be determined. If the study had gathered information about the home literacy environment and other sources of literacy, different and perhaps more significant results regarding the role of parent literacy activities may have been found. Another limitation that the researcher encountered was when most parents were not available and difficult to locate them. The researcher also had a challenge from moving from one school to the other because of time and distance. The researcher had challenges during the interview session where he had to wait for participants to finish their meals and come back to continue. Consequently, some teachers were not readily available to be interviewed as well. Lastly, some parents and participants were not sure of the responses that they were given to them and that may question the authenticity of the data collected and this hindered the utilization of all data.

REFERENCES

Acheampong, K. (2017). *Whole school development in Ghana.* Accra, Ghana: UNESCO EFA Monitoring Report

Adusei, D. (2016). Encourage Students to Read. *Daily Graphic*, Friday, October 6, 2016, 9.

Afful, J. B. A. (2017). *Literacy and communicative skills in the Ghanaian*. Cape Coast: UCC.

Agona West District Education Statistics Report (AWD) (2015). Swedru: Agona West District Education Office.

Alitiparmak, S. (2011). *Parental perceptions on emergent literacy in early childhood years.* Middle East Teachnical University.

Allington, R. L. (2013). The reading instruction provided readers of differing reading abilities. *Elementary School Journal, 83*, 548-559.

Anamuah-Mensah, J., Koomson, A. K., & Godwyll, E. F. (2016). *GNAT commissioned study on FCUBE policy document: Basic education sector improvement programme.* Accra, Ghana: Ghana National Association of Teachers.

Anderson, P. & Morgan, G. (2018). *Developing tests and questionnaires for a national: Assessment of educational achievement.* Washington D C: World Bank.

Anderson, R. & Cheung, S. (2013). Time to read: Family resources and educational outcomes in Britain. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 34*(3), 413-433.

Antilla, J. A. (2013). The effects of early literacy development on academic success in the educational setting and implications for educational leaders and teachers Accra, Ghana: University of Ghana, Legon.

Ásgeirsdóttir, A. (2011). *Home literacy & child language development: The importance of children's literature and poetry.* Haskoli Islands: Universitatis Islandiae Sigillum.

Baker, L. & Scher, D. (2012). Beginning readers' motivation for reading in relation to parental beliefs and home reading experiences. *Reading Psychology, 23*, 239-269

Berk, L. E. (2015). *Infants and children: Prenatal through middle childhood,* (5th Ed.) Boston, MA: Ally and Bacon. Blackwell Publishers Ltd

Bird, L. & Akerman, R. (2015). *Every which we can: A literacy and social inclusion position paper*. London: National Literacy Trust

Bond, V. C. (2011). *What we talk about when we talk about literacy: A Look into the value, measurement, and power hierarchy of literacy*. Masters of Arts in English Thesis. University of California.

Bracken, S. S. & Fischel, J. E. (2018). Family reading behaviour and early literacy skills in preschool children from low-income backgrounds. *Early Education and Development, 19*, 45–67.

Bruner, J. (2019). Culture, mind and education. In B. Moon and P. Murphy, (Eds.), *Curriculum in context.* (pp. 148-178). London: Paul Chapman.

Bruner, J. S. (2013). *Child's talk.* New York: Norton.

Burgess, S. R., & Lonigan, C. J. (2018). Bidirectional relations of phonological sensitivity and pre-reading abilities: Evidence from a preschool sample. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology, 70,* 117–141.

Burgess, S. R., Hecht, S. A. & Lonigan, C. J. (2012). Relations of the home literacy environment (HLE) to the development of reading-related abilities: A one-year longitudinal study. *Reading Research Quarterly, 37*, 408-426

Byrne, B. & Fielding-Barnsley T. (2012). Longitudinal twin study of early reading development in three countries: Preliminary results. *Annals of dyslexia, 52*(1), 47-73.

Carroll, D. (2013). Over-education of recent higher education graduates: New Australian panel evidence. *Economics of Education Review, 32*, 207-218.

Chall, J. S. (2013). Learning to read: The great debate (rev. ed.). *Educational Psychologist*, *29*, 175-185.

Chapman, J. W. & Tunmer, W. E. (2015). Development of children's reading self-concepts: an examination of emerging sub-components and their relationship with reading achievement. *Journal of Education Psychology, 87*, 154-167.

Clay, M. (1966).*The early detection of reading difficulties: A diagnostic survey*. Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann.

Clay, M. M. (2011). *Change over time in children's literacy development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Colton, S. (2013). Emergent literacy interventions for vulnerable pre-schoolers: Relative effects of two approaches. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology, 12,* 320 – 332.

Copeland, K. A., & Edwards, P. A. (2015). Towards understanding the roles parents play in supporting young children's development in writing. *Early Child Development and Care, 56,* 11-17.

Crawford, P. A. (2015). Early literacy: Emerging perspectives. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 10*, 71-86.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Fifth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Crystal, D. (2016). *Child language, learning and linguistics*. London, UK: Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd.

De Jong, P. F., & Leseman, P. P. M. (2011). Lasting effects of home literacy on reading achievement in school. *Journal of School Psychology, 39*, 389-414.

DeBaryshe, B. D. (2013). Joint picture-book reading correlates of early language skills. *Journal of Child Language, 20*, 455-461.

DeBaryshe, B. D. (2015). Maternal belief systems: Linchpin in the home reading process. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 16*, 1-20.

DeBaryshe, B. D., Binder, J. C., & Buell, M. J. (2016). Mothers' implicit theories of early literacy instruction: Implications for children's reading and writing. *Early Child Development and Care, 160,* 119-131.

Developing Emergent Literacy (2013). Developing skills through storybook reading. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 39*(2), 72-79.

Dickinson, D. K. & Tabors, P. O. (2011). *Beginning literacy with language*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Drouin, M. A. (2019). *Parent involvement in literacy intervention: A longitudinal study.* New York: Pearson.

Dyson, A. H. (2013). From invention to social action in early childhood literacy: a reconceptualization through dialogue about difference. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 8*, 409-425.

Ely, W. B. & Gleason, J. (2016). *How in the world do students read?* Hamburg: The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

Family Health International (2012). *Qualitative research methods: A data collector's field guide*. London: Sage Publications.

Ferriero, E. (1986). *The interplay between information and assimilation in beginning literacy*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Gee, J. P. (2016). *Social linguistics and literacies: Ideology in discourses*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Girard, L. C. (2013). *An investigation of the predictors of emergent literacy skills in ju nior kindergarten.* Toronto: University of Toronto.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. (1989). *Fourth generation evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gunn, B. K., (2014). *Emergent literacy: A synthesis of research.* Thousand Oaks: Routledge.

Gunn, B. K., Simmons, D. C., & Kameenui, J. (2015). *Emergent literacy: Synthesis of the research.* Thousand Oaks: Routledge.

Hall, N., (2017*). The emergence of literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Hamilton, L. G. (2013). *The role of the home literacy environment in the early literacy development of children at family-risk of dyslexia.* New York: University of York.

Hatch, A. (2012). *Doing Qualitative Research in Educational Settings.* New York: State University of New York Press.

Hee, P. J. (2014). *The home environments and emergency literacy skills among childr en in a Hawaiian community on Kauai.* Hawaii: University of Hawaii.

Hiebert, E. H. (2018). The role of literacy experiences in early childhood programs. *The Elementary School Journal, 89* (2), 161-171.

Hindman, A. H., Connor, C. M., Jewkes, A. M., & Morrison, F. J. (2018). Untangling the effects of shared book reading: Multiple factors and their associations with preschool literacy outcomes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 23*, 330–350.

Holdaway, D. (2019). *The foundations of literacy.* Sydney, Australia: Ashton – Scholastic.

Hong, S. S. (2012). *Supporting children's language and literacy skills: The effectiveness of shared books reading intervention strategies with parents.* England: Queensland University of Technology

Hood, M., Conlon, E., & Andrews, G. (2018). Preschool home literacy practices and children's literacy development: A longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 100,* 252-271.

Hull, G. A. & Moje, E. B. (2019).*Understanding language: what is the development of literacy the development of?* Stanford: University Press.

88

Johnson, D. (2019). Globalisation, literacy and society: redesigning pedagogy and assessment. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy and Practice 10*, 5-14.

Jones, S. R., Torres, V., & Arminio, J. (2016). *Negotiating the complexities of qualitative research in higher education: Fundamental elements and issues*. New York: CRC Press.

Justice, L. M., Ezell, H. K & Pullen, P.C. (2013). Promising interventions for promoting emergent literacy skills: Three evidence-based approaches. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 23*, 99-113

Kasper, L. F. (2018). New technologies, new literacies: Focus discipline research and ESL learning communities. *Language Learning &Technology, 4*(2).

Knobel, M. (2017). *A sociocultural approach to literacies*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.

Koch, T. (1994). Establishing rigour in qualitative research: The decision trail. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 19*, 976–986. D

Kozulin, A., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V. & Miller, S. (2013). *Vygotsky's educational theory in cultural context.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Lankshear, C. J. & Knobel, M. (2013). *New literacies: Changing knowledge in the classroom*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Lawson, K. (2012). The real power of parental reading aloud: exploring the affective and attentional dimensions. *Australian Journal of Education 56*(3), 257.

Leu, D. J., Jr., Kinzer, C. K., Coiro, J., & Cammack, D. W. (2014). *Toward a theory of new literacies emerging from the Internet and other information and communication technologies.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lonigan, C. J. (2016). Development, assessment, and promotion of pre-0literacy skills. *Early Education and Development, 17* (1), 91–114.

Lonigan, C. J., Burgess, S. R., & Anthony, J. L. (2013). Development of emergent literacy and early reading skills in preschool children: Evidence from a latent-variable longitudinal study. *Developmental Psychology*, 36, 596-613.

Lynch, J., Anderson, J., Anderson, A. & Shapiro, J. (2016). Parents' beliefs about young children's literacy development and parents' literacy behaviors. *Reading Psychology, 27*(1), 1-20.

Lyons, C. A. & Beaver, J. (2015). *Reducing retention and learning disability placement through reading recovery: An educationally sound, cost-effective choice*. London: Sage.

Mason, J. M., & Stewart, J. P. (2013). *Emergent literacy assessment for instructional use in kindergarten.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Mason, J. M., Stewart, J. P., Peterman, C. L., & Dunning, C. L. (2012). Toward an integrated model of early reading development. *Centre for the Study of Reading*. Technical Report No. 566.

McCormick, S. (2014). A non-reader becomes a reader: a case study of literacy acquisition by a severely disabled reader. *Reading Research Quarterly, 29*, 157- 176.

McGee, L. M. (2015). On combining apples and oranges: A response to Stahl and Miller. *Review of Educational Research, 60* (1), 133-140.

Merriam, S.B. (2019). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Monica-Ariana, S. & Anamaria-Mirabela, P. (2014). The impact of social media on vocabulary learning case study- Facebook. *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economics Science Series, 23*(2), 120–130.

Morgan, A. (2015). Shared reading interactions between mothers and pre-school children: Case studies of three dyads from a disadvantaged community. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 5*, 279-304.

Morrow, L. M. (2015).Preparing the classroom environment to promote literacy during play. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 5*, 537-554.

Morrow, L. M. (2017). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (3rd ed.). Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Morrow, L.M., & Rand, M.K. (2016). Promoting literacy during play by designing early childhood classroom environments. *The Reading Teacher, 44* (6), 396-402.

Nebrig, M. R. (2017). *Parent and teacher perception of home activities to encourage emergent literacy*. University of Lehigh, Department of School Psychology.

Neuman, S. & Roskos, K. (2013). *Language and literacy learning in the early years: An integrated approach*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company

Ochs, E. & Schieffelin, B. (2016). *The impact of language socialization on grammatical development*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Payne, A. C., Whitehurst, G. L., & Angell, A. L. (2014). The role of home literacy environment in the development of language ability in preschool children from low income families. *Early Childhood research Quarterly, 9*, 427-440.

Pence, K., & Justice, L. M. (2018). *Language development: Theory to practice*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Perfetti, C. & Curtis, M. (2016). Development of children's reading self-concepts and their relationship with reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *87*, 155-169.

Perry, K. (2012). What is Literacy? –A critical overview of socio - cultural perspectives. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, *8*(1), 50–71.

Phillips, B. M., & Lonigan, C. J. (2019). Variations in the home literacy environment of preschool children: A cluster analytic approach. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 13,* 146–174.

Phillips, L. M., Norris, S. P., & Anderson, J. (2018). Unlocking the door: Is parents' reading to children the key to early literacy development? *Canadian Psychology, 49*, 82-88

Radford, A. (2014). *English syntax: An introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rodriguez, E. T. & Tamis-LeMonda, C. S. (2011). Trajectories of the home learning environment across the first 5 years: Associations with children's vocabulary and literacy skills at prekindergarten. *Child Development, 82*, 1058–1075

Rowsell, J. & Walsh, M. (2011). Rethinking literacy education in New York. *Brock Education Journal,* 21(1), 53-62.

Saracho, O. & Spodek, B, (2011).Parents and children engaging in storybook reading. *Early Child Development and Care, 180*, 1379-1389.

Scarborough, H. S., & Dobrich, W. (2014).On the efficacy of reading to pre-schoolers. *Developmental Review, 14*, 145-302.

Scarborough, J. S., Dobrich, W. & Hager, M. (2011).Preschool literacy experience and later reading achievement. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 24*, 508-511.

Scott, S. E & Palincsar, A. S. (2015). *Sociocultural and digital theory*. Retrieved on 21st August, 2020 from http://www.education.com/reference/article/socio cultural-theory/

Sénéchal, M (2016).   Testing the Home Literacy Model: Parent involvement in kindergarten is differentially related to grade 4 reading comprehension, fluency, spelling, and reading for pleasure. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 10,* 59-87

Sénéchal, M. & LeFevre, J. A. (2012).Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, 73 (2), 445-60.

Sénéchal, M., LeFevre, J, Smith-Chant, B. L., & Colton, K. (2011). On refining theoretical models of emergent literacy: The role of empirical evidence. *Journal of School Psychology, 389*, 439-460.

Smith, J., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Klebanov, P. (2017). *Consequences of living in poverty for young children's cognitive and verbal ability and early school achievement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Snow, C., Burns, M. S. & Griffin, P. (2018). *Developing early literacy: Report of the national early literacy panel.* Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

Snow, C.E. (2016). Beyond conversations: Second language learners' acquisition of description and explanation. In J.P. Lantolf and A. Labarca (eds.), *Research in Second Language Learning: Focus on the Classroom*, pp. 3–16. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Sommer, K. L. (2017).*The relationship between parenting styles, parental reading involvement, child behaviour outcomes, child classroom competence, and early childhood literacy.* Oklahoma: Oklahoma State University.

Spedding, S., Harkins, J., Makin, L., & Whiteman, P. (2017). *Investigating children's early literacy learning in family and community contexts: Review of the related literature*. South Australia: Commissioned for the Learning Together Research Program; Government of South Australia.

Stanovich, K. E. (2016). Matthew effects in reading: some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly, 21*, 360-406.

Stoltz, B. M & Fischel, J. E. (2013). Evidence for different parent–child strategies while reading. *Journal of Research in Reading, 26*, 287–294.

Tamis-LeMonda, B. & Baumwell, M. (2011). Trajectories of the home learning environment across the first 5 years: Associations with children's vocabulary and literacy skills at prekindergarten. *Child Development, 82*, 1058–1075

Teale, W. H., & Sulzby, E. (2017). *Literacy acquisition in early childhood: The roles of access and mediation in storybook reading*. New York: Pergamon Press.

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 48*, 388–396.

UNESCO (2016). *UNESCO, EFA global monitoring report: Literacy.* Paris: UNESCO

Van Daal, Victor H. P. &Sandvik, J.M. (2012). *The Effects of Multimedia on Early Literacy of Children at Risk: A Meta-Analysis*. An EETC presentation given at the University of Stavanger.

Van Kleeck, A. (2020). Emergent literacy: Learning about print before learning to read. *Topics in Language Disorders, 10* (2), 25-45.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Walker-Dalhouse, D. (2013). Beginning reading and the African-American child at risk. *Young Children, 49*, 24-28.

Wayne , A. (2013). *Literacy behaviours of preschool children.* Louisiana: Louisiana State University.

Weigel, D. J., Martin, S.S., & Bennett, K.K. (2016). Mothers' literacy beliefs: Connections with the home literacy environment and preschool children's literacy development. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy, 6,* 191-211

Weinberger, J. (2016). A longitudinal study of children s early literacy experiences at home and later literacy development at home and school. *Journal of Research in Reading, 19*, 14-24.

Welman, J. C. & Kruger, S. J. (2012). *Research methodology* (2nd edition). Cape Town: Oxford Southern Africa.

Whitehurst, G. J., Epstein, J. N., Angell, A. L., Payne, A. C., Crone, D. A., & Fischel, J.E. (2014). Outcomes of an emergent literacy intervention in head start. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 86*, 542-555.

Whitehurst, G. L, & Lonigan, C. L. (2018). Child development and emergent literacy. *Child Development, 69*, 848-872.

Willis, J. W. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches.* London: Sage Publication.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PUPILS

PUPIL/FAMILY INFORMATION

1. Name of Child……………………………………………………………………………

2. School…………………………………………………………………………………….

3. Class…………………………………………………………………………………...

4. Attendance at School ………..………………………………………………………….

5. Performance and attitude in School.(from teacher and exercise books) …………………………………………………………………………………

6. Names of Parents …………………………………………………………………………………

7. Parents' Education …………………………………………………………………………………

8. Details of Domicile (house, area, environment) …………………………………………………………………………………

9. Details of Community ……………………………………………………………………………………

10. Parents Jobs(past/present) ……………………………………………………………………………………

11. How often do parents stay at home? ……………………………………………………………………………………

12. Are there older children? If YES, what are their ages? ……………………………………………………………………………………

STORYTELLING

1. Is there storytelling in the house? ……………………………………………………………………………………

2. How frequently are stories told? ……………………………………………………………………………………

3. Who tells the stories? ……………………………………………………………………………………

4. How much are the children involved? ……………………………………………………………………………………

94

5. At what age is a child allowed to tell a story?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

READING

1. Is there reading in the home?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Where, when and how often does reading take place?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Does the child see people reading at homeand at which age?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. What are the sources of the reading?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Who reads at home?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Are there older children at home who read?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

7. How does the CHILD interact with them when they are reading?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

8. Does child sometimes do simulated reading, and how often?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

9. How does child do such simulated reading, and with which material?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Is there picture reading?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

11. What are some of the pictures?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

WATCHING

1. Is there a TV at home?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which programmes does the child watch on TV?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Do you watch video programmes or movies?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Which video programmes does child watch?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Is the child encouraged to watch specific programmes on TV or Video?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Does the child show preference for any particular programmes on TV/Video?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

7. Does the child have any video games?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

8. When did the child first have video games

…………………………………………………………………………………………

LISTENING

1. Does the child has access to any radio programmes?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Which programmes does the child listen to

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Are there any directions as to which programmes the child listens to on radio?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Do parents determine which programmes a child listen to? If yes, how often?.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Name which programmes parents prefer for children?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

WRITING

1. When is the first time did child start writing?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2. Did child write on wall/books/sheets of paper?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Was the child encouraged to write?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Did child see others writing?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

5. Can you describe the child's reaction to people writing?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

LIBRARY

1. Does the child have books at home?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

2. How often are books bought for the child?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

3. Does the child visit the library? If yes, how often?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Are there any follow-ups by parents etc. about child's visit to library?

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS (NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOLS)

A. Teacher identification

1. Place of residence
2. Nursery/ Primary
3. Certificate
4. Gender.
5. Teaching experience

B. Developing the child's emergent literacy skills and literacy development.

1. How are the literacy skills in children when they come to school?

2. What are your expectations?

3. Whose duty is to develop the child's literacy skills? Why?

4. Does their basic knowledge have any effects on your class delivery?

5. Does the school have materials/ facilities to help children develop literacy skills and reading habits? What kind of materials are there?

6. How do you use these materials to stir love for reading, writing, speaking and listening?

7. Are there children's materials you can recommend to a child readership?

8. How could parents help teachers to foster literacy development in children?

9. What do you think of the reading culture in Kasoa?

APPENDIX C

ORAL TEST EXPRESSION

We are going to take turns telling a story. First, I am going to tell you a story about this book. I want you to listen carefully. Then, it will be your turn to tell the story. After I tell the story, I want you to tell me the very same story. Listen carefully. "Amponsah Goes Swimming."

6. One warm morning, Amponsah was playing in their garden. Amponsah was about to eat an orange when he saw his friend Yaw Adu dive into the lake closer to their house where Amponsah wanted to swim too!

7. Amponsah also jumped into the water! Oh no! Amponsah forgot he could not swim. He sunk to the bottom of the lake, and was very scared!

8. Luckily, Yaw Adu saw Amposah sinking, and was there to save him! Yaw Adu quickly swam to the bottom of the lake, and helped Amonsah back to land.

9. Finally, Amponsah made it back to land. He was happy he was safe. Yaw Adu showed Amponsah the correct way to swim, and they practiced together. Amponsah would never sink again.

Now it is your turn to tell me the story. Tell me everything you remember. Try your best.

Do your best. What is happening in the story in this picture? Tell me everything you can remember.

APPENDIX D

SOME PICTION FOUND IN PRE – SCHOOL CLASSROOM
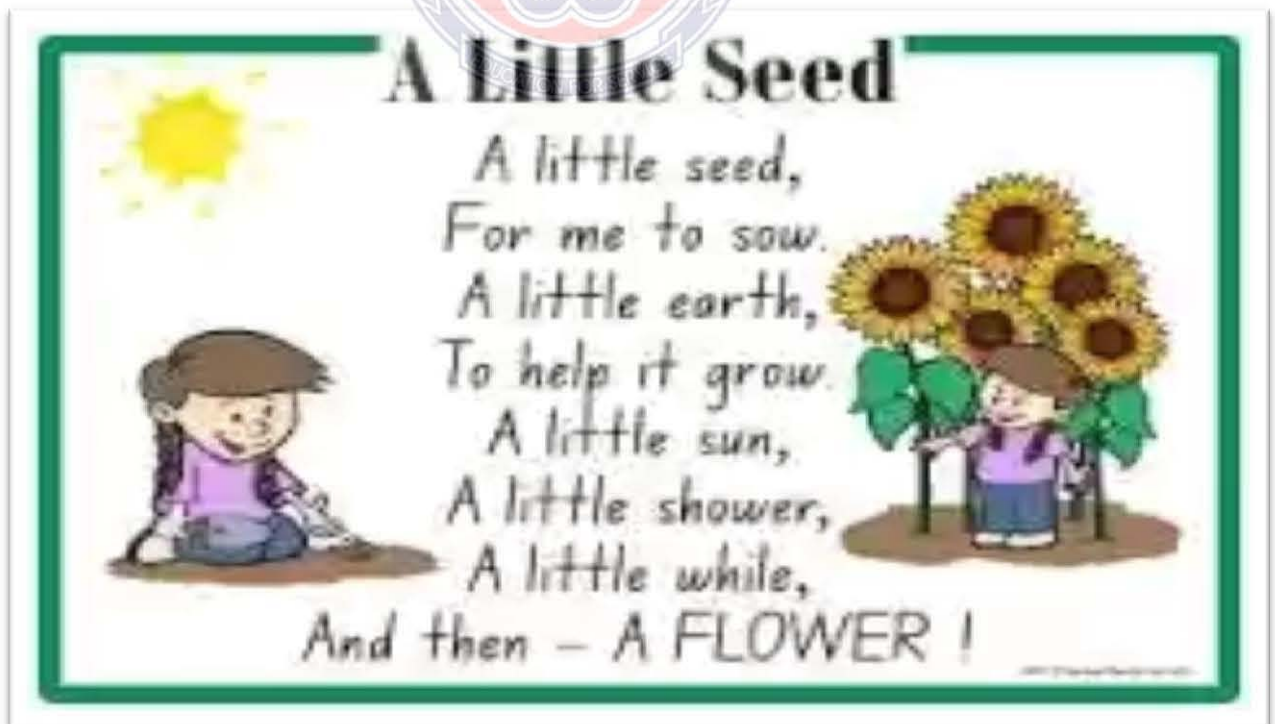
APPENDIX E

CHILDREN IN THE LISTENING AND SPEAKING CLASSROOM

RECITING A RHYME

APPENDIX F

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana   eco@uew.edu.gh
+233 (020) 2041072

FES/DECE/S.6

17ᵗʰ November, 2021

The Municipal Director
Ghana Education Service
Agona Swedru
Box 314 SW

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

We write to introduce to you Mr. Charles Abeiku Forson with index number 200052086 who is an M. Ed student in the above department. He was admitted in 2019/2020 academic year and has successfully completed his course work and is to embark on his thesis on the topic: "*influence of emergent literacy skills on the child's literacy development in Agona West District.*

Mr. Forson is to collect data for his thesis, and we would be most grateful if he could be given the needed

assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Oppong Frimpong, Ph. D
Ag. Head of Department