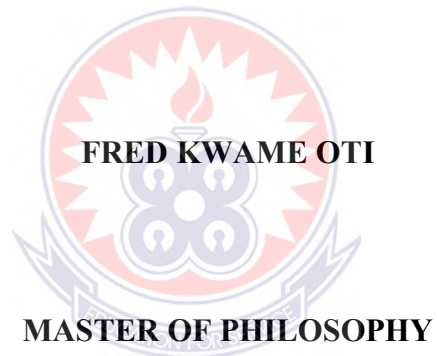


**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**PUPILS' PERCEPTION ON THE COCKCROW AS CHILDREN'S  
LITERATURE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PUPILS READING IN THE  
DUNKURA CIRCUIT**



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**A thesis in the Department of Basic Education, Faculty of  
Educational Studies, submitted to the School of  
Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
(Basic Education)  
in the University of Education, Winneba,**

**MARCH, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, Fred Kwame Oti, declare that this thesis, 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

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Prof. Asonaba Kofi Addison (Principal Supervisor)

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

Dr. Emma Sarah Eshun (Co-Supervisor)

**Signature:**.....

**Date:**.....

## **DEDICATION**

To my dearest wife, Mrs. Benedicta Oti Agyemang for her immense support towards this research work.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors; Prof. Asonaba Kofi Addison and Dr. Emma Sarah Eshun for sparing no effort in helping me accomplish my MPhil programme throughout. Their knowledge has enriched my research skills and I have learned a lot from their experience. I wish them prosperous life and good health. I am most grateful to my uncle, Mr. Patrick Mensah for sponsoring my MPhil programme at the University of Education, Winneba. I am thankful to the Bosome Freho Education office for granting me access to carry out my research in the Dunkura circuit Junior High schools in the District. My sincere thanks go to my colleague teachers at Ampento D/A Junior High School and my kind hearted and understanding headmaster, Mr. Francis Obeng.

I will not forget to thank my friend and colleague at the University of Education, Winneba, Last but not least, I would like to thank my beloved family for giving me all the strength I needed and for their support and tolerance during my absence. I understand that it has been such a difficult time for them and I promise to compensate them for all the time I have been kept away.

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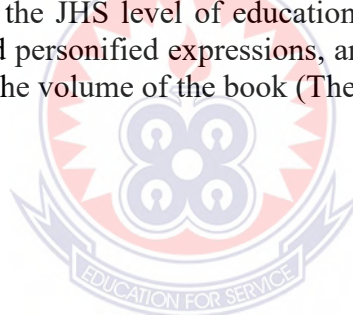
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## ABSTRACT

This study examines Pupils' Perceptions on "The Cockcrow" and its influence on reading in the Dunkura circuit. The study sought to find out the pupils' perceptions on 'The cockcrow' as literature for children; find out how these perceptions influence their reading in general and "The Cockcrow" in particular. The study adopted a Mixed method which is a research approach for collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely. The tools used for this research work were questionnaire and interview. 60 pupils were questioned and 10 were interviewed. Various books, articles from journals and internet were consulted to gain insight into the subject under investigation. The findings of the research reveal that pupils have been introduced to "The Cockcrow" by their English Language teachers in school. The study concluded that Pupils' perceptions on a book have greater impact on the reading and learning performance of a book, and "The Cockcrow" is no exception. Participants (respondents) in this study revealed certain short falls that they perceive "The Cockcrow" to be having, which include difficult diction used in the book, voluminous nature, theme identification difficulty, et cetera. and as such do not perceive "The Cockcrow" to be a complete children's literature book. It further recommends that Curriculum developers and other education stakeholders should have a review of "The Cockcrow" to be able to be a desired book for children literature at the JHS level of education concerning the themes, difficult diction, metaphorical and personified expressions, and length of some of the "stories" in "The Cockcrow" and the volume of the book (The Cockcrow) itself.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Overview**

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research objectives, the research questions, significance of the study, and delimitation of the study and organisation of the study.

#### **Background to the Study**

The English Language has been largely used in many areas such as politics, economics, tourism, electronics, telecommunication, science, culture, and technology (Swanzy, 2014:1-3). In Ghana, English has become a lingua franca and the official language of the press and commerce. English is the language of the formal education, starting as a subject on the timetable for the first three (3) years of formal education and thereafter becoming the channel of the institution. One of the efforts put in place is to encourage reading at all levels of education to improve the speaking and comprehension of English Language in various endeavours of the Ghanaian people. It is a fact that reading has attracted much prominence in our schools especially at the pre-tertiary level in recent times. A major foundation for learning and academic achievement is learning to read.

Reading is a gateway to literacy in the sense that it unlocks the door to the study of other subjects (Swanzy, 2014:1-3). It is therefore essential for many Ghanaians to have a good command of English to satisfy the growing needs in a developing country like Ghana. It can be understood that with strengthened reading skills, English as a second language (ESL) or as a foreign language (EFL) readers will have immense progress and achieve a higher level of development in every academic area. Among

the numerous steps that can be employed in the teaching and learning of reading to achieve its purpose is the designing of the curriculum for English language learners, aside from the use of appropriate methodology, classroom management, pupils' readiness, et cetera. "Reading is a medium of language learning, of communication, and sharing data and thought" (Chung, 2001 in Owu–Ewie, 2018 ). "When reading is well taught and practiced, it will improve the development and enhance academic success" (Owu–Ewie, 2018:107). Ghana's standard of education in recent years has been falling as a result of some reasons. A study made by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2014: 40) reported that "Ghana's education at all levels is said to be below international standards". The then acting Director-General of Ghana Education Service(GES) Charles AhetoTsegah in 2014,through an interview revealed that, "Ghana's educational standards have been falling due to poor reading habits of students" (Efua, 2014).

All these capitulate that the standard of Ghana's education which has fallen is due to poor reading habit among students. To overcome this was the "announcement of an additional reading hour to the curriculum of all schools". This was made known in an interview granted to Citi News (Efua, 2014). As a means to overcome these poor reading habits at the J.H.S level is the introduction of "a set book for Junior High Schools" by the GES called "The Cockcrow" in a bid to improve reading (GES/MOE/CRDD,2013). "The Cockcrow" is a collection of short stories, poems, and drama that are abridged from the original literal pieces of some authors (Sackey and Darmani, 2013). 'The Cockcrow' which is a literature book is supposed to be a children's literature book since it is designed to be studied by pupils at the JHS level of Ghana's education.

The use of children's literature, a key component in whole-language instruction, provides real texts that can be used to teach reading (Minardi, 1994:2-3). Minardi further acknowledges that children's literature builds on background, past experience, and interests of the learner. The literature suggests that the use of children's books in the reading and language art curricula has many benefits and among them is using children's literature to facilitate language development. It is also seen to have positive effects on reading achievement, as well as on the acquisition of reading skills and strategies (Minardi, 1994:2-3). Again, Minardi narrates that, writing skills which include: grammar, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary, clarity, et cetera are improved and writing styles such as expository, persuasive, descriptive and narrative writing styles are broadened through the use of children's literature in the learning of reading. Children's literature encourages both high-level thinking and learner involvement, important in motivating students to read (Heald-Taylor, 1989 in Minardi, 1994). Further, there is the benefit of using children's literature to enhance the connections between reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Minardi, 1994). So there is every reason in designing children's literature book for pupils at the JHS level of education if we want to improve reading habits and in effect enhance the standard of learning in Ghana's education.

Any "carefully and well selected piece of children's literature brings forth a perfect beginning and an enriched content where children are engaged in multiples of language learning activities that allows children to use it as springboard to relate to other areas of the curriculum" (Naashia, 2007:2). "The Cockcrow" which is introduced as a piece of children's literature work is selected to suit the learner's comprehensive level in order to improve reading at the JHS level, and should be able to read with less difficulty (Sackey and Darmani, 2013). Therefore, the perception of learners (students)

would definitely inform curriculum developers to seriously take into consideration the major factors that should be considered in selecting or designing a book to be used as literature at the JHS level. According to Naashia (2007:2), “well selected pieces of children’s literature make a peculiarly useful source of genuine language input which is both likeable and enjoyable to children from the lower primary to secondary school”. So every book selected for children to be used should be able to appeal to them and should excite them. Again, Naashia (2007:2), is of the view that “children’s book should creatively and actively involve children, and allow them to relate the story to their own lives as well as making a springboard to relate to other areas of the curriculum”. This means that children’s book should have some characteristics to be able to do all these.

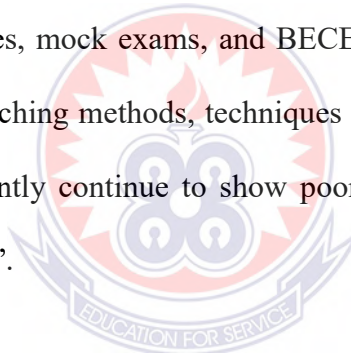
This study is to assess students’ perception on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature and how it influences their reading at the JHS level of education in the Bosome Freho District. The researcher also is of the view that there could be readily available children’s literature books that bring into consideration the major elements or characteristics of children’s literature that some could be selected to be used at the JHS level. However, if stakeholders who are responsible for selecting a book for learners at this level do not take critical look at it to determine its suitability to such learners, the purpose of introducing these or such books may be a mirage.

For all these reasons, it would be paramount to inquire about perceptions pupils have on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature and how these perceptions influence pupils’ learning of “The Cockcrow”. By doing so, we would be able to recognize the relationship between pupils’ perception on “The Cockcrow” and the impact it has on their reading performance. It is envisaged that this study will reveal perceptions of

pupils on the study of “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature and how it influences their study of literature and reading.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Acquiring the habit to read and comprehend has long been the heart of education in every society. Therefore, encouraging learners to develop the habit to read will eventually improve performance in Ghanaian Schools in the basic level’s subjects and finally lay strong bedrock for later competence and competencies. “The Cockcrow” is a supplementary reading book which is introduced at the JHS level of education to improve the reading competence of JHS pupils (Sackey & Darmani, 2013). Nonetheless, this has not been the case as pupils continue to show poor performance in class exercises, quizzes, mock exams, and BECE. Though English Teachers have tried to adopt several teaching methods, techniques and strategies to help remedy the situation, pupils persistently continue to show poor reading performance especially with the “The Cockcrow”.



Chief Examiner’s report on the B.E.C.E 2017 accounts that there was a decline in performance in English language (WAEC, 2017). He attributed this decline to poor grasp of language, lack of vocabulary and wrong spellings which however are supposed to be some of the challenges when one reads, should help solve.

Observations and experiences from the quizzes, class assignments and mock examinations the researcher and other English teachers have conducted from 2016/2017 academic year till date generally revealed that few of the pupils at the JHS level answer questions from “The Cockcrow” in a satisfactory manner.



Again, the results of an unstructured interview made in the researcher's school to find out from the pupils why they are not able to answer questions set on "The Cockcrow", showed that there is minimal interest and understanding in reading "The Cockcrow" during and after school hours, and even on vacations. All these are evident as a result of the perception the pupils have on "The Cockcrow" as a literature for children. So, if "The Cockcrow" was introduced to improve the standard of reading and comprehension (Darmani & Sackey, 2013), and eventually improve the standard of learning, why then is pupils' achievement in English Language not improving, with pupils showing minimal interest in reading "The Cockcrow"? Or is it that the book is regarded new? Or is it because little or no research has been conducted on the validity of the book? Answers to these questions are not known, and it is upon this that the researcher seeks to embark on this research to find answers to.

Some research works have been done on children's literature using some research methods. However, I believe that a different aspect of children's literature, especially on perceptions children have on books they read, can be looked into using different methods.

It is against this background that the researcher investigates the perceptions of pupils on "The Cockcrow" which is a supplementary reading literature book at JHS level of education in Ghana, as children's literature and how it influences their reading.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to find out pupils' perceptions on "The Cockcrow" as literature for children; find out how these perceptions influence their reading in general and "The Cockcrow" in particular.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To determine the level of pupils' knowledge on the introduction of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature.
2. To find out pupils' perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature.
3. To find out how these perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature influence their reading and learning on "The Cockcrow".
4. To determine how the use of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature has influenced pupils' reading in general.

### **Research Questions**

The following are the research questions that were formulated to guide the study:

1. What is the level of pupils' knowledge on the introduction of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature?
2. What are pupils' perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature?
3. How do these perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature influence their reading and learning of "The Cockcrow"?
4. How has the use of "The Cockcrow" influenced pupils' reading in general?

### **Significance of the Study**

There has been a significant development in the theories and practices of the study of children's literature in the world in recent times. It is important to examine those developments for insights that can help us bring about significant changes in reading and learning of children's literature. Research in this field is very significant for basic schools (JHS), because the standard of education of the country depends on students'

reading proficiency in English. It is very important to improve the reading and comprehension of English Language for a meaningful education at the JHS by using children's literature books.

The findings from this study will aid literature students from the universities to be able to have it as sources of references. Again, the results will be useful to literature teachers in teaching children's literature. Also, the findings will be very helpful to university libraries to be added to their reference materials that they have in stock for research.

The findings from this study will inform policy makers, Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) and other educational stakeholders to have a review of 'the cockcrow' to be able to meet the standard of the pupils at J.H.S level of education. Also, the findings of the study will serve as a reference material for researchers who would want to inquire into similar area.

### **Delimitation**

The study is delimited to only J.H.S pupils in five schools in the Dunkura circuit in the Bosome Freho district. Though the concept of children's literature has many areas that could be discussed in relation to "The Cockcrow", the study looked at only the pupils' perception of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the research objectives, the research questions, significance of the study, and delimitation of the study. Chapter two is captioned as a literature review that covers: Various books, articles from

journals and internet were consulted to gain insight into the subject under investigation.

Chapter three follows with philosophical paradigm, research approach, design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, ethical considerations. Chapter four, deals with presentations, analysis and discussions of results. The final chapter covers summaries, conclusions and recommendations.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Overview**

This chapter reviews relevant literature related and important to the study. Various books, articles from journals and internet were consulted to gain insight into the subject under investigation.

#### **Theoretical Framework**

##### **The Reader Oriented Theory**

The development of reader-orientated theory was in response to dissatisfaction with more objective theories from the earlier twentieth century (Habib, 2011) which regarded texts as being independent of readers (Guerin, 2005). Reader-orientated theories involve a variety of critical stances, but with the belief that readers are responsible for the creation of meaning (Newton, 1997).

“These theories differ from earlier views because they focus on the readers as meaning makers, responsible to varying degrees’ dependent on the particular theorist, for bringing their life experiences, their beliefs, values, and memories to the text in order to make meaning” (Bradfield, 2017: 124-126). To the reader orientated theorist, meaning making is a result of the interaction of the reader and text, with valid interpretations being made in contrast to the earlier assumptions that there is one correct meaning (Bressler, 2011; Rosenblatt, 1978, 1985).

Earlier objective theories viewed the inclusion of the readers in interpretation as allowing subjectivity and relativism into the making of meaning (Guerin, 2005), while reader-orientated approaches demand acknowledgement of the reader or audience in

any literary analysis (Habib, 2011). In contrast to earlier text-orientated theories, the reader-orientated approach turned away from assuming texts were self-contained aesthetic objects and instead pondered the making of meaning when the reader and the text came together (Dobie, 2012; Habib, 2011). The main tenet within reader orientated approaches is that the reader is the most important element in the interpretation process (Guerin, 2005). This tenet has held interest and appeal for readers and theorists, who were increasingly becoming aware of themselves as readers, and found that reader-orientated approaches spoke directly to a growing and flourishing notion of readers and what readers do (Parker, 2015).

Criticisms of reader-orientated approaches are aimed at both the theoretical underpinnings, the subjectiveness of the interpretations, and the effectiveness of the theory in classrooms. Firstly, arguments about the theory itself involve the claim that there is no clear methodological approach to analysis or unified theoretical underpinnings (Bressler, 2011) which has led some critics to state that reader orientated approaches should be seen as emphases in interpretation rather than as theories (Hall, 2001). This criticism is backed by the great variation in practices that have been given by theorists and despite the continued agreement of the importance of the reader in making meaning (Hall, 2001). Reader-orientated approaches are thought to be the chaotic jumble of theories (Dobie, 2012), and that oversimplification of the theory has produced a meaningless construct (Hall, 2001). With interpretation seen as the act of reading, and with the authority coming from the reader and not the text, the possibility exists that there will be many different interpretations of the same text by different readers, and even several different interpretations by each reader throughout the reading (Dobie, 2012). Critics question whether a text's meaning can ever be found if it is the reader who creates meaning and multiple interpretations of

the same text (Bressler, 2011) and that digressions into what is thought of as the “self-analysis” of the textual analysis makes the reader’s life more important than the literary work (Dobie, 2012:131).

In response to the argument of subjectivity, Holland (1975) concedes that although interpretation could be subjective, it is not random and Bressler (2011) reminds critics that although there is no one correct meaning for any text, there can be valid interpretations. Dobie (2012, p. 131) argues that a reader-orientated approach “powerfully engages readers to move analytically by the inward and outward finding meaning in the text, the self and the world”.

### **The Cognitive View (Top-Down Processing) on Reading**

“The cognitive view or top-down processing reading theory, according to Owu-Ewie (2018: 118) posits that it’s an approach which changes the manner learners learn to read”. Owu-Ewie continues that this is a theory where reading is not just extracting theory meaning from a text but a process of connecting information in the text with the knowledge the reader brings to the act of reading. The theory sees the reading as a dialogue between the reader and the text which involves an active cognitive process in which the reader’s background knowledge plays a key role in the creation of meaning (Tierney & Pearson, 1994). According to this theory, reading is not a passive mechanical activity but purposefully and rational, dependent on the prior knowledge and the expectations of the reader. It is not merely a matter of decoding print to sound but also a matter of making sense of written language (Smith, 1994). In brief, reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject, make new hypotheses, and so forth (Owu-Ewie, 2018).

One could deduce that, children's literature has the relevance of entertaining, providing moral lessons to readers and also enhancing pupil's reading ability. In effect, readers acquire vocabularies and knowledge that help them to continue in making meaningful life in the years ahead as Livingstone and Brown (2017) alluded to. This can also mean that a student may not be able to benefit from children's book when he/she is not able to make sense of the language used for the text according to the cognitive view theory of reading. That is, the student (reader) needs to understand the vocabularies in the text before the book could be beneficial to him/her. These two theories are relevant to the current study since the researcher tries to find out how the students perceive "The Cockcrow" as children's literature and how it has influenced their reading ability. That is, whether the "The Cockcrow" is seen by students as literature for children, and whether it has influenced their reading since they started reading it.

### **Empirical Study**

A study made by Jui-Fan Yu Chang in 2007 on *The Role of Children's Literature in the Teaching of English Language to Young Learners in Taiwan* aimed at finding out how a sample of children's literature commonly used by teachers of young learners in Taiwan when considered in relation to a range of criteria derived from critical review of writing on children's literature and, in particular, 'good' children's literature. In the study, 58% of teachers indicated that they use story books during class lessons at least once a week and those story books are used as supplementary books.

Chang (2007) in his work, argued that for a book or text to be considered as literature for children, it should meet certain criteria of which the following were included:

1. That the book or text should have an imaginative interest.
2. That the book or text provides access to understanding through empathy.



3. It should include realistic but simple dialogue.
4. That it should be able to provide an exposure to new illustrated vocabulary in context.

Among some of his findings, he concluded that “some of the textbooks and supplementary literature books sampled saw that these texts in the textbooks and supplementary literature books with the text they contained, does not meet the criteria that he used to consider a text or book as literature for children”. He revealed that “some of the sentence illustrations in the texts used as literature for children are that of adults”. That is, “the vocabularies used are difficult to grab by children at such level and thus meant for students or people of higher level of education”. He also indicated that “the vocabulary structures do not make the texts interesting and meaningful” (Chang 2007: 150-158, 270), and these are literature texts written by Taiwanese. On Chang’s findings from the analysis on these literature texts that were used in Taiwanese educational institutions, it was indicated that the “texts were linguistically inappropriate to young English learners in Taiwan” (Chang 2007: 270).

However, some findings which were also made by Chang in his work on some popular children’s books written in UK and found out that, unlike the children’s literature texts written by people from Taiwan, those popular books had their “language structure been appropriate, meaningful, understandable, and meet all the criteria that puts a book in the category of children’s literature” (Chang, 2007: 270). These affirms the fact that it is not every literature book that can be said to be children’s literature book. He then cautioned “teachers to be careful on the criteria they use to select a book or text as literature to be studied by children” (Chang, 2007: 265).

Such revelations by Chang also, among some others, encouraged and drove me to inquire about how pupils perceive *The Cockcrow* to be literature book for children at the JHS level of education in Ghana. It is of essence to note that *The Cockcrow* is also written by Ghanaians and approved by the Ghana Education Service and Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) now National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NACCA) to be used as supplementary reading literature book for pupils at the JHS level of Ghana's education. This similarity makes it relevant for this research piece of Chang to be looked at in undertaking this current study.

## **Related Literature Reviews**

### **Children's Literature**

According to Chang (2007:7), "before the nineteenth century, a very few books were especially written for children". Since then, changing attitudes towards childhood and children's development, along with the increased sophistication of print technology, have led to the development of children's literature as a major industry (Chang, 2007). Nonetheless, there is no simple, straightforward definition of children's literature that can be applied with equal validity at different times and in different contexts (Chang, 2007). Chang further explains that, just as concepts of 'child', 'childhood' and 'literature' have evolved over time, so too have definitions of 'children's literature'. It is not a simple matter to define 'childhood' or 'literature'. Some writers maintain that children's literature differs from adult literature in degree only (Lukens, 1995); others (Lesnik-Oberstein, 1996) maintain that it differs in kind, that is, that the word 'literature' when used in the context of 'children's literature' cannot necessarily be related in any straightforward way to the word 'literature' as used in other contexts. Thus, for example, Bottigheimer (1998, p. 190) argues that children's literature is "an important system of its own". To complicate matters further, there are those who

maintain that to be included in the category of ‘children’s literature’, writing must be of ‘good quality’. Thus, for example, Hillman (1999:3) would exclude from the category of ‘children’s literature’, writing that is “stodgy,” “too predictable,” or “too illogical.” Precisely how one determines whether a work meets these extremely vague criteria largely remains an open question.

Definitions of children’s literature, from Chang (2007), can be assigned to three broad categories (intended audience; purpose; style/quality), the second of which includes three sub-categories (entertainment; entertainment and information; empathy). Although, in terms of overall emphasis, the majority of definitions fall into one of these categories and sub-categories, some include aspects of more than one of them. The most commonly occurring contemporary definition of children’s literature is one that focuses on intended audience. For many writers, children’s literature is simply a body of texts that is intended for a particular readership, that is, children, children being defined loosely in terms of a range of socio-cultural and individual characteristics (see, for example, Galda& Cullinan, 2002; Hunt, 1996; Lesnik-Oberstein, 1999; McDowell, 1973; Weinreich& Bartlett, 2000). Also common are definitions of children’s literature that focus on purpose. That purpose is sometimes seen in terms of both information and entertainment (see, for example, Norton, 1999; Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown, 2002; Winch, Johnson, March, Ljungdahl& Holliday, 2004); sometimes, however, entertainment alone is the critical definitional feature, the emphasis generally being on works belonging to the narrative genre (see, for example, Ghosn, 2002; Hollindale, 1997). Less often, definitions that relate primarily to purpose focus on empathy, children’s literature being classified as literature that is designed to help children to understand, and emphasize with, the world views and experiences of others, including other children (see, for example, Huck, Helper, Hickman & Kiefer,

2001; Saxby, 1997; Tomlinson & Lynch-Brown, 1996/2002). Finally, there are those who believe that children's literature should be defined in terms of style and quality (see, for example, Lukens, 1995).

➤ **Intended Audience**

Weinreich & Bartlett (2000:127) do not define children's literature explicitly. They claim, however, that in any account of children's literature, "the child must. . . be regarded as a necessary condition which the author consciously or unconsciously relates to in the creative process". For McDowell (1973) and Hunt (1996), the definition of children's literature includes explicit reference to intended readership. For them, the term 'children's literature' is applicable to books written for, and read by, that group referred to as 'children' by any particular society. It needs not have any other specific characteristics or qualities.

Furthermore, McDowell (1973:17) notes that whether a particular text can be given a value "depends upon the circumstances of use". This approach to defining children's literature excludes books that are read by, but not primarily intended for, children. Even so, to define children's literature in terms of intended readership alone is potentially problematic in that it allows for the inclusion of, for example, textbooks which would not normally be considered to come within the domain of children's literature. This is an issue that is not resolved by Lesnik-Oberstein (1996:17) who defines 'children's literature' as "a category of books the existence of which absolutely depends on supposed relationships with a particular reading audience: children". Even the inclusion of the word 'books' in this definition is problematic: it excludes a range of written materials that are not produced in book format. Townsend (1971:9) observes that "any line which is drawn to confine children and their books to their own special

corner is an artificial one”, and therefore that “[the] only practical definition of a children’s book today—absurd as it sounds—is ‘a book which appears on the children’s list of a publisher’”. Quote apart from the fact that, once again, the word ‘book’ appears in this definition, its usefulness is questionable. This definition would exclude works that appear in electronic format and are not listed in publisher’s catalogues. It would, however, include books designed for adults that have been adapted for children. In this respect, it can be aligned with the views of Weinreich and Bartlett (2000:37) who includes in his definition of children’s literature books originally written for adults that have been re-worked with children in mind.

### **Purpose or Function of children’s literature**

#### **➤ Emphasis on entertainment**

For many writers, ‘children’s literature’ is not only a term that applies to writing that is designed primarily to entertain, but also one that is restricted to narrative fiction. For Hollindale (1997:30), for example, children’s literature is “a body of texts with certain common features of imaginative interest, which is activated as children’s literature by a reading event: that of being read by a child”, “a child [being] someone who believes on good grounds that his or her condition of childhood is not yet over” (emphasis added). Ghosn (2002:172) explicitly confines children’s literature to fiction, defining it as “fiction written for children to read for pleasure, rather than for didactic purposes” and explicitly excluding “‘basal readers’, or ‘reading scheme’ books, which are developed around controlled vocabulary and sentence structures”. This definition raises some critical issues. It is not only ‘basal readers’ and ‘reading scheme’ books that are “developed around controlled vocabulary and sentence structures”. In excluding such material, Ghosn effectively excludes many very popular books that have been written for children. Furthermore, it is unclear what Ghosn intends by the

use of the word ‘didactic’ in this context. The word ‘didactic’ can be applied to any material that is intended to convey information and instruction, whether or not it is also designed to entertain. In explicitly excluding materials that are intended to teach as well as to entertain, including materials that are developed around controlled vocabulary and sentence structures, Ghosn would effectively exclude from the category of children’s literature books such as *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle (1969). He would also exclude all writing that does not belong to the category of narrative fiction.

➤ **Emphasis on information and entertainment**

Galda and Cullinan (2002:7) claim that literature “entertains and . . . informs”, that “[it] enables young people to explore and understand their world” and “enriches their lives and widens their horizons”. Thus, through literature, children “learn about people and places on the other side of the world as well as ones down the street. They can travel back and forth in time to visit familiar places and people, to meet new friends, and to see new worlds. They can explore their own feelings, shape their own values, and imagine lives beyond the one they live”. Such an approach, would allow for the inclusion in the category of children’s literature of both fiction and non-fiction. It would also allow for the inclusion of works which are designed to teach as well as to entertain.

➤ **Emphasis on empathy**

For a number of writers, children’s literature is narrative, an important characteristic of which is the provision of access to understanding through empathy with the lives and experiences of others (see, for example, Hollindale, 1997; Huck, Helper, Hickman & Kiefer, 1997; Saxby, 1997). For Saxby (1997:14), “the raw material of literature is

experience - life". Hollindale (1997:62) notes that the experiences recorded need not be fictional but might, for example, be based on the author's memory of his or her childhood. For Huck et al. (1997:5), children's literature is "the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language". It is socially and culturally conditioned and focuses on the lives and experiences of children, thus enabling young people to broaden their world view through the imaginative apprehension of new experiences. Through vicarious experience, Huck et al. claim, children's literature encourages the development of empathy. Thus, for example, *The Upstairs Room* by Johanna Reiss (1987) which describes the lives of two Jewish girls who hid from German soldiers in the cramped upstairs room of a farmhouse for two years, provides children with an opportunity to understand and empathize with experiences with which they are themselves unfamiliar. In common with many other writers for whom the development of empathy through vicarious experience is a critical characteristic of children's literature, Huck et al. restrict children's literature to the narrative genre.

➤ **Emphasis on style and quality**

In a definition that is reminiscent of the canonical approach to adult literature often associated with F. R. Leavis (see, for example, *The Great Tradition* (1948)), Lukens (1995:7) refers to children's literature as involving "a significant truth expressed in appropriate elements and memorable language", the ideas being "expressed in poetic form, [and] the truths of theme and character [being] explored through the elements of fiction, and the style of the artist". There is, however, no serious attempt to define what is meant in this context by 'significant truth', 'appropriate elements', 'memorable language', 'poetic form' or 'style of the artist'.

### **A contextually Relevant Definition of Children's Literature**

What all of the approaches to definition to which reference has been made have in common is that they all emphasize the fact that children's literature is written for children and, therefore, with the needs and interests of children in mind. Even so, children's literature can be defined in many different ways. For the purposes of this study, an inclusive definition that focuses on intended readership is the most useful. Thus, 'children's literature' is defined here as any material that is written for, and read by, that group referred to as 'children' by any particular society. This leaves open for the moment the issue of what constitutes 'good' or 'effective' children's literature. This is however, an issue of considerable importance and one that will be addressed later in relation to context of use.

Hunt (1995) in given response to "what books are for children?" says, the answer is that we all know what it is, but it is not very easy to tell what it is (or what it is not) . It is everything from a Sixteenth Century chapbook to a twentieth century computer-based, interactive device. It is everything from the folktale to the problem novel, from the picture book to the classroom poem, from the tract to the penny dreadful, from the classic to the comic. Children's literature is the collection of books that are read to and by children. That collection is enormous: There are hundreds of thousands of English-language children's titles in print. Currently about 25,000 new titles are published every year in the English language alone (Library and Book Trade Almanac, 2010). And it is old: The tradition of publishing literature for English-speaking children dates back two and a half centuries, predating the founding of the American republic. Children's literature spans the range from alphabetical books and nursery rhyme collections for the very young through novels and informational books for adolescents



or young adults, as they are called in the book trade — in other words, from birth to about age fifteen. Today, most children's books are written expressly for children.

Children's literature comprises those books written and published for young people who are not interested yet in adult literature or who may not possess the reading skills or developmental understandings necessary for its perusal (Patton, 2003). It is literature that implies some value added to separate good books from ordinary one (Hilman, 1999). The value relates to quality that is associated with literary standard. This means that children's literature should be good-quality trade books (Carol & Tomlinson, 2005). Every book that children read is not necessarily a part of children's literature. Textbook, comic book, adult science fiction borrowed from parents is not children's literature (Sutherland, 1996). However, some people still believe that anything children read and enjoy is a part of their literature (Sunan, 2008). More people working on this field state that children book are books that are not only read and enjoyed by children but books that are written for children (Sunan, 2008). This means that children's book should meet certain criteria related to literary standard. Sunan (2008) further explains that children's books are book for children from birth to adolescence covering topic that is relevant for children on their ages and the books should be interesting for children.

Ken (2012) is of the view that children's literature could be explained as literature— not including works such as joke books, cartoon books, and nonfiction piece that are not intended to be read from front to back, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other reference materials. Children's literature is defined by Livingston and Brown (2017) as literature that seeks to answer works that were particularly pointed at the young or that came to be considered as children's literature by being appropriated by

young readers, and those that were once read by children but are now almost exclusively read by scholars. Livingston and Brown (2017) further explain that Children's literature as a concept is defined as 'literature that is exclusively about children or aimed at children'. It concerns literature that involves ideas, relationships and language that are often seen as simple and can teach the child a moral lesson. Children's literature denotes ideas related to stories, poetry, rhymes, folk tales, and drama, exclusively created for children as the target audience (Livingston & Brown, 2017).

### **Types of Children's Literature**

The vastness and variety of the different types of children's literature that is available to study, makes a simple classification very difficult (Livingston & Brown, 2017). Hence, a very general discussion of the most common types will be undertaken.

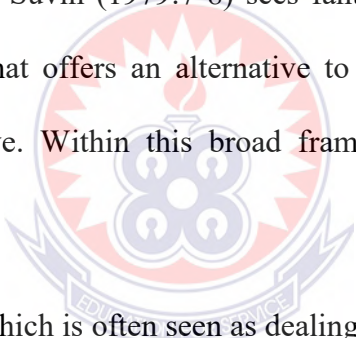
#### **Fantasy**

Recently a young teacher at a girls' school in Gauteng noted that she found it absolutely impossible to get her teenage learners interested in reading and wondered if there was any advice to be given regarding how she could change this. It was suggested that she try reading to them from popular works such as Stephanie Meyer's twilight series (Meyer: 2005, 2006; 2007, 2008) or The Hunger Games trilogy by Suzanne Collins (Collins: 2008, 2009, 2010). She looked appalled and said, "The girls all carry those round at break, but surely books like that don't count." This conversation raises two important questions for teachers: Firstly, are there really such things as books that "don't count" when it comes to reading and Secondly, why do so many learners who resist reading anything else, seem to enjoy reading fantasy?

Defining fantasy as a genre is a not easy and before spending too much time on it, we should perhaps remember that fantasy critic Lucie Armitt (2000:13) complains that prescriptive labelling often closes down rather than opens up critical approaches, so that important issues can be lost while critics argue over whether a text should be considered “marvelous” or “fabulous”.

From Livingston and Brown (2017), the broadest definitions of fantasy speak of ‘creating a mental image’ or of fiction dependent on the strangeness of setting or character. It is fiction that does not concern itself with realistic representation of characters.

The work of critic Darko Suvin (1979:7-8) sees fantasy as a genre that relies on an imaginative framework that offers an alternative to the global setting in which the reader and the writer live. Within this broad framework, there are different sub-categories such as

- 
1. Science fiction, which is often seen as dealing with possible futures,
  2. The gothic, which deals with frightening supernatural events in settings that have medieval elements.
  3. Magical realism, in which magical events take place within familiar environments.

### **Popularity of fantasy with young readers**

There are many possible reasons why fantasy is so popular with young readers and here is a summary of three of the most important ones:

1. Fantasy stimulates the imagination and critical thought.
2. Fantasy provides a safe space for the exploration of disturbing issues.

3. Fantasy encourages the development of optimism.

Carlsen (1980:40) indicates that interest in reading often peaks between the ages of twelve and fourteen, since changes in the teenage brain seem to encourage young adults to question authority and challenge received values. Reading about completely different societies or environments encourages young readers to think critically about their own environment, but also to tease out the full implications of radical social changes.

Maria Nikolajeva (2010:42), who heads children's literature studies at the University of Cambridge, has observed that fantasy for children can explore crucial moral and psychological issues in an unthreatening way because it deals with worlds that are slightly detached from the real one. In a sense, this observation builds on Bruno Bettelheim's (1976/1991) ground-breaking work, 'The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales', in which he suggests that the inner value of fairy tales' rests in the fact that they allow the fledgling child to explore his or her potentially terrifying desires and emotions at a safe distance from any context in which their potentially destructive power is made obvious. "Hansel and Gretel" for instance is not simply a story about a witch in a cottage made of sweets; it is a story about greed and the importance of controlling yourself and recognizing the needs of others. Similarly, the Harry Potter series is not just a story about learning to be a wizard; it is a story about learning to deal with evil embedded in you, about confronting death and about the importance of love.

In a way, fantasy worlds can perhaps be thought of as maps of the mind, and the struggles within them are often fought not between a hero and a villain, but between the conflicting impulses of a single personality. Contemporary realist fiction for

adolescents often deals with disturbing issues such as child abuse, drinking problems or prejudice of various kinds. Obviously, these are issues that need to be raised, but the novels that deal with them sometimes resemble adult fiction in that they avoid making moral judgments and often have inconclusive or even tragic endings. By contrast, the traditional narrative structures of fantasy often follow protagonists who come of age by going through a cycle that involves them leaving home, having adventures, triumphing over a terrifying and undeniably evil opponent and then returning home to communities whose respect they have won. Clearly, real life is not always like that, but it is also possible that teenagers, made vulnerable by their rapidly developing minds and bodies, may not yet be able to deal with the knowledge that life offers no guarantees of happy endings or that it may be entirely random and therefore without purpose or meaning.

### **Folk and fairy tales**

Folk tales have been defined as ‘stories of people that have been passed down from generation to generation’ (Gamble, 2013:140) and are seen as a dominant part of every culture (Tunnel, Jacobs, Young and Bryan, 2016: 109). “Due to the fact that these stories were often passed down by word of mouth, they are also known as stories from an oral tradition. Because of the cultural aspect inherent in folk tales, we are often able to track similarities between folk tales from different cultures and thus the universal nature of folk tales comes to the fore. These folk tales may vary from culture to culture but are still so similar” (Tunnel et al, 2016: 110).

### **Types of folk tales**

Folk tales can be divided into a variety of categories that make it easier to study. These are cumulative tales, pour quoi tales, beast tales, trickster tales and noodle head tales.

➤ **Cumulative tales**

In a cumulative tale, sometimes also called a chain tale, action or dialogue is repeated and consequently builds up in progression as the tale progresses. With only the sparest of plots, these tales often depend upon repetition and rhythm for their effect, and can require a skilled storyteller to negotiate their tongue-twisting repetitions in performance. An example of a contemporary cumulative tale is ‘There was an old woman who swallowed a fly’ or ‘this is the house that Jack built’ and these tales often feature a series of animals or forces of nature each more powerful than the last. The device also often takes the form of a cumulative song or nursery rhyme.

➤ **Pour quoi tales**

Pour quoi means ‘why’ in French and these tales are also known as ‘why tales’. These tales are used to describe ‘why’ things happen. In African folk tales, there are many of these tales e.g. why the crocodile has a bumpy back, why the giraffe has a long neck. These stories have evolved into modern retellings like the TingaTinga series. <http://www.tingatingatales.com/>. The TingaTinga tales are based on African tales that have been retold with an African feel and address the origins of specifically African animals and answering the ‘why’ questions.

➤ **Beast tales**

The beast fable or epic is usually a shortened tale/poem in which animals talk and is often recognized as a traditional repetition of symbolic writing. An allegory is a story which can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning and typically has a moral or lesson which needs to be taught. These beast tales are a type of fable in which human behaviour is judged and weighed for reflection by the animal kingdom.

➤ **Trickster tales**

Trickster tales form a strong subdivision of Folk Tales in which the wits of ordinary people are tested by trolls, devils and fairies. There are also examples of ethnic heroes who are seen as tricksters or wise fools and a trickster is usually a mischievous or dishonest figure who typically makes up for a physical weakness with sneaky or devious humor. A popular trickster figure in African literature is Ananse the spider and further information regarding this trickster can be found at: <http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/origins11717-anansi-brings-stories-to-the-world.html>

➤ **Noodle head tales**

Noodle head tales form another subcategory of folktales. These are tales of typical fools or well-intended individuals who often lack common sense or who take words too literally. Often there are whole villages or districts of them. A popular folk tale regarding a noodle head is that of 'The emperor's new clothes' which was written by Hans Christian Anderson. Examples of noodle head tales can be found on the following web page <http://www.eldrbarry.net/roos/books/nood.htm>

➤ **Fairy tales**

Fairies stories or as they are more commonly known, fairy tales, are short stories, set in the distant past, depicting events that would not be possible in the real world (Livingston & Brown, 2012). Traditional fairy tales are a subcategory of folk tales which include fables and legends.

According to the Oxford Companion to Children's literature (Hahn: 2015), fairy tales are 'wonder' stories, characterized by magical occurrences, where hero/heroines are mortal. Magical creatures like dwarfs, giants, witches and ogres make up the dramatis

personae. Although fairy tales and the oral traditions that existed before then have evolved through the centuries from culture to culture, the 'Golden age' of folk and fairy tales spanned a century from 1812 to 1912. Before then, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the term *contes des fees* were coined in France to describe such stories. But it was during the 19<sup>th</sup> century that European scholars like the Charles Perrault, Hans Christian Anderson and the Brothers Grimm, who began collecting and cataloguing folk tales from various cultures around the world, writing them down and publishing them so that these stories would not die out (Zipes, 2013).

#### ➤ **Fables and Animal Stories**

Fables are short stories which illustrate a particular moral and teach a lesson to children. The theme and characters appeal to children and the stories are often humorous and entertaining for kids of all ages. Fables can also be described as tales or yarns which have a message in their narrative such as a parable might have. Fables can often pass into our culture as myths and legends and used to teach about morals to children and is in essence, a short story with a moral and is usually a satirisation of human weaknesses using animals (Gamble, 2013: 148). Morals of these stories include 'one good turn deserves another' and 'a friend in need is a friend indeed'.

#### ➤ **Aesop**

Aesop (620–564 BCE) was an Ancient Greek fable writer or story teller who was attributed with a number of fables which we know today as 'Aesop's Fables'. Although the details of his life remains uncertain and no writings by him survive, there are several tales, of animals who speak and solve complicated problems, in many different languages, which are credited to him and influence the storytelling practice that



continues to this day. Famous fables include the story of “The tortoise and the hare’ and ‘The fox and the grapes’.

➤ **African fables**

Africanisation of the traditional Aesop fables include the story of ‘The rink Hals and the snake-eagle’ and ‘the jackal and the klipspringer’ by Naidoo and Grobler (2011) are popular in children’s literature today. These fables are also often falling into the sub-category of ‘pour quoi’ tales, where ‘why’ questions are answered while providing readers with a moral lesson to be learnt.

➤ **Animal stories**

According to the Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature (2015) animal stories were available to children from the earliest days in the form of fables. The earliest forms of animal stories are bestiaries, which were popular in medieval Europe and depicted real and imaginary animals used to promote Christian dogma and morals. Talking beasts were also part of fairy stories and religious books. The 18th century saw the introduction of full length narratives in which talking animals played the main role. A noted example of this is “The life and perambulation of a mouse” (1783) and “The history of Pompey the little” or the life and adventures of a lap dog (1751). In 1805, Mother Hubbard was introduced to the reading public and a nursery rhyme became a political satire of an old woman and the antics of her dog. Black Beauty: the autobiography of a horse (1877) became one of the best-selling children’s books of all time.

### ➤ **Myths and legends**

Myths are as old as human history in addition to being used to explain how things came into existence (Gamble, 2013:113) and are usually associated with Greek, Roman and Norse mythologies (Zipes, 2015). A mythological story is usually an example of the origins of life and death and often explains the basic functions of nature. Most often, myths are linked to religious stories. Most religions, for example, have a creation myth which explains how the earth was created. “Myths grew out of the human need to understand the world and explain their own existence. Many myths are similar to pourquoi folk tales because they explain nature and why they exist in the form that they do” (Tunnell et al, 2016:114). “Myths are different from other children’s literature as the characters are simple and the action is rooted in a different world from that of the child. Legends are usually based on fact and set in history” (Gamble, 2013:137) and share stories of valorous works of legendary personalities, mostly saints, kings or heroes. “People in legends often did exist but their lives and deeds have been embellished in retellings” (Tunnell et al, 2016:115).

### **Rhymes and poetry**

Rhymes or chants are very often accompanied by games when they are performed by children on the playground. It is often found that these chants are passed down from generation to generation, which slight variations. Counting-out rhymes are verses used in games that involve one player (catcher or chaser) who is chosen for a special role. The rhyme (e.g. eeny meeny miney mo) is repeated and the last child on the last syllable falls out. Some of the most famous rhymes learnt by children and experimented on are limericks. Limericks were popularized by Edward Lear in 1872 (Hahn, 2015).

### ➤ **Poems**

Poetry is one of the genres in children's literature that has been used to entertain and teach children for centuries. Nursery rhymes, ballads, limericks all make up the staple of children's reading, 'Mother Hubbard' (1806). As with fairy tales, the 19th century was the golden age of children's poetry and saw the spread of anthologies aimed at children. Further anthologies of poetry for children (1809) were written by Charles and Mary Lamb. The twentieth century saw respected authors and poets adding to their opus by writing poems for children. This includes the likes of T.S Eliot's 'Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats' and Ogden Nash's 'Parents Keep Out'. Post world war 2 poetry for children saw the subject matter of children's poetry firmly rooted in the everyday experiences of the child – the school yard, the playground, the home – and are written for a wider cultural audience. Rhyming poetry has also seen a shift to the 'mischievous' with the likes of Roald Dahl (Revolting rhymes) and Julia Donaldson (The Gruffalo) writing for younger children. Another perennial favourite is Dr Seuss (Theodore Geisel), whose picture/comic books transcend time and are still popular (Hahn, 2015).

### ➤ **Schools stories**

School stories use the school setting as a framework for a series of tales in which a school plays an important part. These stories have been written from as early as 1617, with the publication of *Pueriles Confabulationes*, a Latin school book which was translated into English. 1749 saw the publication of *Goody Two-Shoes*, a series of tales in which school played an important role. The first stories to be written about school life though, were written by Dorothy Kilner. Charles and Mary Lamb and Harriet Martineau wrote school narratives and introduced the idea of writing about boarding school. School stories also evolved to begin condemning the conditions of

rural day schools in America, with the introduction of authors like Edward Eggleston and his novel *The Hoosier School Boy* (1883). The 20th century saw the introduction of P.G. Woodhouse's *Mike* (1909). By the 1940's, the genre of school stories began to lose its popularity, but the likes of *The secret diary of Adrian Mole*, *Grange Hill* and the *Harry Potter* series, a healthy tradition of school based stories seems to be flourishing.

### ➤ **Plays**

Many children's stories or moral tales in the 18th century were written in the form of dialogues but it wasn't until the late 18th century that the theatre of education was published as a four volume collection of comedies for girls, intended to be performed and used for moral instruction. Maria Edgeworth is seen as the first English writer who composed plays chiefly for enjoyment. Pantomimes or Christmas theatrical entertainments then entered the mainstream and provided children with Christmas entertainment. Children also entertained themselves with toy theatres (characters mounted on cardboard and used for miniature performances) and mummers' plays (traditional English folk drama enacted at Christmas) which they enacted as charades. Novels were also adapted for the stage in the 19th century and the first notable example of this was *Alice's adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the looking glass* (1871). In 1904, J.M. Barrie wrote *Peter Pan* for the stage and in 1918, A.A. Milne adapted *Wind in the Willows* as *Toad of Toad Hall* for the stage. Recent children's theatre in London and the UK has seen adaptations of books by Julia Donaldson (*The Gruffalo*) and Roald Dahl (*Matilda*) as well as the young adult books by Terry Pratchett (*Nation*).

➤ **Religious texts**

It is important to remember that before the mid-18th century the main purpose behind children's books was religious instruction (Hahn, 2015). Hornbooks and the later version, the battledore (on which the alphabet, the invocation of the Trinity and the Lord's Prayer were printed) and primers (the original name for an elementary prayer book) were used to teach children to read. In America and in Britain, the Puritans published countless books, which were dominated by moral tales. The Religious Tract Society published children's books during the 19th century and placed the emphasis on evangelical doctrine. Their publications included magazines and pious books. The 20th century saw the rise of fairy tales that were imbued with religious feeling. A noted example of a fairy tale that is imbued with a religious style is C.S. Lewis's stories of Narnia, with allegorical representations of Aslan as the Messianic figure in the novels.

➤ **Comic books and Graphic novels**

The term 'graphic novel' came into being in the 1960's and is aimed at a slightly more mature audience than comic books. It is the last step in the comic book's evolution (Baetens and Frey, 2015). Graphic novels are skewed towards young adults and often make greater changes to the traditional fairy tale mode. These novels are often just variations of fairy tales, with hybrid texts that borrow from myths, legends and gothic stories (Zipes, 2015). Although comic books have often been seen as taboo in the classroom, graphic novels have been able to breach the stigma and introduced text features which include changes, background information and visual stability (Botzakis, 2015). An example of graphic novel that closely follows the original story on which it is based is 'The Hobbit' adapted by Charles Dixon (1993) and illustrated by David Wenzel.

## **History of Children's Literature**

The history of children's literature may be traced back from thousands of years. Nursery rhymes, folktales and lullabies formed the basis of the oldest children's literature of the world and enjoyed wide popularity among children since the dawn of human civilization (Muddasir, 2019). Originally, they were in oral form and gradually took the written shape through different languages and dialects of the world. The Panchatantra is one of the oldest collections of stories for children and best known for its moral theme. Hertal, a learned American editor, believes that the original work was composed in Kashmir of India about 200 B.C (Jafa, 1982:30). Max Muller in his study 'Migration of Fables' describes "the travels of Panchatantra from India to Persia, to Arabia and from there to Italy, Spain, France, Germany and other countries of the west" (Quoted by Kunhappa, 1980: 57). The fairy tales and the legends due to obvious reasons had the same basic stories in many countries of the world. In this connection Larrick (1961) observes:

Centuries ago before printed books were common, fairy tales and legends were repeated by travelling story-tellers, who altered events' and -characters as they went along. Even so we find the same basic stories in the folklore of many countries, for example, Cinderella- sometimes with pumpkin coach and sometimes, without – appear in folktales of Germany, France, England, Greece, Egypt and Scandinavia.

These fairy tales have also an international appeal. They are enjoyed by children all over the world irrespective of their caste, creed and faith. Stating the international appeal of fairy tales Cassell's Encyclopaedia of Literature (1953, volume 1) states:

"The Arabian Nights' from the east, the tales of Perrault, the brothers Grimm, and Andersen from Europe, the Negro folk stories of Joel Chandler Harris' Uncle Remus

(1880) from America, these can be appreciated by any child, irrespective of nationality” .The first printed books appeared in China nearly six centuries earlier. Those earliest books for children were block books - books printed from wooden blocks on which texts and illustrations had been engraved. With the beginning of T’ang Dynasty in 618 A.D. China entered into a glorious period, in her history, in which art and literature flourished. Buddhism then took deep root and only; for the spread of Buddhism, orally or in writing, the valuable passages from Buddhist scriptures needed repetition to a great extent. Finally a method of, endless reduplication of such merit-bringing passages by means of impressions on paper from wooden blocks was devised and most of such passages were told or retold to children. At that time Japan was under strong Buddhist influence. Shotoku, Empress of Japan, 748 A.D. to 769 A.D., ordered for the printing of a million Buddhist charms which were intended to be placed in miniature pagodas for distribution among people. As specimen of Buddhist cultural heritage, these charms formed a part of children's literature of the then society.

The great development of manuscript books took place in Ireland in the 6th, 7th and 8th century. During this period manuscripts, of splendid calligraphy were published in Irish monasteries. The most outstanding examples of the work of the Irish school of calligraphy and Illumination in the famous book Book of Kells was hailed by more than one writer as 'the most beautiful book in the world'. The oldest manuscripts that now survive were copied and recopied again and again, through those centuries, as a result of which the immortal epics of Homer, the plays of the Greek tragedians, the dialogues of Plato, the scientific works of great thinkers like Aristotle and Euclid, the poetry of Yirgil and Horace are available for children as well as adults. In this way, the preservation of the Bible in the written form of books for centuries was possible in the

form of manuscripts. And those books of manuscripts are still treasured in many libraries as monuments of the bygone days.

In the 17th century, there was a strong emphasis upon religious literature for which chapbooks with tiny ‘paperbacks’ appeared in SngMn4 and her colonies. These little books of sixteen, thirty-two or sixty-four pages were small folded booklets usually sold by peddlers, Chapmen or travelling salesmen just like the paperback books of today. Gradually these books were printed all over the British Isle and also found their way to America, where the reprints of these books appeared very soon. By the middle of the 18th century, there was a shift from the knowledge based upon religious sanctions to knowledge gained through human investigations. A galaxy of scientists like Newton, Bacon, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and many others challenged the authoritarian reasoning and employed a method of science to arrive at truth more concretely and more significantly. The natural laws suggested the study of physical nature of the universe and human nature as well. John Locke, in his book *Concerning Education* (1693), recognized the child as a ‘miniature adult’. Furthermore, he stated that human nature has at least partially the result of environment and thus provided a moral sanction to the content of books.

Rousseau, the French Political philosopher and educationist, also emphasized the natural unfolding of a child’s nature which he believed to be inherently good. The followers of both Locke and Rousseau, saw no good in fairy tales, condemned recreational reading as morally dangerous and may lead, to ‘idleness’ and ‘false-beliefs’. However, by the end of the century the idea of individual rights of the child was being recognized in different countries of the world and pedagogue prescribed sugar-coating learning. Towards the end of the 19th century compulsory education for



children was introduced in most of the democratic countries of the world. The invention of lithography, mechanical paper making and cloth binding coincided to enable the standardized mass production of books. As a result of this, there was a reasonable reduction in cost and the increase in the number of children's books.

World War I (1914) brought about significant changes in the social order of most of the countries and international influence was felt in the promotion of literature for children ensuring happy and progressive life. As a result of this, 1920s and 1930s showed a substantial increase in family and adventure stories. The prospective writers felt the necessity of a body of literature in which children were to be seen as human beings not only to be informed and educated but also to be entertained. But this conducive atmosphere for the enrichment of children's literature did not last long due to the effects of Second World War 1939. Due to various side effects of war activities, there was a terrible destruction of book stocks in the air raids on London, Japan, United States and France. The shortage of printing papers was a world phenomenon. As the cost of printing became high, many of the publishers lost interest in publication of children's books.

However, in the second half of the 20th century, the modern trends of children's literature have been widely influenced by radio, television, world events and dynamic trends in education. Social realism has become a major factor in books for children and the young people. The number of books catering to the needs of particular age group and ability group greatly increased in both fiction and nonfiction types. By the end of the 1970s, the technical developments, social conditions, national and international influences have produced a body of children's literature ranging from toy books, picture books and cartoons to fiction and non-fiction covering wide range of themes in

the U.K., the U.S.A., Sweden, Germany, Russia and many other countries. It is also noteworthy to mention that today's world of children's literature has been noticeably dominated by a large number of British, American and Russian books. The English and American books have been translated in small language European countries for many years in order to increase the number of books for their children. For a long time, Sweden had only received translated books, but during the 1960s and 1970s Swedish literature had a great influence on European children's literature. Further, other European countries have also begun to translate English, Russian and American books into German, Scandinavian, Italian and Spanish languages.

In socialist countries, efforts have been made to increase their own quality of literature and some of such literatures have been translated into English, German and Russian. It is common to find in Egypt and Libya simple books from Britain and Russia translated into Arabic. Small language countries like Bangladesh, Norway and Holland have excellent Indigenous writers to carry out the work of translation of English children's literature in order to provide a suitable body of literature to their children. In the U.S.S.R. a vast variety of literature is being produced every year and also at a cost within the reach of general masses. However, after going through the details of various sources, the researcher strongly feels only to mention the highlights of the growth and development of the children's literature in the following countries.

Alterman (2014) writes that some schools of library science offer graduate courses on the history of children's literature. In one such school, a sage professor told me, "I don't know why they offer that course. I don't think children's literature has any history!" I laughed, but I did wonder why she said it. After all, every children literature textbook I had read contained a chapter on history. When I asked the professor, she

replied that children's literature as we know it today began in 1865 when Charles Dodgson (under the pen name of Lewis Carroll) wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. It was the first novel written especially for children that was purely entertaining, with no instructional purpose. The book has a dreamlike quality. What did children read before the publication of *Alice*? Children have always listened to and enjoyed folklore, and after the development of the printing press in the late 1400s, they were able to read folk literature. Before 1865, children in the English-speaking world read and enjoyed adult novels, such as *Robinson Crusoe* (Defoe, 1719), *Gulliver's Travels* (Swift, 1726), *The Swiss Family Robinson* (Wyss, 1812), *A Christmas Carol* (Dickens, 1843), and *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (Verne, 1864). If you review the unabridged versions of these works, you will find them very advanced reading, so I think these books must have been read by older, more capable children who perhaps shared them with their younger siblings.

The earliest books written for children were entirely religious, instructional, or for the improvement of their morals and manners. In the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, an English publisher named John Newbery published books for children to enjoy. One such book, *The History of Little Goody Two Shoes* (Newbery, 1765), is considered the first novel written especially for children. Newbery's books were also highly moralistic, but at least someone had recognized that children needed to be entertained as well as indoctrinated. Young children read and enjoyed these books, of course, because there was little else for them to read. However, those early books would not entertain children today. When I reviewed some of them, I found them to contain all the flaws of "no literature" identified by Hillman: "stodgy writing, plots that are either too predictable or too illogical, and socially conscious themes that outweigh the slender story that supports them" (2002:3).

Imagine the delight of children when they first read Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. "What made this story absolutely unique for its time was that it contained not a trace of a lesson or a moral. It was really made purely for enjoyment" (Huck, Hepler, Hickman, & Kiefer, 1997, p. 96). Charles Dodgson was a mathematics lecturer and ordained deacon at Christ Church College of Oxford University in England. He often entertained the young daughter (Alice Liddell) of the dean of his college by telling stories about Wonderland. Later he published the stories under the pseudonym of Lewis Carroll in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and the sequel Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There (1871). Alice was the prototype—the first of its kind—of modern children's literature.

Other good books that were widely read by children also appeared during the remainder of the nineteenth century. Not all were specifically intended for children, and certainly not all were free from moralism. (Even today, a common criticism of children's literature is that too many books are moralistic, with implicit lessons built in.) However, these books were primarily entertaining, and most contained child characters.

### **Characteristics/elements of children's literature**

In the view of Chang (2007), many writers seem to suggest that the question of what constitutes 'good' children's literature can be addressed without taking direct account of context of use. Stewig (1980), whilst arguing that the most important factor in evaluating children's literature is the responses of children themselves, he notes that evaluation need not only be external (based on children's responses), but can also be internal (based on a set of pre-established criteria). So far as internal evaluation of children's storybooks is concerned, he includes characterization, dialogue, setting,

plot, conflict, resolution, theme, and style, but makes no mention of illustration. Also, with the exception of general references to dialogue and style, he makes no mention of language. Nor does he provide any indication of possible internal evaluation criteria that can be applied to genres and text-types other than narrative.

Hillel and Mappin (1995) state that evaluation criteria should include considerations of literary merit, challenge, readability and appeal, noting that “the elusive quality ‘literary merit’ is taken to include notions of beauty in visual or linguistic terms and the overall cohesion and harmony of the work”. They add that “challenge is considered in terms of the importance of the issues raised in each book, the seriousness with which they are treated and the intellectual dexterity that is called for to unpack the meanings embedded in the work”. Criteria such as these raise more questions than they answer. It is impossible, for example, to determine what Hillel and Mapin have in mind when they refer to ‘beauty in visual or linguistic terms’, particularly as concepts of ‘beauty’ vary from culture to culture and from person to person. Similarly, what constitutes ‘cohesion and harmony’ so far as Hillel and Mapin are concerned is a matter that remains unexamined. Equally, the requirement that ‘intellectual dexterity’ should be involved in unpacking meanings would be inappropriate in some contexts. Finally, the notion of embedded meanings would appear to presuppose an encoding-decoding model of language. Like Stewig (1980), Hillel and Mappin (1995) provide a range of vague and subjective evaluative criteria and focus exclusively on the narrative genre.

Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002) propose a series of evaluative criteria that relate to (a) fictional elements, (b) visual elements and (c) nonfictional elements. These evaluative criteria are outlined below.

### **Fiction elements**

- **Plot** A good plot produces conflict in order to build the excitement and suspense that can easily invite children to get involved.
- **Characters** - Characters must be memorable. The main characters in an excellent work of fiction for children are fully-developed, undergoing change in response to life-altering events.
- **Setting** - The setting is an integral part of a story, which includes time and place. Although setting is often vague in traditional literature for children, detailed descriptions of settings can be an effective way of engaging children's interest.
- **Theme** –Themes in children's books should be worthy of children's attention and should convey truth to them. Furthermore, themes should be based on high moral and ethical standards. A theme must not overpower the plot and characters of the story, however; children read fiction for enjoyment, not for enlightenment.
- **Style** - Style is the way in which an author tells the story; it is an aspect of the writing itself, as opposed to the content. Style should be appropriate in relation to content. The elements of style include word choice, sentence selection and book organization. The words should be appropriate to the story told; sentences should be easy to read but melodic, and the paragraphs, length of chapters, headings and chapter titles, preface, endnotes, prologue, epilogue, and length of the book overall should be designed with children's age and stage of development in mind.

What Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown say about plot and characterization, though very general, is nevertheless useful except to the extent that there may be neither need nor

opportunity in, for example, a short story to allow for character development. However, what they say about setting, theme and style is less useful. There may, for example, be contexts in which it is inappropriate to provide details of the setting in which particular actions take place. So far as theme is concerned, to evaluate a book in terms of the extent to which it attracts children's attention presupposes some prior knowledge of the reactions of children to the work. Furthermore, children from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds may react very differently to different themes. In addition, it is unclear precisely what is meant by to 'convey truth'. Furthermore, although many adults would now agree that the avoidance of explicit didacticism is generally sensible, this depends to a considerable extent on the direction of the message. Children are often more than willing to apply moral lessons to others so long as they see themselves as occupying a superior moral position.

### **Visual elements**

- **Line** - Lines are the stroke marks that form part of the picture. The line of a picture generally defines the objects within the picture. Artists may choose to use lines that are dark or pale, heavy or light, solid or broken, wide or thin, straight or curved, or have combinations of these elements. The lines of the picture should help to create and convey both the meaning and the feeling of the story.
- **Colour** - Colour can be described in terms of its hue, lightness, and saturation. Colours must be used to complement text. For example, soft warm tones are associated with calmness and contentment. Colours should change appropriately according to the story lines. If the events and mood of the story change during the course of the story, then the colors should change to reflect the shifts in the story.

- **Shape** - Shapes are evaluated for their simplicity or complexity, their definition or lack of definition, their rigidity or suppleness and their sizes. For example, negative or blank space may be used to highlight a particular object or to indicate isolation or loneliness. The shapes in a picture, the spaces surrounding the shapes and the proportion of objects in relation to one another are important aspects of non-verbal messages.
- **Texture** – Texture conveys the impression of how a pictured object feels and can add a sense of reality to illustrations. Textures can be rough or slick, firm or spongy, hard or soft, jagged or smooth.
- **Composition** - Composition includes the arrangement of the visual elements within a picture and the way in which these visual elements relate to one another. The compositional characteristics of illustrations can help to convey an overall sense of unity and can reinforce aspects of textual meaning.

What Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown say about the visual elements of children's books is suggestive rather than truly informative. Nevertheless, it provides a useful starting point for those who are seeking for ways of determining how, and why, children react in different ways to different illustrations.

### **Non-fiction**

A clear, direct, easily understandable style is critical. Stylistic devices such as the inclusion of questions including the second person pronoun (you), as in "Have you ever wondered how chameleons change Colour?" can stimulate readers' interest and involvement.



Captions and labels should be clearly written and informative. Though brief, these pieces of text serve the vital function of explaining the significance of illustrations or of drawing the reader's attention to important or interesting details.

Facts should be accurate and current. Non-fiction should distinguish clearly between fact, theory, and opinion.

Personification should be avoided. Attributing human qualities to animals, material objects, or natural forces is part of the charm of works of traditional and modern fantasy. However, it should be avoided in nonfiction. Attractive presentation. Works of non-fiction should be attractively packaged and presented. An intriguing cover, impressive illustrations, and appropriate balance between text and illustrations can make nonfiction more attractive to children.

Movement from known, simple and general to unknown, more complex and specific. To aid conceptual understanding and encourage analytical thinking, presentation of information should be from known to unknown, general to specific, and simple to more complex. Stereotyping should be avoided. The best non-fiction goes beyond mere avoidance of sexist or racist language and stereotyped images in text and illustrations. It also shows positive images of cultural diversity.

Format and artistic medium should be appropriate to the content. The exactness, clarity, and precision of photography, for example, make this medium appropriate for authors whose purpose is to present the world as it is.

Depth and complexity of subject treatment must be appropriate for the intended audience. If an explanation must be simplified to the extent that facts must be altered before a child can begin to understand, the concept or topic is inappropriate in terms of

the age and/or conceptual development of the intended audience. Although Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown refer to 'style', claiming that it should be 'clear, direct and easily understandable', they do not engage with the complex issue of precisely how one is to determine, with reference to a particular child or group of children, what factors determine whether style is clear, direct and easily understandable. So far as learners of English as an additional language are concerned, a critical factor may be the extent to which the vocabulary, structures and discourse features included have already been introduced and the extent to which the meanings of any new vocabulary, structures and discourse features can be inferred on the basis of written and visual context.

Although Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown note that there should be a clear distinction between fact, theory and opinion, they do not indicate the ways in which this distinction can be conveyed verbally and visually or observe that both the language of such distinctions and the distinctions themselves will not necessarily be evident to all children unless they are pointed out and reinforced. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown claim that personification is inappropriate in nonfiction although much of the language of science is highly metaphoric and often involves aspects of personification.

Although Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown, in common with a number of other commentators, note that stereotyping should be avoided in non-fiction, it remains the case that certain types of stereotyping, such as, for example, the association of a medical doctor or a teacher with certain types of clothing and equipment, can be useful, particularly in introducing new vocabulary to language learners. Issues relating to stereotyping vary from culture to culture, and imposing essentially Western ideals of stereotype avoidance in some cultural contexts can lead to confusion, represent a barrier to understanding and even lead to resentment and a sense of alienation.

Finally, the clear-cut distinction that Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown make between fiction and non-fiction is unhelpful. This type of binary labelling not only fails to acknowledge the existence of, for example, fictional works in which the context is intended to be as historically accurate as possible, but also represents an oversimplification of issues relating to genre and text-type.

In addition to evaluative criteria relating to plot, setting, character, theme and style in fiction, Glazer and Giorgis (2005:40) add criteria relating to coherence and integrity in fiction, defining 'coherence' as "a sense of completeness" and 'integrity' as "a creative approach to . . . topics and an honest presentation of the story". They claim that a story is coherent if it lacks "the lags, random happenings, or intrusions that characterize real life" and flows "in a meaningful way, with each part related to other parts and the whole". Of coherence and cohesion as they relate specifically to language they have nothing to say. Nor do they specify what they mean by 'honest' in the context of "an honest presentation of the story". With reference to the evaluation of illustrations, they refer to proximity to the text, development of the text, appropriateness and emotional linkage with the text. To understand what they may have in mind in referring to 'emotional linkage', we need to turn to Wallace (1989:7) who observes:

To discover the emotional link of a story, the illustrator must understand all levels on which the story functions: intellectual, physical, psychological, and spiritual. This link is then made by a variety of means: appropriate media, colour, changing perspectives, shape of the illustrations, shape of the book, style of type, white space around the type and each of the drawings, and the position of each character in relation to one another.

Apart from the vague reference to emotion, this adds little to the criteria for the evaluation for the visual elements of text outlined by Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown

(2002). Glazer and Giorgis (2005:50) note that “the purpose for which the book was designed can help define criteria for evaluating illustrations”. They note, for example, that in concept books, which tend to show and name objects, illustrations should be clear and uncluttered and that in alphabet books, it is important to take care to avoid potential areas of confusion. Thus, for example, illustrations of objects symbolized by words beginning with the letter ‘s’ should not include any which begin with the [ʃ] sound, notwithstanding the fact that words representing these objects also begin with the letter ‘s’. So far as illustrations in non-fiction are concerned, they note that they must help “convey the facts or concepts being presented”, adding that “[this] means that diagrams must make a concept clearer, that photographs must convey information as well as beauty, that drawing must help the reader understand”. Once again, the binary distinction between fiction and non-fiction is unhelpful as is the failure to recognize that different audiences and different purposes may require very different approaches to both written text and illustration.

So far as external evaluation is concerned, Stewig (1980) and Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (1996/2002) recommend that teachers and librarians refer to lists of award-winning books, relevant awards being, for example, the Newbery Medal, and the Caldecott Medal (American Literary Association). Furthermore, making reference to any of the following may be useful: The Horn Book Magazine; School Library Journal; Bulletin of the Centre for children’s Books;; Language Arts; The Reading Teacher; Young Children; and Booklist; The New Advocate and The Journal of Children’s Literature. There are, in addition, standard bibliographic sources and evaluative reviews in magazines and newspapers such as The New York Times and The Book Review Index. So far as picture books are concerned, Isbell and Raines (1994) make particular reference to the value of the American Library Association’s

Caldecott Medal and Honour Books; the International Reading Association Children's Book Award, and the Coretta Scott King Awards (for African-American authors recognized in the field of children's literature). However, in spite of the fact that award-winning children's books may be interesting and challenging in some contexts, Taylor (1996) found that award winning books did not always accord with children's stated reading preferences. This is, perhaps, not surprising since awards are adult-driven enterprises. Not only many children's book awards, but also, more generally, commentaries on the value of children's books are often driven more by adult perceptions of what is good for children in terms of socialization than by what children actually prefer. Thus, for example, the Canadian critic, Michele Landsberg (1987), makes reference to 'civilization', 'the . . . complexity of life' and 'empathy' in discussing what he refers to as 'good books': Good books can do so much for children. At their best, they expand horizons and instill in children a sense of the wonderful complexity of life - No other pastime available to children is so conducive to empathy and the enlargement of human sympathies. No other pleasure can so richly furnish a child's mind with the symbols, patterns, depths, and possibilities of civilization.

Identifying quality in children's books is controversial and it is clear that many of those writers who have attempted to do so are driven by adult values, often assuming without any specific evidence that the impact of books on children, in terms, for example, of 'empathy and the enlargement of human sympathies will relate in some fairly direct way to content. However, how children respond may differ in some fundamental ways from how adults generally respond. This is clear, for example, in the way in which children 'read' illustrations (Doonan, 1993) and in their sense of humour (Saxby, 1997). It is also clear that children often have a taste for the ridiculous and the absurd that is different from that of most adults (Saxby, 1997; Munde, 1997), that they

often select books that adults might consider frightening or macabre (e.g., *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, published by Bodley Head Children's Books, 1993) or impolite (e.g., *Walter the Farting Dog* by William Kotzwinkle, Glenn Murray and Audrey Colman, published by Penguin Group, 2004), that they often respond positively to what might appear to adults to be excessive punishment for relatively minor misdemeanours on the part of protagonists (e.g., *Noisy Nora* by Rosemary Wells, published by Scholastic, 1973), and that they often enjoy stylistic features, such as repetitive language patterns, that many adults would find tedious and dull (*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin and Eric Carle published by Holt, 1970). Furthermore, many books that have been extremely popular with children, including the Harry Potter series by J. K. Rowling and the Famous Five series by Enid Blyton, have been banned from some school libraries. It follows those standard guidelines for choosing 'good' works of children's literature are of little use in some contexts. For our purposes, a 'good' work of children's literature is a work which is effective in relation to the teaching and/or reinforcement of language learning at a particular stage of language development. In this context, defining what is 'good' involves taking account of the needs and interests of the teacher, the learner and the curriculum designer.

### **Importance/Values of Children's Literature**

Ken (2012: 20) is of the view that the following could be seen as the specific benefits children derive from reading and listening to books:

Strengthening a bond between the child and adult reader is one of the benefits children gain when engaged in reading children's books. That is, when children's books are read to them by an adult (teacher or care giver), it creates strong relationship between

the child and the adult reader. The child easily relates with such adult and misses his or her presence when not around since the adult reader tries to read and guide the child to understand what is read to him or her by coming to the child's level.

She stated that experiencing the pleasure of escaping into a fantasy world or an exciting adventure is another benefit the child gets. When children read books, which are for children and such books contain stories of fantasies and adventure children get enthused to be adventurous and try to engage in life of fantasies as their quest to explore new environment in life.

Lilia believes that when children read books designed for them, they develop a favourable attitude toward books as enrichment to their lives. As children are exposed to books at this age, they are rooted in the attitude of having the desire to read books. This attitude goes a long way to help them shape their lives since they may get a lot of experiences in life through their interest in reading from childhood to adulthood.

Stimulation of cognitive development in young readers is a benefit that children's literature brings on board. Lilia is of the view that when children read children's books they are able to develop cognitively since the child needs to think and develop understanding of what he or she reads. Trying to gain understanding from text read by thinking to create meaning helps the child to develop mentally.

Children also gain new vocabulary and syntax when they read children's books. As children reads, they come across new words and syntax. As a result, they get to acquire these new vocabularies and use them in the construction of sentences both written and oral appropriately in their everyday life.

Stimulating and expanding their imaginations is something worth mentioning. Lilia thinks that when children read, their creative power enhances and they are able to imagine new things and bring them into existence. This helps make children innovative. Such children when are asked to write a story on a particular topic may be able to write a good piece out of their imaginative power gained through reading.

Children are able to empathize with other people's feelings and problems as a result of reading children's books. As children read, they get to understand why certain events occur and why some people behave the way they do in the text. This helps these children to develop an understandable emotional attachment for people in real life situations. They are able to hold on to their judgment on people's attitudes and decisions and are able to feel for others.

Also, children learn ways to cope with their own feelings and problems. When children read books meant for them, they get to learn how some characters in a text read managed their emotions and certain problems they encountered. This guides them to learn how to deal with their own real-life situations. They are able to control how happier or sorrowful they are without over reacting to create problems or miss feelings for others.

Again, it widens their horizons as they vicariously learn about the world. When children read books meant for them, they get to learn and understand other parts of the world. This happens as a result of some of the text having stories that have their settings, style, atmosphere and characters depicting culture and modernity of a world not of their own. This help shape the way they think or live with other people, and are able to cope with and adapt to new environment, events and people.



Developing an interest in new subjects and hobbies is another benefit that children gain when books meant read for children. The stories and poems in some of the books children read expose children to new games and other things of interest and as such try to venture into such games and hobbies. These may be games and hobbies that are not found within their culture or are not experienced before, and children been adventurous would want to engage in these new games and subject of interest.

Understanding the heritage of their own and other cultures is an additional value that adds up to children's gain as they read children's books. Some of the stories and poems in children's books are written with the history and culture or traditions of their country or community. This help them to know their roots very and are able to know their past and what they need to do as part of them to maintain the history, culture and traditions of their forefathers.

Sunan (2008) is also of the view that children's literature offers two values which are personal value and academic importance. The personal values are that develop the individual reader's personality and these include "enjoyment, imagination and inspiration, vicarious experience, understanding and empathy, heritage, moral reasoning, literally and artistic preferences" (Sunan, 2008). The academic value also improves skills on reading, writing, art appreciation and also in contents of subject area across curriculum (Sunan, 2008).

Many values of children's literature can be cited, but the most precious benefit is the delight and enchantment which good literature affords boys and girls (Calson, 1969). Competent observers can measure enjoyment by subjective means such as the sparkle in a child's eye as he shares his favorite book about a horse or a dog, a sense of kinship which peers have when they discuss *The Borrowers* by Norton (1953) or *Wind in the*

Willows, a deep sense of involvement in difficulties of Wilbur and Charlotte in *Charlotte's Web*, (White, 1952) or the quiet contemplative look of a boy curled up in a chair immersing himself in *A Wrinkle in Time*, (Green, 1968). Some children enjoy literature for its therapeutic value. A boy who reads *The Loners* (Wier, 1963), empathizes with the nameless child who wanders alone to migrant camps, and the controversial book, *Drop Dead*, by Cunningham (1965) depicts a lonely boy and his inner turmoil concerning the meaning of security and conformity.

Younger boys and girls enjoy poetry when it is presented in an enjoyable manner. The very young child relishes the rhythm of the words in "Mrs. Peck Pigeon" by Eleanor Farjeon, or "Jump and Jiggle" by L. Beyer. He struts as a pigeon or pantomimes the movement of creatures jumping and jiggling. He can march up and down a hill to the "Grand Old Duke of York" or listen to the rhythm and story of "The Pasture" by Robert Frost. A child loves melodious lines in poetry or prose or listens to the alliterative tune of 'S' in "Sea Shell" by Amy Lowell or the W and Wh sounds giving the speed of a train in "Whickety-Whack" by Aileen Fisher. Again he may listen to the words of Margaret Wise Brown in "Little Black Bug" or be lulled by the tune of "April Rain Song" by Langston Hughes. Occasionally a child may dramatize such a poem as "A Fairy Went a Marketing" by Rose Fyleman or "The Owl and the Pussy cat" by Edward Lear.

Older children enjoy reading horse and animal stories. Boys and girls in the fifth and sixth grades immerse themselves in books by such an author as Marguerite Henry. Her volumes such as *Misty of Chincoteagea* (Henry, 1947), *King of the Wind*, and *Gaudenzia, Pride of the Palio* (Henry, 1960) are relived imaginatively. Somehow boys and girls can identify with the words of Mrs. Henry as her distinctive prose recreates

the training of horses in *White Stallion of LI. Pizza*, (Henry, 1964). They sense the cruelty and avariciousness of hunters who almost destroyed mustangs for dog food in *Mustang Wild Spirit of the West*, (Henry, 1966).

Other books of realistic fiction are appreciated by intermediate grade children who are finding their places in a peer group. A poignant book enjoyed by such readers is *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes. Poor Wanda Petronski, a Polish child from a motherless family tries to win friends by telling about her hundred dresses even though she daily wears a faded, well-ironed dress to school. Peggy and her satellite, Maddie, taunt the child because she is different. Another story about friends and poverty is *The Noonday Friends* by Mary Stolz. The contrast of ideals between Simone who desires a beautiful world and Fanny who recognizes ugliness is clearly delineated, and a quarrel plays a central part in the story.

Good literature extends the imaginative power of childhood in a way to allow readers to cope with everyday life problems. Such classics as *Alice in Wonderland*, (Carroll 1956) and *The Wizard of Oz*, (Baum, 1960) pave the way for science fiction and moon landings. An unusual fantasy involving the kingdom of Tatrajan is *Tatsinda* (Enright, 1963). All of the animals have names that commence with "ti"; the names of people start with "ta". C. S. Lewis introduces the country of Narnia in his seven fantasies, which commence with *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (Lewis, 1960). Lloyd Alexander has capitalized upon Welsh legends and mythology in his imaginary land of Prydain. *The High King* is an exciting adventure fantasy where the forces of good and evil battle with each other, as valiant heroes fight to destroy the dreadful cauldron which creates "mute and deathless warriors". In addition to *Charlotte's Web* (White, 1952), young children love *Stuart Little*, an earlier book by White (1945), which offers

many amusing adventures to a little mouse boy who even substitutes as a teacher. In *The Mouse wife* by Rumer (1951), children sense the friendship between a timid turtledove and a busy small mouse wife. Again, children are pleased with such animal fantasies as *Rabbit Hill* (Lawson, 1945) and *the Touth Winter* (Lawson, 1954). In these books one finds that animals also look at humans as strange persons. An English fantasy author, Mary Norton, has created the miniature world in *The Borrowers*. This has been followed by such sequels as *The Borrowers Afield*, *The Borrowers Aloft* (Norton, 1961), and *The Borrowers Afloat*. *Pod and Homily Clock* are disturbed when *Arrietty* wants to discover a larger world, and the problems of these lilliputran creatures capture the imaginations of children who even form *Borrower's Clubs*.

The imaginative power of very young children can be extended through such stories as *and to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street* (Seuss, 1937), *Tico and the Golden Wing* (Lionni, 1964) and *Sam Bangs and Moonshine* (Ness, 1966). Dr. Seuss has created many highly imaginative books but his earlier one on *Marco's fantastic day dreams on Mulberry Street* offers opportunity for amusing day dreams. Younger boys and girls can imagine that they have a *Wishing Bird* similar to the one in *Tico and the Golden Wings* (Lionni, 1964). Boys and girls who read *Sam Bangs and Moonshine* can have fun distinguishing between real talk and moonshine talk, and can empathize with *Samantha* who dreams of mermaids, lions and baby kangaroos.

Literature can enlarge imaginative horizons, but it also develops an appreciation for beauty. Primitive man expressed nearness to nature through ritual chants such as those reproduced by Richard Lewis in *Out of the Earth I Sing* (Lewis, 1968) or in *The Sky Clears* (Day, 1951). Both of these volumes reproduce a ritualistic Navaho chant commencing with the words, "The voice that beautifies the land". Eskimos add their

original rhythmical verse to *Beyond the High Hills* (Rasmussen, 1961) which is accompanied by magnificent color photographs by Father Guy Mary-Rousseliere, an Oblate priest. Natalia Belting reproduces beauty and a sense of closeness to nature in such volumes as *The Earth Is On a Fish's Back* (Natalia, 1965), *The Stars Are Silver Reindeer* (Natalia, 1962), and *The Sun Is a Golden Earring* (Natalia, 1962). Each of these books reproduces ideas about nature by people around the world. A recent volume, *The Wind Has Wings, Poems from Canada*, compiled by Downie & Barbara (1968) also speaks of beauty in the dramatic flaming forests of Canada. Patricia Hubbell offers poetic glimpses of beauty in *Catch Me A Wind* (Hubbell, 1968). Both "Gemini" and "To the Sun" offer closeness between a poet and the heavens.

Another type of beauty and kinship with nature is felt in such novels as *Island of the Blue Dolphins* (O'Dell, 1960) and *The Black Pearl* by O'Dell (1967) or *Ishi, Last of His Tribe* by Kroeber (1964). In all of these volumes children sense the beauty and terror of loneliness as man seeks to survive against the forces of the elements such as a roaring ocean, the raging wind or unknown monsters of the sea.

A third type of man's nearness to beauty is expressed in Oriental verses such as the Japanese haiku form. Richard Lewis has contributed greatly to this philosophy of beauty in *The Moment of Wonder* (Lewis, 1964), a collection of Chinese and Japanese Poetry which is illustrated with paintings by Chinese and Japanese masters. Lewis has also created three books with striking photographs by Helen Buttfeld. One of these is *This World* (Lewis, 1968), *A Poet's Life in Poetry* which depicts the life and poetry of the Japanese Haiku poet, Issa. The other two books are *The Wind and the Rain* (Lewis, 1968) and *The Park* (Lewis, 1968). In *A Spring Garden* by Lewis (1965) and is

illustrated with dramatic colored pictures by Ezra Jack Keats. Poems in each of these sources focus upon the quiet immediacy of beauty.

A fourth value of children's literature is its contribution to the growth of a more compassionate or humane human being. In this modern world of violence, the compassionate individual is often forgotten. In "Renaissance", the poet, Edna St. Vincent Millay speaks of "the compassion that was I". Younger girls sympathize with Sarah in *The Courage of Sarah Noble* by Dalglish (1954) and with the brave girl in *The Princess and the Lion* by Coatsworth (1967). Sarah Noble has to conquer fear with courage while alone in the wilderness with owls, wolves, and unknown Indians. The little Abyssinian princess in the Coatsworth story travels a dangerous journey with Asafa, her mule, and Enelik the lion, to save a kingdom for her imprisoned brother, Prince Michael. Little Paco, the Indian in the Stinetorf volume, *A Charm for Paco's Mother* (Stinetorf, 1965), feels charity and compassion for many others as he desperately seeks to pray at the great stone cross on Christmas eve. A kid is caught dangling in a rabbit snare, and a wheel on Zorro's cart needs mending. Malinchina, a little girl has to be cared for while the miller seeks a new tree for a wheel. Then there is the stranger at Mitla and the little charcoal worker, Miguel, who desperately needs a warm coat. One feels great compassion for Negro slave, Estebanico, whose character is so beautifully delineated in *Walk the World's Rim* (Baker, 1965). This is the tale of the Cabeza de Vaca expedition as seen through the eyes of Chakoh, an Indian lad who suffers hunger and many hardships in accompanying the expedition. Chakoh learns that the world is a large place and the white man's god is different from his Spirit of Misfortune. One can also empathize with Ishi in *Ishi, Last of His Tribe* (Kroeber, 1964) when he realizes that the death of each one of the old people means less surviving members for his tribe until at last he is alone. Again, children can empathize

with Manolo in *Shadow of a Bull* (Wojchiechouska, 1965). Although he is the son of the greatest bullfighter in Spain, he does not have that aficion or unconquerable urge to fight the bull, and he must make a decision to do what he wants to do in spite of the Spanish community's expectations. A beautiful novel for older children is *North to Freedom* (Holm, 1965). David has lived twelve years in a concentration camp until he is suddenly allowed to escape. This odyssey takes the boy from prison camp to Salonika and north to Denmark. David has to learn that there is a green and gold world in contrast to the gray oppressiveness of ugly prison life. He also needs to create a God of his own, a God of green pastures.

A fifth value of good literature is its wonderland of words. Readers of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* (Carrol, 1956) relish the clever puns, similes and images which leap and scurry across this imaginative fantasy. The poem, "Jabberwocky" with its "brillig", "slithy-toves" and "frumius Bandersnatch" gives a grasp of the original courage of new words by a gifted author.

James Thurber in *The Wonderful* (Thurber, 1957) offers a satirical fantasy of a world in which all words lick the letter O. Sesyle Joslin carries out somewhat this same idea in her fantasy, *The Night They Stole the Alphabet* (Greenleaf, 1968). In this book Victoria has many adventures searching for the lost twenty-six letters in strange places. Juster (1961) has also introduced a vast kingdom of words when Milo visits the ruler of Diction polis in *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

Some specialized books on words for younger boys and girls are *Ounce, Dice, Trice* by Reid (1958), *Sparkle and Spin* by Rand and Paul (1957), *A Crowd of Cows* (Graham, 1968) and *The Alphabet Tree*, by Leonna (1968). The Reid book coins' original words; the book by the Rands offers sparkle to language; the Graham book cleverly discusses

groups of words, and *The Alphabet Tree* beautifully depicts an alphabet tree and a world where the "word bug" patiently teaches letters to form themselves into words. Mary O'Neill has developed books directly related to the wonderland of words in both: *Words, Words, Words* (O'Neill, 1966), and *Take a Number* (O'Neill, 1968). A clever writer, Eve Merriam, succeeds in making words sparkle in her book, it doesn't always Have to Rhyme (Green, 1967). Children reading most literature written by good authors add to their word banks, but literature also offers a vast storehouse of information.

A sixth value of good literature consists in its cultural store off acts which enhances learning in other areas such as history, art, and geography. S. Carl Hirsch has written a history of lithography in *Printing from Stone, the Story of Lithography* (Hirsch, 1967). Oscar Ogg, the calligrapher, adds additional information about the alphabet in *The 26 Letters* (Ogg, 1961).

An interesting historical novel is *Caxton's Challenge* (Harnett, 1965). This is a fictionalized account of the battle between a firm using scribes and William Caxton who popularized the printing press in England around 1475. One of the books printed by Caxton was *The Canterbury Tales* which have been selected and edited by Anne Malcolmson in *A Taste of Chaucer* (Malcolmson, 1964). Two other books about Chaucer which offer a wealth of information are: *They Lived Like This in Chaucer's England* (Neurath & John, 1961) and *Chaucer and His World* (Serraillier, 1968).

Another fascinating book of world history is *The Bayeaux Tapestry* (Denny & Josephine, 1968), the *Story of the Norman Conquest*. This book reproduces the famous tapestry which glorifies the Norman Conquest of England. A recent novel for older children about the Norman Conquest is *Banner Over Me* (Margery, 1968). This is a



study of two brothers engulfed in the conflict between King Harold of England and William of Normandy. Another type of information is an appreciation of artistic principles.

A seventh value of good literature is its contributions to art appreciation. In recent years' colorful books are being written about art, the opera, famous artists, and ballet dancers. Pupils can read these volumes and see their beautiful illustrations which contribute to their cultural growth. The First Book of Paintings by Moore (1960) introduces art appreciation through such aspects as line, shape, space, light, pattern, balance, rhythm, and contrast and unity. The art style of thirty-one different artists is reproduced on these pages. Looking, at Pictures (Clark, 1960) also presents such artists as Titian, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and Goya, as well as others.

Frances Robert Nugent has authored a series of small books with approximately sixty-four pages in which each volume focuses upon part of the life and work of one artist. One of these is Jan Van Eyck. Elizabeth Ripley has created a series of biographies of artists on such ones as Botticelli, Durer (Ripley, 1958), Picasso (Ripley, 1959) and Vincent Van Gogh (Ripley, 1954) as well as many others. A recent book for younger children is Long Ago in Florence (Downer, 1968) which is the story of Luca Della Robbia.

Children can become interested in music through reading biographies of musicians. Opal Wheeler wrote an earlier biography, Ludwig Beethoven and the Chiming Tower Mad Bells, and Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher have combined their talents to create several biographies such as Franz Schubert and His Merry Friends (Wheeler, 1939), Joseph Haydn: The Merry Little Peasant (Wheeler, 1937), Sebastian Bach, the Boy from Thuringia (Wheeler, 1937), and many others.

Warren Chappell has created lovely books featuring the theme and music of The Nutcracker, Sleeping Beauty and others, and Frans Haacken has beautifully illustrated Peter and the Wolf by Serge Prokofieff. Peter and the Wolf offers motivation for involvement activities in creative drama and writing. Literature also helps us to understand ourselves and others better.'

A recent book which meets many needs is Tales from the Ballet which is illustrated by Alice and Provensen (1968). Ballets are defined as stories with music which are without words. Tales are portrayed such as "The Wood Nymphs," "Ondine," "Billy the Kid," "The Firebird," "Swan Lake," and many others. An eighth value of good literature is its help in raising the self-concept of a child who has a poor picture of himself. In recent years' numerous books are being published in the field of black literature as the ghetto child living in an urban environment frequently fails to identify with literary selections written for those persons living in other more favored environments. An inherent danger in such literature lies in a tendency to offer only books of social protest or books about an Afro-American hero such as a baseball player, jazz singer, or person serving the underground railway. Teachers of reading should be cautioned to select black literature of high quality written in good style. Afro-American children are acutely sensitive of their environmental heritage and will be quick to detect "phony" books written to capitalize upon the popular market. Stereotyped characterizations and novels or poetry written in pedestrian language should be avoided.

Two recent books on poetry for urban children are I Am the Darker Brother an Anthology of Modern Poems by Negro Americans, edited by Arnold Adoff and On City Streets (Larrick, 1968) An Anthology of Poetry, and the collection in I Am the

Darker Brother (Adolf, 1968) offers such poems as "Juke Box Love Song" by Langston Hughes, "The Glory of the Day Was in Her Face" by James Weldon Johnson and "The Day breakers "by Arne. Bontemps. Some of this literature is dispirited, bitter, and cruel. On City Streets is a collection which offers poetry with more hope and less despair. For instance, the much quoted poem "Mother to Son" offers a vision of hope for a better world won through the agonies of toil and privation. Rachel Field sings of city streets where taxes go by like tireless amber-eyed beetles in "Manhattan Lullaby".

An unusual new novel which is biographical in style is *The Narrow Path, An African Childhood* (Selorney, 1968). This is the story of Kofi who was born in a village on the Ghana coast. His grandfather has eight wives and twenty-five children. Kofi's father is educated and a teacher in the village school, but his discipline of the child is merciless. The boy's emotions, grief, terror and despair are inter-mingled with a mysterious African heritage with a light veneer of Christianity.

An eighth value of excellent children's literature is its part informing a foundation for more difficult adolescent novels, poems; and dramas. For instance, children who have not had an opportunity to enjoy the rich storehouse of folktale, myth, legend, and epic stories find little enjoyment in appreciating such classics as *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. If a child has read a story of "Daedalus and Icarus" he appreciates allusions to such tales in more sophisticated-poetry. If a boy or girl is unfamiliar with Jupiter or Zeus, Minerva, Cupid, Psyche, Odin, and other Gods and goddesses, he "tunes out" when these allusions appear in later novels and tales. If a speaker mentions "the goose that laid the golden eggs" the reference is lost on the ears of a listener who has never read a traditional tale of "Jack and the Beanstalk".

A ninth value of literature is the heroic image which it gives to childhood. Some pupils can identify with the heroic impulse through reading mediaeval legends which incite the imagination with deeds of prowess. Jennefer Westwood has translated and adapted Medieval Tales (Westwood, 1968). In this volume, students can read such favorites as Chanticleer, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and such tales as "Auccessin and Nicolette" and "The Story of Roland". Henry Treece has written The Windswept City (Treece, 1967), a novel of the Trojan's war, which relates events through the eyes of Asterius, a slave to the aging and homesick Helen.

In recent years many books about Beowulf have been written for younger children. One of these is Beowulf the Warrior by Ian Serallier. Several classical heroes appear in William Mayne's Book of Heroes and Hero Tales from the British Isles, retold by Barbara Leone Picard. Modern children can visit city museums to study mediaeval types of armor, and they can share a vision of a world where men accepted their responsibilities and faced challenges with courage and strength.

Myths, legends and folktales offer universal values which are world-wide in scope. Most cultures have a favorite cinder lad or Cinderella who works diligently under unfavorable circumstances and are rewarded. Folklorists have claimed a thousand versions of the Cinderella motif. Each country has its own variant of a folktale. A child reading Sea Spells and Moor Magic (Leodhas, 1968), with its Scotch touch or Leprechaun Tales by Kathleen (1968), with its Irish Leprechauns or the Oriental flavor of The Crane Maiden (Matsutani, 1968), learns valuable character traits in a nondictactic manner.

The discussion has brought to bear some values or importance of good children's literature. Books bring joy to readers and extend imaginative powers. Literature

improves an appreciation of beauty and a kinship with the terror of loneliness in a strange world. Many books assist readers to become more compassionate, but people ought to be sensitive not sentimental entities. Good authors present a wonderland of words, not hackneyed similes and metaphors. Some books offer a cultural storehouse of data. A few selected books for children offer artistic embellishments and an appreciation of the arts. Some literature aids to improve the self-concept of children who feel lost from a middleclass Ghanaian culture. A rich heritage of myths, legends, and folktales blaze trails for more hectic journeys into adult literature. The heroic impulse of pupils can be encouraged through the reading of heroic legends and epics. Literature is worldwide in scope and its values are universal. Long ago, Andersen created "The Chinese Nightingale" a tale in which a little timid bird brought life to a Chinese emperor, but officials of his court wanted the shining artificialities of, a mechanical jewel encrusted bird which was false. Children in our (Ghana's) culture ought not to lose this little nightingale; they must treasure the real, genuine, and beautiful things of life.

### **Definition of Perception**

In order to do with perception there is the need to identify definition of perception by some researchers. According to Rao and Narayan (1998), perception in the layman's perspective is defined as "an act of being aware of "one's environment through physical sensation, which denotes an individual's ability to understand". However, many social psychologists have tended to develop the concept around one of its most essential characteristics that the world around us is not psychologically uniform to all individuals. This is the fact, in all probability, that accounts for the difference in the opinions and actions of individual/groups that are exposed to the same social phenomenon.

Again, according to Quick and Nelson (1997) perception is the process of interpreting information about another person. What this definition means is that the opinions one forms about another person depends on the amount of information available to him or her and the extent to which they are able to correctly interpret the information they have acquired. In other words, one may be in possession of the same set of information that other people have on a particular situation, person or group but still arrives at different conclusion due to individual capacity to interpret the information that is available.

Rao and Narayan (1998) obviously shared the main characteristics of the above definition like interpreting information about another person. However, they emphasized that perception ranks among the important cognitive factors of human behavior or psychological mechanism that enable people to understand their environment. According to them, perception is the process whereby people select, organize, and interpret sensory stimulations into meaningful information about their environment. They argued that “perception is the single most important determinant of human behavior, stating further that there can be no behavior without perception.” Though focusing on managers in work settings, Rao and Narayan drew attention to the fact that since there are no specific strategies for understanding the perception of others, everyone appears to be left with his own inventiveness, innovative ability, sensitiveness and introspective skills to deal with perception. Michener, DeLamater and Myers (2004), perception is defined as constructing an understanding of the social world from the data we get through our senses. Thus, perception refers to the process by which we form impressions of other people’s traits and personalities.

Rao and Narayan (1998), clearly listed five elements of the definitions of perception as follows;

- i. Our attention, feelings and the way act are influenced by our environment,
- ii. Perception helps you to gather data from your surroundings, process the data and make out of it,
- iii. In perception it is sometimes difficult to separate the information from the action,
- iv. It is basically a process of gaining mental understanding, and
- v. Perception guides the perceiver in harnessing, processing and channeling relevant information towards fulfilling the perceiver's requirements.

Finally, Reuben (1990:117) defined perception as a cumulative process that is based on an individual's background of experiences. This in effect means that what the individual thinks and knows based on his or her experiences is what he or she always perceives.

### **Pupils' perception on a book for children**

Every child wants to be happy all the time. Children are drawn closer to things that make them happy all the time, and are therefore drawn back by things that do not entertain them or make them feel at home. Pupils in this sense love to read books that entertain them and they are comfortable with. However, some books which are meant for pupils to read may be seen as books which perceive to be boring.

Ken (2012), in her work, narrates how she took a group of peer service teachers to a school to teach. She thought a particular student would not have a suitable book for himself, out of the lots of books taken to the class. Ann thought some "sports books" would be better for the students, but the boy chose Arnold's Days with Frog and

Toads. This tells how she was wrong in imaginatively selecting a particular book for the child. Meaning, pupils perceive literally books for children different from what the teacher may perceive. Lilia (2012) further states that when children are “giving varied choices”, such as they find in school and public library, they will select books which are appropriate to their interest and reading abilities.” This tells that when children are restricted to a particular book to be used in the course of their study, they might not have interest in that book since they might perceive it to be boring.

In Temple, Martinez and Yakota (2014), “Jackie murmurs in South Texas classroom, “oh, good” when Mrs. Sloan sends her group to the library center, a favourite in the classroom. Some of her colleague students search through the collection of books”. The question is, why were the other students searching for particular book? It is because those students perceived the books they were searching to be of their interest, though all the books there were selected for them to be used in the classroom.

Naashia (2007) states that “For every young learner, picture books, and stories that are accompanied by colorful illustrations that synchronize with the text are essential.” From Naashia’s statement, it could be deduced that is not every literature book that are selected for children that should be seen as children’s literature. This is because it should fall within the perception of the child as a book of his or her interest. In the researcher’s point of view, the way pupils perceive literature books selected for them to be used in school, has greater influence on the child’s reading and learning of selected books for children such as “The Cockcrow” would bring to bear the correlative impact of the book on the child.



### **Summary of Literature Review**

The chapter dealt with the meaning of children's literature which is a type or kind of literature which is specifically written for children. It again captured the types of children's literature. It also covered the elements or characteristics of children's literature which is grouped into three, namely; element of fiction, elements of non-fiction and elements of visuals. The chapter moreover talked about history of children's literature which narrated how it started in the entire world and has given rise to the modern day children's literature. Importance of children's literature is also captured, and lastly, perceptions of learners in choosing a book to read and how these perceptions influence their reading and learning of a selected literature book for such pupils. It is hoped that after reading the literature reviews, one would be moved to read much and be in a position to assist children so that they can read and learn to have positive impact on their studies in school.

From the literature reviewed above, it can also be seen that research on how children perceive a book as children's literature is not conclusive. Chang (2007) for instance, opines that, what people say, or comments on the values of children's books are often driven more by adults' perception of what is good for children than what children really give preference to. This way a book is assessed to be a good children's literature book is clearly seen to be what adults such as teachers, parents, and others perceive. This assertion cannot be categorical since it is not every book that when selected for children may be liked by them. This may result in the fact that children also have their own way of perceiving how a book is good for them, as assert by Saxby (1997) and Munde (1997) that children often have a taste for the ridiculous and the absurd that is different from most adults.

It is thus imperative to establish the extent to which pupils' perception on 'The Cockcrow' makes the book (The Cockcrow) children's literature book and whether or not it has been able to have any influence on their reading. Therefore, this study intends to assess the perceptions of pupils on 'The Cockcrow' as children's literature and how it influences their reading.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Research Method

Research method, according to Vegas-Hernández, et al (2011:47) is defined as a ‘highly intellectual activity used in the investigation of nature and deals specifically with the manner in which data are collected, analyzed and interpreted. The research method determines the frame of explanations arising from the analysis of data and observations’. From the above definition, one cannot do his or her study without research method. For the purpose of this study, the methodology that was deployed was the mixed method.

#### Philosophical Underpinnings

In social research, the term “paradigm” is used to refer to the philosophical assumptions or to the basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher (Lincoln, et al. 2011). The philosophical paradigm that underpins this research study is pragmatism which is associated with the mixed method approach (Creswell and Clark 2011; Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009), where the focus is on the consequences of research and on the research questions rather than on the methods. Pragmatism has often been identified in the mixed methods research literature as the appropriate paradigm for conducting mixed methods research (Patton, 2002). In pragmatism, empirical is preferred over idealistic or rationalistic approaches (Frega 2011). Instead of assigning positivism and constructivism in two different ontological and epistemological perspectives, pragmatism guides the researcher to focus on the two different approaches to inquiry (Morgan 2014b). The researcher gathered data quantitatively, and he needed to also

collect data from participants qualitatively, hence the use of the mixed method approach. It is expected that where the quantitative data does not yield the needed results the qualitative data will make up for it. This will enable the researcher to achieve the needed results for this study.

### **Research Approach**

Mixed method study is a research approach for collecting, analyzing, and mixing quantitative and qualitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study in order to understand a research problem more completely. The field of mixed methods research is relatively new with major work in developing it stemming from the middle to late 1980s (Creswell, 2014). Although there is a debate about mixing methods, there is some agreement that quantitative and qualitative paradigms can be combined (Gelo, et al, 2008). “Early articles on the application of such designs have referred to them as multi-method, integrated, hybrid, combined, and mixed methodology research” (Creswell and Plano Clark 2007: 6). “The goal of mixed method research is not to replace qualitative or quantitative approaches but rather, to combine both approaches in creative ways that utilize the strengths of each within a single study” (Tavakoli, 2012: 208).

Creswell (2014), defines mixed method research approaches to be methods which involves combination or integration of qualitative and quantitative data in a research study. Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner (2007) cited in Creswell (2014), broadly viewed mixed method as:

- Involving the collection of both qualitative (open-ended) and quantitative (closed-ended) data in response to research questions or hypotheses.
- It includes the analysis of both forms of data.

- The procedures for both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis need to be conducted rigorously (e.g., adequate sampling, sources of information, data analysis steps).
- The two forms of data are integrated in the design analysis through merging the data, connecting the data, or embedding the data.
- These procedures are incorporated into a distinct mixed methods design that also includes the timing of the data collection (concurrent or sequential) as well as the emphasis (equal or unequal) for each database.
- These procedures can also be informed by a philosophical worldview or a theory.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) also are of the view that mixed methods should be considered the third paradigm to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative paradigms. From the definitions above, it is very useful to adopt this method because it enables the researcher to get enough data on the topic, in this case, pupils' perception on the cockcrow as children's literature and its influence on reading, and also gives a clearer picture of the problem identified.

### **Rationale behind a Mixed Method Approach**

Some researchers have used mixed method approaches within social sciences research (Mutch, 2005). Two possible reasons were suggested by Robson (2002) for using mixed methods in social sciences which are that; positivist and constructivist paradigms are compatible, or more researchers are taking a pragmatic approach, using philosophical and methodological approaches that work specifically for their piece of research. From Creswell (2014), the researcher adopts this study based on the assumption that:

*collecting diverse types of data best provides a more complete understanding of a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative data alone. The study begins with a broad survey in order to generalize results to a population and then, in a second phase, focuses on qualitative, open-ended interviews to collect detailed views from participants to help explain the initial quantitative survey.*

### **Advantages of Mixed Method Approaches**

Mixing data sets can give a better understanding of the problem and yield more complete evidence – the investigator gains both depth and breadth. Amalgamating statistics with thematic approaches can help avoid over-reliance on the former and can also capture "soft-core views and experiences" (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011) and the subjective factors necessary to elucidate complex social situations. It can also strengthen findings – a process known as triangulation.

On a more philosophical level, mixed methods research combines paradigms, allowing investigation from both the inductive and deductive perspectives, and consequently enabling researchers to combine theory generation and hypothesis testing within a single study (Jogulu and Pansiri, 2011). Having to use mixed methods also helps researchers to develop their skills, which are particularly important for those at an early stage of their career.

### **Disadvantages of Mixed Method Approaches**

Mixed methods are not without their drawbacks, however. An obvious one is the resources and skills required – one researcher may not be skilled in both qualitative and quantitative methods, and may have to call on the expertise of someone else, or another team, which will increase cost.

Brannen (2005:5) also points out that “some researchers may undertake mixed method research for pragmatic reasons, thereby running the risk that their study is not sufficiently embedded in the theory of their discipline”. Furthermore, Brannen (2005: 6) argues “there may be problems at the dissemination stage: it may be difficult to present numbers and words coherently on the same page; also to find a publication outlet as many journals have a distinct methodological leaning”.

Though there are some weaknesses to the mixed method approach just like any other research approach, the researcher was convinced that using the mixed method research approach was not far-fetched since it made room for the researcher to get the fundamental opinions and experiences in relation to the study of “The Cockcrow” thus far. It aided me to complement narrative data from participants to the numerical presentation of data that is derived from structured questions which limit the participants from coming out with all the perceptions they have on the book.

### **Research Design**

An explanatory sequential design was used as the research design in carrying out this study. Creswell (2014: 268-278), outlines six mixed method designs which are the convergent parallel design, the explanatory sequential design, the exploratory sequential design, the embedded design, the transformative design and the multiphase design.

Creswell (2014: 274) opines that explanatory sequential design as one of the mixed method design, involves a two-phase project in which the researcher collects quantitative data in the first phase, analyzes the results, and then uses the results to plan (or build on to) the second, qualitative phase. Creswell (2014) explains that quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be purposefully

selected for the qualitative phase and the types of questions that will be asked of the participants. Eventually, the intent of this design is to have the qualitative data help explain in more detail the initial quantitative results.

An explanatory sequential design according to Plano Clark (2011) consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection is needed to refine, extend or explain the general picture. Since the research wanted to have concrete view and a more convincing result from the topic under study, it was necessary to adopt a design that can help me achieve such a result. This made the researcher choose the explanatory sequential research design in order to give a more detailed explanation of the data collected as suggested by Creswell, and to make data collected more refined as asserted by Clark. This also synchronizes well with the research approach and data collection instruments and procedure adopted.

### **Population**

Population is defined as the larger group upon which the researcher wishes to generalize: it includes members of a defined class of people, events or objects (Patton, 1990). The general population of JHS pupils in BosomeFreho is 3000.

### **Target population**

The part of the general population left after its refinement is termed target population, which is defined as the group of individuals or participants with the specific attributes of interest and relevance (Bartlett et al., 2001; Creswell, 2003). The target population is more refined as compared to the general population on the basis of containing no



attribute that controverts a research assumption, context or goal (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). The target population will be all 980 pupils in JHS 3 level of education in the Bosome Freho District. See Appendix C on population and target population

### **Accessible Population**

The accessible population is reached after taking out all individuals of the target population who will or may not participate or who cannot be accessed at the study period (Bartlett et al., 2001). It is the final group of participants from which data is collected by surveying either all its members or a sample drawn from it. It represents the sampling frame (Bartlett et al., 2001), if the intention is to draw a sample from it. The accessible population for this study will be all 290 JHS 3 pupils in Dunkura Circuit. Dunkura circuit has eight (8) JHS all of which are mixed. See appendix

### **Sampling Technique and Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to select the circuit, in this case the Dunkura circuit in which the study was conducted. Frankel and Wallen (2000: 99-100) advise that subjects to be surveyed should be selected purposively if possible, from the population of interest as they possess the information the researcher wants to obtain. Even though, purposive sampling has disadvantages, the researcher chose it to select the circuit because he needed to be sure that he could work with the participants in the Dunkura circuit to find out their perception on the cockcrow and its influence on reading. Also, Creswell (2013) alluded that purposive sampling could be used in selecting a site for a study hence the use of purposive sampling in selecting Dunkura circuit for the study. Hence, the researcher needed to select Dunkura circuit due to the closeness and accessible nature of the geographical area to the researcher. According to this

technique, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject (Freedman et al., 2007).

From the accessible population, pupils from 5 schools which were selected randomly were used for the study. It must be emphasized that year three pupils of the 5 selected schools were selected for the study because they would have used the book for more than a year. This will mean that any assured difficulty or easiness would have been established by them. Stratified sampling was used to separate the females from the males in order to avoid sampling bias. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous groups, with each group containing subjects with similar characteristics (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Twelve (12) pupils were selected (using simple randomization), from each of the five (5) schools bringing the sample size to 60 pupils for quantitative data, and two (2) pupils selected with same sampling technique from each of the 12 pupils selected from each of the 5 schools.

**Table 1: Schools and Number of Pupil Respondents**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Number of pupils/ respondents</b>
Ampento D/A JHS	12
Beposo D/A JHS	12
Dunkura D/A JHS	12
Ampaha D/A JHS	12
Morontuo D/A JHS	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020

## **Data collection instruments**

Data allows us to look over the researcher's shoulder and see what he saw. Data makes research empirical, and empirical research is highly valued because it represents something outside our opinions and ourselves (Griffiee 2012:207). Examples of data collection instruments include questionnaires, interviews various types of tests, observation schemes, and transcription protocols. In line with the research approach, the study employed questionnaire and interview instruments to elicit data for the study.

## **Questionnaire**

“Questionnaire is a set of carefully designed questions given in exactly the same form to a group of people in order to collect data about some topic(s) in which the researcher is interested” (Jupp 2006: 252). “It is a data-collection instrument that asks respondents for demographic information, opinion or questions of fact” (Griffiee 2012: 67). For the current study, 13 close-ended questions were administered to 60 JHS three pupils selected from 5 schools in the Dunkura circuit. Out of this number, 30 were females and 30 were males. The items on the questionnaire were divided into two (2) sections A and B. Section A presents biographical information of respondents and Section B presents pupils' perception on “The Cockcrow” and its influence on reading. All closed-ended questions were set based on the headings already stated. The researcher used closed ended questions because it was very easy to code and also it becomes very easy when analysing.

The aim is to give the focus or direction and make questions easy to answer. Another reason is that respondent feel reluctant when dealing with open-ended questions. The issue is that, with the open- ended they need to express their views by providing their

own answers and some respondents think it is waste of time so they try to give excuses when given the questionnaires to fill. In order to avoid these problems, the researcher chose the closed-ended questions to elicit the information from participants. This made the exercise very effective.

### **Interview**

Creswell (1994), states that conducting interviews is a fundamental way to obtain information about one's experiences and meaning he or she makes out of these experiences. Through interviewing, the researcher was able to determine pupils' perception on "The Cockcrow" as a suitable literature book or not for them and how it influences their reading. Interviews are planned; pre-arranged interactions between two or more people, where one person is responsible for asking questions related to the research topic while the other person is to respond to the questions asked (Merriam, 1998). There are different types of interviews that are commonly used to gather information. Qualitative interviews which are generally semi-structured or unstructured, of longer duration, and conducted one-to-one is the most suitable for this research as I wanted to get in-depth understanding of the research topic from the pupils' perspective as Bryman, (2008) asserts. Moreover, a qualitative interview is believed to be the most appropriate research tool for this study as it focuses more on the interviewee's point of view instead of the interviewer's as practiced by quantitative researchers (Bryman, 2008).

In general, there are two types of qualitative interview; semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The use of semi-structured interview is suitable for researchers who know exactly the information they wish to obtain from the interviewees (Cohen et al., 2007). It involves the use of interview guide, explained to

be a brief list of memory prompts of areas to be covered (Bryman, 2008). Bryman (2008), further suggests that researchers use their research questions to help shape the interview questions in the manner that it appears to be significant to the research study. Unstructured interview on the other hand is described to be similar to a conversation (Bryman, 2008).

The researcher opted for an in-depth semi-structured interview as one of the research instruments as it allowed deep information to be collected from the participants (Knight, 2002). Cohen et al. (2007) for example state that “one of the reasons of choosing for a research instrument is its ability to gather information that answers the research questions”. The advantage of using semi-structured interview is that it ensures enough amounts of data relevant to the study is collected whereas the unstructured interview, although has the potential of generating a large amount of rich data, its relevance to the research is not guaranteed. Hence, due to the time restriction that I had anticipated to encounter during the data collection process, semi-structure interview appears to be the best option in gathering the qualitative data for this study. The researcher used 10 pupils to answer the interview questions.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

This section gives a detailed description of what was (or will be) done in carrying out a study. Bala (2005) proposed some questions that a researcher should follow for an effective procedure. The researcher adapted these four questions to guide her to collect her data.

1. How is the data collected?
  - Where is the information documented?
  - When the information is considered "final"?

- Who is responsible for providing the data?
- How do you ensure that all relevant data has been collected?

2. When is the data collected?

Make sure the procedures indicate at exactly what point each piece of data is to be collected.

3. Who is responsible for collecting and recording the data?

Describe who is responsible for collecting the data, who is responsible for entering it in the database, and who is responsible for transforming the raw data into the form you will work on.

4. Where is the collected data stored?

Describe how the data will be stored – questionnaires, records of interviews, copies of official documents, emails, as well as the name and location of these materials.

5. How do we ensure that the data are correct?

For smooth flow of the exercise, the researcher answered the adapted 5 questions to describe the procedure used to collect her data. As earlier stated, the researcher used questionnaire and interview to solicit for responses from pupils. In order to receive the desired information needed, certain measures were taken for the administering of the questionnaires based on the mixed method. The reviewed questionnaire was piloted to test its validity before it was finally administered to the pupils selected to participate in the study. Before administering the questionnaire, official approval was sought from the relevant authorities to enable the pupils to freely participate in the study. The administering of the questionnaire took one (1) hour to complete. Even though, the questions were closed-ended, respondents were given enough time for completion and submission.

There was also the need to go to the selected schools to have first - hand information on what pupils do in the reading literature classroom. The researcher sought permission from the respective head teachers of the schools selected for the interview exercise. Each head teacher called for a short meeting with the English Language teachers for a briefing on the study. Later, the researcher was introduced to the students for a similar exercise. This was to win the confidence of the participants and eliminate any possible aversion towards the study.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

Due to the quantitative and qualitative data collected, the researcher adopted descriptive statistics to analyze the quantitative data. Tavakoli (2012:161) defines descriptive statistics as “a set of statistical procedures that are used to describe, organize and summarize characteristics of sample data in a clear and understandable way, both numerically and graphically”. Some of the descriptive statistics procedures include measures of central tendency (such as the mean, mode, or median), and variability (typically the variance or standard deviation, or percentiles) and in graphical presentations of frequency distribution, bar graph, histogram, frequency polygon, pie chart, normal distribution, and skewed distribution. Percentiles were used for the descriptive analysis to analyze the quantitative data.

On the other hand, thematic analysis tool was used to analyze the qualitative data. Qualitative approaches are incredibly diverse, complex and nuanced (Holloway & Todres, 2003 in Braun & Clarke, 2006), and thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method for qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) state that, “it is the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn, as it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other

forms of qualitative analysis”. Hence, using the thematic data analysis tool in analysing qualitative data collected for this research is not far-fetched.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Certain issues were addressed as this research work involved human participants and investigated on accounting school practices in life. The consideration of these issues is necessary for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the security of the participants. These issues were identified in advance so as to prevent future problems that could have arisen during the research process. Among the significant ethical issues that were considered included consent from school authorities of schools where the study was conducted, confidentiality of respondents’ identity and data protection.

In the conduct of the research the interview was done in a very clear and unambiguous manner to bring clarity in respondents’ minds. Pupils who participated in the research were given ample time to respond to questions posed to them to avoid errors and inaccuracies in their answers. The respondents were given a waiver regarding the confidentiality of their identity. The respondents’ cooperation was well sought after, and they were assured that the data gathered from them would be treated with the strictest confidence, so that they would be more opened. This was done in order to promote trust between the researched and the researcher.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Overview

This chapter presents analyses of data to assess the perception students (pupils) have on the cockcrow as children's literature and its influence on their reading. The researcher administered questionnaires to 60 pupils, with twelve (12) each selected from each of the five different schools chosen. Later, interviews were conducted for ten (10) pupils selected from the 60 pupils with two each selected from a school among the five selected schools. Four research questions that guided the study were:

1. What is the level of pupils' knowledge on the introduction of "The Cockcrow"?
2. What are pupils' perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature?
3. How do these perceptions influence their reading and learning performance of "The Cockcrow"?
4. How has the use of "The Cockcrow" influenced pupils' reading in general?

Data obtained from questionnaires (close ended) were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the aspect of descriptive statistics the researcher will use is percentages. Data obtained from the interview were analyzed using themes. The study's results are presented and discussed in this chapter.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Participants

In all, 70 pupils were used as participants in this current study. 60 of them were questioned and 10 from the 60 were interviewed. Among the 60 participants, 30 were males and 30 were females, and 5 males and 5 females were used for the interview.

The pupils' interest in literature books ranged from 18 pupils having High interest in literature books which is 30%, 30 pupils having Mild interest in literature books representing 50%, and 12 pupils having low interest in literature books, representing 20% of the 60 pupils questioned.

**Table 2: Students' interest in literature books**

<b>Rem.</b>	<b>No. of frequent respondents</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
High	18	30
Mild	30	50
Low	12	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

Ages of participants ranges from 12years to 19years. 2 pupil was between the ages of 17 and 18 representing 3.3%. 52 pupils were between the ages of 12 and 14 representing 86.6% and 6 pupils were between the ages of 15 and 16 representing 10% of the 30 participants. This is shown in table 3 below.

**Table 3: Ages of Participants**

<b>Ages</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
12 – 14	52	86.6
15 – 16	6	10.0
17 – 19	2	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data, 2020

**Table 4: Perception on ‘The Cockcrow’ and its influence on their reading**

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
The Cockcrow is introduced to us.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	52	86.7%	8	13.3%	4.1333	.34575
The Cockcrow is taught by the English Language teachers.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	60	100.0%	0	0.0%	4.0000	.00000
The Cockcrow is always taught during English literature lessons	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	20.0%	36	60.0%	12	20.0%	4.0000	.64327
The Cockcrow makes difficult reading	0	0.0%	6	10.0%	20	33.3%	32	53.3%	2	3.3%	3.5000	.73108
The Cockcrow is an interesting text.	0	0.0%	40	66.7%	16	26.7%	4	6.7%	0	0.0%	2.4000	.62146
The cockcrow is easy to understand	16	26.7%	28	46.7%	16	26.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.0000	.74278
The cockcrow is voluminous	2	3.3%	0	0.0%	16	26.7%	28	46.7%	14	23.3%	3.8667	.89955
Change the language of the cockcrow	0	0.0%	2	3.3%	18	30.0%	30	50.0%	10	16.7%	3.8000	.76112
The Cockcrow is suitable for children	0	0.0%	38	60.0%	14	23.3%	0	0.0%	10	16.7%	2.7333	1.1121
The Cockcrow introduces us to reading	16	26.7%	24	40.0%	12	20.0%	4	6.7%	4	6.7%	2.2667	1.1426
Questions in the cockcrow are difficult	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	20.0%	32	53.3%	16	26.7%	4.0667	.69149
Teachers read and explain the cockcrow to us	0	0.0%	4	6.7%	22	36.7%	28	46.7%	6	10.0%	3.6000	.77013
The Cockcrow has improved my reading	6	10.0%	34	56.7%	20	33.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.2333	.62606

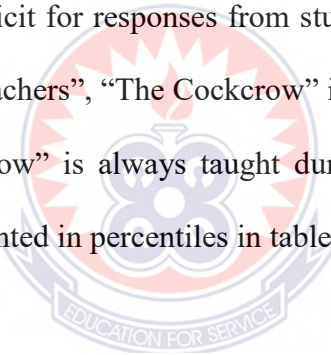
Source: Field Data (2020)

### **Analysis of Participants' Responses to Section B of the Questionnaire**

Students' responses to items in the section B of the Questionnaire where the respondents were required to indicate on a five-point likert scale ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (5) their views on how they perceive "The Cockcrow" as children's literature and its influence on their reading performance were analyzed. The percentage presentation of the results is shown in Table 4.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 1: What is the level of pupils' knowledge on the introduction of "The Cockcrow"?**

In answering this research question the following headings were made from the questionnaire items to solicit for responses from students: "The Cockcrow" has been introduced to us by our teachers", "The Cockcrow" is taught by our English Language teacher and "The Cockcrow" is always taught during English Literature sections". The data gathered is presented in percentiles in table 5 below.



**Table 5: The level of pupils' knowledge on the introduction of 'The Cockcrow'**

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
The Cockcrow is introduced to us.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	52	86.7%	8	13.3%	4.1333	.34575
The Cockcrow is taught by the English Language teachers.	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	60	100.0%	0	0.0%	4.0000	.00000
The Cockcrow is always taught during English literature lessons	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	20.0%	36	60.0%	12	20.0%	4.0000	.64327

Source: Field data (2020)

#### **“The Cockcrow” is introduced to us by our English Language teachers**

Table 5 illustrates that, 52 participants representing 86.6% of the sample agree that “The Cockcrow” is introduced to them by their English Language teachers. 8 participants representing 13.3% of the participants strongly agree that “The Cockcrow” is introduced to them by their English Language teachers. The mean score (i.e., 4.1333) of the responses for this statement reveals that most of the respondents agree that they have been introduced to “The Cockcrow”

#### **“The Cockcrow” is taught by the English Language teachers**

From Table 5, all the 60 participants representing 100% of the sample agree that “The Cockcrow” is taught by their English Language teachers and none had a contrary view.

### **“The Cockcrow” is always taught during English literature lessons**

From table 5, 6 participants representing 20% of the sample were not sure “The Cockcrow” is always taught during English literature sections. However, 26 of the participants representing 56.6% agree that “The Cockcrow” is always taught during English literature sections. Also, 14 participants representing 23.3% of the sample strongly agree that “The Cockcrow” is taught by their English Language teachers. From Table 5, the mean score of the responses to this statement shows an inclination towards the agree point on the Likert scale. It could therefore be inferred that majority of the respondents agree that “The Cockcrow” is always taught during English literature lessons

### **Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data was gathered through interview on the research questions for the study and analyzed to affirm the position made by participants through the questionnaire. This was also done to have more detailed views from participants on their perception on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature.

### **Research question one: What is the level of pupils’ knowledge on the introduction of “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature?**

When the data was collected, the researcher chose questions in relation to the above issue. The questions were, “Have you heard about a book named ‘The Cockcrow’?” “Where did you hear about “The Cockcrow”?”, “Have you started reading ‘The Cockcrow’?”, and “How frequent do you read “The Cockcrow”?”

All the respondents said that they have heard about ‘The cockcrow’. Respondent

3(male) remarked that;

*Yes. I have heard about “The Cockcrow”.*

Respondent 1(male) also remarked that;

*Yes please.*

Respondent 2(female) in addition remarked that;

*Yes, I have heard about it.*

This therefore shows that the children know about the introduction of “The Cockcrow”. This means that “The Cockcrow” is not a strange reading book to pupils.

All the respondents concluded that they heard about the book in their classrooms when they were asked where they heard about the cockcrow. Respondent 1, Respondent 2, and Respondent 4 (female) remarked that;

*We were told during English Language class by our English teacher.*

Respondent 9 (male) and respondent 10 (female) also remarked that;

*We heard about it during English Language class by the English Language teacher.*

This clearly shows that the pupils were informed at the right time and place about “The Cockcrow”. That is, they heard or they were informed about “The Cockcrow” in school and at the time they were supposed to have English lessons by their English Language teachers. This shows they would be about to relate why the book is to be read during English language lessons.

All the participants responded that they have been reading “The Cockcrow” since it was introduced to them. Respondent 5 (male) and respondent 7(male) for instance remarked that;

*Yes, we started reading it during literature section.*

Respondent 6(female) also remarked that; \\\

*Yes, we have started learning it since JHS 1.*

Again, Respondent 8(female) remarked that;

*Yes, we have started learning it.*

These responses depict that pupils have been reading the cockcrow immediately it was introduced to them in class by their English Language teachers. Hence, would be able to give an opinion about what their perceptions are about “The Cockcrow”.

When participants were asked how frequent they learn or read “The Cockcrow”, they responded that they mostly learn or read “The Cockcrow”. Respondents 1,2,7 remarked that;

*We always learn “The Cockcrow” during English literature sections.*

The responses show that anytime it is English literature section, they learn the cockcrow. This affirms the majority responses on the questionnaire item about whether they always learn “The Cockcrow” or not, where about 80% of the participants asserted that their teachers always teach them “The Cockcrow”.

From the above findings; it can be seen that, pupils at the JHS level of education have been introduced to “The Cockcrow” by their English language teachers in school and as such have started reading The Cockcrow. It is also seen that the pupils frequently learn the book (The Cockcrow) during English literature sections. This complements the position made by respondents from the questionnaire where majority of the respondents agreed that they are introduced to “The Cockcrow” and they always learn it during English literature sections. This gives solid foundation that they have formed a perception on the book and would be able to speak to it.



**RESEARCH QUESTION 2: What are pupils' perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature?**

In answering this research question the following headings were made from the questionnaire items to solicit for responses from students: "The Cockcrow" makes difficult reading, "The Cockcrow" is an interesting text, I understand the content of "The Cockcrow" anytime I read it all by myself, "The Cockcrow" is voluminous and "I wish the authorities change "The Cockcrow" for a simpler language children's literature book". The data gathered is presented in percentiles in table 5 below.

**Table 6: Pupils' perceptions on the content of "The Cockcrow" as children's literature**

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean	SD
The Cockcrow is difficult to read	0	0.0%	6	10.0%	20	33.3%	32	53.3%	2	3.3%	3.5000	.73108
The Cockcrow is an interesting text.	0	0.0%	40	66.7%	16	26.7%	4	6.7%	0	0.0%	2.4000	.62146
The cockcrow is easy to understand.	16	26.7%	24	46.7%	16	26.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2.0000	.74278
The cockcrow is voluminous	2	3.3%	0	0.0%	16	26.7%	28	46.7%	14	23.3%	3.8667	.89955
Change the language of the cockcrow.	0	0.0%	2	3.3%	18	30.0%	30	50.0%	10	16.7%	3.8000	.76112
The Cockcrow is suitable for children	0	0.0%	36	60.0%	14	23.3%	0	0.0%	10	16.7%	2.7333	1.11211

Source: Field data (2020)

From Table 5 it would be seen that, six (6) participants representing 10% disagreed to the statement that "The Cockcrow is difficult to read". However, thirty-two (32)

participants representing 53.3% agree that they have difficulty in reading “The Cockcrow”, and two (2) participants strongly agreeing to the fact that “The Cockcrow” is difficult to read. But twenty (20) participants representing 33.3% neither agree disagree or strongly agree or strongly disagree on the statement “The Cockcrow” makes difficult reading. The Table shows a mean score of 3.5 for the responses for this statement which is an indication that the most of students have difficulty reading “The Cockcrow”.

#### **“The Cockcrow” is an interesting text**

From Table 5, forty (40) participants representing 66.7% disagreed on the statement “The Cockcrow” is an interesting text but four (4) participants representing 6.7% agreed that it is an interesting text. It is also seen that, sixteen (16) participants representing 26.7% neither agree nor disagree and strongly agree nor strongly disagree. The mean score of 2.4 as shown in the Table 6 indicates that most of the respondents disagree that “The Cockcrow” is an interesting text.

#### **I understand the content of “The Cockcrow” anytime I read**

Sixteen (16) participants representing 26.7% strongly disagree to the fact that he gets the understanding of the content of “The Cockcrow” anytime he reads it even by himself. Twenty-eight (28) participants, representing 46.7% disagreed with the above statement. However, sixteen (16) of the participants, which is 26.7% neither agree, disagree, strongly agree nor strongly disagree. The mean score of 2.0 is an indication that most of the respondents disagree that they understand “The Cockcrow” anytime they read.

**“The Cockcrow” is voluminous**

From Table 5, it exhibits that two (2) participants, representing 3.3% strongly disagree that “The Cockcrow” is voluminous. Sixteen (16) participants, representing 26.7% were not sure whether “The Cockcrow” is voluminous or not. Twenty-eight (28) of the participated members, representing 46.7% agreed that “The Cockcrow” is voluminous. Fourteen (14) participants representing 23.3% agreed strongly that “The Cockcrow” is voluminous. The table shows a mean score of 3.8667 for this statement. Thus, it could be inferred that majority of the students agree that “The Cockcrow” is voluminous.

**I wish the authorities change “The Cockcrow” for a simpler language literature book.**

In responding to the above heading, two (2) participants, representing 3.3% disagreed that “The Cockcrow” should be changed for a simpler language literature book. Eighteen (18) participants, representing 30.0% were not sure whether “The Cockcrow” should be changed or not. However, thirty (30) participants, representing 50.0% and ten (10) participants, representing 16.7% agreed and strongly agreed respectively to the statement that the authorities should change “The Cockcrow” for a more simple language literature book. The table shows a mean score of 3.8 suggesting that majority of the respondents agree that authorities should change “The Cockcrow” for a simpler children’s literature book.

**“The Cockcrow” is suitable for children**

From Table 5, thirty-six (36) of the participants, representing 60% disagreed that “The Cockcrow” is suitable for children. Also, fourteen (14) of the participated members representing 23.3% were not in agreement or disagreement. They neither strongly agree nor strongly disagree to the above statement. Ten (10) participants, representing

16.7% strongly disagreed that “The Cockcrow” is suitable for children. The table reveals a mean score of 2.7333 suggesting that a few of the respondents do not think “The Cockcrow” is suitable for their children.

**Research question two: What are pupils’ perceptions on the content of “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature?**

When the data was collected, the researcher chose questions in relation to the above issue. The questions were, “Do you think that “The Cockcrow” is children’s literature?”, “What makes you think that “The Cockcrow” is suitable for children?”, “What are your perceptions about “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature?”, “When you are learning “The Cockcrow”, what are some of the difficulties you find?” and “Should “The Cockcrow” be changed?”

All the participants responded that they do not see the cockcrow to be children’s literature. Respondent 3 for instance remarked that;

*No, because not all the stories in “The Cockcrow” are meant for children.*

Respondent 1 also remarked that;

*No. Because some of the stories in “The Cockcrow” are for children and others are for adults.*

Again, Respondent 2 remarked that;

*No, because some of the stories contain adult lifestyle as in “Ripples” telling about marriage.*

If the above remarks are to be put into perspective, then one would agree with Livingston and Brown (2017) that children’s literature is a literature that seeks to answer works that were particularly pointed at the young or that came to be

considered as children's literature by being appropriated by young readers. The pupils see that the cockcrow has some stories not pointed at them contrarily to the assertion of Livinston and Brown (2017). So for a book to be considered as children's literature, it should be exclusively be created for children as target audience (Livinston & Brown, 2017). However, the respondents see "The Cockcrow" having stories not targeting them (the pupils) but rather adults as remarked by Respondent 1 and Respondent 2. Respondent 2 in one of her remarks said;

*"Ripples" is good for adults because it talks about marriage for adults to follow.*

This emphasizes that not all the stories in "The Cockcrow" are for children.

Respondent 2 remarked that;

*Some part of the cockcrow when reading is difficult to pronounce some words or lines, hence not good for us.*

This suggests that "The Cockcrow" is not suitable for pupils. The remarks by P2 makes a section of the stories, poems and play in "The Cockcrow" oppose the view opined by Lukens (1995), that children's literature involves "a significant truth expressed in appropriate elements and memorable language". So, the remarks by Respondent 2 do not make "The Cockcrow" seem to be written with appropriate or suitable elements and worth remembering language.

In responding to whether there are some difficulties they encounter when reading "The Cockcrow", all the respondents said yes. Hence, they further responded about some of the difficulties they encounter when reading and learning "The Cockcrow". Respondent 2 remarked that;

*The pronunciation and the understanding of some words are difficult.*

Respondent 1 remarked that;

*I do not understand some of the words when reading “The Cockcrow”.*

Respondent 3 also remarked that;

*Some of the difficulties are pronunciation of words, identifying literally devices and finding themes in the stories in “The Cockcrow”.*

Respondent 4 additionally remarked that;

*Some of the challenges we are facing when reading he cockcrow is that, we are having pronunciation problems and understanding of some words, and I think that is not helping us.*

When participants were asked whether “The Cockcrow” should be changed, majority of the respondents suggested that it should be changed.

Respondent 8 remarked that; *Yes, it should be changed.*

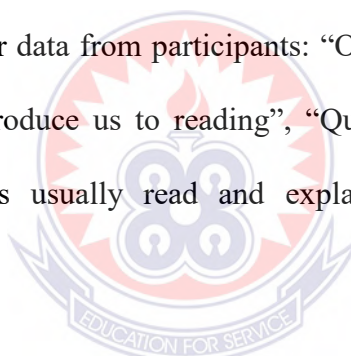
Respondent 10 also remarked that: *I wish they change the book (The Cockcrow) because it is not suitable to us.*

This implies that pupils find it very difficult to pronounce and understand some of the words in the cockcrow, hence the language learning that should be one of the objectives that children’s books seek to achieve would not be met by the pupils who study the cockcrow. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002) are of the view that words used in children’s book should be appropriate (suitable) to the story told. Hence, if pupils are about to pronounce and understand some of the words in the cockcrow, they would be able to have much interest in the cockcrow. But that is on the contrary. Pupils are also of the view that “The Cockcrow” be changed.

From the above findings; it can be seen that it is not every book that a child at the J.H.S level should read since the books that they are not supposed to read may contain bad scenes in some of the stories in such books. Again, pupils do not find the cockcrow to be entirely children’s literature book. Also, pupils have some difficulty in pronunciation and understanding of some words when reading and learning the cockcrow. Eventually, pupils perceive “The Cockcrow” not to be suitable and as such should be changed.

### **RESEARCH QUESTION 3: How do these perceptions influence their reading performance of “The Cockcrow”?**

To answer this research question, the following statements from the questionnaire item, were used to gather data from participants: “Our teachers with good discussion on “The Cockcrow” introduce us to reading”, “Questions on “The Cockcrow” are difficult” and “Teachers usually read and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to us.



**Table 6: How pupils’ perceptions on “The Cockcrow” influence their reading performance of “The Cockcrow”**

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree		Mean	SD
The Cockcrow introduces us to reading	16	26.7%	24	40.0%	12	20.0%	4	6.7%	4	6.7%	2.2667	1.14269
Questions in the cockcrow are difficult	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	20.0%	32	53.3%	16	26.7%	4.0667	.69149
Teachers read and explain the cockcrow to us	0	0.0%	4	6.7%	22	36.7%	28	46.7%	6	10.0%	3.6000	.77013

Source: Field data (2020)

### **The Cockcrow introduces us to reading**

Table 6 illustrates that, sixteen (16) participants, representing 26.7% strongly disagreed on the statement that “Our teachers with good discussion on “The Cockcrow” introduce us to reading”. Also, twenty-four(24), participants, representing 40% of the participated members disagreed that their teachers with good discussion on “The Cockcrow” introduce them to reading. twelve (12) participants, representing 20.0% neither agreed nor disagreed, or strongly agreed nor strongly disagreed on the statement that teachers with good discussion on “The Cockcrow” introduce to reading. However, four (4) participants, representing 6.7% and four (4) participants representing 6.7% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that their teachers introduce them to reading through good discussion using “The Cockcrow”. 2.2667 is the mean score for this statement, revealing that it is only a smaller number of respondents who believe “The Cockcrow” introduces them to reading.

### **Questions on “The Cockcrow” are difficult**

The results from Table 6 also revealed that, twelve (12) participants, representing 20% did not strongly disagree, disagree, agree or strongly agree to the statement that “Questions on “The Cockcrow” are difficult. Notwithstanding, thirty-two (32) participants, are representing 53.3% agreed to the statement that Questions on “The Cockcrow” are difficult. Also, sixteen (16) of the participants, representing 26.6% strongly agreed to the statement. From the table, it revealed that the mean score was 4.0667 which suggests that majority of the respondents agree questions on “The Cockcrow” are difficult.



**Teachers mostly read and explain stories and poems in the “The Cockcrow” to us.**

From the results captured on Table 6, it indicates that four (4) participants, representing 6.7% disagreed that teachers usually read and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to them. Twenty-two (22) participants, representing 36.7% did not agree, strongly agree or strongly disagree to the statement that “Teachers usually read and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to us”. Twenty-eight (28) of the participants, representing 46.7% agreed to the statement and six (6) represented by 10% strongly agreed that indeed their teachers read and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to them. The table showed a mean score of 3.6 suggesting that a larger number of the respondents is of the view that teachers mostly read and and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to them.

**Research question three: How do these perceptions influence their reading and learning performance of “The Cockcrow”?**

After the data collection, the researcher had questions relating to the above issue. “How do the perceptions on “The Cockcrow” influence your learning of “The Cockcrow”?”, “Do you think you would be able to complete studying “The Cockcrow” before you complete school?”, and “Are you able to answer questions on “The Cockcrow” satisfactorily?”

All the respondents expressed the fact that, the perceptions they have on the cockcrow has influence on their reading and learning of the cockcrow. Respondent 3 (male) remarked that;

*It doesn't make the cockcrow interesting to read. Some of the stories are difficult to understand because of the problems we encounter when we are learning “The Cockcrow”.*

From the above response from Respondent 3, it is seen that the perceptions he has on reading and learning of “The Cockcrow” do not make him have interest to read “The Cockcrow”. Temple, Martinez and Yakota (2014), expressed that in determining what makes a book good for children, it will require that we do develop some criteria for quality in children’s books, and the answers depends partly on the age and the interest of the child. This then explains that a child’s interest in a book determines if the book is a good book for children. Lilia (2012) states that, when children are given choices to select books to read, they will select books which are appropriate to their interest and reading abilities. The remarks by Respondent 3 suggests that if the cockcrow were to be selected among other books, he would not had selected it to read but rather a different one which will be of his interest and reading ability as stated by Lilia. He would not have selected “The Cockcrow” among other books since he has the perception of difficulty in reading and understanding some stories because of difficulty in pronouncing some words.

Respondent 4 (female) also remarked that;

*It is not making the book understandable when reading and not making us have interest in reading “The cockcrow”.*

This implies that if we are to measure the cockcrow as children’s literature book, what Temple, Martinez and Yakota (2014) expressed that to determine what book is good for children partly depends on the interest of the child might support the claim that “The Cockcrow” is children’s literature book. This is supported with the response from Respondent 4 that he does not has the interest in reading “The Cockcrow”.

Respondent 2 remarked that;

*It makes me confused in reading the stories because you don't understand the words.*

This suggests that the choice of words used in the cockcrow might not have been carefully selected with the standard of the pupils at J.H.S carefully considered. Tomlinson and Lynch Brown (2002) are of the view that the style which has “choice of words” as one of its features should be appropriate in relation to content. Meaning, if the choice of words selected in a given book is difficult to pronounce and understand, it may invalidate the meaning and the import of the content of that book. Hence, no wonder Respondent 2 said he gets confused in reading the stories.

All the respondents said they would not be able to complete studying the cockcrow before they complete. Respondent 1 when asked if they can finish learning “The Cockcrow” remarked that;

*No, because some of the stories are plenty.*

Respondent 1 in saying why they would not be able to complete studying “The Cockcrow” said some of the stories are plenty, meaning some of the stories in “The Cockcrow” are lengthy. This implies that a book that they are supposed to study and answer questions on at their final exams which is BECE would not be of help to them when they are not able to complete, and questions on stories, poems and play that they could not finish reading and learning drop. This might likely affect their performance. Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002) has this to say that length of chapters and length of the book overall should be designed with children’s age and stage of development in mind. It looks like this is not clearly seen in “The Cockcrow” if the response that Respondent 1 gave is anything to go by.

Respondent 5 remarked that;

*No, because the pages are many.*

Respondent 5's response backs the response made by Respondent 1 suggesting "The Cockcrow" is voluminous and this might make children find it tiresome to be reading "The Cockcrow" thereby making them lose interest in reading and learning "The Cockcrow".

When the respondents were asked if they are able to answer questions on "The Cockcrow" satisfactorily, they all responded no. Respondent 7 remarked that;

*When questions are asked, we are not able to answer most of them so we are not able to perform well.*

Lilia (2012) in listing specific benefits children derive from reading and listening to books which are for children, mentioned "stimulating cognitive development" as a benefit young readers gain. This implies that when children read children's books, they should be able to develop mentally. Hence, it is expected that as children (pupils) read "The Cockcrow", they should be able to answer the questions on it (The Cockcrow) satisfactorily since it is supposed to develop their mental fortitude to be able to memorize and recall. However, the response made by Respondent 7 does not suggest that assertion.

Respondent 9 remarked that,

*As I keep on saying, these problems are making us find it difficult to solve some problems in "The Cockcrow" or do exercises. Because of not understanding some words or lines in "The Cockcrow", when questions are asked, we find it difficult to answer.*

This implies that the pupils (readers) find it difficult to answer questions on “The Cockcrow” satisfactorily. Because they find some of the words and lines in “The Cockcrow” difficult to understand, they are not able to answer questions on the cockcrow during exercise. This suggests that a careful consideration of making sure the words used in “The Cockcrow” are appropriate, meaning, the words should suit them (readers) and for that matter they should be able to read and understand them, and sentences which should be easy to read as suggested by Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002), cannot be seen in “The Cockcrow” according to the response from Respondent 9.

Respondent 3 remarked that;

*The stories in “The Cockcrow” are many, because of that we can’t learn them. Also, when questions are set, we are not able to answer all, so we are not able to perform well.*

From the above findings, it can be deduced that, the perceptions pupils have on the cockcrow influence their reading and learning of “The Cockcrow”. As a result, they (readers) are not able to read and understand some of the stories in “The Cockcrow”. Again, pupils do not have much interest in reading “The Cockcrow”. It is also seen that pupils do not believe they would be able to complete studying “The Cockcrow” before they complete J.H.S. Because of these perceptions pupils are not able to answer questions on “The Cockcrow” satisfactorily.

**Research Question 4: How has the use of “The Cockcrow” influenced pupils reading performance?**

The following statement was used to answer this research question: “The Cockcrow” has improved my reading (That is, I am able to read other books satisfactorily since introduced to “The Cockcrow”).

**Table 7: How has the use of “The Cockcrow” influenced pupils’ reading performance**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	SD
The Cockcrow has improved my reading	6 10.0%	34 56.7%	20 33.3%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	2.2333	.62606

Source: Field data (2020)

Table 7 displays that, six (6) participants, representing 10% strongly disagreed that “The Cockcrow” has improved their reading performance since they were introduced to it (The Cockcrow). Also, seventeen (34) participants representing 56.7% disagreed that “The Cockcrow” has improved their reading performance and as such are able to read other books since they were introduced to “The Cockcrow”. Nonetheless, twenty (20) participated members did not agree, strongly agree, disagree or strongly disagree to the statement. The means score (i.e, 2.2333) of the responses to this statement shows an inclination towards the disagree point on the Likert Scale. It could therefore be inferred that majority to the respondents disagree that “The Cockcrow” has improved their reading

**Research question four: How has the use of “The Cockcrow” influenced pupils’ reading in general?**

When the data was collected, the researcher selected questions related to the above issue. The questions were, “Do you think “The Cockcrow” has been beneficial to you?” and “Has “The Cockcrow” been able to help you read other story books and Pupil’s textbook?”

All the respondents said “The Cockcrow” has not been beneficial to them and stated why. Respondent 4 in stating why she thinks “The Cockcrow” has not been beneficial to her remarked that;

*It has not been able to help me read well and get more knowledge to study because of how difficult some of the words are.*

Respondent 4’s remarks makes it clear that the cockcrow in one way or the other has not been useful to them due to the vocabulary challenges they face when reading and learning the book (The Cockcrow). This contradicts what Sunan (2008) said about the value of children’s literature. Sunan stated that children gain improvement in skills on reading and writing. This is to show that, pupils have not been able to acquire skills on reading since introduced to “The Cockcrow” which is supposed to be the ideal thing that children’s book are supposed to offer to readers. Again, from respondent 4’s response, it does not affirm what Sunan (2008) said; that, children acquire knowledge in content of subject area across curriculum as one of the academic values children gain when they read children’s books.

When respondents were asked whether “The Cockcrow” has been able to influence them to read other story books and Pupil’s textbook well, they all responded that The

Cockcrow” has not influence their reading performance of other books. Respondent 10 remarked that:

*I am not able to read the English language textbook satisfactorily since “The Cockcrow” was introduced.*

Respondent 1 remarked that:

*I still can't read other books well.*

The responses from respondent 10 and Respondent 1 suggest that since they started reading “The Cockcrow”, they are not able to read other books such as the Pupil’s textbook and other story books well. These responses do not agree with the assertion by The Cognitive View Theory which suggests that when children read books made for them, it enhances their reading ability (Owu-Ewie, 2018). This also opposes the views opined by Calson (1969), that children’s literature consists in its cultural store of acts which enhances learning in other areas such as history, art, and geography. This implies that as pupils read “The Cockcrow”, it is able to help them acquire some amount of knowledge that they are able to transfer to other subject areas to be able to help them in their academic life. This means that “The Cockcrow” has not been able to impact on pupils positively due to the vocabulary challenges they encounter.

### **Discussion of Results**

The purpose of the study was to investigate pupils’ perception on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature and its influence on reading at the Junior High School level of education in the Bosome Freho district.

The answers to the first research question indicated that pupils at the JHS level of education have been introduced to “The Cockcrow” by their English language



teachers in school and as such have started reading “The Cockcrow”. It is also seen that the pupils frequently learn the book (The Cockcrow) during English literature sections. This complements the position made by respondents from the questionnaire where majority of the respondents agreed that they are introduced to “The Cockcrow” and they always learn it during English literature sections. This gives solid foundation that they have formed a perception on the book and would be able to speak to it.

The findings to the second research question indicated that majority of J.H.S pupils find it difficult in reading “The Cockcrow”. They attributed this problem to the difficult vocabulary usage in the stories and poems in “The Cockcrow”. This opposes the views ascribed by Tomlinson and Lynch Brown (2002) that word choice which is part of the style as one of the elements of any children’s literature fiction should be appropriate to the story and hence make the sentences easy to read. Again, majority of the pupils do not share the view that “The Cockcrow” is an interesting text. This lack of interest by the majority of the pupils contradicts what Calson (1969) says that good literature book offers children a delight and enchantment as one of the values of children’s literature. Also, larger numbers of the JHS pupils do not understand the content of “The Cockcrow” anytime they read. From the qualitative and quantitative data collected, it was revealed that majority of the pupils do not get the understanding of what the stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” seek to portray to readers (pupils). This problem of difficulty in making meaning from a reading text and in this case “The Cockcrow” by J.H.S pupils does not aligned with Tomlinson and Lynch–Brown (2002) with the suggestion that the diction of children’s book should be appropriate to the content, and that, the style which includes the diction and sentence construction should be clear and understandable. Further pupils find “The Cockcrow” voluminous and as such does not resonate with what Tomlinson and Lynch–Brown

(2002) assert that length of chapters and length of the book overall should be designed with children's age and stage of development in mind. Such length of stories and poems in "The Cockcrow" and as such the entire "Cockcrow", might affect the interest pupils might have in reading "The Cockcrow" and the ability to be able to complete studying "The Cockcrow" before completing J.H.S. Moreover, from the findings for research question two (2), majority of the pupils wish that "The Cockcrow" is changed by the authorities for a more simple language literature book. In the same view the pupils revealed that the "The Cockcrow" is not suitable for them. These findings resonate with the assertion made by Lilia (2012) that when children are giving varied choice, such as they find in school and public library they will select books which are appropriate to their interest and reading abilities". These clearly indicate that if "The Cockcrow" is suitable to the pupils they would not have wished "The Cockcrow" is changed for a more simple language literature book.

In finding answers to research question three (3) on how the perceptions pupils have on "The Cockcrow" as children's literature as indicated earlier, affect the pupils reading performance of "The Cockcrow", the following were identified from the responses of the participants. It is indicated that the teachers of English Language at the J.H.S introduce readers to reading, read and explain stories and poems in "The Cockcrow" to the pupils (readers). These findings do not resonate with the reader oriented theory where it is believed that reader make meaning of a text read by them. For instance, Bradfield (2017 : 124 – 126) opines that readers are seen to be "meaning makers, responsible to varying degrees on the particular theorist, for bringing their life experience, their beliefs, values and memories to the text in order to make meaning. Bressler (2011) similarly made an assertion that meaning making is a result of the interaction of the reader and text with varied interpretation being made. This simply

denotes that the pupils are not able to read “The Cockcrow” and generate meaning and understanding from it well by themselves. If any understanding is to be created, it is done by the teachers which in this way does not develop the child cognitively and as such will also not be able to help the child to develop his/her reading skills properly as the introduction of “The Cockcrow” intends to achieve. This consequently was detected to be affecting their ability to answer questions on “The Cockcrow”. Not only with the teachers mostly reading and explaining most of the stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to the pupils but the difficulty of words used in the “the Cockcrow” do not help students to answer questions on “The Cockcrow” satisfactorily. This condition defaces and does not resonate with the notion opined by Lilia (2012), that, in listing specific benefits children derive from reading and listening to children’s books, mentioned “simulating cognitive development” as a benefit young readers gain. This implies that when children read children’s books, they should be able to develop mentally. Hence it is expected that as children (pupils) read “The Cockcrow”, they should be able to answer the questions on it (The Cockcrow) satisfactorily since it is supposed to develop their mental fortitude to be able to memorize and recall. However, the results from the questionnaire and interview data collected do not support this assertion.

In finding answer to research question four (4) on how the use of “The Cockcrow” have influenced pupil’s reading performance, pupils do not see any significant contribution “The Cockcrow” has offered them since they were introduced to it, and as such do not like it (The Cockcrow). They believe that it is not a book that is meant to address their interest. Majority of the participants indicated that “The Cockcrow” has not improved their reading performance since they were introduced to “The Cockcrow”. This does not align with what Sunan (2008) said about the value of

children's literature, that children gain improvement in skills on reading and writing.

Sunan was of the view that as children read books of children they improve in their reading and writing skills. This is not actualized with the pupils in this study.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Overview

This is the final chapter of this research study. This chapter summarizes the study and highlights the major findings. It also indicates the conclusion of the study, its implication for practices and further puts across recommendations and directions for future research.

#### Summary of the Study

The study inquired about the perception pupils have on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature and its influence on reading. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of pupils’ knowledge on the introduction of “The Cockcrow”?
2. What are pupils’ perceptions on the content of “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature?
3. How do these perceptions influence their reading and learning performance of ‘The Cockcrow’?
4. How has the use of ‘The Cockcrow’ influenced pupils’ reading in general?

The study was conducted using the mixed method approach with the explanatory sequential design. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to answer the research questions. The target population for the study was all JHS 3 pupils in Bosome Freho district. The accessible population was all 290 JHS3 pupils in the Dunkura circuit. Questionnaire and interview were the instruments used to gather data for the study. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaire (close ended) while

qualitative data was gathered using interview (unstructured). Descriptive statistics, in these case percentages, was used to analyze the quantitative data and thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data.

### **Summary of Major Findings**

The summary of the findings of the study are presented in this section according to the research questions that guided the study.

#### **What is the level of pupils' knowledge on "The Cockcrow"?**

Analysis from the responses of pupils collected through the questionnaire and interview revealed that majority of the pupils' Level of knowledge on "The Cockcrow" is that:

1. Pupils have been introduced to "The Cockcrow" by their English Language
2. Pupils always learn "The Cockcrow" during English Literature lessons.
3. Pupils are taught "The Cockcrow" by their English Language teachers.

The level of knowledge the pupils have on the introduction of "The Cockcrow" made it evident that they have formed some perceptions on "The Cockcrow".

#### **What are pupils' perceptions on "The Cockcrow" as children's literature?**

Analysis from the responses of pupils from the questionnaire and interview revealed that majority of the pupils' perceptions on "The Cockcrow" as a book for children is that:

1. The book (The Cockcrow) has difficult vocabulary usage and as such makes reading of it difficult.
2. Pupils do not perceive the book to be interesting for children.

3. Due to its difficult vocabulary usage, it makes the understanding of the content of “The Cockcrow” difficult.
4. “The Cockcrow” is voluminous.
5. “The Cockcrow” should be changed for a more simple language literature book.
6. “The Cockcrow” is not suitable for children.

### **How do these perceptions influence their reading performance of “The Cockcrow”?**

Analysis on the data collected to answer this research question indicated that, due to the perceptions pupils have on “The Cockcrow” as difficult to read and understand, and not having interest in the book, created room for their English Language teachers to mostly read and explain stories and poems in “The Cockcrow” to them when introducing the pupils to reading. This situation has given rise to the following problems:

1. They are not able to read the book (The Cockcrow) all by themselves.
2. The pupils are not able to answer questions on “The Cockcrow” satisfactorily.

### **How has the use of “The Cockcrow” influenced pupils reading performance in general?**

In analyzing data collected to answer this research question, it was indicated that a larger proportion of the pupils has not seen improvement in their reading performance in general since they were introduced to “The Cockcrow”. This might be attributed to difficulty in reading some of the words and sentences in the book, lengthy nature of “The Cockcrow”, among others.

## **Conclusion**

Pupils' perceptions on a book have greater impact on the reading and learning performance of that book, and "The Cockcrow" is no exception. Participants (respondents) in this study revealed certain short falls that they perceive "The Cockcrow" to be having and as such do not perceive "The Cockcrow" to be a complete children's literature book.

They express some of these short falls to be difficulty in pronunciation and understanding of words, adult stories (that is, they perceive some stories or poems or play in the cockcrow as adult literature). The way children perceive books to be chosen to read is different from that of adults, and thus their (children's) perception on a book selected for them to read should be critically looked at. When pupils have difficulty to pronounce words and understand, how would they be able to read meanings to such books? This is not different to what is seen with "The Cockcrow" in which the perceptions outlined by pupils do not aid pupils to have meaningful understanding of most of the stories or poems or play in "The Cockcrow". Again, the pupils' perception that some of the texts in "The Cockcrow" are adult literature also affects the interest that they are supposed to have in reading such texts. This finding affirms what Temple, Yakota & Martinez (2014); Lilia (2014) said that books that are of interest to children can be considered to be children's literature since they address the needs and the interest of the children. Children or pupils see that such stories in "The Cockcrow" do not address their interest since they are about adult life styles, and some having scenes that they fear might influence them negatively to engage in other deviant behaviors. These perceptions are not making "The Cockcrow" lives its relevance and to help pupils in reading performance.



The pupils' perceptions have a greater influence on their performance as in relation to any selected book(s) they read such as "The Cockcrow" at the JHS level of education. Since the perceptions they have on "The Cockcrow" do not help readers or pupils to develop enough enthusiasm and interest in reading "The Cockcrow", it does not help pupils to answer question on "The Cockcrow" satisfactorily during exercises, class tests, mock examinations and end of term examinations. If pupils are not able to answer questions correctly or satisfactorily, then it means there are issues with "The Cockcrow" that stakeholders in basic education need to look at since it leaves much for concern. This means that "The Cockcrow" have not been able to help them develop cognitively. This is contrary to the assertion made by Lilia (2012) that "stimulation of cognitive development of the reader" is one of the values or importance of children's literature when they read children's book. Also it does not synchronize with the views expressed by Sunan (2008) that as part of the academic benefits or values children achieve when they read children's books is "improvement in their knowledge of content of subject areas across curriculum". Per these assertions made by Sunan and Lilia as stated above, "The Cockcrow" might be very difficult to be considered as children's literature book since it does not address the cognitive development benefit of the readers as revealed in this study.

Pupil's knowledge of the import of "The Cockcrow" is another thing to look at in this study. Pupils assert that the book (The Cockcrow) has not offered them any significant impact since they were introduced to it. These do not make pupils' likeness to the book anything to write home about. Among the many things that make them dislike "The Cockcrow" were how they see the book to be having stories meant for adults, how difficult the diction of the book is, and how there has not been any improvement in their cognitive development as a result of reading "The Cockcrow"

since they were introduced to it. It is seen from this study that, majority of the pupils hitherto the introduction of “The Cockcrow” were lacking some huge elements of reading skills, but “The Cockcrow” has not been able to improve their reading skills challenges. This contradicts what Sunan (2008) opines that children’s reading skills improve when they read books which are meant for children. This implies that “The Cockcrow” may not fall within the categories of children’s literature putting Sunan’s assertion into perspective because majority of the pupils do not see “The Cockcrow” improving their reading skills.

Again, the book, from this study is seen to be voluminous, and containing some lengthy texts. This assessment, add flesh to some of the responses pupils gave in how they perceive “The Cockcrow”. This identified issue with “The Cockcrow” with its challenges, do not help pupils to imbibe the actual messages that “The Cockcrow” intent to impact on readers. This finding, from Lynch-Brown & Tomlinson (2002) could discount “The Cockcrow” to be children’s literature book because lynch-brown and Tomlinson are of the view that children’s book should not have lengthy sentences and stories and as such should not be voluminous.

Also, it is revealed from this study that pupils would not be able to complete studying “The Cockcrow” because of its voluminous nature. “The Cockcrow” is a supplementary text book that is supposed to be used in classroom teaching and learning, hand in with the pupil’s textbooks, and other topic of contents from the JHS English language syllabus. As a subject teacher for English Language for five years, sometimes topics in the syllabus are not completed in the academic year, not to talk of the pupils’ textbooks. Then a book of 190 pages is added to the overload of the classroom activity of teaching and learning of the content syllabus and the pupils’

textbooks. One should not miss the fact that the pupil's textbook does not require pupils to answer questions on what they read and learn from it at the BECE but the cockcrow does so. So, if the pupils are not able to complete studying "The Cockcrow", how would they be able to answer questions on it satisfactorily? And this would go a long way to affect their performance in the English Language during BECE.

To conclude, it is evidently clear that the perceptions pupils have on "The Cockcrow" is not making them have much interest in reading and learning "The Cockcrow", and also not making pupils perform well when questions are asked on "The Cockcrow". These perceptions and its impact do not make the pupils see "The Cockcrow" as entirely children's literature. This assertion is backed by the findings made by Lilia (2012); Temple, Martinez and Yakota (2014); Naashia (2008) that books which are perceived by young readers (children) as books not of their interest should not be considered as children's literature book. Also, from the Reader Oriented Theory, it puts the reader at the centre of meaning making and that how the reader reads and understand can also determine whether the book he or she reads can be considered as children's literature book. And the from this study, is revealed that readers do not understand most of words and sentences they read and for that matter affects their meaning making from stories and poems they read in "The Cockcrow". This makes it difficult for "The Cockcrow" to be considered as children's literature. One major focus of The Cognitive View on reading is improving the cognitive capacity and the reading skills of readers, but "The Cockcrow" has not been able to do that according to the revelations made from this study. All these make it a solid ground for a conclusion to be made that "The Cockcrow" which was introduced at the JHS level of education to improve the reading abilities (skills) of pupils at the JHS level of

Ghana's education, and also to enhance their reading and learning performance has not been able to achieve this purpose, and as such cannot be considered as children's literature book.

### **Limitations**

The accessible population for the study was 290 respondents, out of which 70 representing 24.14 percent was sampled for the study. As a result of this small sample size, it would be difficult to generalize the results for the entire country. Limited time factor, limited financial resources and geographical locations of the schools within the Dunkura circuit were also a major limitation to the study. Nonetheless, the researcher believes that the validity of the information collected is accurate, notwithstanding the above mentioned limitation.

### **Recommendations**

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

**Curriculum developers and other education stakeholders should have a review of “The Cockcrow”.**

Curriculum developers and other education stakeholders should have a review of “The Cockcrow” to be able to be a desired book for children literature at the JHS level of education concerning the themes, difficult diction, metaphorical and personified expressions, and length of some of the “stories” in “The Cockcrow” and the volume of the book (The Cockcrow) itself.

### **Visuals should be added to books**

Visuals should be added to books that are to be selected for children at the JHS level of education since children are able to read or learn and recall well by things that give them mental pictures.

### **Head teachers and teachers should deploy strategies**

Head teachers and teachers should deploy strategies to be able to encourage pupils to develop interest in reading and learning “The Cockcrow”, and also to finish learning and studying the cockcrow before they leave the JHS.

**Parents should be enlightened on the introduction of “The Cockcrow”.** Parents should be enlightened on the introduction of “The Cockcrow” so that they can also find the need to employ measures to help the pupils to read and learn the book when they come to the house.

### **Enough time allocation**

Enough time should be allocated on the school’s time table for the teaching and learning of “The Cockcrow” for pupils to be able to complete studying the book before they complete JHS level of education.

### **Recommendations for further studies**

The researcher recommends the following areas to be further researched;

1. Teachers’ perceptions on “The Cockcrow” as children’s literature.
2. Impact of “The Cockcrow” on pupils’ reading skills.
3. Impact of “The Cockcrow” on pupil’s performance in English Language study.
4. The qualitative aspect of this study.

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## APPENDIX A

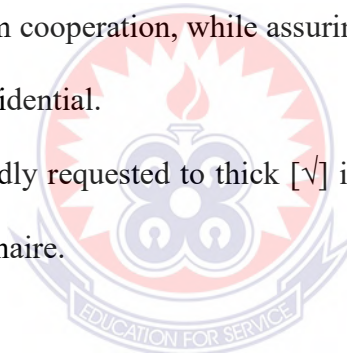
### Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This questionnaire seeks your view on how you perceive the cockcrow as children's literature and its influence on your reading. Your candid responses will enable curriculum developers, teachers and other educational stakeholders make informed decisions when selecting an English literature book for JHS pupils to learn. This is expected to lead to an improved teaching and learning of English literature in our JHS level of education. The filling of this questionnaire will take you approximately twenty minutes to complete.

I count on your maximum cooperation, while assuring you that all your responses will be treated as strictly confidential.

**Instruction:** you are kindly requested to tick [] in spaces provided for the various questions in the questionnaire.



#### Section A

##### Respondents Background Information

1. Sex: Male [] Female []
2. Age: 12-13 [] 14-16 [] 17-19 []
3. Interest in literature books: High [] Mild [] Low []

**Section B****Your Perception on *The Cockcrow* as Children’s Literature and its Influence on Reading.**

For each of the statements below, please indicate the extent of your agreement or disagreement by placing tick [✓] in the appropriate column to show how you perceive the cockcrow as children’s literature and how it influence your reading.

**Perception on *The Cockcrow* and its influence on your reading**


Statements of effects on social life	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
“The Cockcrow” makes difficult reading”					
“The Cockcrow” is an interesting text”					
“The cockcrow” is easy to understand”					
“The cockcrow” introduces us to reading”					
“Questions on ‘The Cockcrow’ are difficult”					
“Teachers explain stories and poems in Cockcrow”					
“The Cockcrow” has improved my reading”					
“The Cockcrow” is voluminous to read”					
“The Cockcrow” is suitable for children”					
“The language in “The Cockcrow” should be changed”					
“The Cockcrow” is introduced to us in this school”					
“The Cockcrow” is taught by the English Language teachers”					
“The Cockcrow” is always taught during English Literature sections”					

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Guide

1. Have you heard about a book named ‘The Cockcrow’?
  - Where did you hear about the Cockcrow?
  - Have you started reading ‘The Cockcrow’?
  - How frequent do you read ‘The Cockcrow’?
  
2. Do you think that the Cockcrow is children’s literature?
  - What makes you think that the cockcrow is suitable for children?
  - What are your perceptions about the cockcrow as children’s literature?
  - When you are learning the cockcrow, what are some of the difficulties you find?
  - Should ‘The Cockcrow’ be changed?
  
3. How do they (your perceptions on the cockcrow) influence your learning of the cockcrow?
  - Do you think you would be able to complete studying the cockcrow before you complete school?
  - Are you able to answer questions on the cockcrow satisfactorily?
  
4. Do you think the cockcrow has been beneficial to you?
  - Has ‘The Cockcrow’ been able to help you read other story books and Pupil’s textbook?

## APPENDIX C

<b>GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE</b>		
In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted  <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">Our Ref No.</div> <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px;">Your Ref No.</div>	 <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 2px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;">REPUBLIC OF GHANA</div>	BOSOME FREHO EDUCATION OFFICE P.O. BOX 453 Digital Address: A4-0043-5010 TEL.:0207052134 Email.:bosomefreho.ded@ges.gov.gh

OTI KWAME FRED  
 AMPENTO D/A JHS  
 P.O BOX 146  
 BEKWAI, ASHANTI.  
 Dear Sir,

RE: DATA FOR THE POPULATION OF JHS STUDENTS IN THE BOSOME FREHO DISTRICT AND ENROLLMENT OF JHS THREE (3) STUDENTS IN EACH JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN THE DUNKURA CIRCUIT.

With reference to your letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, the following are the data on enrollment for the JHS students in the district, and also for JHS three (3) students in Junior High Schools in the Dunkura circuit:

Table 1: **Enrolment of JHS students in the Bosome Freho district.**

LEVEL	ENROLLMENT
JHS 1	1018
JHS 2	1022
JHS 3	980
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3020</b>

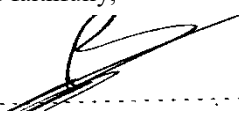
Table 2: **Enrolment of JHS 3 students in schools in Dunkura circuit**

SCHOOL	JHS 3 ENROLMENT
AMPENTO D/A JHS	42
BEPOSO D/A JHS	38
DUNKURA D/A JHS	40
AMPAHA D/A JHS	36
MORONTUO D/A JHS	35
DAJANSO D/A JHS	34
ADUMASA D/A JHS	35
JAPADU D/A JHS	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>290</b>

I hope the above information provided will be helpful. Do not hesitate for any further assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

  
 Seth Boateng  
 (District Director)