

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE GAMES IN THE TEACHING OF READING AMONG
BASIC FOUR PUPILS OF NEW TAFO-AKIM SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST PRIMARY**



2018

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE GAMES IN THE TEACHING OF READING AMONG
BASIC FOUR PUPILS OF NEW TAFO-AKIM SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

BY

HANNAH OKYERE

7160080011

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS,
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION,
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WENNEBA, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (TEACHING
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE) DEGREE**

SEPTEMBER, 2018

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

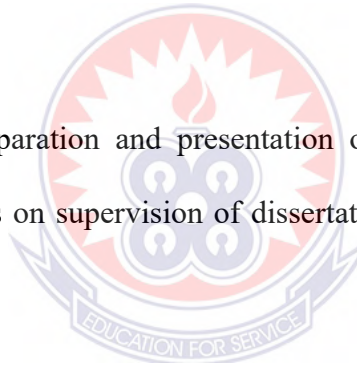
I, Hannah Okyere, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole; for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Supervisor's Declaration

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



SUPERVISOR: Dr. Kwaku Ofori

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my profound gratitude to the many individuals who have so greatly supported the completion of this project. I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Dr. Kwaku Ofori, whose guidance has been productive and insightful. My special thanks go to teachers of kukurantumi circuit for their candid response to the questionnaire. I am very appreciative to the pupils selected for the study. I am also grateful to my siblings: Obeng Twumasi Darko, Oti Twumasi Darko, Gyimah Okyere, Sarah Okyere and my late sister Janet Boadu for their support, love and care throughout my masters course. To Hon. Agyapong Emmanuel Manu, Mrs Patricia Prempeh and Emelia Amoako, a big thank you for your profound support and encouragement for the success of this work.



DEDICATION

To my daughter, Nana Ama Gyekyiwaa Gyekyi and my beloved brother, Obeng Twumasi Darko.

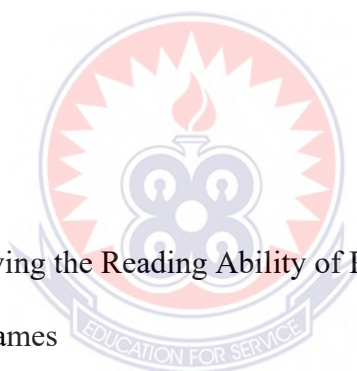


TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	5
1.3 The purpose and objectives of the study	6
1.4 Research questions	7
1.5 Significance of the Study	7
1.6 Delimitations of the Study	7
1.7 Limitations of the Study	8
1.8 Organization of the study	8
CHAPTER TWO	9
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 The concept of reading	9
2.2 Importance of Reading	10



2.2.1 Reading is an active mental process	11
2.2.2 Reading improves vocabulary	11
2.2.3 Reading improves concentration and focus	11
2.2.4 Reading builds self-esteem	12
2.2.5 Reading improves memory	12
2.2.6 Reading improves creativity	12
2.2.7 Reading reduces boredom	12
2.3 Causes of Reading Difficulties	14
2.3.1 Physical factors	14
2.3.2 Mental set	14
2.3.3 Personality problems	14
2.3.4 Lack of practice	15
2.3.5 Failure to concentrate	15
2.4 Language Games in Improving the Reading Ability of Pupils	15
2.5 Importance of Language Games	16
2.6 Types of Language Games	18
2.7 Language Games and the Gaming Concept	20
2.8 Reasons why Games should be used in Language Teaching	23
2.9 Organizing the Class for Language Games	27
2.10 Guidelines for using Language Games Effectively in the Classroom	28
2.11 Characteristics of Good Language Game	30
2.12 Conclusion	30
CHAPTER THREE	31
METHODOLOGY	31



3.0 Introduction	31
3.1 Research Design	31
3.2 Location of the study	32
3.3 Population	33
3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure	33
3.5 Instruments	33
3.5.1 Questionnaire	34
3.5.2 Interview	34
3.5.3 Observation	35
3.5.4 Test	36
3.5.5 Pre-intervention	36
3.5 .6 Intervention	36
3.5.6.1 Materials/ Games	37
3.5.6.2 Description of Materials/ Games	37
3.3.6.3 Intervention Process	40
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	41
3.7 Data Analysis Procedure	41
3.8 Conclusion	42
CHAPTER FOUR	43
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	43
4.0 Introduction	43
4.1 Results obtained by pupils during the pre-intervention	43
4.2 Results obtained by pupils after the intervention	45
4.3 Research Question 1	47



4.4 Research Question 2	50
4.5 Observation	52
4.6 Interview responses from pupils	54
CHAPTER FIVE	57
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	57
5.0 Introduction	57
5.1 Summary of major findings	57
5.2 Conclusions	58
5.3 Recommendations	58
5.3 Suggestions for further studies	59
REFERENCES	60
APPENDIX A	63
SECTION B	65
SECTION C	66
APPENDIX B	67
APPENDIX C	68
APPENDIX D	69
APPENDIX E	70



LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Results obtained by pupils during pre-test (fluency)	43
2	Results obtained by pupils during pre-test (pronunciation)	44
3	Results obtained by pupils during pre-test (vocabulary)	45
4	Causes of reading inability	48
5	Effects of reading inability	50



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Progress test results for fluency on reading	46
2	Progress test results for pronunciation on reading	46
3	Progress test results for vocabulary on reading	47



ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out the role of language games in the teaching of reading among Basic Four Pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. Action research design was employed for the study. The study sample was made up 36 teachers and 30 pupils. Test, questionnaire, observation and interview were used to solicit information from the respondents. The instruments covered three main aspects: causes of reading inability of primary four pupils, effects of reading inability on primary four pupils and the role of language game in improving the reading skills of primary four pupils. The data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 16). Frequency counts and percentages were used for all the items on the survey. The responses from the interviewees were put into themes for analysis. The study revealed that prior to the language games the pupils reading was poor. This was ascertained during the pre-intervention results. The study attested to the fact that language games improved the reading skills of pupils. The post-test results indicate that the performance of students enhanced after the intervention. The study recommends that Curriculum developers should make communicative activities such as language games an integral part of the curriculum. Teachers should be encouraged to receive refresher courses on pedagogical skills on the teaching of the English language especially on how to teach reading as well as new modes and techniques for effective teaching and learning.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

English as an International language is used by people not only for communicating to other people who come from different countries but also for providing a source of knowledge. English plays a very imperative role in every facet of human institution in the English speaking countries. For instance, many books are written in English. This is why people have to cultivate the ability in reading. According to Anon (1999), reading is the most important language skill to be developed in the classroom. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that pupils will be able to read English text effectively and efficiently. That is why reading is one of the major language skills that should be mastered.

To be effective, a reader should have knowledge of the language system, and also literacy skill. Meanwhile, it is not easy to teach reading to students. Teachers face some problems in teaching English. For instance the method of the teacher often makes pupils bored. The approach of the teacher may not be compatible and sustainable because the teacher has limited knowledge regarding teaching of reading. However, at least the problem can be minimized by applying interesting ways of teaching and method. The teacher should be creative to make the classroom conducive (Ginnis, 2002).

Many techniques and methods in teaching English can be applied in the teaching and learning process. The teachers could select one which is compatible with the situation and condition of the pupils in the classroom. The pupils who learn English as an additional language generally learn to hear sounds in words very easily. Anon (1999) stated that, first; we practice the separate sounds, then words, then sentences. That is the natural order and is therefore right for

learning a foreign language. It means every human being faced the same steps in gaining language as part of communication. The students who can hear sounds in words do well in reading.

The last decade has brought a growing consensus on the range of skills that serve as the foundation for reading and writing ability (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). To become a skilled reader, children need a rich language and conceptual knowledge base, a broad and deep vocabulary, and verbal reasoning abilities to understand messages that are conveyed through print. Children also must develop code-related skills, an understanding that spoken words are composed of smaller elements of speech (phonological awareness); the idea that letters represent these sounds (the alphabetic principle), the many systematic correspondences between sounds and spellings, and a repertoire of highly familiar words that can be easily and automatically recognized (Davies, 2000).

But to attain a high level of skill, young children need opportunities to develop these strands, not in isolation, but interactively. Meaning, not sounds or letters, motivate children's earliest experiences with print (Yusuf, 2015). Given the tremendous attention that early literacy has received recently in policy circles (Pretorius, 2009)), and the increasing diversity of our child population, it is important and timely to take stock of these critical dimensions as well as the strengths and gaps in our ability to measure these skills effectively.

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

According to Ginnis (2002), the 21st century demands that a literate person should possess a wide range of abilities and competencies such as the ability to: develop proficiency and fluency with the tools of technology; build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so as to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought; design and share information for global communities to meet a variety of purposes; manage, analyze, and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information; create, critique, analyze, and evaluate multimedia texts and attend to the ethical responsibilities required by these complex environments.

The reading habit of school children is poor and this affects to a great extent, the academic performance of school children. Poor reading habit is believed to be one of the causes of poor performance in schools in Ghana today. There is however no generally accepted definition of academic performance because of the multifaceted domains of learning, Be that as it may, every academic pursuit should have some aims and objectives which it sets out to achieve. At the completion of a programme, an evaluation is carried out to measure how far the participants benefitted from the programme or the extent to which the desired skills have been acquired by the learners. This evaluation is usually based on the set goals and objectives of the academic institution that designed the programme. The outcome of this assessment is academic performance. There is a general lament in the country that the academic performance of students is poor.

Almost everybody loves playing whether young or old. From early childhood playing is an enormous part of most children's lives and it plays a big part of their development as well. Children start playing as early as infancy but as they develop throughout their childhood they keep playing, and as they grow up and mature the nature of their play changes. When children enter middle childhood (6-12) their play starts to change into games which are different from play

in the sense that they are more organized and planned, and they usually include a variation of rules and a specific objective (Rixon, 1981). When playing most games participants are almost forced into communicating with each other in order for the game to work. The need for communication during games, and the informal setting games provide encourages students to be unafraid to talk, which practices their fluency, a valuable communication skill. Because of this fact it is vitally important for teachers to create a positive learning environment, and to try to spark interest amongst their students both in the foreign language and culture because that is important to a successful language learning process. Games help achieve these goals as they help satisfy the requirement of the national curriculum that language learning should be enjoyable for students (Allington & Walmsley, 1995).

Literacy development is not automatic. Teachers of English must make conscious efforts to help pupils develop good proficiency levels in the language. For teachers to do this, they must employ teaching strategies that integrate the four language skills, that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing among others, in the English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons. In doing this, ESL teachers can employ some innovations that have the capability of transforming challenges faced by ESL learners onto wonderful opportunities for pupils to learn the language in a fun-filled and relaxing atmosphere. One way of doing this is through language games and contests (Chen, 2005; Elkin, 2007; Lee, 1979).

Lee (1979) defines language games as having clear beginnings and endings: It is competitive and governed by rules. This competitive aspect of games plays an essential role in the motivation of pupils in the ESL class. It therefore, means that language games come handy as a very powerful tool in promoting literacy skills, especially in rural schools where teaching and learning resources are woefully inadequate or even absent. Quite apart from that they have little opportunity to hear or speak the target language outside the school environment. In this case,

using language games becomes one critical innovative way of getting rural school pupils to learn and practice the ESL in a less stressful classroom environment and even outside the classroom. According to Lee (1979), language is learnt through using it in situations. These situations which bring the second language to life in the classroom include actions, gestures, games and contests among others. Language games actually create the opportunity for pupils to use the second language for meaningful communication.

In recent times, according to Chen (2005), researchers in second language acquisition have shifted their focus from individual language skills acquisition to communicative competence of ESL learners. Teachers of ESL, therefore, need to look out for activities, contests and games that seek to integrate the four language skills to assist ESL learners achieve a good level of communicative competence progressively. Games do have a great potential of developing in pupils speaking, listening, reading, vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking ability among others (Chen, 2005; Lee, 1979). However, ESL teachers in rural primary schools are either ignorant about this fact or see language games as time consuming as well as very challenging to organise, given the efforts it requires. This study sought to find out the role of language games in the teaching of reading among basic four pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The researcher observed that Basic 4 pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality find it difficult to read long sentences which is having adverse effect on their academic performance and the speaking of the English language. Since education is the backbone of the country's development and English is the lingua franca of the nation it is expected that every child would be able to read and write. However, this is not the case; reading has become one of the major issues in the public discourse. Research has indicated

that reading inability on the part of pupils is on the ascendancy (Adams, 1992). This problem has trickled down to P4 pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality. Pupils are expected to have gone through some pre-reading activities at the Kindergarten and the lower primary. If the pre-reading activities are not thoroughly and effectively carried out, actual reading at the higher class become a problem for such pupils. According to Chen (2005), language learning is a difficult task. The English teacher, therefore, has a lot to do to ensure that learners learn the target language in a friendly atmosphere. Naturally, games are enjoyed by children, apart from the great potential they have in the teaching and learning of the target language. Language games have this characteristic of integrating the four language skills that is listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as offering an enabling environment for learning the target language. Language games therefore, offer great potential in developing the communicative competence of second language learners progressively. Yet teachers complain of the unavailability of teaching/ learning resources for English lessons. The lack of games in the teaching of reading has contributed to the low level of reading ability among class four pupils in New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality.

1.3 The purpose and objectives of the study

The purpose of the study is to find out the role of language games in improving the reading ability of pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality. Specifically the study seeks to:

1. Ascertain the causes of reading inability among the pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality.
2. Find out the effects of reading inability among pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality.

3. Find out the role of language games in the teaching of reading among pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality.

1.4 Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What are the causes of reading inability among pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality?
2. What are the effects of reading inability among pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality?
3. What is the role of language game in improving the reading of pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study results would serve as a literature in the field of English Language in the various ways of teaching reading to young pupils. It is hoped that the findings of the study would enable the Ghana Education Service and other stakeholders of education be abreast of the causes of reading inability in order to help address the problem.

The study would serve as a point of reference for future researchers who want to conduct research in a similar field. The study would also serve as a reference material for pupils and teachers who may come across it. Again the notion that people and pupils have that English Language as a subject is difficult and that it is only for the elite in the society will be cleared. The study would encourage teachers to use language games as a method in their teaching to improve the reading ability as well as the academic performance of pupils.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to class four pupils of New Tafo Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akyem Municipality. The class was selected for the study because it

was observed that the pupils find it difficult to read. The school was also selected because of convenience. Since the area of teaching reading is very broad, the writer limits the study to the role of language games to improve the reading of pupils. There are so many tools in gathering data but the study is limited to the use of questionnaire and interview.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study considered teachers in public primary schools within the circuit without including teachers of private primary schools who would also have given vital information about the role of language games in improving reading among pupils. Pre-determined questions were used excluding open-ended questions which would have given the respondents the opportunity to give vital information about the role of language games in improving reading among pupils. Due to the unique sample available for the study, results may not be generalized beyond the specific population from which the sample was drawn. Due to the failure of sample respondents to answer with candor, results might not accurately reflect the opinions of all members of the included population.

1.8 Organization of the study

This research is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and limitation of the study. Chapter 2 of the research reviews literature related to the study. Issues considered are both theoretical and empirical review related to the problem investigated. The methodology and procedures used to gather data for the study are presented in Chapter 3. The results and discussion of the study are contained in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 is a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter deals with both theoretical and empirical literature that underpins the study. The areas considered include: the concept of reading, importance of reading, and causes of reading difficulties and role of language game in improving the reading ability of pupils

2.1 The concept of reading

Reading is a complex skill that most of us can perform without thought of how it is accomplished. According to Aebersold and Foertsch (1997) reading is a process and practice. Allington and Walmstey (1995) said reading has three definitions: the first definition, learning to read means learning to pronounce words. Beginners learn to read English; their eyes encounter three types of structural units that make contact with their knowledge of language: letters, words and sentence. Azies and Wasilah (1996) said skilled readers can recognize a whole word as quickly as they can recognize a single letter and in fact they can name a word faster than a letter. In this case students have to integrate the words in a sentence into single ideas. Students have to remember the first words that are encountered until they can be related to later words. The early words must be remembered with the support of some kind of temporary memory system, and so a sensible research question concerns the type of memories that support reading.

Reading can also be described as being skilled because the component activities require no thought. Bainbridge and Malicky (2000) purported that reading is the process by which we identify individual words from their printed and written form and by which we combine these words into simple ideas or propositions, in order to be able to form a mental model of the text based upon inferences that take us beyond the information given. Reading has so many

component activities that have to take care to design tasks that as much as possible are targeted on the component interest. Reading also can be said to transform written language into meanings, but it is only occasionally that students need to worry about the meaning of an individual word. Reading is always a continuously smooth activity, because when students do come across unfamiliar words students are disturbed by them and the calm flow of ideas is halted.

However reading is an active process not a passive process which suggests students not only to recognize the symbol, the sign, and have to know how to spell it (to pronounce it's written symbols) but deeper than all the things above reading means students have to encounter the knowledge that they had already got. Department for Education and Skills United Kingdom (1998) said in the National Curriculum that reading is by no means a passive process. It involves searching, problem solving, active prediction and an ability to bring past knowledge and experience to bear. In the case of reading, students can also observe the acquisition of skill, as most of them become highly skilled information processors.

2.2 Importance of Reading

Reading plays a very significant role in everyday life as it remains one of the most essential skills that are needed for one to have a fuller and richer life both in school and the society at large. The ability to read and get meaning from a printed material or text is one skill we all need to have a comfortable life in a world that is dominated by print. According to Eddie (1981) all pupils should be able to read, write and communicate. According to Foertsch (1998) people read at leisure period for the fun of it. He further explains that people may read for relaxation, adventures or aesthetic purpose. Reading is also done to learn new materials to gain some information in order to be updated with current issues and help them gain knowledge as well.

According to Ginnis (2002) reading is an educational skill, it is important because it is the most effective self-reliance tool for learning a skill that opens the door to physical, emotional, intellectual and moral self-improvement. To Hamalik (1992) reading is important because every aspect of life involves reading of some sought.

Bear (1999) identifies the following importance of reading:

2.2.1 Reading is an active mental process

According to Nicholas one major notable aspect of reading is to gain the ability to perform daily functional skills easily. People read instructions on new products such as electronics, food items, medicines, road signs, maps, and menu and so on. Others also read to fill out forms, apply for jobs, admissions to institutions etc. Unlike sitting in front of the idiot box (TV), reading makes you use your brain. While reading, you would be forced to reason out many things which are unfamiliar to you. In this process you would use the grey cells of your brain to think and become smarter.

2.2.2 Reading improves vocabulary

In elementary school when students learn to infer the meaning of one word by reading the context of the other words in the sentence they get the same benefit from book reading. While reading books, especially challenging ones, students are exposed to many new words they would not be otherwise.

2.2.3 Reading improves concentration and focus

Students are require to focus on what they are reading for long period. Unlike magazines, Internet posts or e-mails that might contain small chunks of information, books tell the whole story. Students must concentrate in order to read, like a muscle, they will get better at concentration.

2.2.4 Reading builds self-esteem

The more students read, the more knowledgeable they become. With more knowledge comes more confidence. More confidence builds self-esteem. So it is a chain reaction. Since students are so well read, people look to them for answers. Their feelings about themselves can only get better.

2.2.5 Reading improves memory

According to Ginnis (2002) reading improves memory and therefore those who do not practice reading would lose their memory. He purported that crossword puzzles are examples of word games that improves memory. Reading, although not a game, helps students stretch their memory muscles in a similar way. Reading requires remembering details, facts and figures and in literature, plot lines, themes and characters.

2.2.6 Reading improves creativity

Reading about diversity of life and exposing students to new ideas and more information helps to develop the creative side of the brain as it imbibes innovation into your thinking process.

2.2.7 Reading reduces boredom

Educational researchers have found that there is a strong correlation between reading and academic success. In other words, a student who is a good reader is more likely to do well in school and pass exams than a student who is a weak reader. Good readers can understand the individual sentences and the organizational structure of a piece of writing. They can comprehend ideas, follow arguments, and detect implications. They know most of the words in the text already, but they can also determine the meaning of many of the unfamiliar words from the context - failing this, they can use their dictionary effectively to do so. In summary, good readers can extract from the writing what is important for the particular task they are employed in and they can do it quickly (Preturius, 2009).

Educational researchers have also found a strong correlation between reading and vocabulary knowledge. In other words, students who have a large vocabulary are usually good readers. This is not very surprising, since the best way to acquire a large vocabulary is to read extensively, and students who read extensively are likely to be good readers. Students who are encouraged to read are successful at school. Reading non-fiction in English is probably the most important, but English fiction and any reading in the mother tongue - if done extensively - will help students develop the reading competence that is essential for academic achievement (Bainbridge & Malicky, 2000)

The figure below illustrates the interdependence of vocabulary, reading ability and academic success.

Figure 1: The Interdependence of Vocabulary, Reading Ability and Academic Success

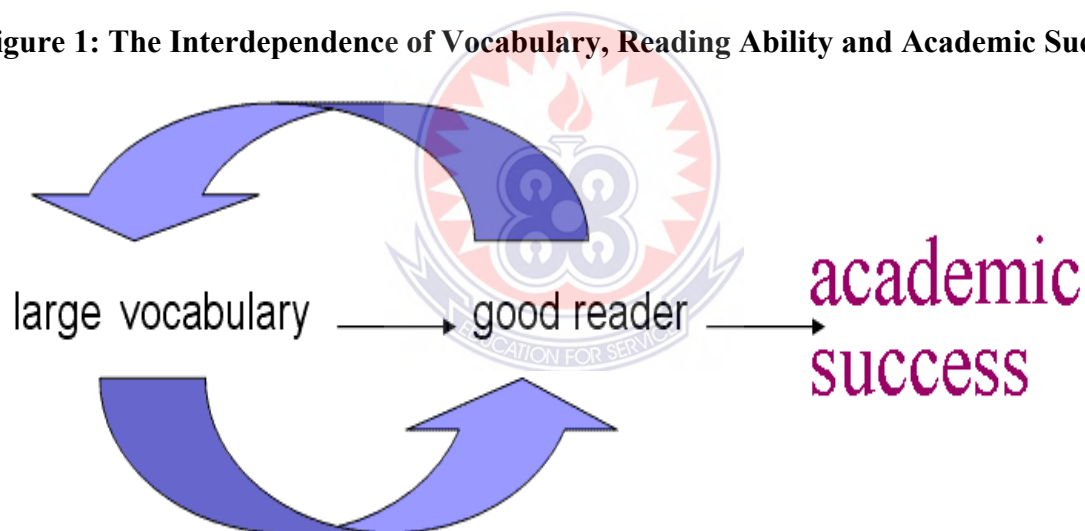


Figure 1: Pretorius (2009)

Research findings in applied linguistics and reading research consistently show a strong correlation between reading proficiency and academic success at all ages, from the primary school right through to university level: students who read a lot and who understand what they read usually attain good grades (Pretorius, 2009).

2.3 Causes of Reading Difficulties

2.3.1 Physical factors

According to Spregue (2005) physical disabilities such as inadequate brain development, vision or hearing defect, visual disability can cause reading difficulties. He explained that children with visual problems can only read written materials that can be seen by touching it and they tend to be skipping over most of the words and this affects their fluency skills. A child with a hearing loss will not gain much of the typical activities in auditory discrimination. The malnourished or ill child would not be able to put forth attention necessary in reading. Spregue (2005) again describes reading disability as a condition in which a sufferer displays difficulty in reading resulting primarily from neurological factors.

2.3.2 Mental set

This implies that if children's minds are not turned towards activities geared towards acquiring the needed skills, development of interest in that particular activity becomes impossible. Spregue (2005) argued that, Pupil's inability to read in first language could be a trace to their inability to read a second language. Clay (1979) proposed that poor reading in foreign language is due to poor reading ability in the first language (L1)

2.3.3 Personality problems

Azies and Wasilah (1996) observed that among the relevant factors in the pupils social background are the factors in the social and cultural level of his parents including their interest in books and the extent to which they read and their interest in the child's progress'. This simply means that most pupils come from homes where English is sparkingly used or not at all. Where parents are not educated, their socio-economic level is low, where there no text books and where parents do not take interest in the academic work of their children. This seems to be the exact situation of home of pupils under review.

2.3.4 Lack of practice

Practice they say makes one perfect. According to Spreque (2005) learners who read any materials they lay hands on, eventually become good and fluent readers but those who do not practice do not do well.

2.3.5 Failure to concentrate

To get meaning from reading material the reader must focus the mind on the text-lack of concentration on the text may result in poor reading.

2.4 Language Games in Improving the Reading Ability of Pupils

According to Richards (2007) English is the language of globalization, international communication, commerce and trade and media. There are therefore, different motivations for learning it. English is no longer seen as the property of the English Speaking countries. However, it is an international commodity sometimes referred to as "World English". In Ghana, English is an official language studied at all levels of the educational system.

Learning a second language is quite a difficult task. The ESL teacher therefore, has a lot to do to ensure that learners learn the language in a friendly atmosphere. Chen (2005), concede that language learning is hard work and that it requires great effort at every moment, and it is important that this effort is maintained for a longer period of time. For them, games have the ability to help and encourage many learners to sustain their interest and work. He also agrees that, "games also help the teacher to create contexts to make the language useful and meaningful. The learners want to take part and in order to do so they must understand what others are saying or have written, and they must speak and write in order to express their own point of view or give information

2.5 Importance of Language Games

In recent times, the use of games has captured the attention of researchers. A number of these researchers have revealed that games have a positive impact on the brain development of young children. This relatively new phenomenon seems to have drawn the attention of second language acquisition researchers to take advantage of this phenomenon to boost second language learning, especially literacy. Current ESL textbooks for pupils, as well as methodology guides for teachers of English as a second language, have described games as activities that just go beyond time-filling activities. These books hold the belief that games have huge academic values as well. Lee (1979) posits that many language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms. He further argued that games should be treated as central but not peripheral to the foreign language programme.

Chen (2005) argues that games are excellent communicative activities. He believes that games can simply be very powerful tools for learning languages. He further posits that the main objective of games is to allow pupils to use the target language. This is so because during contest, children engage the target language in persuading and negotiating their way for desired results. He summarizes the vast benefits of language games into nine points. He states that language games as learner centered:

- i. promote communicative competence
- ii. create a meaningful context for language use
- iii. increase learning motivation
- iv. reduce learning anxiety
- v. integrate various linguistic skills
- vi. encourage creative and spontaneous use of language
- vii. construct a cooperative and collaborative learning environment

viii. foster participatory attitudes of the students.

Action research report by Huyen and Nga (2003) revealed that students liked the relaxed atmosphere, the competitiveness and the motivation that games brought to the classroom. On the effectiveness of games, the report revealed that teachers were excited because their students seem to have learnt faster and retained materials better than before.

Fotovatnia and Namjoo (2013) did a study on: “The Effects of Cooperation versus Competitive Word Game on EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Gain, Motivation, and Class Atmosphere.” The setting of the study is Iran. This was basically an experimental research. The focus of the study was on using word games to enhance vocabulary acquisition of mostly teenagers in Iran. The end result was that word game impacted positively on learners’ vocabulary acquisition. According to Fotovatnia and Namjoo (2013), word games also increased pupils’ motivation and changed their attitude towards their teachers as well as created a positive classroom atmosphere.

Similarly, Yu, (2005), carried out a similar study but in Taiwan. He looked at, “The Effects of Games on the Acquisition of Some Grammatical Features of L2 German on Students Motivation and Classroom Atmosphere”. His main objective was to find out the “effects of the use of language games as a teaching strategy for raising the grammatical level of secondary school students of German as a second language in Taiwan. The study was also experimental in nature which falls in line with my study. The findings of the study, was quite interesting, after eight (8) weeks of experimenting with the use of language games, the study revealed no improvement in the area of grammar in German as a second language in particular. However, there was generally a marked improvement that could be traced to students’ motivation as well as classroom atmosphere. Yu, (2005) is therefore, of the view that language games could be included in the teaching and learning of grammar, in that, learner’s motivation, peer interaction,

teacher-student interaction through language games create a fertile ground for the improvement of grammar gradually.

Khalid (2011) did a study in Saudi Arabia on, “Utilization of Instructional Game in EFL Teaching: A Case Study of Saudi Intermediate School.” The purpose of his study was to investigate the extent to which Saudi students at the intermediate level utilize instructional studies. This is basically a quantitative study that sort to find out from teachers whether language games were useful during teaching at the intermediate level in Saudi. Generally, teachers agreed that language games were useful classroom techniques. The study revealed that instructional games give ESL learners the opportunity to share experience and learn from one another, banish boredom and make learners more willing to learn, encourage learners to interact communicate as well as encourage cooperative learning among others.

Al-Rashid (2010) agrees that the benefits of language games in the EFL classroom are quite enormous. According to him, language games:

- i. are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.
- ii. are motivating and challenging, and can lower anxiety.
- iii. help students to make and sustain the effort of learning.
- iv. provide language practice in various skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- v. encourage students to interact and communicate.
- vi. create a meaningful context for language use.
- vii. they give shy pupils more opportunity to express their opinion and feelings.
- viii. they also enhance student’s use of English in a flexible, communicative way.

2.6 Types of Language Games

The use of games in the second language classroom is becoming popular in recent times. According to Lee (1979), language games are essential to all teachers who believe that in foreign

language teaching, enjoyment and success go together. However, there is a genuine challenge out there. Some second language teachers are usually caught in a dilemma as to what type of games to engage young learners in and how exactly children will benefit from such games. Thankfully, the answers to these questions are not farfetched. This is because language games are grouped under various categories.

According to Lee (1979), games are categorized under the various aspects of the English Language. For example, we have structure games, vocabulary games, spelling games, pronunciation games, and read-and-do games among others. He also added that games are also categorized under level and age, depending on the level of difficulty of these games; hence we have games for elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. He further added that games could also be categorized under Group Size. For example, some games could be suitable for whole class, groups/teams or pairs. But this, to a large extent will depend on the creativity level of the teacher. With regard to this study, vocabulary games, spelling games, reading games pronunciation games among others are employed. Language games have also been categorized by other writers. The first group is made up of linguistic games which focus on accuracy and communicative games with focus on exchange of information and ideas. The second taxonomy has many more categories. They are:

1. Movement games: pupils are physically active and care must be taken to monitor them very closely.
2. Card games: pupils collect, give away, exchange, sort and count cards.
3. Board games: this involves moving markers along a path.
4. Dice games: these can have colours, letters of the alphabet- virtually anything you like.
5. Drawing games: this spans the gap between the key functions of the brain.
6. Guessing games: the main aim is to guess the answer to a question of some kind.

7. Role-play games: these are guided activities; the language input here could be prescribed or opened on the language level, curiosity, and confidence of your class. Role plays are said to stimulate a child's imagination and are tests of true communication.
8. Matching games: this involves matching corresponding pairs of cards or pictures, and may be played as a whole class activity, where everyone must circulate until they find a partner with a corresponding card of pictures.
9. Team games: require cooperative team work.
10. Word game: involves spelling and writing.

2.7 Language Games and the Gaming Concept

The use of games is fast gaining prominence in the ESL classroom; there is no doubt about it. The quest for language teachers to make the learning of the second language easy and exciting finds the use of games convenient. This is as a result of the fact that children enjoy playing games. Language games are basically classroom activities with a set of rules which guide the pupils' actions and an element of strategy (Games and Game-like activities). According to Klopfer (2009), there is even a more exciting platform for learning the second language that has emerged - digital games, thanks to technology. In these recent times, one cannot talk about games without mentioning digital gaming. Digital gaming is fast catching up with the younger generation. Klopfer *et al.* (2009) assert that, if industries and organizations like the health sector, road and transport and business among others are taking advantage of digital games, why not the education sector?

According to them, games and digital games for training and learning purposes, to a very large extent have impacted greatly on the current ways people communicate, collaborate, operate and form social constructs. Klopfer *et al.* (2009) further stated that research is proving beyond reasonable doubt that technology and digital games are moulding the way, most people think,

work and live, especially the younger ones. Interestingly, according to them this phenomenon is completely new to both parents and teachers. Consequently, the need to take advantage of this new and exciting phenomenon by integrating it formally into the school curriculum has become a matter of urgency. This is because digital games are a good resource for literacy development.

Uzun *et al.* (2013) carried out a study on the following topic, "developing and applying a Foreign Language Vocabulary Learning and Practicing Games: The Effect of Vocaword". This study was done in a university. Though the study was carried out in the university, my interest as far as this work is concerned is the method employed. They employed the pre-test, post-test method. The pre- test conducted constituted a vocabulary quiz from students` curriculum and course book before the experiment was carried out. The results from the study revealed that students from the experimental group exhibited a high level of improvement in vocabulary acquisition as compared to their colleagues in the control group. Their study also revealed that female students performed better in terms of literacy than their male counterparts. In their conclusion, they made very interesting recommendations; these include:

1. language games should be developed for the other aspects of the second language and that
2. education philosophies, methodologies and techniques as well as the language curriculum should be rearranged and modified to meet the needs and interests of the new age learners.

Carrying the study of gaming further is the latest School Technology Action Report [STAR] (2013). In their report entitled "The Science of Learning: How Current Brain Research can Improve Education"., they are of the view that video games continue to be a growing phenomenon in our society today, and children have a growing interest in the use of video games to learn. This exciting phenomenon is a wake-up call for universities and neurologists to research into what constitutes a successful educational game. According to STAR report when games are

well developed and used appropriately, it has the ability of engaging players in a type of learning that is directly related to school curriculum. In this case teachers can then leverage the learning in these games without necessarily disrupting the world of "play" or school (STAR, 2013). The report further stated that, games have the capability of enhancing low level vision of players/learners as well as multi-tasking, task-switching and speed in performing tasks. One interesting revelation of the STAR report that cannot go unnoticed is the fact that gamers have better focus and better visually selective attention.

The STAR (2013) latest report posits that games promote understanding, motivation and enjoyment and are terrific at immersing players in complex, feedback-rich problem spaces. And while they are most often not sufficient in and of themselves for a course of study, they can help many students advance beyond the temporary memorization of facts and procedures, attainments that are usually lost when classes stop. It is significant to note that the STAR report, did not specifically talk about language games but rather the importance of games in the learning process and brain development. All these have a direct connection to language games and literacy development, since literacy development equally goes through the same process. The use of language games to promote literacy is therefore not a new venture. However, in Ghana, it appears much is not being done in the area of games and second language acquisition. In countries like Turkey, Malaysia, Poland, India, Taiwan among others a lot of study is being carried out in the use of language games. For instance, Chen (2005) researched into "Using Language Games to Teach Communication Skills." Khalid (2010) did a study on "The use of Games for Vocabulary Presentation and Revision." Arikan *et al* (2011) also researched into "the effectiveness of using Games in Teaching Grammar to young Learners". The major findings of their research work showed that, there was a highly significant improvement in learners' communication writing, spelling and reading skills.

2.8 Reasons why Games should be used in Language Teaching

Second language teaching experts have outlined a number of reasons why language games could be used in teaching English. Adams (1992) has underscored ten very interesting reasons for using games to teach English. Games create a context for meaningful communication: Some games do this more obviously than others. According to Adams (1992), all games create a meaningful context for communication to some extent. Though some games revolve around discrete language items such as grammar and spelling, meaningful communication happens because learners need to process how to play the game as well as communicating about the game before, during and after.

This meaningful communication serves as a basis for comprehensible input: Basically, comprehensible input is what pupils understand as they listen and read, interaction to improve comprehensibility such as asking for repetition or giving examples. This leads to comprehensible output as pupils are speaking and/ or writing so that their peers can understand.

1. Games add interest to what learners find boring: A long term effort is needed in learning language and maintaining interest means sustaining effort. This is usually difficult especially for young learners. It is therefore important to shape a learning task in a form of a game. This piques the interest of learners who see it as different to what they usually do in class.
2. Games can be used with all the language skills: games can be tailor made to focus on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Interestingly a combination of skills can be involved in the same game. They are therefore a good tool for appealing to different types of learners at the same time.
3. Games offer a fun experience and make children excited.

4. Games encourage participation from all learners: games offer variety and intensity and this lowers the anxiety of learners and encourages introverts to participate, especially when games are played in small groups.
5. Games are learner- centered activities: truly, games are learner-centered because learners are not only active when playing games, but are also made to play leadership roles with the teachers being facilitators.
6. Games work outside of class: games are used everywhere. It should therefore be no surprise that many games can be played outside of the class. This presents a means for learners to use the language outside of class time.
7. Games promote cooperative learning: games work well with small groups thereby creating a setting for pupils to develop their skills in working with others.

Numerous scholars (Chan and Jiang, 2008; Kuo, 2008; Lin, 2000; Zheng, 2008) have pointed out that games are useful for children involved in the learning of English since games can strengthen students' motivation and self-confidence. According to Skinner's theory, playing can be presented as a kind of prize after learning which allows teachers to motivate learners. Sixty-eight percent of students preferred using games as teaching aids. Moreover, all students expressed a negative attitude when games were not employed in class. In other words, students prefer to be immersed in a game-teaching environment which is highly effective in raising their motivation and interest in English language learning. The same conclusion was also advocated by Kuo's (2008) research. Kuo compared two teaching approaches, – regular teaching and game teaching, – by dividing students into the experimental group (giving game teaching) and the control group (giving regular teaching). Results showed that the experimental group was superior to the control group both in students' English oral ability and in confidence. Therefore, games not only bring fun to the class, they also motivate students and build their confidence (Chan & Lin, 2000).

According to Chen (2005) if students are aware that they are going to play games after they learn either grammar structure or vocabulary, they will look forward to participating in those activities and apply things that they have recently learned with greater motivation. The significance of playing is also supported by Piaget due to its contribution to the development of problem solving, creativity, and communication which happens naturally in the process of playing games (Arikan *et al*, 2011). Additionally, the affective filter hypothesis of the natural approach which was proposed by Krashen argues that learners with high motivation generally do better, and learners with self-confidence and a good self-image tend to be more successful (as cited from Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This concept is related to using games in teaching English to raise children's motivation and confidence which can then promote higher levels of English learning. In Jiang's study (2008), composed of a structured questionnaire, classroom observations and the dynamics teacher-student relationships, 360 respondents' attitudes toward using games in learning English at a primary school were investigated.

Chen (2005) is of the same opinion, showing that games are workable because they can easily attract the attention of students, thus influencing student motivation and enhancing English ability. A very similar position is supported by Yu Shu-yun (2005) who declared that using games is useful for teachers to lower stress, to naturally keep their students' attention. Ogbonna (2014) also advocated that games offer a chance for real communication, while also decreasing the stress-levels experienced by students. Using games, according to the same study, also maintains high levels of attentiveness as any basic understanding of human nature might suggest probable. Gennis (2002) argued that, playing is vital to the development of the flexible and adaptable human brain because children's imagination and creativity are enhanced by playing. Based on the studies mentioned above, the importance of using games in facilitating children's motivation and confidence appears to be well supported.

In addition to facilitating children's motivation and confidence, learners can acquire vocabulary more quickly and easily by doing actions during game playing (Taylor et al, 1990). According to Dewey's "learning by doing", children learn best by doing and by acting in the world (Ehri, 2005). When children touch something, they get to realize what the object is and how it feels; when they do some action, they get to know its meaning. By using a game which offers children lots of opportunities to do, to act, and to move, children can acquire a greater quantity of meaningful vocabulary. Similarly, Total Physical Response (T.P.R.), a teaching approach aimed at improving student vocabulary acquisition, relies heavily upon the above outlined scenario. Meaning is conveyed through actions which students are involved with in the playing of games. In T.P.R., role playing, which is viewed as a type of game that is centered on everyday situations, such as „at the restaurant“, „shopping in the supermarket“, or „visiting the post office“. During enactments, classmates interact in their role playing, thus enabling students to acquire additional vocabulary, often unconsciously (Freeman, 2000). Furthermore, games which are designed for learners who have bodily intelligence, or so called kinesthetic intelligence as outlined in Gardner's 'Multiple Intelligences', can help students memorize and utilize new vocabulary more efficiently (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Deng (2006) observed 45 students and carried out a 4-month experiment by teaching subjects in a traditional way during the first two months and then teaching students via games in the last two months. Then the teacher picked 10 words and taught five of them in a regular way and the other half intrinsic to a game. The results of the experiment between game teaching and non-game teaching indicate that it is beneficial to use games to promote language proficiency and vocabulary acquisition. Also, Atake (2003) made the following statement in her research, arguing that students are challenged to think and use certain target vocabulary expressions but in games it becomes easier for students to memorize because students are impressed by competing or interacting with classmates. The same research

results are supported by Angelova and Lekova (1995), who concluded that games and movements during play help children remember foreign language vocabulary and encourage the students to use them spontaneously. Based on the studies mentioned above, the importance of using games in facilitating children acquiring a greater vocabulary is evident.

2.9 Organizing the Class for Language Games

Classroom organization is very important during language games. Lee (1980) is of the view that the success of many games depend to a very large extent on good class organization. He therefore outlined some strategies that can be used during language games to make them successful in the ESL class. They include: Dividing pupils into teams/groups- it is important to divide pupils into teams. The number of groups/teams will depend on the size of the class however, he is of the view that this should not be done frequently as this can waste a lot of time. He also said that children tend to have a sense of belongingness if they are the same group for long at least for a whole year. Frequent changing of groups could affect their sense of belongingness negatively.

Teams/groups should be named. With respect to names of teams/groups Lee (1979) posits that names for the various teams/groups should be suitable. Names that will excite pupils should be used. He suggested that names like sparrow, robins and skylarks may be pleasing to children in a place where these birds are well known. He also suggested names of popular animals like lions, tigers, etc as well as colours and cardinal points have broader appeal and are widely accepted. He however, thinks that much depends on the age of the children and the country where one is teaching.

One other essential strategy in organizing the classroom for games according to Lee (1980) is that teams/group members should be evenly matched, if there is to any competition or contest. This is to ensure that no team or group is at an advantage over the other. If the above

average pupils and the below average ones are unevenly matched some groups or teams will always be at the winning end and the others at the losing end. This can be discouraging for those always at the losing end.

Lee (1980) also argues that teams should be larger than groups. This should be done taking the class size into consideration. This is one way of multiplying language practice. The arrangement should be done in such a way that the teacher or facilitator should be able to move from one group to the other easily and as quickly as possible. Pair activity is also recommended. According to him it can give a greater amount of communication practice, even though this creates less opportunity for pupils to consult each other and do some mutual correction. Teams/groups are preferred in very large classes though team work. The methods of scoring points of competitions during language games should vary. Lee (1980) advised that psychologically it is good to award points for success than to take them away for failure even if this process keeps the scorers very busy. He suggested that images of things which climb or expand are useful as means of visually representing the scores.

2.10 Guidelines for using Language Games Effectively in the Classroom

For language to be effectively used in the ESL classroom proper guidelines must be put in place. Talak (2010) outlined guidelines to ensure that language games are effectively carried out.

They are:

1. The learning objectives and purpose for the language game must be clear.
2. It should be clear what the pupils are learning and practising in the activities and procedures of the language games.
3. Pupils should be assigned to teams. The grouping may depend on a number of factors but ultimately, it should depend to a large extent on the task pupils will be performing. It is essential to form fair teams where above average, average and below average pupils are

evenly distributed to give each team a fair chance. Apart from that weaker pupils get to learn from the average and above average pupils. Random grouping is not usually recommended as one group could have an unfair advantage over others. It is also not advisable for pupils to choose their own groups. They may want to work with their friends and this does not promote learning in general.

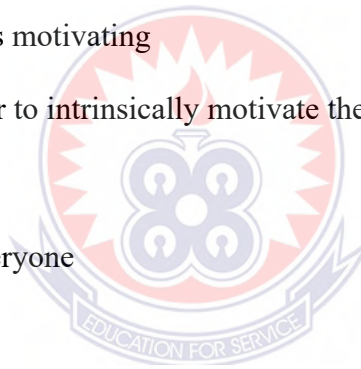
4. It is important to explain very well rules governing the games as well as the procedures involved in playing them. Ensure that every one is listening and at the end understands. It is sometimes necessary to let pupils recap rules and procedures of previously played games.
5. Be consistent. Ensure that pupils have equal amount of time to work. Do not begin another round if all the teams will not have a chance to go before the end of the game. Also be sure you are actually rejecting wrong answers and accepting only correct answers to avoid unnecessary anxieties.
6. Be prepared. Enough materials, time, questions and the other important things for the games should be available before the start of the games. As a teacher the unexpected may happen but it is the duty of the teacher to take well informed decisions on the spot. Knowledge of the language games is of utmost importance.
7. Maintaining a non-threatening environment. Making sure that all standard rules and procedures should be observed during language games. Unacceptable behaviours like name calling belittling and teasing should not be encouraged. During games pupils get over excited and could react negatively when outcomes are unexpected. All these issues should be discussed before starting games.
8. Sometimes it is useful to have pupils create their own games. But this should be done when pupils have had enough exposure to language games. This is to ensure that pupils

are familiar with the nature of games in general. However, there should be set boundaries for pupils.

2.11 Characteristics of Good Language Game

There are a lot of language games but is not every game that is good. The teacher must take his/her time to select games that are can be used as tools for learning. Talak (2010) has identified some characteristics of good language games that teachers should look out for when selecting language games for the ESL class. They are:

1. based on learning objectives
2. give the player control over his own destiny
3. include doable challenges
4. fun and interesting, thus motivating
5. based on reality in order to intrinsically motivate the players to continue to play the game.
6. require interaction
7. games must include everyone



2.12 Conclusion

The review explores the central idea of teaching and learning, the concept of reading, the process of reading, importance of reading and the difficulties involved in reading. The literature also considered the role of language game as a method in improving the reading ability of pupils. The review also provides valuable aids for assessing the reading ability of pupils in different context. It is hoped that the review of literature from distinctive perspectives will provide teachers with elements to improve the methods they use in facilitating reading among pupils. The review will also help the research to adopt the appropriate reading technique and methodology to help learners improve on their reading ability.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering. The areas considered include the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis plan.

3.1 Research Design

Action research design was employed for the study. This type of research deals with finding immediate solutions to problems in the classroom. It is a type of an applied research which is used to solve classroom problems or a local problem through the application of the scientific method. Action research can be conducted by teachers to solve problems in their classrooms. Action research is to observe, describe, find solutions, suggest, recommend and document aspects of the situation as it occurs. Action research serves as starting point for the researcher to generate hypothesis. It also enables the researcher to observe the problem very well before finding the causes and solutions to the problem (Sarantakos, 2005).

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

The rigour of action research is attested by Corey cited by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) who argues that it is a process in which practitioners study problems scientifically so that they can evaluate, improve and steer decision making and practice. Indeed Kemmis and McTaggart (1992,p:10) argue that ‘to do action research is to plan, act, observe and reflect more carefully, more systematically, and more rigorously than one usually does in everyday life’. A more philosophical stance on action research, one that echoes the work of Habermas, is cited by Carr and Kemmis (1986,p:162), who regard it as a form of ‘self-reflective inquiry’ by participants, undertaken in order to improve understanding of their practices in context with a view to maximizing social justice. Action research is designed to bridge the gap between research and practice thereby striving to overcome the perceived persistent failure of research to impact on, or improve practice (Somekh, 1995). According to Cohen *et al.* (2005) one weakness is that, it is not very effective and comprehensive because the amount of information concerning the study is not enough.

3.2 Location of the study

The school is situated at Kukurantumi in the Abuakwa North Municipality. The district is situated in the northern part of eastern region. The town shares common boundaries with New Tafo Akim, Old Tafo Akim, Addokwanta and Sokode Dwaso. The population of the town is approximately five thousand two hundred according to 2010 population census from the District Assembly. Agricultural activities stand paramount amongst economic activities in the town with foodcrops such as maize, cassava, plantain, yam and vegetables serving as the main crops. There are several other non-agricultural economic activities such as small scale industries which include: agro-based, wood-based, quarrying, construction, metal based, banking services and several artisan ventures. Again, the district prides itself in a serene and highly hospital tourism and important landmarks such as the Norbuor forest. The town has one public senior high school

and five private senior high schools. The health delivery system in the district is public community hospital that serve the town and its environs.

3.3 Population

The population for the study was made up of class four pupils of New-Tafo Akyem Seventh Day Adventist Primary School and all public primary schools teachers within the circuit. The overall population for the study was 78. Out of the 78, 42 were pupils and 36 were teachers.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study sample size was sixty-six (66) pupils and public primary school teachers in the circuit. In arriving at the sample for the study, the researcher used 85% of the entire population for the study. This is in agreement with Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005) who proposed that for a population size of 78, a sample size of 66 is representative enough for an action research. Purposive sampling was used to select the teachers for the study. Therefore, all the thirty-six (36) teachers were purposively selected for the study. This refers to the sampling technique where a particular group is expressly selected with a definite purpose based on the evidence available. In this technique, the researcher purposively selected the teachers who were relevant for the study. The important criterion of the choice was the knowledge of the respondents about poor reading among pupils in the circuit. Simple random sampling was used in selecting the pupils for the study. This gave pupils equal chance of being selected for the study. Out of the 42 pupils, 30 were selected randomly by writing numbers serially on pieces of paper. Pupils were informed that all those who would pick from number 1-30 will be used for the study.

3.5 Instruments

The following instruments were used to gather data for the study.

3.5.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire design for the study was adopted from the studies of Kuo (2008), Wu (2000) and Zeng (2005). The questionnaire consisted of a 4-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The questionnaire was used to solicit for information from the teachers. The questionnaire was made up of three sections. Section one (1) entailed items used to gather information on causes of poor reading among pupils. Section two (2) of the instrument was used to obtain information on the effect of poor reading ability among pupils. Section three (3) was also used to elicit information on the role of language games in improving the reading ability of pupils.

The questionnaire was personally distributed by the researcher to the selected individuals for the study. To maximise response level, the researcher made follow-ups to re-emphasize the importance of the study and the value of the respondents' participation. The questionnaire was retrieved personally as against postage system in order to increase the rate of return. All the 36 questionnaire distributed were retrieved, representing 100% of the total questionnaire distributed. The researcher used two weeks to retrieve all the questionnaires. The completed questionnaire was gathered for statistical analysis. The respondents were guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity of the information given. They were further assured that the information provided would be used only for academic purpose. The participants were given freewill to either be part of the study or not.

3.5.2 Interview

Interview was also used by the researcher to collect data for the study. As a research method, the interview is a conversation carried out with the definite aim of obtaining certain information. It is designed to gather valid and reliable information through the responses of the interviewee to the planned sequence of questions (Sarantakos, 2005). In obtaining the data the

interviewees were asked questions which were in line with the research questions formulated to guide the study. The interviews were recorded and written down by the interviewer in order to avoid errors. In order to ensure validity of the interview, the researcher confined her entire attention to one task at a time.

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

The researcher audio-recorded pupils' responses and notes were taken during the interview process. The interviews were conducted in the school. The researcher used two weeks in conducting the interview. Notes were then transferred to index cards, and a matrix was developed to summarize the responses. Each research question was addressed by investigating common themes and pupils direct responses that pertained to particular question.

3.5.3 Observation

Observational data are attractive as they afford the researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations. The researcher is given the opportunity to look at what is taking place in situ rather than at second hand (Patton, 1990:2003-2005). This enables researchers to understand the context of programmes, to be open-ended and inductive, to see things that might

otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations, to move beyond perception-based data (e.g. opinions in interviews), and to access personal knowledge. Because observed incidents are less predictable, there is a certain freshness to this form of data collection that is often denied in other forms, e.g. a questionnaire or a test. Patton (1990) suggests that observational data enable the researcher to enter and understand the situation that is being described. The researcher observed pupils as they use the language games in reading.

3.5.4 Test

Test was used to collect data from the respondents. The pupils selected for the study were given test during both the pre-intervention stage and the intervention stage. This helped the researcher to identify the gap between the pre-intervention and the post intervention.

3.5.5 Pre-intervention

The pre-intervention is the procedure that researcher applies in trying to defined or diagnose the perceived problem before the actual intervention. The researcher assessed the levels of pupils through observation and test. The pupils were given a passage from their English textbook to read and were also given words to pronounce. It was noticed that pupils found it difficult to mention words in the passage which was an indication of reading problem among pupils.

3.5.6 Intervention

An intervention is a combination of programme elements or strategies designed to produce behaviour changes or improve academic status among individuals or an entire population. Interventions may include educational programmes, new or stronger policies to improve pupils academic performance. It is a professionally directed, educational process resulting in a face to face meeting with pupils who struggle in class (chen, 2005).

3.5.6.1 Materials/ Games

A number of materials and games in the form of teaching and learning resources were used to undertake this study. They include:

3.5.6.1.1 Materials

1. Exercise books
2. Pencil
3. Ludo dice and colour pebbles
4. Bottle tops
5. Attendance Register
6. Scoring sheets

3.5.6.1.2 Games

1. Board game
2. Picture reading games
3. Flash cards
4. Video game (DVD)



3.5.6.2 Description of Materials/ Games

Materials and games that were used to carry out the study are described below.

3.5.6.2.1 Board Game (4 in a Row)

This is a game that helps pupils to acquire sight vocabulary. The boards are in levels, from simple to complex, as the game progresses. A ludo die and colour pebbles are used to play this game. This is how it is played:

1. This game is played in a team of four members.
2. Each member has a turn to roll the die.

3. You then read the word with a number that corresponds with the number that has been rolled.
4. If this team member is able to read the word correctly, then s/he places his/her colour pebble on the said word. On the other hand, if the team member is not able to read the word s/he loses out on that round.
5. The winner is the one who has four of his/her coloured pebbles in a row in a form of a line vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

3.5.6.2.2 Picture Reading Game

From a picture dictionary, this game was developed out the researcher's own innovation and creativity. The pictures have their descriptions or definitions underneath them. The pictures in each square are then numbered. This game was design to help pupils develop pronunciation and reading skills through collaborative efforts in a team spirit. It will also help pupils to tolerate each other; above all the weaker ones will be pulled along. It was extremely exciting.

This is how it is played:

1. Bottle tops are numbered to correspond with the numbers of the pictures.
2. Each team is expected to choose a team member to pick a lucky number written on a bottle top; the numbers on the bottle tops are concealed to avoid confusion.
3. The team, with combined efforts then read the picture definition that corresponds with the lucky number picked.
4. If the team is able to read the picture definition correctly they win a point by keeping the bottle top. If on the other hand a team member is not able to read, he/she returns the bottle top picked, they are then mixed together again for the next team.
5. The winners are those who earn the highest point or have the highest number of bottle tops.

3.5.6.2.3 Flash Cards

The flash cards contain sight vocabulary which is meant to compliment the board game. The ability of a child to read a lot of sight words goes a long way to improve upon the reading ability of a child. The cards were used to carry out a number of activities and contests to enhance pupils' pronunciation, spelling as well as reading skills. For example;

1. The cards are displayed on a table.
2. Pupils are then made to come in turns and pick a card, read the word on it and spell it.
3. If the pupil is able to read and spell his/her word he/she will pick a bottle top, which represents a point.
4. On the other hand, if a pupil is not able to read the word he/ she will drop it back and give the chance to another pupil.
5. The winner is the one with the highest number of bottle tops.

3.5.6.2.4 Diaries

These are note books for pupils to keep record of new things learnt. For example, the new words that they learn. Pupils recorded any new thing or words they have learnt or anything they find exciting to them.

3.5.6.2.5 Exercise Books and Pencils

Each of the selected subject was provided with an exercise book and a pencil. This was to ensure that they did their exercises and tests without complaining of lack of these materials which was actually the case at the beginning. It was also another form of motivation for them.

3.5.6.2.6 Ludu Dice and Coloured Pebbles/ Counters

Ludo dice were provided for teams to enable them play their games. Coloured pebbles or counters were also on hand to help determine winners of some of the games. The pebble had

unique colours for a team or each member of the team as the case may be. These were mostly used for the “4 in a row” game and the picture dictionary reading game.

3.5.6.2.7 Video Game

The video game contains letters and their corresponding sounds as well as phonic activities such as blending of consonants and vowels to form two letter, three letter or four letter words and beyond. Basically, the game is played like this: when a consonant or two are given for pupils to determine the appropriate vowel to click to form a correct word. This game has full of fun, it also helped pupils to learn letters and their corresponding sounds which is a major weakness of pupils in the class school. The knowledge of phonics helps to improve the pronunciation skills of learners.

3.5.6.2.8 Bottle Tops

Bottle tops were used to play the picture reading game and as well as the flash cards activities. They were used to represent points just to break the monotony of using numbers. A team which wins in a round will pick a bottle top and this represents a point. At the end of the game, the team that has more of the bottle tops is declared the winner.

3.3.6.3 Intervention Process

During the intervention period tests was the major instrument used in collecting data. Interviews and observations were also used. The types of language games used for the intervention were basically reading games and vocabulary games. The intervention process lasted for eight weeks. During this period one major parameter was the focus of the study. That is: reading skills. This skill is crucial, as far as literacy is concern. Under reading sub-skills like fluency in reading, pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition skills were assessed. Data was collected under these areas through tests. Pupils were introduced to letters, sounds of letters, consonants and vowels and blending of sounds. This was followed by a video game on blending

of sounds. This exercise was to help lay a good foundation for the reading and other games pupils were going to be engaged. This was also necessary because pupils had a weak foundation in reading as revealed in the pre-test and was followed by language games involving sight words. The board games and the flash card games were used. These kinds of games were in levels, from simple to complex words as the games progressed. Here, pupils contested in reading and word formation. They contested in teams and at individual level. From the sight words, progress was made to picture dictionary and other reading games. Pupils were further engaged in reading and vocabulary games. Here, pupils also contested at team level and individual level. At the end of each week pupils were tested to their progress in the various skills and sub- skills mentioned earlier. Again Language games are multi-faceted and for that matter, the four language skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking skills are usually integrated. The drills and repetition practice of these skills during language games go a long way to improve pupils' literacy skills. Post-test was conducted for both experimental and control groups immediately after the intervention process ended. The post-test followed the same procedure as pre-test.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The respondents were guaranteed of confidentiality and anonymity of the information given. They were further assured that the information provided would be used only for academic purposes. The interviews were conducted by the researcher herself. It took the researcher 3 weeks to complete interviewing the respondents. The researcher made follow ups for clarifications where previous interviews were not clear. All the questionnaire administered were retrieved by the researcher.

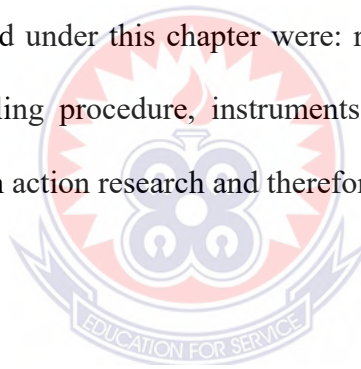
3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

Data collected was analysed quantitatively. Data collected from the various respondents selected were perused to ensure that responses given by respondents were complete and relevant

to the study. As quality control measures, the researcher did sorting, editing and coding of the data to identify errors, omissions and non-completion of some questions as well as to identify general gaps in the data collected. The analysis of the data was done with the Statistical Products and Service Solutions (SPSS 17). The analysis of the research questions were undertaken using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics consists of tools and issues involved in describing collections of statistical observations. After the interviews had been concluded, the recorded responses were transcribed. The qualitative data were then analyzed using a manual coding process.

3.8 Conclusion

The chapter focused on the techniques and procedures used in the process of data gathering. The areas considered under this chapter were: research design, location of the study, population, sample and sampling procedure, instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis plan. The study was an action research and therefore an intervention process was used.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of the collected data. The study focused on the role of language games in the teaching of reading among Basic Four of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. The data analysis covers three main aspects in line with the research questions formulated to guide the study. The units of analysis of the study are the subjects selected for the study.

4.1 Results obtained by pupils during the pre-intervention

Under the reading skills three (3) sub-aspects were considered; fluency in reading, punctuation and pronunciation. The following results were obtained by pupils on fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary during the pre-intervention. This implies that the pupils had been given an exercise to perform without prior instruction using language games. The test was meant to measure pupils' reading skills. It was administered soon before the intervention process started.

Table 1 Results obtained by pupils during the pre-test (Fluency)

Marks obtained	No. of pupils	Percentage (%)
0	6	20
20	11	37
30	6	20
40	5	17
45	1	3
50	1	3
Total	30	100

Table 1 shows that six pupils (20%) scored 0 marks, 11 pupils representing (37%) obtained 20 marks, six pupils (20%) also scored 30 marks while five pupils (17%) obtained 40 marks. The table shows that one pupil scored 45 marks representing (3%) whereas one pupil scored 50 marks representing (3%). This shows that, pupils' performance in the pre-test on fluency was poor.

Table 2 Results obtained by pupils during the pre-test (Pronunciation)

Marks obtained	No. of pupils	Percentage (%)
10	9	30
20	15	50
30	2	7
40	2	7
45	1	3
50	1	3
Total	30	100

Table 2 depicts clearly that nine pupils scored 10 marks representing 30% while 15 pupils (50%) scored 20 marks, 2 pupils representing (7%) obtained 30 marks, 2 pupils (7%) also scored 40 marks while one pupil (3%) obtained 45 marks. The table shows that one pupil scored 50 marks representing (3%). This shows that, pupils' performance in the pre-test on pronunciation was very poor.

Table 3 Results obtained by pupils during the pre-test (Vocabulary)

Marks obtained	No. of pupils	Percentage (%)
10	12	40
20	7	23
30	5	17
40	4	13
50	2	7
Total	30	100

From Table 3, more than one-third of the respondents obtained 10 marks representing (40%). The table further shows that 7 pupils obtained 20 marks on vocabulary while 5 of the respondents obtained 30 marks representing (17%). It is evidence from the Table that 4 pupils had 40 marks representing (17%) whilst 2 pupils also had 50 marks.

4.2 Results obtained by pupils after the intervention

During the intervention period, individual progress was monitored through test as well as the group or team contests. The individual progress test results were recorded under three aspects of reading. That is, fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary.

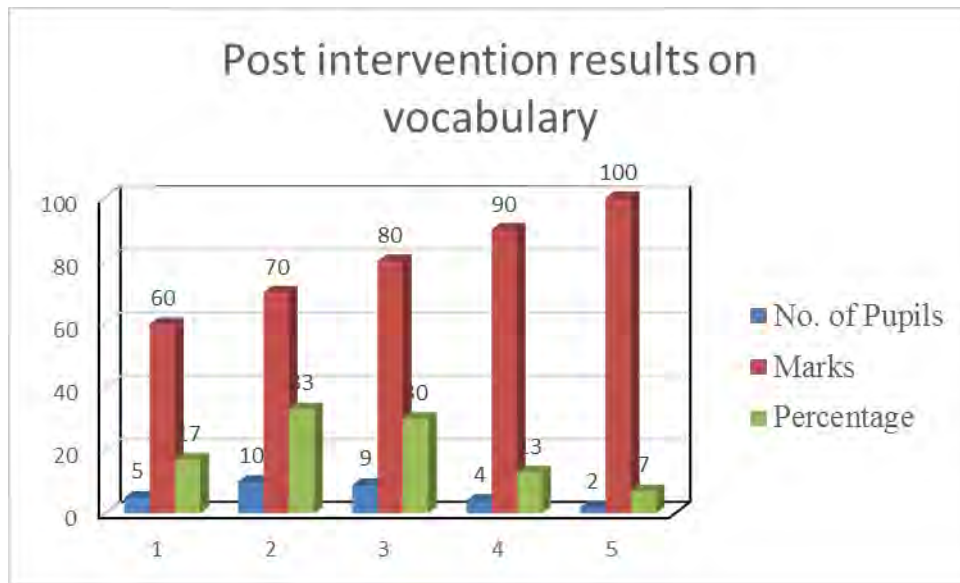


Figure 2 Progress test results for fluency on reading

Figure 2 indicates that two (2) pupils had fifty (50) marks representing (7%) of the respondents, four (4) also had sixty (60) marks representing (13%) while ten (10) had seventy (70) marks representing (33%) of the pupils. The figure confirms that 8 (27%) of the respondents obtained eighty (80) marks whilst 4 (13%) also had ninety (90) marks in reading fluency. The analysis depicts clearly that there was improvement in reading fluency after the intervention.

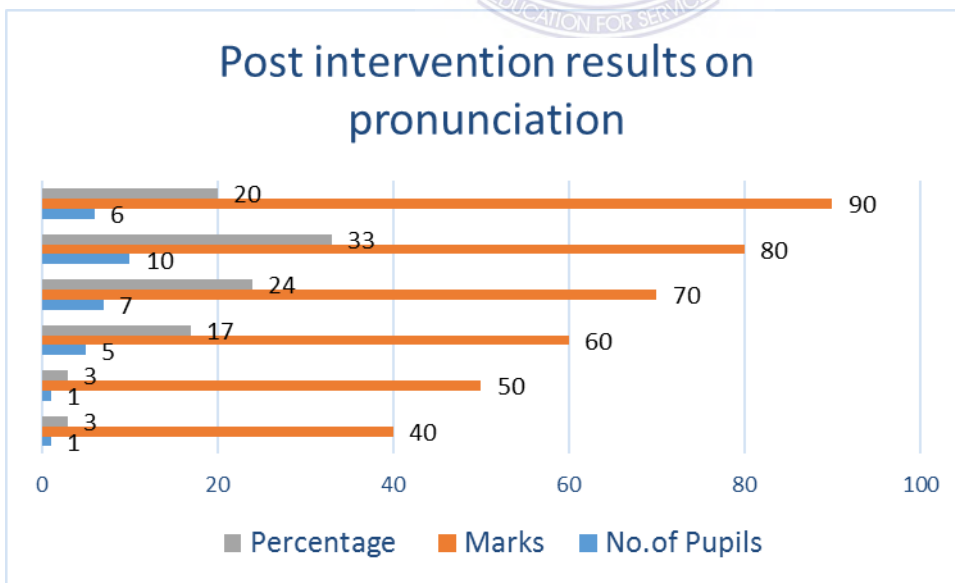


Figure 3 Progress test results for pronunciation on reading

Figure 3 represent the progress test results of pupils for pronunciation. From a cursory look at figure 3, it is obvious that the performance of the pupils improved after the intervention. The least marks obtained was forty (40) and the highest marks obtained was ninety (90). More than two-third of the pupils had between seventy (70) and Ninety (90) marks representing (74%) of the respondents.

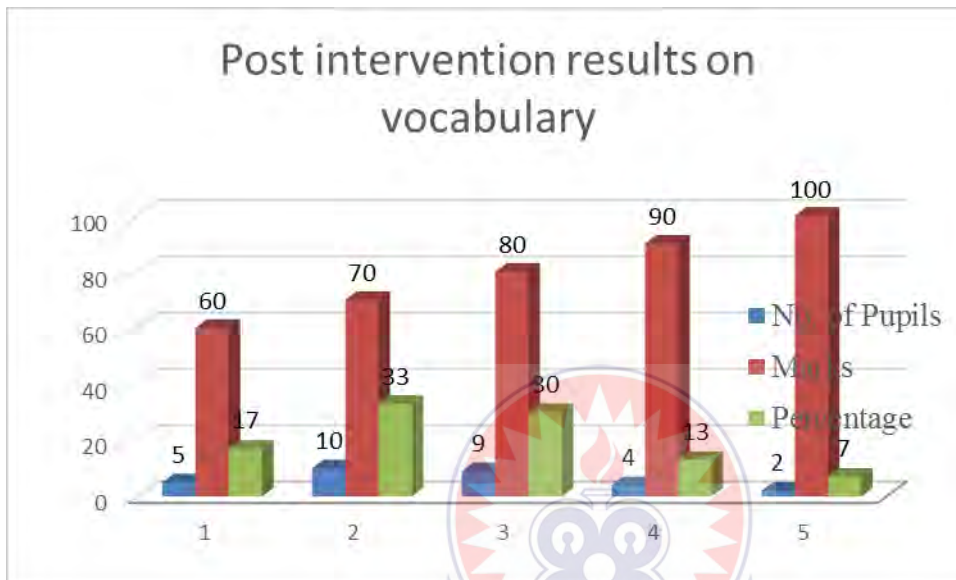


Figure 4 Progress test results for vocabulary on reading

Figure 4 shows that the general performance of pupils on vocabulary was good as compare to the results obtained during the pre-intervention. The least marks obtained was sixty (60). Twenty-five (25) pupils had between seventy (70) and hundred (100) marks representing (83%) of the total respondents.

4.3 Research Question 1

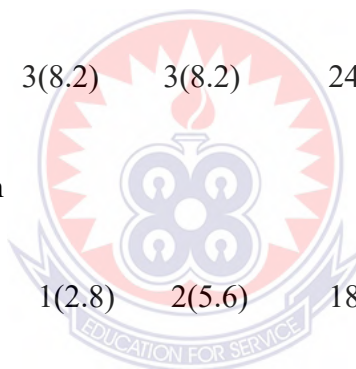
What are the causes of reading inability of primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School?

The question sought to find out the causes of reading inability of primary pupils from teachers selected for the study. To get answers to this research question, respondents were made

to respond to 7 items (that is, question numbers 1-7 on the questionnaire). Table 4 illustrates causes of reading inability of primary pupils in the form of frequency counts and percentages.

Table 4 Causes of Reading Inability of Primary Four Pupils

Item	Str. Disagree Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)	Agree Freq. (%)	Str. Agree Freq. (%)	Total
Lack of enough reading materials in the school affects pupils reading	1(2.8)	3(8.2)	22(61)	10(28)	100
Pupils dislike the reading method of their teacher	2(5.6)	3(8.2)	29(80.6)	2(5.6)	100
Parents do not provide pupils with reading materials	3(8.2)	3(8.2)	24(66.6)	6(17.0)	100
Pupils prefer to play rather than reading during leisure or free period	1(2.8)	2(5.6)	18(50.0)	15(41.6)	100
Lack of reading skills results to pupils poor attitude to effective reading	3(8.2)	4(11.4)	26(72.2)	3(8.2)	100
Parents not able to afford high cost of books for their children	1(2.8)	4(11.4)	17(47.0)	14(38.8)	100
Inappropriate match between the school's curriculum and Pupils' needs	2(5.6)	3(8.2)	19(52.8)	12(33.4)	100



Results from Table 4. indicate that out of a total of 36 respondents 32 (89%) of the respondents agreed that lack of reading materials in the school affects pupils reading while 4 (11%) of the respondents disagreed. Also 31 (86.2%) agreed that pupils dislike the reading method of their teacher and 5(13.8%) disagreed. In addition, 30 respondents (83.6%) agreed that parents do not provide pupils with reading materials whereas 6 respondents (16.4%) disagreed. Results further reveal that majority of the respondents being 33 (91.6%) agreed that pupils prefer to play rather than read during leisure or free period but 3 (8.4%) disagreed.

More than three-quarters of the respondents (80.4%) agreed that lack of reading skills results in pupils poor attitude to effective study whilst 7 (19.6%) disagreed. There were 31 respondents (86.2%) who agreed to parents not able to afford high cost of books for their children whereas 5 (13.8%) disagreed. When asked about inappropriate match between the school's curriculum and pupils needs, 31 respondents (86.2%) agreed that there is a mismatch between the curriculum and pupils needs while 5 (13.8%) disagreed.

From the analysis of the data, as depicted in Table 4, one could infer that causes of reading inability are numerous. A large percentage of respondents agreed that lack of reading materials in the school affects their reading. This confirms Taylor, Frye and Maruyama's (1990) assertion that the quality of writing used in some content of textbooks found in classrooms today is considered deficient in some respects. Issues like pupils dislike the method of teachers, parents do not provide pupils with reading materials, lack of reading skills by pupils, cost of books and inappropriate match between curriculum and pupils needs are causes of poor reading according to the respondents.

4.4 Research Question 2

What are the effects of reading inability of primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School?

The question sought to find out the effects of reading inability among primary pupils from teachers selected for the study. To get answers to this research question, respondents were made to respond to 6 items (that is, question numbers 8-13 on the questionnaire). Table 5 illustrates the effects of reading inability of primary pupils in the form of frequency counts and percentages.

Table 5 The effects of reading inability among pupils

Item	Str. Disagree Freq. (%)	Disagree Freq. (%)	Agree Freq. (%)	Str. Agree Freq. (%)	Total
Poor reading ability leads to lower self-esteem	2 (5.6)	4 (11.4)	16 (44.2)	14 (38.8)	100
Reading problems prevent individuals from reaching career goals	1 (2.8)	3 (8.2)	20 (55.5)	12 (33.5)	100
Reading problems prevent individuals of the opportunity to read for pleasure	3 (8.2)	2(5.6)	25 (69.4)	6 (16.8)	100
Reading failure can lead to anxiety and lack of motivation	4(11.4)	3 (8.2)	22 (61.0)	7 (19.4)	100
Poor reading appears to affect performance in all subjects	2 (5.6)	2(5.6)	20 (55.5)	12(33.3)	100
Poor socio-emotional adjustment	4 (11.4)	4(11.4)	18 (50.0)	10 (27.2)	100

From Table 5, it can be seen that on the issue of poor reading ability leads to lowered self-esteem most of the respondents 30 (83%) agreed whereas 6 (17%) disagreed. Further analysis revealed that 32 (89%) agreed that reading problem prevent individuals from reaching desired career goals while 4 (11) disagreed. Another issue was reading problem prevent individuals of the opportunity to read for pleasure. Majority of the respondents, 31 (86.2%) agreed whereas 5 (13.8%) disagreed. On the issue of reading failure can lead to anxiety and lack of motivation, 29 (80.4%) of the respondents agreed while 7 (19.6%) disagreed. In response to the statement: poor reading appears to affect performance in all other academic subjects, more than two-third of the respondents 32 (88.8%) agreed while 4 (11.2%) disagreed to the statement. On the issue of poor socio-emotional adjustment, majority of the respondents 28 (77.2%) agreed while 8 (22.8%) disagreed.

A look at Table 5 reveals that majority of the respondents are of the view that poor reading ability leads to lowered self-esteem. This confirms Richet, List and Lerner (1989) who indicate that as a primary cause of school failure, poor reading ability leads to lowered self-esteem and serious emotional overlays.

It is evident from Table 5 that reading problems prevent individuals from reaching desired career goals. This supports the research conducted by Anderson (2011) that shows that a broad range of graduates from universities were unemployable as a result of their poor communicative skills which are vehemently attributed to poor reading habit in the basic schools. Majority of the respondents (88.8%) agreed that reading problems prevent individuals of the opportunity to read for pleasure and enjoyment. This is in collaboration with Yilmaz (2000). According to Yilmaz (2000), people who do not learn to read through an intensive phonic programme often have lack of enjoyment in reading.

Majority of the respondents agreed that reading failure can lead to anxiety and lack of motivation. This is in agreement with Ehri (1999) who purported that reading difficulty affects children negatively. By the end of first grade, children having difficulties in learning to read begin to feel less positive about themselves than when they started school. On the issue of poor reading appears to affect performance in all academic subjects, majority of the respondents (88.8%) agreed. This is supported by Bhan and Gupta (2010). They examined reading habits and academic achievement among the students belonging to scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste group. The results reveals that reading has significant impact on the study habits and academic achievement of students.

Majority of the respondents were of the view that poor socio-economic adjustment is one of the key effects of reading inability among pupils. Poor readers have been reported to feel less competent in reading, consider it to be difficult, be less motivated to read, and hold generally more negative attitudes towards learning to read (Chapman & Tunmer, 1997; Gottfried, 1990; Lepola, Salonen, & Vauras, 2000). The relation between poor reading ability and these negative reading-related perceptions steadily increases as children age (Chapman & Tunmer, 1995).

4.5 Observation

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

1. **Motivation:** I observed a very high level of motivation among pupils during the intervention process. This was reflected in their attendance. According to the attendance register, their attendance to lessons was very good. Punctuality to the venue for our meetings, and good class participation were good signs of motivation exhibited by pupils. There were occasions pupils requested to stay longer with me or even come for weekend classes. The kind of games and the way they were organized might have accounted for

this level of motivation. This also goes a long way to agree with the findings of Chen (2005) who reported that language games motivate learners in the classroom.

2. Groupings and group work: Putting pupils into groups and getting them to work together was my major challenge at the beginning of the intervention process. Initially, the boys did not want to work with the girls. The reason being that the boys thought they could do better than the girls and that the girls could not contribute much to the success of their respective teams. One other reason that could be responsible for their attitude is that, it was not a practice in the class to work in groups and so it was an entirely new experience for them. This, the class teacher confirmed but was quick to add that “no time for group work.” I also observed that some pupils were rejected by their group members because they felt they were not academically strong to support the group. But gradually, I got them working together and they enjoyed it to the extent that they wanted a reshuffle of groups. This is clearly a reflection of Johnson and Johnson’s (2013) collaborative/cooperative learning where pupils work together to achieve shared results as well as learn to co-exist and respect each other’s opinions. It also agrees with the multiple intelligence theory of Kim (2009) who explained that, every individual has a different set of intelligence which is innate.
3. The use of digital games: At the beginning I resorted to use digital games in phonics to help them with their reading and pronunciation skills. The interest level was very high and participation was good and they learn very fast as well. Though the computers were few, each pupil was determined to have his or her hands on. This conforms to the attitude of people who belong to current generation. Very manipulative in nature.

4. Improvement in reading: After the use of the language games I observed that the fluency, pronunciation and vocabulary used by the pupils has improved. I also observed that the communicative skills of the pupils has improved.

4.6 Interview responses from pupils

Pupils reported that apart from the class English textbook, they do not read any other materials. They noted that there were no reading materials at home. On the issue of how reading skills affected their study, they purported that they find it difficult to read and it was having serious repercussions on their studies. One pupil indicated that, “I could not read and therefore I do not understand what the teacher teaches”. Another mentioned “I am disinterested in school because I cannot read”. Pupils felt that their inability to read and understand English made their understanding of other subjects very difficult. They further posited that their academic performance was abysmal because of their inability to read to comprehend questions given by the teacher.

Pupils reported that they used their free time to play football, netball, “ampe” and “hide and seek”. The researcher further probed why pupils refused to read their textbooks during their leisure time. The response was that the English textbooks were not enough and even during classes time the teacher had to put them in groups. One of the respondents said, “our teacher will not give the books to us because some pupils will tear the books”. On the issue of parents providing them with reading materials, the respondents reported that their parents did not have the money to buy the books for them. Majority of the pupils said that their parents did not have enough money to purchase reading books for them. One of the respondents said “I am from a single parent home and my mother is the only person taking care of six children. She does not have the money to buy reading books for me”. Pupils were questioned whether their parents guided them to read but majority responded that their parents were illiterate. They could neither

help the children to read nor provide information to help solve their academic problems. Most of them said that their parents were unable to provide informational support when they sought advice or help from them. As most of the parents themselves attained a low educational level or were uneducated, they faced difficulties in helping their children to read. Two respondents shared that their parents were too busy and one said that his father had to work almost 12 hours a day. Tiredness and inadequate knowledge hindered the quality of the knowledge support they were able to give their children. Five respondents complained that their parents were too busy at work and that they always had to stay at home alone after school. Even when their parents were at home, they felt that they were not concerned about their academic performance.

With regard to pupils being given equal attention in class, one female pupil recounted, “I couldn’t get attention from the teacher. I would raise my hand and she would not get to me”. Another male pupil echoed the sentiment that their classroom was too small for the class size. Expressing frustration, he continued, “We do not get the attention we need to do our work”. A pupil justified his disengagement because the teacher never interacted with him in the classroom. If he did not get the attention he needed, he would not understand what to do. If he could not understand what to do, then why waste his time doing his work? As a result of this pattern, pupils always fell farther behind without adequate problem-solving skill.

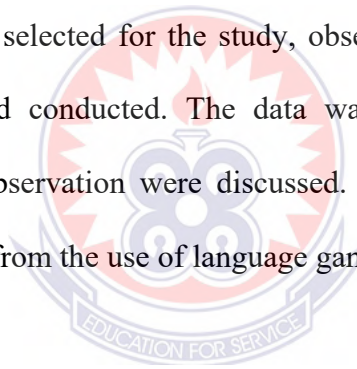
Pupils reported that they experienced difficulty getting assistance in large classes. One pupil indicated, “I can’t get attention from the teacher.” Another mentioned that there were too many pupils in the class so he scarcely had attention from the teacher. A pupil requested for an additional teacher for the class. Pupils felt that without being able to get the assistance they needed, the teacher was not meeting their needs.

With regard to the use of the language games, pupils reported that it has improved their reading skills. Five pupils recounted that, they had not used language games before and they were

very happy for been given the opportunity to manipulate such important learning games. A pupil justified her satisfaction by saying ‘I initially felt shy using the games but was encouraged by members in my group’. Pupils reported that they experienced difficulty getting assistance from their colleagues but later it was okay for them. They further purported that the language game helped to improve their academic performance. They now understands whatever they are taught. They can now read fluently and pronounce words correctly without much difficulty. Some of the pupils were on the view that the games added interest to what they initially felt bored to read or learnt

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the data obtained from test conducted, questionnaire developed to solicit for information from teachers selected for the study, observation made during the intervention processes and the interviewed conducted. The data was subjected to analysis using SPSS software. The findings and observation were discussed. The general outcome of the results indicates that pupils benefited from the use of language games in the classroom.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to find out the role of language games in the teaching of reading among Basic 4 Pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. Action research design was employed for the study. The study sample was made up 36 teachers and 30 pupils. Test, questionnaire, observation and interview were used to solicit information from the respondents. The instruments covered three main aspects: causes of reading inability of primary four pupils, effects of reading inability on primary four pupils and the role of language game in improving the reading skills of primary four pupils. The data collected were analysed using Statistics Products and Service Solutions (SPSS 16). Frequency counts and percentages were used for all the items on the survey. The responses from the interviewees were put into themes for analysis.

5.1 Summary of major findings

Based on the analysis undertaken the following findings were made:

1. Prior to the language games the pupils reading was poor. This was ascertained during the pre-intervention results
2. The findings attested to the fact that language games improved the reading skills of pupils. The post-test results indicate that the performance of students enhanced after the intervention
3. It was observed that the communication skills of the pupils is better enhanced when language games are used.
4. Poor reading skills result to pupils poor attitude to effective study

5. Language game encourages participation from learners.
6. Language game promote cooperative learning

5.2 Conclusions

From the study findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

The findings confirm that, the major causes of poor reading include: lack of reading materials, poor reading method by the teacher and parents not providing pupils with reading materials. It can also be concluded that poor time management and poor reading skills results to pupils' poor attitude to effective study. The use of games helped to improve the reading skills of pupils

It is clear from the findings that poor reading ability leads to lowered self-esteem. Reading problems prevent individuals from reaching career goals. It has also led to poor performance in all subjects. It has led to poor socio-emotion adjustment of pupils.

The study reveals that language games create a context for meaningful communication, encourage participation from learners and promote cooperative learning as well as helping pupils to improve their reading skills.

5.3 Recommendations

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

1. Curriculum developers should make communicative activities such as language games an integral part of the curriculum. I strongly believe that it is essential to properly integrate language games into the regular school syllabus rather than use them as icebreakers and time fillers. This will motivate learners to practice meaningfully new structures in the classroom and even outside the classroom.

2. The approach to designing the content of language textbooks should be reviewed to be in consonance with current learning styles. Since textbooks writers produce their books based on the requirement of the syllabus, a revision of the syllabus will go a long way to affect the way textbooks are written.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to receive refresher courses on pedagogical skills on the teaching of the English language especially on how to teach reading as well as new modes and techniques for effective teaching and learning.
4. Both government and the Parents-Teacher Association of the schools should be responsible for the provision of reading materials and a functional libraries which should be manned by a professional librarians.
5. Teachers should engage pupils in frequent reading and writing activities. They should use varied and enough teaching aids to enhance reading. They should also encourage students to read publicly to the hearing of others.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

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

Further research should be conducted on the use of phonic method to improve the reading skills of the pupils. I also encourage researchers to research into the use of Karaoke to improve the reading skills of pupils.

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

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. J. (1992). *Phonemics awareness in Young children a classroom curriculum*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul. H. Brookes Publishing.
- Aebersold, A., & Mary, F. (1997). *From reader to reading teacher*. Edinburgh. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Allington, R. L., & Walmsley, S. A. (1995). *No quick fix: Rethinking literacy programs in America's elementary schools*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.
- Al-Rashid, F. (2010). *Reading comprehension and its relationship with academic performance among standard eight pupils in rural Machakos*. Nairobi, Kenya: Kenyatta University.
- Anon, C. (1999). *Teaching Phonics Staff Development Book*. New Jersey, USA: Harcourt Brace.
- Arikan, K. Arda, B., & Gulin, Y. (2011). Effectiveness of using games in teaching grammar to young learners. *Elementary Education online*. 10 (1) 219-229.
- Azies, F. A. Wasilah, C. (1996). *Pengajaran bahasa komunikatif teori dan praktek*. Bandung: Remaja Rosda Karya
- Bainbridge, J. & Malicky, G. (2000). *Constructing meaning: balancing elementary language arts*. Toronto, Canada: Harcourt.
- Bear, D. R. (1999). *Words their way: Word study for phonics, Vocabulary, and Spelling*. Ohio, United State of America: Merrill Prentice Hall.
- Brown, H. D. (1987). *Principle of language learning and teaching*. San Francisco: State University.
- Chan, J, & Lin, B. (2000). What do we know about fluency? Findings of the National Reading Panel. *The voice of evidence in reading research* 6, 187-212.
- Chen, I-Jung (2005). Using games to promote communication skills in language learning. *The Internet TESL Journal*. 11(2).
- Clay, R. P. (1979). Investigating reading achievement using a causal model. *Scientific Studies of Reading*. 5, 107-140.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrisson, K. (2005). *Research methods in education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Cruttenden, A. (1993). *Grimson's pronunciation of English*. UK: University of Manchester.

- Davies, P., & Eric P. (2000). *Success in English teaching*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Department Of Education and Skill United Kingdom. (2004). *playing with sound: A Supplement progression in phonics*. Norwich. United Kingdom.
- Ehri, C. L. (1999). *The emergence of word reading in beginning reading*. London, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Elkin, J. (2007). *Stages of reading development*. New York: McGraw-Hill
- Fotovatnia, Z. & Namjoo, M. (2013). The effects of cooperative vs competitive word games on EFL learners' vocabulary gain, motivation and class atmosphere. *Mediterranean Journal of Social science*. 4 (1) 189-208
- Foertsch, M. (1998). *A study of reading practices, instruction, and achievement in District 31 schools*. Oak Brook, IL: North Central Regional Education Laboratory.
- Ginnis, P. (2002). *The teacher's classroom achievement with strategies for every learners*. London, United Kingdom: Crown House Publishing Limited.
- Hamalik, O. (1992). *Psikologi belajar mengaja*. Bandung: Sinar Baru.
- Nguyen T. T. H., & Nga, K. T. T. (2003). Learning vocabulary through games. *Asian EFL Journal*, 5(4).
- Johnson. D., W., Johnson, R., T., (2013). *Introduction to cooperative learning; An overview of cooperative learning*. London, United Kingdom: Crown House Publishing Limited.
- Kemmis, R. P., & Traggart, A. H. (1992). Investigating reading achievement using a causal model. *Scientific Studies of Reading*. 5, 107-140.
- Khalid, I. A. 2(011). Utilization of Instructional Games in EFL Teaching: A case study of Saudi Intermediate Schools. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Education Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 3(1): 22-28
- Kim, I. S. (2009). The relevance of multiple intelligence to call Instruction. *The Reading Matrix* 9 (1).
- Klopfer, E., Osterweil, S., Groff, J., & Haas, J. (2009). Using the technology of today, in the classroom today: The instructional power of digital games social networking simulations- and how teachers can leverage them. *The Education Arcade*, 7, 211-215.
- Kuo, H. (2008). *Reading difficulties: Introduction and assessment*. (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lee, W. R. (1979). *Language-Teaching Games and Contests*. London: Oxford University Press.

- Lee, W. R. (1980). *Language-teaching games and contests* (2nd ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
- Ogbonna, I. M. (2014). *Books, libraries and reading in the digital age*. Enugu: Eminota Publishers.
- Pretorius, K. (2009). Early reading acquisition and its relation to reading experience and ability 10 years later. *Development Psychology* 33(6): 934-945.
- Richards, J. C. (2007). *Communicative language teaching today*. New York: Palgrave Publishers Limited
- Rickett, M. A., List, L.K., & Lerner, J. W. (1989). *Reading problems: Assessment and teaching strategies*. London: Prentice-Hall.
- Rexon, K. (2005). *The Basics of Social Research*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). New York: Palgrave Publishers Limited.
- Snow, C., Burns, T., & Graffins, D. E. (1998). *Declining art of table talk a key to child's literacy in Kate Zernike*, the Boston Globe.
- Spregue, K. (2005). *Syllabus analysis on reading*. London: Oxford University.
- STAR (2013). Importance of reading to children. *Educational Journal*, 6, 24-29.
- Taylor, B., Harris, L. A., Pearson, P. D., & Garcia, G. (1995). *Reading difficulties: Introduction and assessment*. (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Uzun, L., Ugar R. C., SedatKorkmaz, H., & Umut S. (2013). Developing and applying a foreign language vocabulary learning and practicing games: The effects of vocawords. *Digital Culture and Education*.
- Yu, Shu-Yun, (2005). *The effects of games on the acquisition of some grammatical features of L2 German on students' motivation and on classroom atmosphere*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Yusuf, H. O. (2015). Assessment of teachers' attitude towards the teaching of reading in primary schools in Kaduna metropolis. *International journal of humanities and social science*.10 (1), 14-109.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESPONDENTS

This questionnaire is to obtain information on the role of language games in the teaching of reading among Basic Four Pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality. The information provided by you would be used only for academic purpose. You are guaranteed of **confidentiality** and **anonymity** of any information given. Thank you.



SECTION A**Causes of reading inability of primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day****Adventist Primary School**

This section is to solicit for information on the Causes of reading inability of primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School. Indicate your level of agreement to the following statements. Please tick the number of the scale given below which best describes your response for the items given.

SA = Strongly Agree: A = Agree: D = Disagree: SD = Strongly Disagree

Causes of reading inability of primary four pupils	SA	A	D	SD
1. Lack of enough reading materials in the school affects pupils reading				
2. Pupils dislike the reading method of their teacher				
3. Parents do not provide pupils with reading materials				
4. Pupils prefer to play rather than reading during leisure or free period				
5. Lack of reading skills results to pupils poor attitude to effective study				
6. Parents not able to afford high cost of books for their children				
7. Inappropriate match between the school's curriculum and pupils need				

SECTION B**Effects of reading inability among primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day****Adventist Primary School**

This section is to solicit for information on the effects of reading inability on the academic performance of primary five pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School. Indicate your level of agreement to the following statements. Please tick the number of the scale given below which best describes your response for the items given.

SA = Strongly Agree: A = Agree: D = Disagree: SD = Strongly Disagree

Effects of reading inability on the academic performance of primary five	SA	A	SD	D
8. Poor reading ability leads to lowered self-esteem				
9. Reading problem prevent individuals from reaching desired career goals				
10. Reading problems prevent individuals of the opportunity to read for pleasure and enjoyment				
11. Reading failure can lead to misbehaviour, anxiety and lack of motivation				
12. Poor reading appears to affect performance in all other academic subjects				
13. Poor socio-emotional adjustment				

SECTION C

The role of language game in improving the reading of primary four pupil New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School

This section is to solicit for information on the strategies to curb the problem of reading inability of primary four pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School. Indicate your level of agreement to the following statements. Please tick the number of the scale given below which best describes your response for the items given.

SA = Strongly Agree: A = Agree: D = Disagree: SD = Strongly Disagree

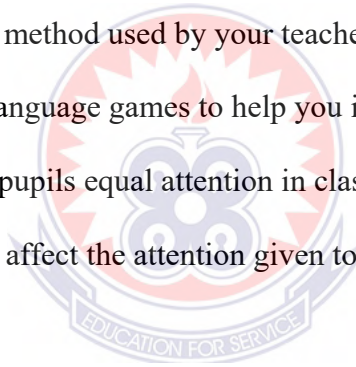
The role of language game in improving the reading skills of pupils of primary four.	SA	A	D	SD
14. Games create a context for meaningful communication				
15. Games add interest to what learners find boring				
16. Games encourage participation from all learners				
17. Games are learner-centred activities				
18. Games promote cooperation learning				
19. Games help learners to learn outside the classroom				

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PUPILS

This interview guide is to obtain information on poor reading among Basic Four Pupils of New-Tafo Akim Seventh Day Adventist Primary School in the East-Akim Municipality.

1. Apart from the class four English textbook, do you read other books?
2. How does your reading skills affect your attitude to study?
3. How does your reading skills affect your academic performance?
4. How do you use your free time?
5. Do your parents provide you with all the reading materials you need?
6. Do your parents guide you on what to read and how to read it?
7. Do you like the reading method used by your teacher?
8. Does your teacher use language games to help you improve your reading skills?
9. Does your teacher give pupils equal attention in class during reading?
10. How does the class size affect the attention given to you by your teacher?



APPENDIX C

A
B
C
D
E
F
G
H
I
J
K
L
M
N
O
P
Q
R
S
T
U
V
W
X
Y
Z

Aa

ambulance
An ambulance is a special van that is used to take people to hospital when they are hurt or sick.

Nee naa! Nee naa!

animal
An animal is something that lives and moves around. A plant is not an animal. Cats, robins, spiders, and goldfish are all animals.

aeroplane
An aeroplane is a flying machine with wings that carries people and things.

alphabet
An alphabet is the letters that are used in writing, arranged in a special order.

angry
If you are angry, you feel very upset and annoyed.

apple
An apple is a round, juicy fruit that grows on a tree. Its skin can be green, red, or yellow.



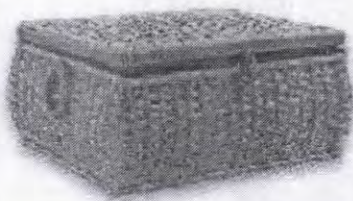
2

APPENDIX D

Bb

basket

A basket is a container used to store and carry things.



bee

A bee is an insect with wings. Bees make honey.



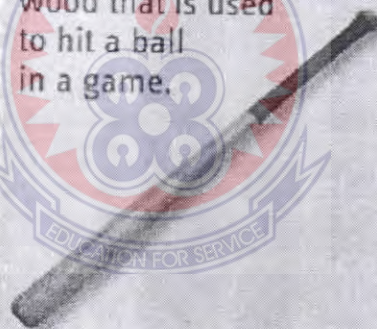
ball

A ball is a round object used in games. You throw, catch, hit, or kick a ball.



bat

A bat is a piece of wood that is used to hit a ball in a game.



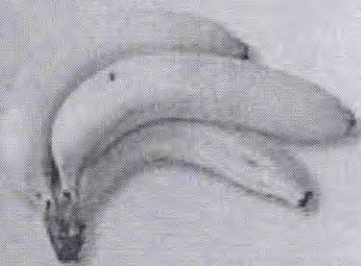
beetle

A beetle is an insect that has hard, shiny wings.



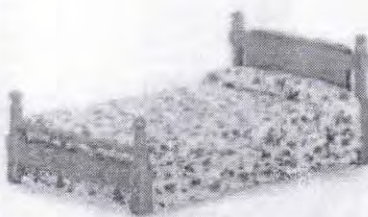
banana

A banana is a long fruit with a thick, yellow skin.



bed

A bed is something you lie down and sleep on.



bicycle

A bicycle is a machine you ride. It has two wheels and pedals.



APPENDIX E

www.mes-english.com ESL/EFL Resources for Teachers

English

come

MES-Phonics Sight Words List 1

www.mes-english.com ESL/EFL Resources for Teachers

English

take

MES-Phonics Sight Words List 1

www.mes-english.com ESL/EFL Resources for Teachers

English

friend

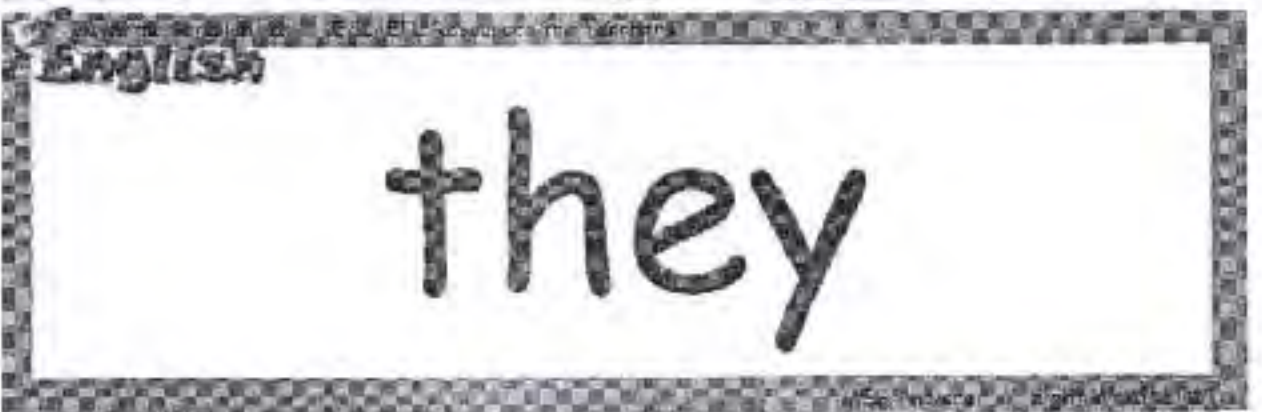
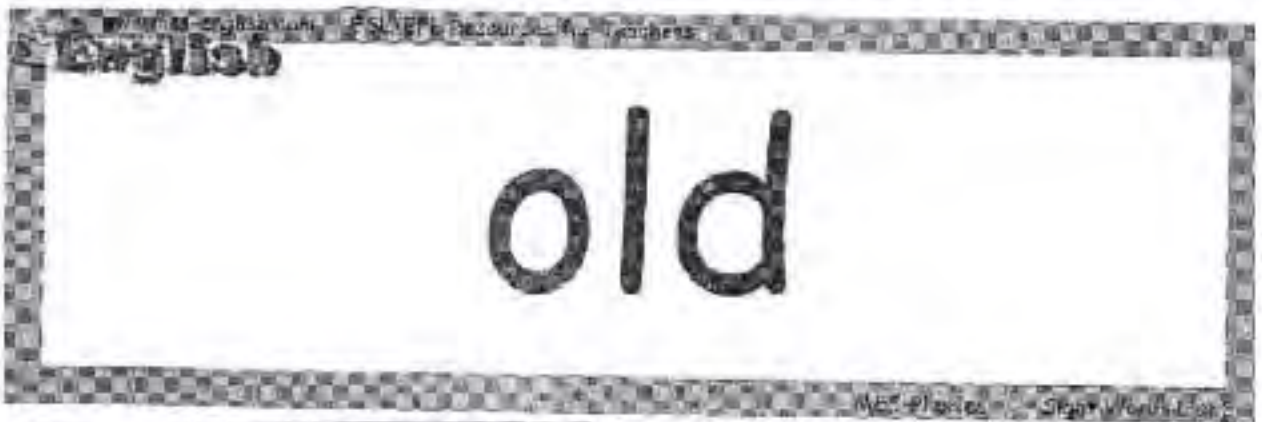
MES-Phonics Sight Words List 1

www.mes-english.com ESL/EFL Resources for Teachers

English

eight

MES-Phonics Sight Words List 1



APPENDIX E

4 In a Row - Board 2

1	2	3	4	5	6
you	two	go	on	one	are
1	2	3	4	5	6
two	we	up	can	two	on
1	2	3	4	5	6
can	you	me	on	go	can
1	2	3	4	5	6
me	one	are	we	up	me
1	2	3	4	5	6
two	go	on	can	you	we
1	2	3	4	5	6
are	we	up	two	one	on

a collaboration between B. Reid - Derry Reading Centre and A. <http://www.scribbr.com/>

4 In a Row - Board 4



1	2	3	4	5	6
has	his	with	if	her	of
1	2	3	4	5	6
his	get	not	for	his	if
1	2	3	4	5	6
for	has	they	if	with	for
1	2	3	4	5	6
they	her	of	get	not	they
1	2	3	4	5	6
his	with	if	for	has	get
1	2	3	4	5	6
of	get	not	his	her	they

a collaboration between D. (First) - Dorey Hoare and Jackie Nelson & <http://www.atsci.com.au>