

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

**IMPACT OF READING COMPREHENSION DIFFICULTIES ON THE ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS OF TANO ODUMASI D/A JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, FACULTY
OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND COMMUNICATION, SUBMITTED TO THE
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MASTER OF EDUCATION IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
(TESL) DEGREE**

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

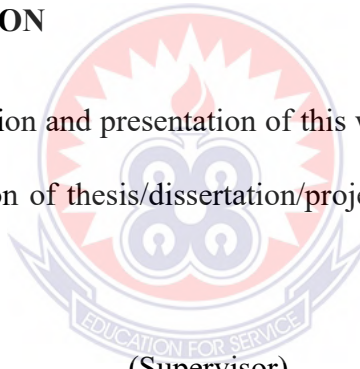
I, Isaac Boakye, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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



Name: (Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Ms. Ernestina Birago Danso. May her soul rest in peace



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr, Mrs. Rebecca Akpanglo = Nartey for her constant guidance, inputs, advice and goodwill throughout this work.

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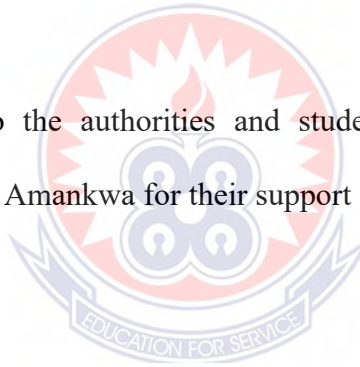


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ABSTRACT

Reading comprehension difficulties has been one of the main challenges of students that affect the performance of students for which this challenge has been established as the main problem of students in Tano D.A.JHS. This study therefore sought to investigate the impact that reading comprehension difficulties have on the academic performance of the students of Tano–Odumasi D/A J.H.S and to determine appropriate reading comprehension strategies that would improve the academic performance of students with such difficulties. The study therefore adopted a quasi-experimental and descriptive research design with the study area being Junior High School pupils of Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. A sample size of 30 students took part in the study consisting of 18 males and 12 females selected through purposive sampling technique. The cloze test procedure was also adopted. Findings indicated that word omission was the most common comprehension difficulty encountered by students followed by word mispronunciation, word substitution and word addition. It was established that these reading comprehension difficulties affected the academic performance of students through the various tests in the close procedure test carried which was confirmed by the end of term examination results of the students. As part of the strategies to improve on the performance of these students, it was established that the reader must adopt planning and identifying strategies, monitoring strategies, and evaluating strategies so as to improve the academic performance of these students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

The English Language is spoken by the majority of the world's population as an official language or an international language. In Ghana, the English language is a compulsory subject one needs to pass to progress on the academic calendar. Failure to obtain the required pass mark may hinder one's dream in academic progression.

Before a student would be able to pass well in the English language, one should be able to read a text, understand and make inferences. Many of our youths however, struggle with the reading comprehension of academic texts across cultures. For instance, Asikhia (2010) confirms that the pass rate between 2004 and 2007 has not gone beyond 47% for Nigerian students who sat for the English language exams in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination between that period and in the Northern Region of Ghana, students who sat for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) from 2007 to 2014 did not exceed the 50% score in all subjects (Abdallah, Fuseini, Abudu & Nuhu, 2014). The challenges of students in their academic performance, especially pertaining to their ability to read, comprehend and to understand and also deliver what is required of them proves reading is an important academic skill as it is necessary for the success of all the other subjects at school.

It is for this reason that Perfetti and Hart (2001) highlight how text comprehension draws from both lower-level lexical skills (including reading effectively and vocabulary acquisition,

sentence-level skills comprising grammatical structure knowledge) and higher-level text processing skills (including reference generation, monitoring comprehension and the working memory capacity) for which these skills are necessary for comprehending texts. As indicated by Cain and Oakhill (2006), higher-level processing skills are required for text comprehension for the purpose of understanding and efficient lower-level lexical skills improves reading comprehension as it provides more resources for the higher-level processing. This points to the fact that for text comprehension both skills (higher-level processing skills and lower-level lexical skills) are required and for that matter has been confirmed by both correlational and longitudinal studies carried out by several researchers to have a relationship and for that matter necessary for reading comprehension (Hulme & Snowling, 2011). Reading comprehension therefore involves transforming a text (or a graphic representation) into thought or meaning (Oakhill, Hart & Samols, 2003) and for this to be possible, these requirements including vocabulary knowledge, memory, knowledge of syntax, general intellectual ability and specific comprehension sub skills (comprehension monitoring, inference and integration skill, and knowledge about story structure) must be operational (Cain, 2003). Deficiencies or impairments in one or more of these requirements may lead to reading comprehension difficulties (Nation, Clarke, Marshall & Durand, 2004) as these requirements are mostly associated with language tasks and as such contribute towards reading comprehension and development. This means that reading comprehension difficulties in students are often related to the lack of one or more of these requirements for text comprehension being related to lower-level lexical skills and higher-level processing skills. This deficiencies/impairment has been identified to have an impact on the academic performance of students as stated by Hall and Segerra (2007).

1.1 The statement of the problem

In the area of reading comprehension difficulties, several studies have been undertaken as in the case of Cain and Oakhill (2006) who researched the "consistency of skill impairment in a sample of poor comprehenders to identify any fundamental skill weaknesses that might be associated with poor text comprehension that might lead to depressed reading development". They determined that individuals with comprehension difficulties also had associated problems with reading. Again, in a research conducted by Hulme and Snowling (2011) on "reading comprehension impairment which has the range of oral – language weaknesses, which impede students' comprehension of both written and spoken language", they also determined that written and spoken language impeded on the academic performance of students but failed to investigate how it impacts on the academic performance of these students. Lessaux and Kieffer (2010) also took their turn to explore the sources of reading comprehension difficulties among language minority learners and their classmates in their early adolescence. Common among the lapses in these studies are that they failed to address how reading comprehension difficulties impacted on the academic performance of students.

Again, the ability to read texts in English with comprehension is a challenge that has been identified in Tano Odumase D/A J.H.S two (2) in the Sekyere South District of the Ashanti Region. This has been a major problem in the district over the past decades. According to the records found in the school, in 2013, there was a reading comprehension survey and about two-thirds of the students were unable to score four out of ten marks. There have been some effective attempts to engaging these students to improve reading comprehension abilities, but these interventions are yet to have any significant effect on the students. What the records failed to

identify was the difficulties among the students reading and comprehension skills and how those difficulties have affected students' academic performance since there were no records of those issues. These revelations prompted the researcher to find on the impact of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of the students. The researcher intended to identify the difficulties students encounter in terms of reading, which accounted for the difficulties in understanding the text read and how these difficulties affected their academic performance. The gaps identified, that is limited literature on the impact of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of students and the failure of records identifying the difficulties among the students reading and comprehension skills, serve as the backdrop for this study. This study therefore seeks to examine how reading comprehension difficulties influence the academic performance of students in the district and for that matter add up to the limited literature on this research area. The study would also identify the reading comprehension difficulties among students in the school and determine more appropriate strategies that would help these students to be able to overcome these difficulties.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify the reading comprehension difficulties faced by students of Tano D. A. JHS and how these reading comprehension difficulties affect the academic performance of students in the school so as to identify more appropriate reading comprehension strategies that would help these students to overcome these difficulties. This study would therefore go a long way to impacting on the academic performance of students in the school so as to improve on their reading comprehension skills.

1.3 Research objectives

The objectives of the study are to:

1. investigate reading comprehension difficulties faced by students of Tano D. A. JHS
2. identify how reading comprehension difficulties affect students' academic performance
3. suggest appropriate strategies to reduce reading comprehension difficulties among students to improve their academic performance.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What reading comprehension difficulties do students of Tano D. A. JHS face?
2. What impact do the reading comprehension difficulties have on the students' academic performance?
3. What could be done to reduce the reading comprehension difficulties to improve the academic performance of the students?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study seeks to investigate the impact that reading comprehension difficulties has on the academic performance of the students of Tano–Odumasi D/A J.H.S and to determine appropriate reading comprehension strategies that would improve the academic performance of students with such difficulties. This study would therefore help education policy makers to come up with policies that would aid students at their early stage in life to be able to overcome reading comprehension difficulties by equipping them with the necessary reading comprehension skills

so as to improve their academic performance as they develop. Again this study would serve as leverage for future researchers to also determine more defining strategies in that direction.

1.6 Limitations

Even though, measures were put in place to control errors if not to avoid them there were some limitations to this study. The research method and design adopted in this research provide an inherent limitation to this study. Again, the study was funded by the researcher for which the research was constrained by financial resources. Time was a limited factor in this study as the time taken for this study did not allow the inclusion of other variables in the study including the teachers' perspective on the reading comprehension difficulties being faced by these students.

1.7 Delimitations

In defining the scope of this study, it included the Junior High School students of Tano-Odumasi Junior High School which means that other students that were not found in this category were not included in this study. The reading comprehension difficulties included in this study had to do with word omissions, word substitution, word mispronunciation and word additions.

1.8 Organization of the study

The research looked at the impact of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of the students of Tano Odumasi Junior High School two (2) of the Sekeyere South District in the Ashanti Region. The study report has been organized into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the research problem,

the purpose of the study, limitations, delimitation and organization of the study. The second chapter gives the conceptual framework of the research and a review of the related literature of the topic under study.

The third chapter discusses the methodology adapted for the researcher and which includes the population sample and sampling techniques and the instrument for data collection.

The fourth chapter centers on the findings/results from the study that was conducted with the sixth chapter serving as the discussion chapter for the findings that were made from the study. The last chapter talks about the summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations to the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the theoretical framework of the study and what other researchers have done about the impact of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of learners. The chapter is made up of sections beginning with the theoretical framework, a definition of reading comprehension and reading comprehension difficulties, types of reading comprehension difficulties, effective strategies for improving reading comprehension/eliminating reading comprehension difficulties and the influence of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of students.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by these theoretical frameworks including psycholinguistic perspective to reading comprehension, cognitive perspective to reading comprehension and processing patterns of reading comprehension.

2.1.1 Psycholinguistic Perspective of Reading Comprehension

This theory was propounded by Goodman (1967) from his perspective to reading comprehension when he proposed the ‘psycholinguistic guessing game’ and argued reading comprehension is ‘a psycholinguistic process in that it starts with a linguistic surface representation encoded by a writer and ends with meaning which reader constructs’ (Goodman, 1967, p. 12). This means that there is an encoding by the writer for which the reader

must also decode the language into understanding. Goodman (1967) further identified that in every reading comprehension, there are four cycles that the reader must go through so as to make meaning (thought) out the text (linguistic representation). These four cycles include:

1. The optical cycle perceives symbols
2. The perceptual cycle makes sense of symbols
3. The syntactic cycle links symbols together build up complex information and
4. The meaning cycle constructs meaning while reading

According to the author, these four cycles interlock and substantially emerge with one another and for that matter undergo five processes including:

“recognition-initiation (recognizing text and initiating reading), prediction (anticipating and predicting while seeking order and the significance of the input), confirmation (verifying or disconfirming predictions), correction (reprocessing while finding inconsistencies) and termination (ending reading activity).” (Goodman, 1967, p. 16)

Reading comprehension as described by Goodman is therefore seen to be an active, selective and interactive process and for that matter involving interaction between language and thought. Hittleman (1978) also supported this theory by describing reading comprehension as ‘getting questions answered’ (Hittleman, 1978, p.102) emphasizing the role of prediction by framing apt and rational questions.

2.1.2 Cognitive Perspective of Reading Comprehension

The second theoretical framework for this study is the cognitive perspective of reading comprehension and as propounded by Gough and Cosky (1977), reading comprehension is a

process that takes place sequentially and for that matter there is the transformation from lower-level sensory information to higher-level encodings. This explains why in his view, reading comprehension takes place in a chronological manner. This chronological process begins when lower-level sensory information enters the reader's visual system as depicted by the graphemic information (that is the text). After entering into the reader's visual system, it is registered on a recognition device subsequently moves through a pattern in the device. The text is read into a character register for which it is converted into a phonemic representation. After the conversion into the phonemic representation, there is a matching system in the long term memory of the reader for which knowledge of syntax and semantics considers the deep structure of the input after which it is forwarded into the final memory register TPWSGWTAU which completes the reading comprehension process.

This theory is supported by LaBerge and Samuels (1974) and further proposed that reading comprehension takes place in three memory systems including visual memory system, phonological memory system and semantic memory system for which these memory systems are able to accommodate different representations of input. Rumelhart (1985) commenting on the cognitive perspective to reading comprehension revealed that reading comprehension relies on schemata for which it is hypothetically driven, thus reading comprehension only confirms or disconfirms hypothesis until a probable conclusion is reached. He therefore recognized that reading comprehension 'begins with a flutter of patterns on the retina and ends (when successful) with a definite idea about the author's intended message' (Rumelhart, Hinton & Williams 1985, p. 722).

2.1.3 Processing Patterns of Reading Comprehension

The theory relating to processing patterns of reading comprehension has been viewed from different perspectives with some authors viewing reading comprehension as following a linear sequence with other authors viewing reading comprehension as a pattern synthesizing the information that is perceived simultaneously from different sources. The perspectives to this theory include the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive processing to reading comprehension.

The bottom-up processing to reading comprehension as viewed by Gough and Cosky (1977) and LaBerge and Samuels (1974) as the process by which constructs meaning is processed in a sequential manner and for that matter it begins with the smallest text units to the largest ones in a linear but a hierarchical form. Mckoon and Ratcliff (1992, p.65) recognize this process to begin with ‘printed stimuli, decodes them to spelling patterns, recognizes words and decodes meanings, gradually compiling the smaller units to decipher and comprehend the higher units’.

The top-down processing to reading comprehension also works in like fashion as the bottom-up processing to reading comprehension in terms of its linear sequence but begins with the largest text units to the smaller text units in a predictive manner. For this the reader begins with the entire text from which paragraphs are concentrated on, then to individual sentences and finally to the individual words in the text. It therefore involves ‘networks of information stored in the brain which act as filters for incoming information’ (Alderson, 2000, p.17). This is for the purpose of either confirming or disconfirming hypothesis.

As the top-down and bottom-up processing to reading comprehension recognizes a sequential movement to reading comprehension, the interactive processing to reading comprehension integrates both approaches to reading comprehension. For this perspective to processing patterns of reading comprehension, it is achieved across several levels of textual analysis and for that matter Kintsch and Van Dijk (1978, p.12) and Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983, p.21) recognize this approach as ‘processing perceptual characteristics, combining words into meaningful clause units, building an interrelated network of these units for gist formation and incorporating the reader’s relevant existing knowledge’. With this approach to processing information, the text must be sufficiently processed so as to activate already existing knowledge that is in the mind of the reader (van den Broek, Young, Tzeng & Linderholm, 1999). The bottom-up processing gives the reader the basic information while the purpose of the top-down is to interact based on the level of knowledge of the reader.

2.2 Definition of Reading Comprehension and Reading Comprehension Difficulties

Every day, Schools all over the world deal with problems of students with reading comprehension difficulties. These students present high-level learning difficulties that affect their academic performance in a variety of school tasks. Based on the above statement, reading comprehension has been defined by many researchers according to their philosophies as to how its difficulties affect students’ academic performance.

According to Sayukti and Kurniawan (2018), “Reading comprehension involves intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interaction between text and the reader”. This statement indicates that students who found it difficult to comprehend text

might not be able to interact well with the text and this would affect their academic performance since they might not be able to make inferences to what they have read.

Fiano (2000, p13), explained that “reading comprehension is an intensive form of reading and involves reading a piece of material closely and carefully to get the full meaning, overall meaning and summarized meaning which has both physical and mental aspect in the sense that it involves an interaction between thoughts and ability to extract information from the passage”. Here, Fiano was also explaining that before one can deduce meaning from text and get accurate information, such a person must interact with the text. This clearly shows that students with reading comprehension problems would find it difficult to extract information that would be required from them to provide from a given passage. This problem persistently would affect such students' academic performance.

A recent study focusing on secondary students was conducted by Cromley (2009). This study focused specifically on “Reading and proficiency in science with an international perspective”. Cromley found that there was a very high correlation between reading comprehension and science proficiency, with the mean for all of the nations involved. What Cromley failed to address was how the students would perform when He or She could not proficiently read and comprehend. These students would perform poorly in academics and it would not be only science.

In furtherance, Cain and Oakfield (2006) postulated that poor vocabulary skill results in impaired growth in word reading ability and poor general cognitive ability which may result in impaired growth in reading comprehension. Despite the researchers finding no evidence in

fundamental skill weaknesses among the participants, they asserted that poor comprehenders obtained lower Student Assessment Test (SAT) scores than the good comprehenders. They hypothesized that poor comprehenders are at risk of low educational attainment, despite the effect of weak verbal or cognitive skills appearing to affect the reading development of poor comprehenders in different ways.

2.2.1 Reading Comprehension Difficulties

As already indicated, reading comprehension involves transforming a text (or a graphic representation) into thought or meaning (Oakhill, Hart & Samols, 2003) and for this to be possible, these requirements including vocabulary knowledge, memory, knowledge of syntax, general intellectual ability and specific comprehension sub skills (comprehension monitoring, inference and integration skill, and knowledge about story structure) must be operational (Cain, 2003). These requirements are very necessary for reading comprehension to be made possible in the sense that these requirements help the individual to transform a text into thought or meaning which could be done in a linear sequential manner as suggested by LarBerge and Samuels (1972) in the bottom-up processing to reading comprehension, by Alderson (2000) in the top-down processing to reading comprehension, by Gough and Corks (1977) in the cognitive perspective of reading comprehension, by Goodman (1988) in the psycholinguistic perspective of reading comprehension or the interactive processing to reading comprehension by van den Broek, Younf, Tzeng and Linderholm (1999) which integrates both the top-down and the bottom-up approach. As already identified by Cain (2003), deficiency/impairment in one or more of these requirements may cause reading comprehension difficulties. This means that reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students are mostly as a result of the

deficiency/impairment in one of the following requirement including vocabulary knowledge, memory, knowledge of syntax, general intellectual ability, and specific comprehension sub skills (comprehension monitoring, inference and integration skill, and knowledge about story structure).

Feagans (1983) also determined reading comprehension difficulties to be associated with vocabulary, word recognition, reading comprehension and reading rate and for that matter recognized reading comprehension difficulties to include word recognition errors, comprehension errors, inappropriate word grouping (specifically ignored or misinterpreted punctuation).

2.3 Effective Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension

The reader is always responsible for the control that he/she exercises over his/her reading comprehension process and this control process in the view of Williams and Moran (1989) is the strategies and metacognitive strategies adopted by the reader. These strategies according to the authors are distinguished from the reading comprehension skills of the reader as these strategies are rather deliberate, conscious and effortful. These strategies are therefore adopted by the reader to aid in the monitoring of his/her performance in the reading comprehension process. It is for this reading that Barnett (1988) identified two levels of strategy categories that would help the reader improve upon his/her reading comprehension and also reduce the reading comprehension difficulties of the reader. These strategies include the text level (this strategy relates to comprehending the whole text) and the word level strategies (this strategy relates to comprehending words). These categorized strategies (that is the text level and the word level strategies) include ‘using context to guess word meanings, identifying the grammatical category

of words, following reference words and recognizing meanings through word families and formation' (Barnett, 1988, p35).

Again, in a study conducted by Pressley and Afflerbach (1995), they categorized 150 reading comprehension strategies under three main types including planning and identifying strategies, monitoring strategies and evaluating strategies. These strategies as grouped by Pressley and Afflerbach (1995) have been confirmed to be effective strategies to improving reading comprehension of students and also resolving reading comprehension difficulties among students as determined by Upton and Lee-Thompson (2001) and Carrell and Grabe (2002). These strategies are identified by Bachman and Palmer (1996) as strategies that relate to reading comprehension itself and therefore determined reading comprehension strategies that help the reader under test conditions for which these strategies were identified as test-taking strategies for the purpose of improving the performance of students under test conditions. These categorized strategies include assessment component (assessing achievable communicative goals as against needed linguistic resources), goal-setting component (identify the specific task that the reader seeks to perform), planning (retrieving relevant information from the language knowledge of the reader and also plan on the use of this retrieved information) and execution (implementing the plan). Although these strategies have been identified to work under test-taking conditions, McNamara (1996) determined these strategies as only preliminary. These strategies identified above could be good or poor strategies depending on the position of the test taker at a given time, the reader's cognitive style, language knowledge and list of test taking strategies. Some test taker may adopt few strategies while other test takers may adopt a wide range of these strategies and for that matter in order to improve the performance of the student, there is the need to take

cognizance of the quality and quantity of strategies adopted. These reading comprehension strategies are therefore geared towards improving the academic performance of students and also reducing the reading comprehension difficulties of these students.

2.4 Reading Comprehension Difficulties and Academic Performance

Several studies have been conducted in the area of reading comprehension difficulties as determined by Kate and Oakhill (2006) with little studies focusing on the impact that reading comprehension difficulties have on the academic performance of students. For the few of the studies that determined the impact that reading comprehension difficulties had on the academic performance of students, they determined that reading comprehension difficulties have an impact on the academic performance of students. In a study conducted by Karanja (2015) on the effects of reading difficulties on academic performance among form three students in public secondary schools in Kiambu County in Kenya who concentrated on comprehension errors (a component of reading comprehension difficulties) determined a significant relationship between comprehension errors and academic performance. He therefore established that words omitted, words substituted, word mispronounced, words added had a significant influence on the end of term one examination of students. This he determined that students who committed few comprehension errors performed better in their examination than students who committed more errors. A study conducted by Njoroge (2000) also determined that reading comprehension difficulties affect the academic performance of students and this was determined among students who had difficulties reading English. Again, a study conducted by Runo (2010) also determined that learners who scored poorly in the wordlist and reading passage did not perform well in their academics. These few studies have established the fact that reading comprehension difficulties

have an influence on the academic performance of students. This study therefore seeks to add up to the limited studies that have been conducted in this area and to also determine reading comprehension strategies that improve the performance of J.H.S two students in Tano Odumase D/A as their ability to read texts in English with comprehension being a challenge to them.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

Chapter three of this report discusses the research design, study area, population, sampling procedure, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data processing and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the process of planning and structuring the format of the research to elicit valid and reliable information which involves the arrangements of conditions for collecting data and analyzing it which is relevant to the researcher in the most economic manner. In other words, it is a program which guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analyzing interpreting, and observing during the research. There are different research designs that could be adopted to undertake any research as suggested by Rahi (2017) but this study seeks to adopt the quasi-experimental and descriptive research design. Quasi-experimental research design has been identified by Rogers and Revesz (2020) as a research design that is employed in empirical studies with the aim of determining the causal impact of an intervention on the target population without random assignment. There is always an experimental group and a control group in this research design for which these groups are included in the study without random assignment. For this research design, the researcher is able to manipulate the independent variable so that control could be exercised to achieve or improve on the internal validity of the study. According to Creswell (2014), this approach is employed where there is difficulty or impossibility to

undertaking the research with complete experimental controls. A descriptive research design was also employed in the study based on the fact that Ivey (2016) acknowledges the role of this design in collecting data for the purpose of testing hypothesis or answering the questions in a research and it involves an accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons. Again, the research approach that was adopted for this study was the quantitative research approach while adopting Tano Odumasi D/A as the case study to this research. The purpose for the quantitative approach to this study is because it allows the researcher to collect numerical data and make analysis of the numerical data so as to arrive at a reasonable conclusion in the study.

3.2 Study Area

The study comprised Junior High School pupils of Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. The study was further focused on J.H.S two students of Tano Odumasi D/A. The decision to use the school was based on the observation that pupils in the selected school face challenges with reading comprehension which affect their academic performance.

3.3 Population of the study

The population for the study was made up of pupils at Tano Odumasi D/A J.H.S. The total number of students in Tano Odumasi D/A J.H.S. is One Hundred and Forty Three (143). This comprises Seventy Nine (79) boys and Sixty Four (64) girls.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to Taherdoost (2017), a sample is made up of a carefully selected part of the units that make up a given population and this comprises a small portion of the population in which the study is conducted. The sample used for the study was thirty (30) pupils; constituting Eighteen (18) boys and Twelve (12) girls, with age ranges of 12 to 15. This study as such used the purposive sampling technique in arriving at this the sample size. In conducting a purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally handpicks the cases to be involved in the study. This is because the researcher considers them to have background knowledge about the research topic. The process involved in this type of sampling was the initial identification of the participants and arranging meetings with them (Cochran, 2007).

One of the strengths of purposive sampling is that it makes it easier to get the participants with the characteristics relevant to the topic under study. Again, it allows for the assessment of people with identified characteristics. In the current study, for instance, students who have difficulties with reading comprehension would be sampled. Also, the respondents for the study are known to the researcher, hence the use of purposive selection rather than randomization.

Considering the above strengths, one of the main weaknesses associated with the use of the purposive sampling technique is that, the inferential statistic procedure involve is invalid. This makes it difficult to extrapolate the findings to a larger population.

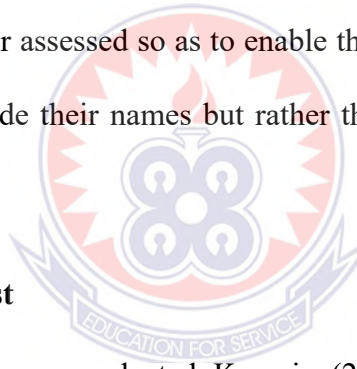
3.5 Data Collection Instrument

This study adopted the close procedure test from Karanja (2015). The test was used by the researcher to collect other data. A test refers to an assessment intended to measure the

respondent's knowledge or other abilities. It can again be defined as a set of questions, problems or the like, used as a means of evaluating the abilities, aptitude, skills, or performance of an individual or group as described by Sato, Hill and Lo (2019).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher had to obtain permission from the authorities of Tano D.A.JHS after which the teachers were engaged on the cloze test that was to be given to the students. The teachers had to review the various tests for which they agreed that the students would be capable of undertaking this test. The students had to read the passage in the test in turns and scores were taken before they were given the opportunity to undertake the other two tests that were in the cloze test. The two tests were later assessed so as to enable the researcher carry out the research. Students were not asked to provide their names but rather they were given numbers for which they used these student numbers.



3.10 Reading comprehension test

A comprehension passage was selected Karanja (2015) so as to meet the students' readability level in order to identify the reading comprehension difficulties among the students. This passage was adopted because these students are not familiar with the passage.

3.11 Data Processing and Analysis

The students were assessed based on the test that was taken after which the scores were inputted in excel sheet. Results were then analyzed using excel and results were presented in tables and figures based on the objectives in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS/FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of the research findings from the cloze test procedure for form two students. All the students that were selected to participate in the study took part in the study which translates into the fact that the response rate was 100%. The chapter is divided into two sections which include the background information of the respondents participating in the cloze test for the first section of the chapter and the results for the research questions that were formulated for this study. The questions that were formulated for this study are: what reading comprehension difficulties do students of Tano D.A.JHS face? What impact do the reading comprehension difficulties have on the students' academic performance? What could be done to reduce the reading comprehension difficulties to improve the academic performance of the students? The results are presented in tables and figures for the purpose of making interpretations for this study.

4.1 Demographics

This section considers the demographics for this study for which the demographics that were incorporated in this study were the gender of the participants and the age of the participants.

4.1.1 Gender of Students

Figure 4.1 depicts the gender of the students who participated in this study and from the findings of the study, the male students formed the majority of the participants in this study with a percentage of 60% while the females formed the minority of the participants in the study with a percentage of 40%. This gives an indication that the male students formed the majority group in the class and this is confirmed by the fact that most parents in the community are of the view that their girl children would only end up as house wives and that there was no need of spending huge amounts of money on the girl child only to end up in the kitchen. It is therefore important to educate parents living in the community on the role of the girl child in the society and the need to educate the girl child. It does not mean that the male children should be discouraged from going to school but rather there is the need to also empower female children.

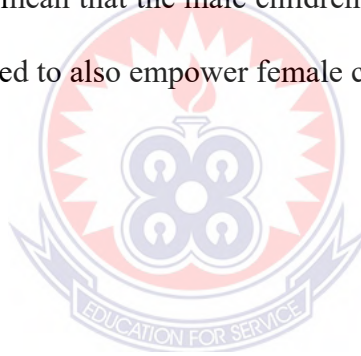
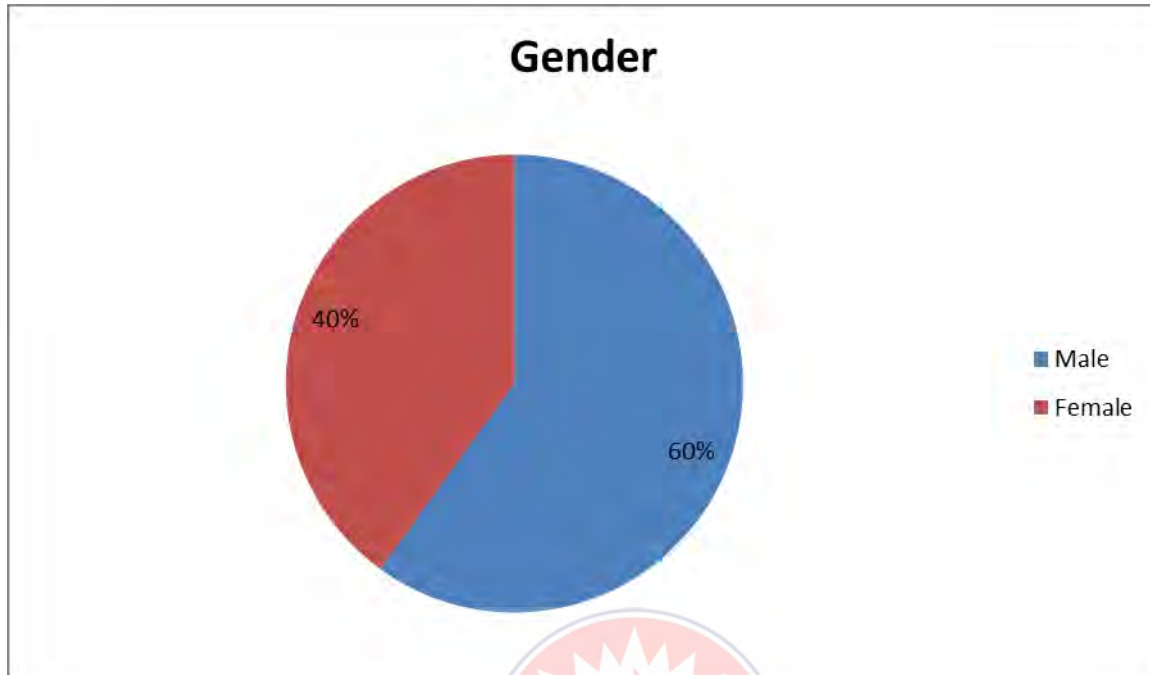


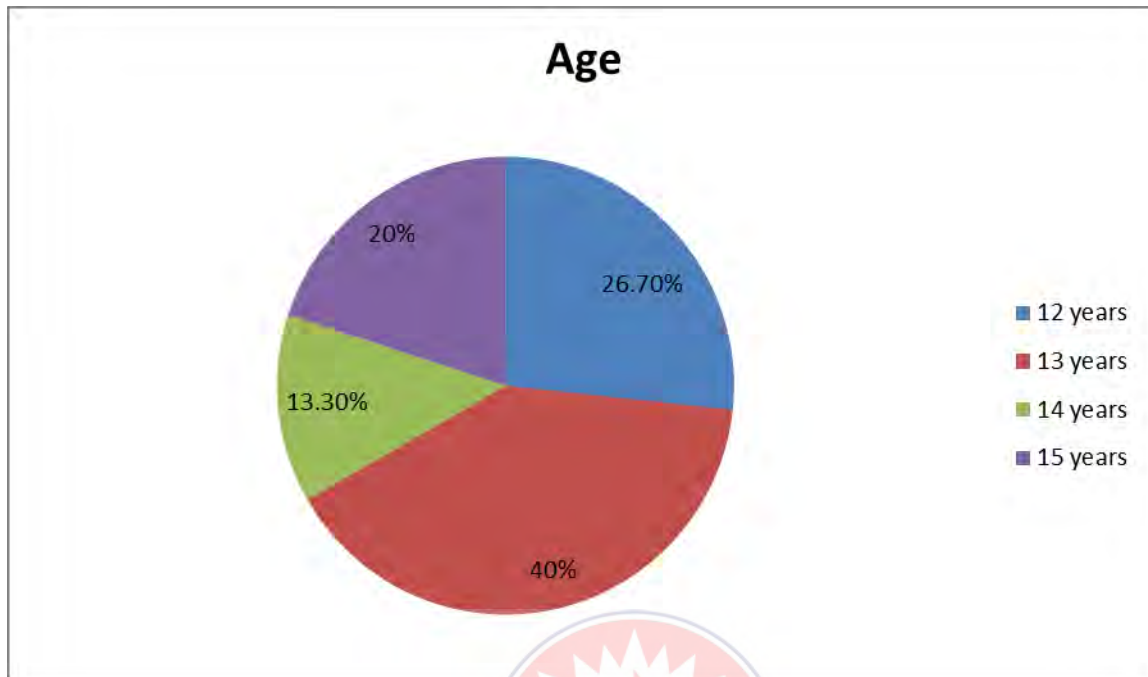
Figure 4.1: Gender of Students



Source: Field survey (2020)

4.1.2 Age of Students

Figure 4.2 depicts the age of the students that participated in this study. Findings showed that the majority of the participants participating in the study were 13 years with a percentage of 40%. This was followed by students who were 12 years with a percentage of 26.7% while students who were 15 years formed a percentage of 20%. The minority group among the participants pertaining to the age was those who were 14 years for which they formed a percentage of 13.3% of the respondents.

Figure 4.2: Age of Students

Source: Field survey (2020)

4.2 Reading Comprehension Difficulties Faced by Students of Tano D.A.JHS

The purpose of this section in this study was to investigate reading comprehension difficulties faced by students of Tano D.A. JHS. Feagans (1983) identified that most reading comprehension difficulties had to do with reading rate, reading comprehension (word omitted, word substituted, words mispronounced and words added), word recognition, and vocabulary problems. In order to determine the reading comprehension difficulties that mostly affected the academic performance of students in the school, several discussions were held with the teachers in the school and they confirmed to the fact that the reading comprehension difficulties that mostly affected the academic performance of students in the school had to do with reading

comprehension. This study adopted the cloze test from Karanja (2015) and was reviewed by teachers who taught Tano D.A.JHS two students for which it was accepted by the teachers. The cloze test was administered to 30 students consisting of 18 boys and 12 girls for whom they were required to read the comprehension passage while the researcher noted the errors that were committed by the students and were scored accordingly. The total number of words in the reading passage was 187 and each word carried a score of 1 which meant that the every student had the opportunity to score 187 points in the reading passage. In scoring students based on the reading passage, each error that was committed meant that 1 point was going to be deducted from the score of the student. This is to say that for every reading comprehension error that was committed by the respondents, 1 point was going to be deducted from the entire score of the student to determine the performance of the student. Figure 4.1 represents the average score that was scored by the 30 students that participated in the study.

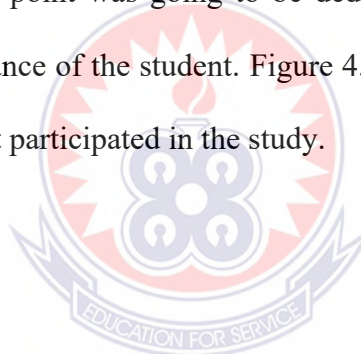
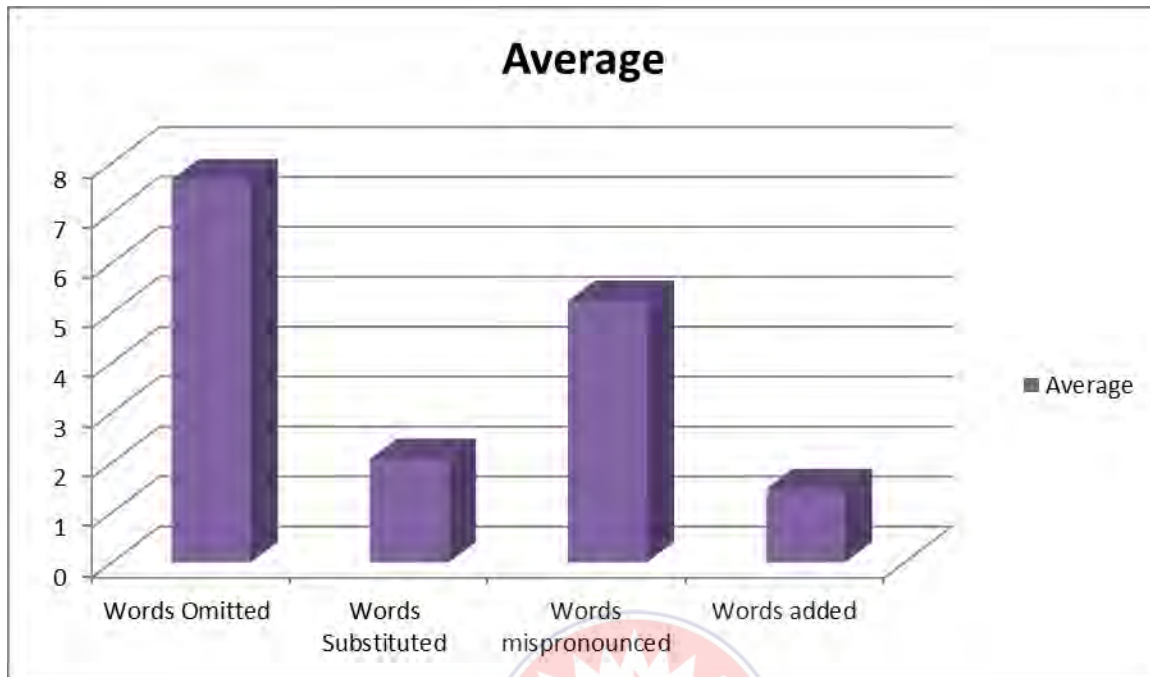


Figure 4.3: Reading Comprehension Difficulties faced by Students

Source: Field survey (2020)

From figure 4.1, the empirical findings revealed that the reading comprehension errors that were committed by students had to do with word omission with an average score of 7.6. This was followed by words that were mispronounced with an average score of 5.23. The third reading comprehension errors that were committed by the students who participated in the study had to do with words substitution with an average score of 2.07 and finally, words added with an average score of 1.47 was the least of the reading comprehension difficulties that were committed by students. There is therefore a clear indication that students were facing reading comprehension difficulties in school.

The empirical findings revealed that the reading comprehension difficulties that were mostly encountered by the students in the school had to do with word omission with an average score of 7.6. With this reading comprehension difficulty, it meant that anytime students omitted a particular word from the reading comprehension passage, it led to the distortion of the message that the writer intended to put on board. This means that there were always the distortions relating to the interpretation of the questions that were presented to students anytime they were taking tests. This was consistent with the findings of Alsubaie (20214) indicating that word omission formed a crucial part of the reading comprehension difficulties that was encountered by students in Saudi Arabian University EFL.

To continue with, empirical findings revealed that the next reading comprehension difficulties that were encountered by the students in the school had to do with words that were mispronounced with an average score of 5.23. It is important to note that words mispronunciation also had the effect of distorting the meanings of reading comprehension passages and for that matter had the capacity to distort the meaning of the passage that the writer was trying to put across. The findings from this study is also consistent with the findings from Karanja (2015) on the fact that word mispronunciation had an effect of changing the meaning of the message of the writer whenever the reader mispronounced the words that were used in the reading comprehension passage. Again, in the study undertaken by Alsubaie (2014), this error among students in Saudi Arabian University EFL mostly related to phonics and for that matter had to do with decoding of words that are used in reading comprehension passages for which anytime this error occurred, it changed that portion of the reading comprehension passage structure.

Furthermore, empirical findings revealed that the next reading comprehension difficulty that was encountered by students in Tano D.A.JHS had to do with words substitution. In this study, this reading comprehension difficulty averaged a score of 2.07 for which it had a similar impact as words that were omitted. This is because anytime a word was substituted in the reading comprehension passage, it distorted the meaning of the passage and for that matter influenced what the writer was trying to put on board. For this reading comprehension difficulty, this study agrees with the finding that was made by Karanja (2015) in his study and also this reading comprehension difficulty was identified by Alsubaie (2014) as part of lexical/semantics errors committed by students.

Finally, empirical findings revealed that the last reading comprehension difficulty that was encountered by students in Tano D.A.JHS had to do with words that were added in the reading comprehension passage which averaged a score of 1.47. Word addition explains words that are newly introduced by the reader in the reading comprehension passage and this introduction influenced the content of the reading comprehension passage. The study further determined that there were always distortions anytime words were introduced into the reading comprehension passage based on the fact that these words were entirely new in the passage for which they did not have to do with the passage that was being read or the new words introduced always changed the nature of the passage.

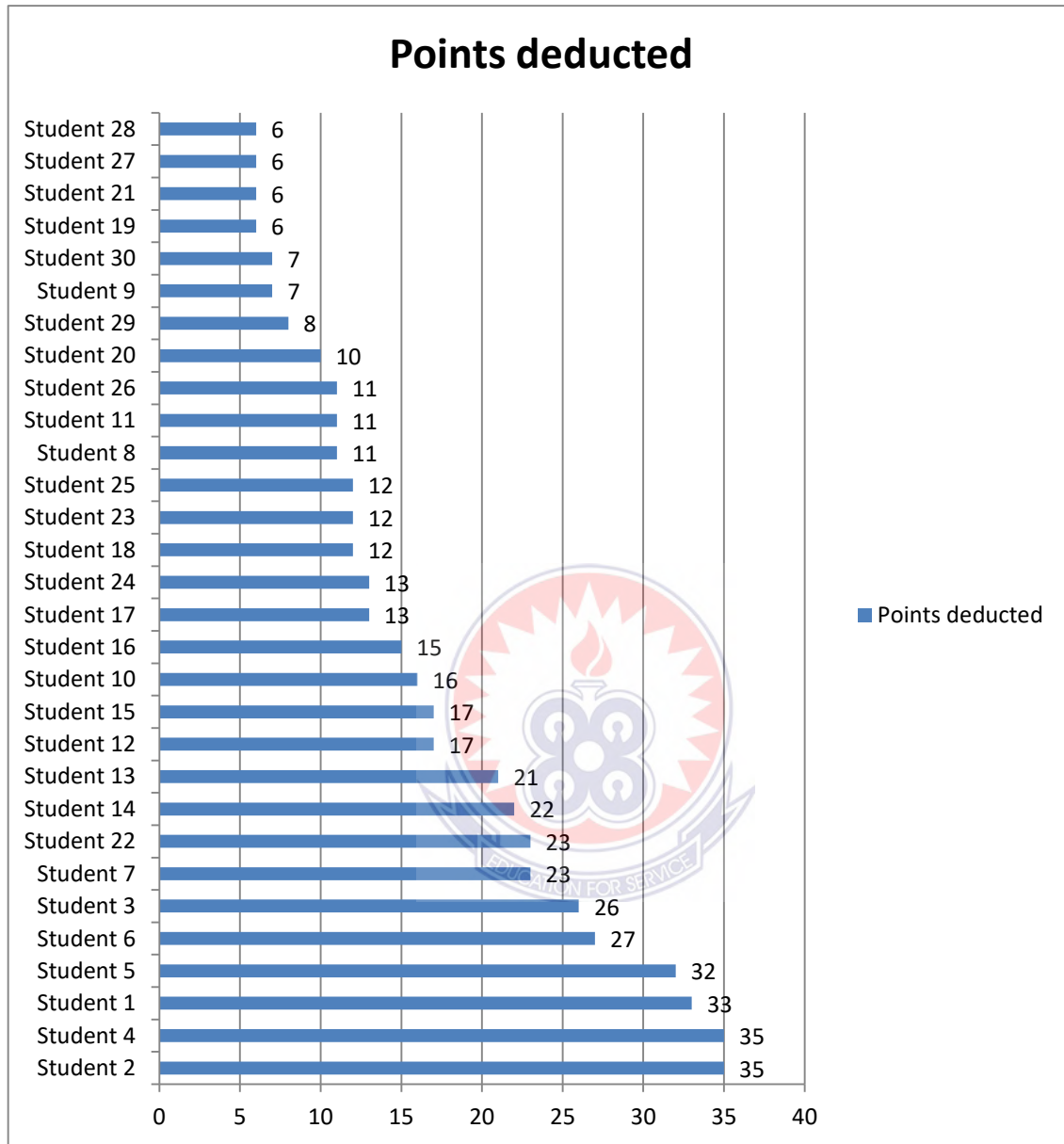
4.3 The Effect of Reading Comprehension Difficulties on Students' Academic Performance

This section discussed the effect of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of students in Tano D.A.JHS. In determining the effect of reading comprehension

difficulties on the performance of these students, the reading comprehension difficulties identified including word omitted, word substituted, words mispronounced and words added through reading comprehension were scored as depicted in figure 4.2. In scoring the students, each error committed attracted a one point deduction after which the total points to be deducted was computed for each student that participated in the research study.



Figure 4.4: Comprehension Errors Committed and Points Deducted



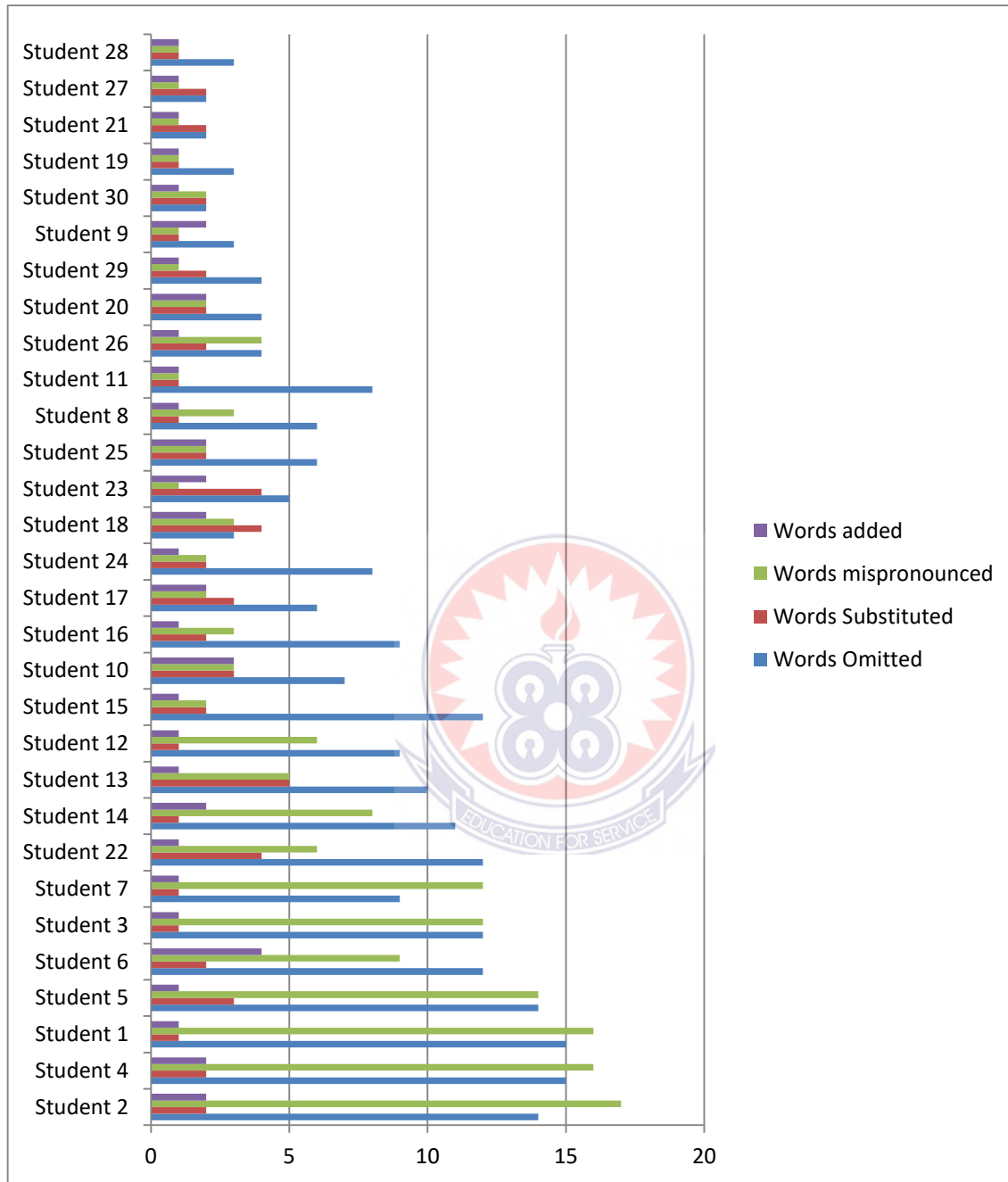
Source: Field survey (2020)

From figure 4.2, the highest point that was deducted based on the errors that were committed by a student was 35 points out of the possible 187 points that each student was

supposed to get for which 2 students (Student 4 and student 2) had this point deduction. This was followed by student 1 who faced 33 points deductions for the errors that were committed by the student. Student 5 also faced a 32 point deduction for the errors that were committed, student 6 faced a 26 point deduction for the errors that were committed, while student 7 and student 22 also faced a 23 point deduction for the errors that were committed. Student 14, student 22 and student 13 faced a 21 point deduction, student 12 and student 15 faced a 17 points deduction, student 10 faced a 16 point deduction, student 16 also faced a 15 point deduction while student 17 and 24 faced a 13 point deduction. In continuing with the points deductions that was faced by students as a result of the errors committed, student 18, student 23 and student 25 faced a 12 point deduction, student 8, student 11 and student 26 also faced an 11 point deduction, student 20 also faced a 10 point deduction. Student 29 faced an 8 point deduction while student 9 and 30 faced a 7 point deduction. Finally, three students performed better in the reading comprehension that was undertaken for which they only faced a 6 point possible deduction. These were student 19, student 21, student 27 and student 28. These points' deductions determined the scores that each student had after going through the reading comprehension test that was undertaken.

In order to determine the effect of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of the students in Tano D.A JHS, there was the need to breakdown the reading comprehension test results into the errors identified including word omitted, word substituted, words mispronounced, and words added as depicted by Figure 4.3. This was to determine how the individual difficulties impacted on the academic performance of students by way of comprehension questions and the fill-in test that formed part of the cloze procedure test.

Figure 4.5: Point Deduction for Errors



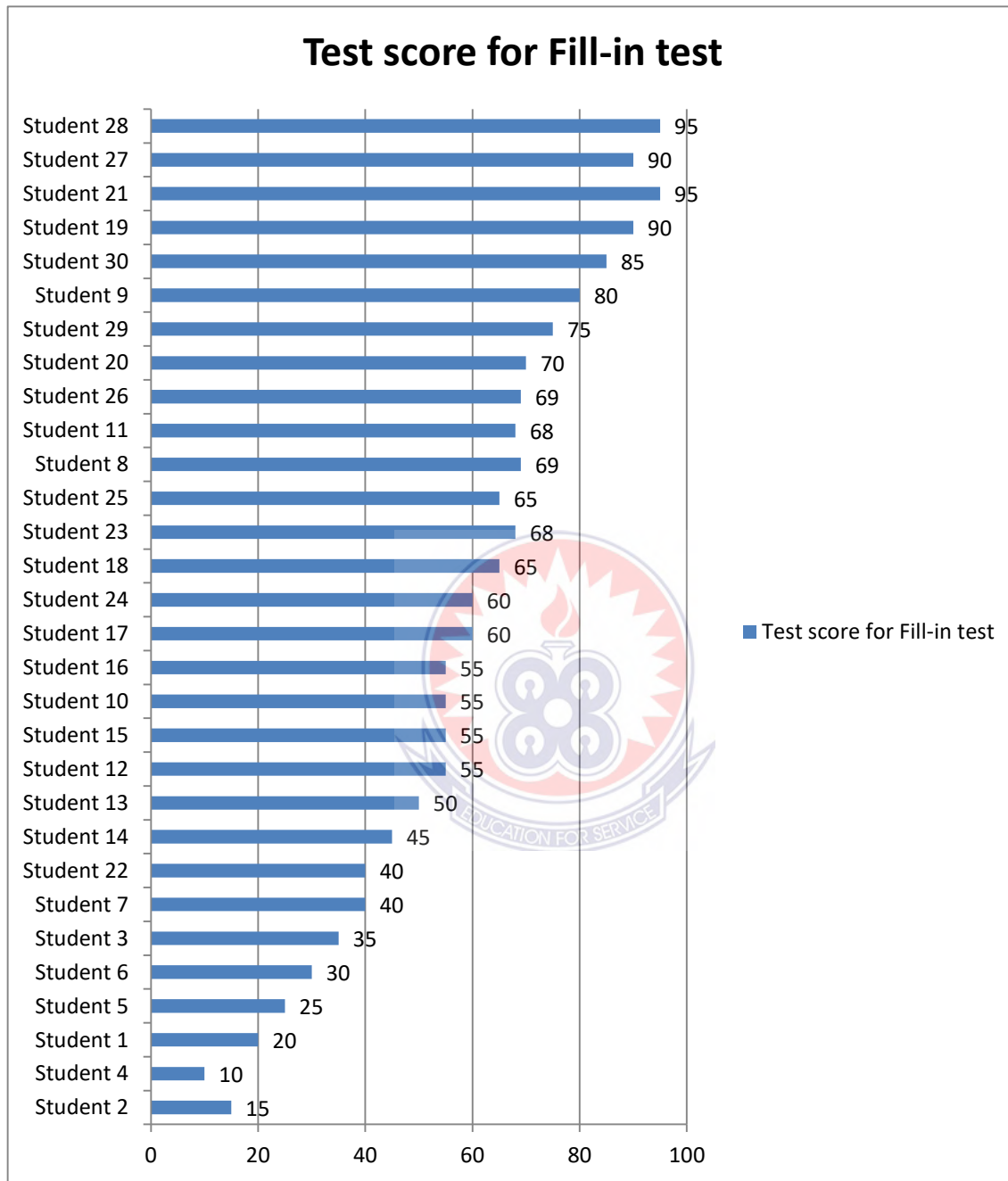
Source: Field survey (2020)

Results from figure 4.3 showed that the errors that were mostly committed included word omission, which was followed by words mispronounced. This was also followed by words substitution and finally words added as the least of the errors that were committed by the students who participated in the study. The point's deductions scores that were obtained and the reading comprehension difficulties that were mostly faced by students from the reading passage test translated into the test scores that were obtained from the fill-in test that was conducted on the students. This is depicted by figure 4.6 and from the results obtained, it was determined that students who faced least point deductions in the reading passage test translated into the high performance of students. On the other hand, the students who faced high point deductions in the reading passage test translated into the low performance of students in the fill-in test that was conducted for the participants in the study. This is further confirmed in figure 4.7 where the test score from the comprehension questions were obtained. From the empirical findings, it was confirmed that students who faced least point deductions in the comprehension questions test obtained higher test scores as compared to the students who faced higher point deductions in the test. To confirm the empirical findings that was found in this study, the end of term results for English Language was collected which is depicted in table 4.1 and from the results that was obtained in their end of term examinations conducted in English Language, this research establishes that reading comprehension difficulties affects the academic performance of students as confirmed by the results obtained by the students. This showed the performance of the students when it came to reading comprehension after identifying the various reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students. The performance of students after identifying these reading comprehension difficulties also translated into the performance of these

students in the fill-in test and the comprehension questions that were provided for the students and the performance of these students was from the least performing student to the highest performing student in the study. The scores obtained confirmed that reading comprehension difficulties affected the academic performance of students as performance matched the academic performance of students in their end of term examinations in English Language.

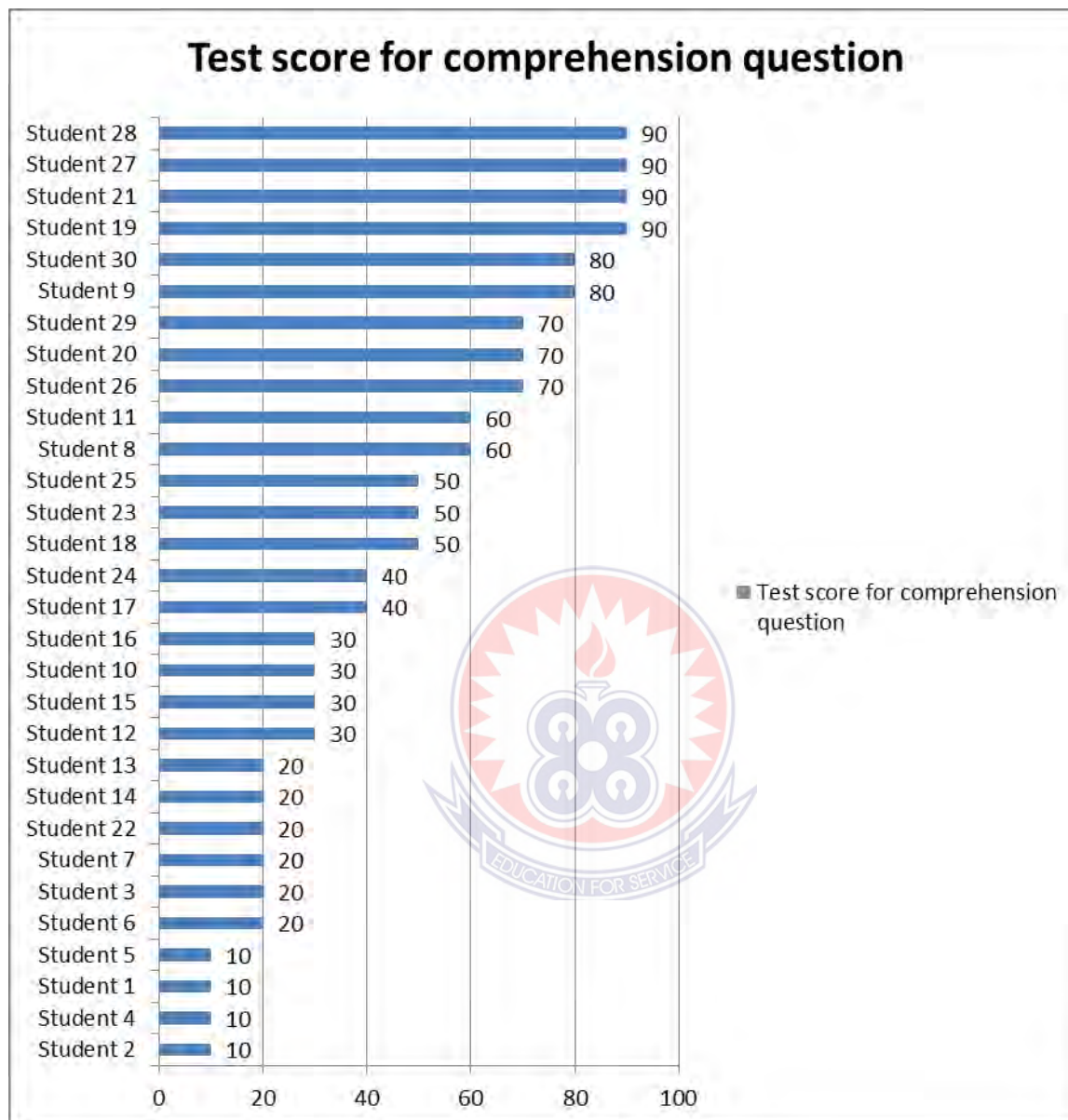


Figure 4.6: Test score for Fill-in Test



Source: Field survey (2020)

Figure 4.7: Test Score for Comprehension Questions

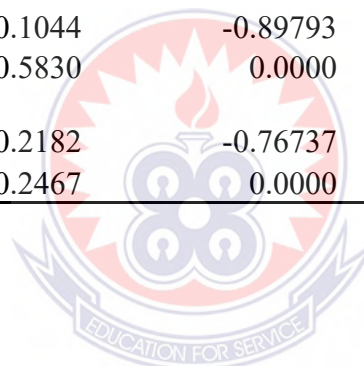


Source: Field survey (2020)

Table 4.2 Correlation Matrix

	<i>Words Omitted</i>	<i>Words Substituted</i>	<i>Words mispronounced</i>	<i>Words added</i>	<i>Reading Passage Scores</i>	<i>Fill-in</i>	<i>Test score for comprehension question</i>
Words Omitted	1						
Words Substituted	0.020005	1					
Words mispronounced	0.825631	-0.10683	1				
Words added	0.107309	0.177686	0.10619	1			
Reading Passage Scores	-0.94279	-0.08035	-0.94608	-0.21039	1		
Fill-in	0.0000	0.6730	0.0000	0.2644	0.979378	1	
Test score for comprehension question	-0.94189	-0.1044	-0.89793	-0.26461	0.907248	0.945127	1
	0.0000	0.5830	0.0000	0.1576			
	-0.92361	-0.2182	-0.76737	-0.22805	0.907248	0.945127	1
	0.0000	0.2467	0.0000	0.2255			

Source: Field survey (2020)



To confirm that students who faced higher point deductions from the test conducted performed poorly in the series of tests that were carried out, a correlation matrix was constructed. Empirical findings from the correlation matrix revealed that there was a significant negative strong correlation between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words omitted with correlation co-efficient of -0.94279, -0.94189 and -0.92361, respectively. This meant that for students who faced higher points deductions for words that were omitted performed poorly in the test scores and for that matter explains that students that omitted more words in the reading comprehension were likely to perform poorly and on the other hand, students that omitted less words in the reading comprehension were likely to perform better.

To continue with, empirical findings from the correlation matrix revealed that there was an insignificant negative weak correlation between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words substituted with correlation co-efficient of -0.08035, -0.1044 and -0.2182, respectively. This meant that for students who faced higher points deductions for words that were substituted not likely to be significantly influenced through their academic performance. This could be said about students who also faced lower point deductions for words that were substituted.

Furthermore, empirical findings from the correlation matrix revealed that there was a significant negative strong correlation between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words mispronounced with correlation co-efficient of -0.94608, -0.89793 and -0.7673, respectively. This meant that for students who faced higher

points deductions for words that were mispronounced performed poorly in the test scores and for that matter explains that students that mispronounced more in the reading comprehension were likely to perform poorly and on the other hand, students that mispronounced less in the reading comprehension were likely to perform better.

Finally, empirical findings from the correlation matrix revealed that there was an insignificant negative weak correlation between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words added with correlation co-efficient of -0.21039, -0.26461 and -0.22805, respectively. This meant that for students who faced higher points deductions for words added were not likely to be significantly influenced by way of their academic performance. This could be said about students who also faced lower point deductions for words that were added.

4.4 Suggest Appropriate Strategies to Reduce Reading Comprehension Difficulties among Students to Improve their Academic Performance

The empirical findings revealed that a greater number of the student participants in the study showed that they were having reading comprehension difficulties and for that matter this section seeks to elaborate on appropriate strategies that would reduce the reading comprehension difficulties among Tano D.A.JHS students so as to improve upon their academic performance. It is important to note that the reader is always responsible for the control that he/she exercises over his/her reading comprehension process and for that matter the reader has to adopt some metacognitive strategies to aid the reader in the reading process to aid the reader in the monitoring of his/her performance in the reading comprehension process. In addition to the

strategies that must be adopted by the reader, the reader also has to be equipped with reading comprehension skills which must be deliberate, conscious and effortful. The strategies that must be adopted by the reader must be both at the text level (comprehending the entire text) and the word level (comprehending words). For readers, there is the need to adopt the following strategies so as to improve their academic performance of students:

1. Planning and identifying strategies: These strategies include planning the text reading process, determining whether there are distinguished features, remembering why the text is read, reading throughout the entire text, reading selectively certain portions of the text, checking out if there are markers of meanings, and finally determining unclear portions of the text.
2. Monitoring strategies: These strategies include monitoring the ongoing comprehending of the text, envisaging what follows immediately, clarifying while going through the reading process, making modifications to the comprehension in reference to information being received and planning how comprehension problems could be resolved. These strategies are determined as part of deliberate measures put in place by the reader to check, monitor and evaluate the reader's thinking prowess and performance levels so as to make sure that the reader verify his/her performance process.
3. Evaluating strategies: These strategies help the reader to make decisions on the progress made pertaining to the reading comprehension.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This is the final chapter in this research study and for which it gives a summary of the findings that were that were discovered in this study. In making a summary to the findings in this study, it was carried out by considering the objectives to this study after which conclusions were made pertaining to the same objectives that were formulated in this study. Finally, recommendations were made based on the findings that were made together with recommendations for future studies.

5.1 Summary of Findings

5.1.1 Demographic Information of Participants

The demographic information of the participants as pertaining to the gender of the respondents showed that the male students formed the majority of the participants in this study with a percentage of 60% while the females formed the minority of the participants in the study with a percentage of 40%. Again, pertaining to the age of the participants, findings showed that the majority of the participants participating in the study were 13 years with a percentage of 40%. This was followed by students who were 12 years with a percentage of 26.7% while students who were 15 years formed a percentage of 20%. The minority group among the participants pertaining to the age was those who were 14 years for which they formed a percentage of 13.3% of the respondents.

5.1.2 Reading Comprehension Difficulties Faced by Students of Tano D.A.JHS

The empirical findings revealed that the reading comprehension errors that were committed by students had to do with word omission with an average score of 7.6. This was followed by words that were mispronounced with an average score of 5.23. The third reading comprehension errors that were committed by the students who participated in the study had to do with words substitution with an average score of 2.07 and finally, words added with an average score of 1.47 was the least of the reading comprehension difficulties that were committed by students. The reading comprehension difficulties that were encountered by the students therefore included word omission, word mispronunciation, word substitution and word addition.

5.1.3 The Effect of Reading Comprehension Difficulties on Students' Academic Performance

In order to determine the effect of reading comprehension difficulties on the academic performance of these students, scores were accumulated after the deduction of points for the various reading comprehension errors that were identified. The performances of the students were arranged in order of performance, that is, from the least performing student to the highest performing student. The performance of students after identifying these reading comprehension difficulties also translated into the performance of these students in the fill-in test and the comprehension questions that were provided for the students and the performance of these students was from the least performing student to the highest performing student in the study. The scores obtained confirmed that reading comprehension difficulties affected the academic

performance of students as performance matched the academic performance of students in their end of term examinations in English Language. To establish how the individual reading comprehension difficulties impacted on the academic performance of students, a significant negative strong correlation was established between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words omitted with correlation co-efficient of -0.94279, -0.94189 and -0.92361, respectively. An insignificant negative weak correlation was established between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words substituted with correlation co-efficient of -0.08035, -0.1044 and -0.2182, respectively. A significant negative strong correlation was established between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words mispronounced with correlation co-efficient of -0.94608, -0.89793 and -0.7673, respectively. Finally, an insignificant negative weak correlation was established between reading passage test scores, fill-in test scores and test score for comprehension questions and words added with correlation co-efficient of -0.21039, -0.26461 and -0.22805, respectively.

5.1.4 Suggest Appropriate Strategies to Reduce Reading Comprehension Difficulties among Students to Improve their Academic Performance

It was established that in order to improve the academic performance of students, students must always be responsible for the control that he/she exercises over his/her reading comprehension process and for that matter the reader has to adopt some metacognitive strategies to aid the reader in the reading process to aid the reader in the monitoring of his/her performance in the reading comprehension process. In addition to the strategies that must be adopted by the reader, the reader also has to be equipped with reading comprehension skills which must be

deliberate, conscious and effortful. The strategies that must be adopted by the reader must be both at the text level (comprehending the entire text) and the word level (comprehending words). As part of the strategies that was suggested, it was established that the reader must adopt planning and identifying strategies, monitoring strategies, and evaluating strategies.

5.2 Conclusions

Reading comprehension difficulties has been one of the main challenges of students that affect the performance of students for which it was established that has been established that this challenge is the main problem of students in Tano D.A.JHS. This study therefore sought to investigate the impact that reading comprehension difficulties has on the academic performance of the students of Tano–Odumasi D/A J.H.S and to determine appropriate reading comprehension strategies that would improve the academic performance of students with such difficulties. Literature relating to reading comprehension, reading comprehension difficulties, and effective strategies for tackling reading comprehension were reviewed being backed by a theoretical foundation. The study therefore adopted a quasi-experimental and descriptive research design with the study area being Junior High School pupils of Sekyere South District in the Ashanti Region. A sample size of 30 students took part in the study consisting of 18 males and 12 females for which they were selected through purposive sampling technique. The cloze test procedure was also used to test students in determining the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students and how these difficulties affected the academic performance of students.

Findings indicated that word omission was the most common comprehension difficulty encountered by students followed by word mispronunciation, word substitution and word addition. It was established that these reading comprehension difficulties affected the academic performance of students through the various tests in the close procedure test carried which was confirmed by the end of term examination results of the students. As part of the recommendations, it was recommended that the school authorities must ensure that students are taken through series of reading comprehensions. The school had no library and for that matter it was recommended that the authorities put strategies and also make funding available to construct a school library, resource the library and also encourage the students to read so as to make sure that the students improve on their reading comprehension skills. The government and Ministry of Education must also make sure that they implement policies that makes reading comprehension in schools compulsory so that students improve upon their reading comprehension skills which ultimately affects the academic performance of these students.

5.3 Recommendations

As already established, it was determined that reading comprehension difficulties affect the academic performance of students for strategies that improve the academic performance of students were suggested. As part of the recommendations, it is prudent that the school authorities ensure that students are taken through series of reading comprehensions. It was observed that the school had no library in place and for that matter it is recommended that the school authorities put strategies and also make funding available to construct a school library, resource the library and also encourage the students to read so as to make sure that the students improve on their reading comprehension skills. The government and Ministry of Education must also make sure

that they implement policies that makes reading comprehension in schools compulsory so that students improve upon their reading comprehension skills which ultimately affects the academic performance of these students. For future studies, it is important that this study must be expanded in terms of the study area and for that matter future studies must consider covering the entire district so as to comprehensively determine the reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students so as to further recommend strategies that improve the academic performance of students.



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APPENDIX**CLOZE PROCEDURE TEST**

Candidate's number _____ Class _____ Date _____

Fill in the gaps with the most appropriate word

There are many kinds of snakes in the world. However, (1) _____ all of them are poisonous. The most common snakes can sometimes be (2) _____ in our gardens. These harmless grass snakes vary in (3) _____ from one foot to three feet. They rarely bite people and (4) _____, in fact, shy creatures. Grass snakes eat insects and small animals (5) _____ frogs and chicks. They are good for the garden as they keep (6) _____ pests like rats and grasshoppers. The more poisonous varieties (7) _____ snakes are the python and viper. (8) _____ snakes are seldom found in gardens. Instead, these snakes (9) _____ in forests or in dense vegetation (10) _____ as swampland. They do not actively seek (11) _____ victims, but (12) _____ defend themselves against potential enemies (13) _____ intruders. If the snake senses (14) _____ coming, it would rather glide noiselessly away (15) _____ confront the person. Contrary to popular belief, snakes do not sting (16) _____ their tongue. They bite with two fangs (17) _____ point backwards. The snake's tongue, which continuously flicks (18) _____ and out, is actually its 'fingers'. Its tongue (19) _____ of nerve endings which helps the snake feel the food before (20) _____ it.

Reading Passage

Candidate's number _____

There are many kinds of snakes in the world. However, not all of them are poisonous. The most common snakes can sometimes be found in our gardens. These harmless grass snakes vary in length from one foot to three feet. They rarely bite people and are, in fact, shy creatures. Grass snakes eat insects and small animals like frogs and chicks. They are good for the garden as they keep away pests like rats and grasshoppers. The more poisonous varieties of snakes are the python and viper. These snakes are seldom found in gardens. Instead, these snakes live in forests or in dense vegetation such as swampland. They do not actively seek out victims, but will defend themselves against potential enemies and intruders. If the snake senses someone coming, it would rather glide noiselessly away than confront the person. Contrary to popular belief, snakes do not sting with their tongue. They bite with two fangs which point backwards. The snake's tongue, which continuously flicks in and out, is actually its 'fingers'. Its tongue consists of nerve endings which help the snake feel the food before eating it.

Scoring Sheet

Total number of words omitted _____

Total number of words substituted _____

Total number of words mispronounced _____

Total number of words added _____



Comprehension Questions

1. All kinds of snakes in the world are poisonous. True/False (1Mk)
2. Where do we commonly find the harmless grass snake? _____ (1mk)
3. Grass snakes eat _____ and _____ (1mk)
4. Why are grass snake good for gardens _____ (1mk)
5. How do poisonous varieties of snake defend themselves against potential enemies and intruders? _____ (1mk)
6. Snakes feel the food with their _____ before eating it (1mk)
7. Explain the meaning of the following word and expressions as used in the passage (3mks)

(a) Poisonous

(b) They rarely bite people

(c) Are good for the gardens

(d) Seldom

(e) Potential enemies

(f) Fingers

8. What is the popular belief about snakes?

_____ (1mk)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION