UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

TEACHING OF SPELLING IN EARLY GRADE (P 3) CLASSROOM (CASE STUDY OF PUPILS AT WASSA AMENFI CENTRAL DISTRICT)

HANNAH ADWOBA BUAH

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(CASE STUDY OF PUPILS AT WASSA AMENFI CENTRAL DISTRICT)**

**HANNAH ADWOBA BUAH
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**A dissertation in the Department of Early Childhood Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies, submitted to the School of
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of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
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# DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Hannah Adwoba Buah, of the Department of Early Childhood Education, do hereby declare that except the references made from other people's work which have been duly acknowledged, this dissertation is entirely my own original research and that it has neither in whole or part been presented elsewhere for similar award.

Signature: ………………………………….

Date: ………………………………….

Supervisor's Declaration

I certify that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines laid down for supervision of dissertation by the University of Education, Winneba.
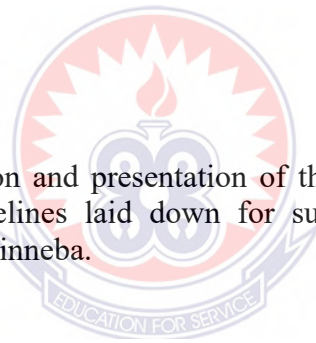
Supervisor's Name: Professor Charles Owu-Ewie

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date: ………………….………………….

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to my Parents, of blessed memory, the Buah family and my children.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to improve pupils spelling skills in Wassa Amenfi Central District in the Western Region. A total of 30 pupils with an average age of 7 and 3 teachers were purposively chosen to conduct the study. This qualitative research design used observation, documentation and interview to ascertain the existence of the problem. The research revealed that pupils spelling errors were due to the following causes: No teaching and learning resources used in teaching spelling, the use of wrong teaching method, absenteeism of students, lesser number of exercises given to student per week, irregularity in providing feedback to pupils, early grade classrooms not conducive for learning and failure of parents to provide basic needs for their children at early level. The study also revealed that teachers could use the following strategies to help leaners improve their spelling ability: The use of word game, creation of conducive classroom environment for the children, practice Jolly phonics method of teaching, preparation and usage of effective teaching and learning materials by teachers. The researcher recommends among other things, that English teachers should use relevant teaching learning resources and give enough opportunities for pupils to practice what they are taught in class, to make pupils become independent learners which will enrich their vocabulary skills.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

Chapter one of this project deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitation.

1.1 Background to the Study
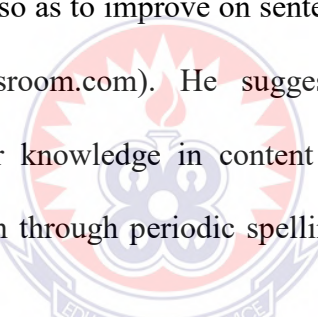
In Ghana, many pupils complete basic school and proceed for secondary education in this free Senior High School Era, with little ability to spell simple words correctly. We cannot put much blame on the pupils, neither can we blame the teachers totally. This problem exist as a result of several factors which affect writing, reading and understanding of events.

Most time, candidates lose vital marks in both internal and external examinations due to wrongful spelling of words. The education think tank, Africa Education Watch, report titled 'An independent assessment of the conduct of the 2020 WASSCE by WAEC'. The report investigated and documented irregularities that characterized the conduct of WASSCE 2020 by WAEC. With a review of relevant literature on previous WAEC examinations' reports in Ghana, it further discussed the root causes, symptoms, and effects of WAEC's perennial examination malpractices in Ghana. This report recommends policy and administrative remedies to improve the conduct of examinations in Ghana and beyond. It also traces the root cause of various examination irregularities by examining the activities of various actors within the examination value chain, while making policy and administrative recommendations to

end examination irregularities and enhance the credibility of WAEC's assessment and certifications system in Ghana and West Africa.

There were reports of cheating and leaking of examination questions in the WASSCE 2020 examination due to candidate's inability to spell and write words correctly but still want to pass (htt://citinewsroom.com)

The chief examiner for languages, report for BECE, 2020, indicated candidates did not perform well due to poor organization of essay, inappropriate use of language or clarity of expression, poor use of language, poor stock of vocabulary and poor skills of answering comprehension questions. Teachers should teach thoroughly the grammar of the languages so as to improve on sentence construction of candidates, he emphasized (htt://citinewsroom.com). He suggested that language teachers be encourage to update their knowledge in content and pedagogy. He stressed that candidates should be taken through periodic spelling drills to improve their spelling (htt://citinewsroom.com).

Research shows that children learn through play. Perlmutter and Burrelle (1950), both teachers, also give us an insight into how teachers can integrate play and work. Therefore, if the method of instruction does not arouse and sustain learner's interest, they got bored so they cannot recognize the words or recall when they are supposed to do so. Spelling has been taught in different ways by teachers of English. However, it seems the most popular approach teachers' used is to write the words on the chalk board for pupils to stand up and spell. This learning is characterized by rote learning which invariably makes pupils forgot easily what they learnt.

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The situation aggravates by pupils' difficulty in relating phonemes to graphemes. This means that when the teacher pronounces a word, the pupils cannot write or use the correct orthography. The negative believes and practices of classroom teachers, perhaps add to the problem. The class teacher punishes pupils when they spell words wrongly. This create tension, anxiety and fear in the classroom and deprives the Child of the chance to take risks.

Although, teachers use teaching and learning materials, the question one may ask are: to what extent do the teaching and learning materials used relate to what the teachers teach? How often do teachers use the materials? The instruction materials used in teaching spelling to make it appealing to children are not often effective. If teachers use games, puzzles, alphabet cards and other playing materials to teach, pupils' interest in the learning process will be enhanced.

The teaching of spelling had been a source of worry, so the researcher wanted to conduct the research to put in an intervention through word games and the use of phonics method to find out if indeed when we use these approaches would enhance their proficiency in English.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

UNESCO (1953), stated that the Ghanaian language (L1) should be used as medium of instruction in Schools, especially at the Early Grade level (Kindergarten one to Basic three) and as a result Ghana has embarked on a lay-polig. From basic four onwards, English becomes the medium of instruction, where L1 taught as a subject. English language plays a major role as the medium of instruction in the Ghanaian Schools. As such, much emphasis is laid on the teaching of English.

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However, it seems every now and then, there are complaints about pupils' performance in both spoken and written English. Learners perform poorly in English Language. The chief examiners report, 2019, comments on candidates' poor performance due to errors they made in spelling. WASSCE 2019 and WASSCE 2020, Science Chief report shown that candidates fail Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Integrated science and others applied sciences just because of their inability to spelling words correctly (htt://citinewsroom.com). Teachers in our schools today, do not allow students in their early stage to master their own language before the introduction of second language, hence, their lack of proficiency in the language (L2).

Takeuchi (2003) states that students should be helped to practice phonological aspects in the beginning stage, create opportunities to help students memorize formulaic expressions and illustrative sentences. Example story telling. Encourage students to practice listening using dictation, make students read aloud repeatedly, help students vocabulary at the beginner stage, engage students in intensive, periodic and continuous self-study. Create opportunity for practice in the target language (English).

Huang and Naerssen (1987), postulate that students should listen to and do oral pattern drills and listen to improve pronunciation. Students should be made to memorize and recite texts, encourage imitation example from teacher's model and create opportunities for students to read to learn vocabulary and grammatical structures. However, inadequate training of teachers, lack of resources and classrooms and unconducive classroom often prevents students from doing well in class. This state of affairs has generated a lot of debate among stakeholders in education taking entrenched positions whiles others attribute the problem to the manner in which the English Language is taught. Others blame it on the pupils. The question is; how do

teachers handle this aspect of the English Language? What methodologies do teachers use? Will the methodologies be appropriate? Therefore, the problem to be investigated in this study is whether the use of word game and phonic method in teaching spelling can help improve pupils' performance.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to explore the teaching of spelling in early grade (p 3) classroom of pupils at Wassa Amenfi Central District.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives were to:

a) Identify the causes of students' inability to spell accurately at their level.

b) Identify the strategies can be used by teachers to improve children's spelling.

c) Examine how spelling can be improved at the Early Grade level.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions for the study are:

a) What are the causes of students' inability to spell accurately at their level?

b) What strategies can be used by teachers to improve children's spelling?

c) How can spelling be improved at the Early Grade level?

1.6 Significant of the Study

The findings of this research would be of immense benefit to teachers, students and educational policy planners/makers.

a) Benefit to teachers

It would help basic school teachers with new insight of teaching English Language.

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It help would teachers to know the stages of students' progression in spelling development.

b) Benefit to the students

It would help the students in basic school to acquire better way of learning English Language to improve their writing, speaking and spelling skills in and outside school.

c) Benefit to Policy planners in education

Indeed, it would help policy makers in the education sector in formulating language policies by revising and re-designing the English syllabus at the basic school level. School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) can include it in in-service training course for teachers to be innovative in the teaching of English Language.

1.7 Limitation

The researcher, limits herself to three (3) primary schools in the Wassa Amenfi Central District of the Western Region.
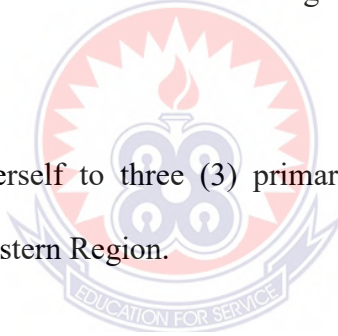
1.8 Delimitations

There are many approaches to the teaching of spelling. This study focused on only using word games and phonic method in teaching spelling to the three (3) selected primary schools in the Wassa Amenfi Central District.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters

Chapter one dealt with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitation.

Chapter two of the research work covers the skills in teaching learning, transfer, interference and overgeneralization in learning, teaching listening, teaching speaking, teaching reading, teaching writing, definition spelling, stages of spelling and strategies of teaching spelling

Chapter three dealt with the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection protocols, data collection strategies and data analysis.

Chapter four presents the results of the study on the problem associated with children's inability to spell simple words in the study area, the causes of students' inability to spell accurately at their level and strategies teachers could use to improve children's spelling

Chapter five covered the summary of the study, findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations.
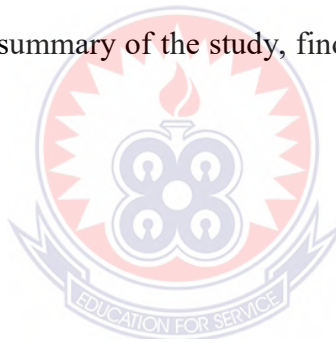
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview

This chapter of the research work covers the Skills in teaching learning, Transfer, Interference and Overgeneralization in learning, Teaching listening, Teaching speaking, Teaching reading, Teaching writing, Definition spelling, Stages of spelling and Strategies of teaching spelling.

2.1 Skills in Teaching Language

Brown (2000), defines teaching as showing or helping someone to learn to do something, giving instructions, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. Teaching is guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning. One's understanding of how the learner learns will determine one's philosophy of education, teaching style, approach, methods, and classroom techniques. Teaching skills all educators should foster are effective communicative skills, creative thinking, ability to adapt and effective organizational skills. (https://www.teachhub.com).

Kimble and Garmezy (1963), explain that learning is traditionally viewed as acquiring or getting knowledge of a subject or a skill by study experience or instruction. It is a relatively permanent change in a behavioural tendency and is the result of reinforced practice. For example, if a child does not know how to read the alphabet of his or her language initially but after instruction from the teacher can now read, we say learning has taken place because the child has moved from a situation of not knowing to knowing. There has been a change in behavior.

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Brown (2000), listed the following as components of learning:

- Learning is acquisition or getting

- Learning is retention of information or skill.

- Retention implies storage systems, memory and cognitive organization.

- Learning is relatively permanent but subject to forgetting.

- Learning involves some sort of practice perhaps reinforced practice.

- Learning is a change in behavior.

There are types of theories to explain how learning occurs in organisms. These theories include behavioristic (classical and operant) proposed by Pavlov and Skinner, cognitive proposed by Ausubel and constructivist by Rogers. The theories of learning however do not capture all the possible elements of general principles of human learning (Brown, 2000). These theories have generated various taxonomies of types of human learning. It must be noted that types of learning vary according to the context and subject matter concerned. The eight types of learning relating to second language learning process, according to Brown, 2000 (citing, Gagne, 1965) are signal learning, where learner learns to make a general response to a signal. This is what Pavlov refers to as the classical conditioned response. In the second language learning situation, signal learning occurs when learners make responses of some kind (emotional, cognitive, verbal or non-verbal) to language (signal).

Stimulus-response learning. This is where the learner acquires a precise response to a discriminated stimulus. A connection is therefore made between the stimulus and the response. Stimulus response occurs in second language learning process. This is evident in the acquisition of learning the sound system of the target language in which, through a process of conditioning and trial and error, the learner's

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pronunciation of the sound system get closer and closer to native like pronunciation. In addition, lexical items in the target language are acquired by stimulus-response fashion.

Channing, what learners acquire or learn is a chain of two or more stimulus-response connections. Learning is not done in isolation. In the acquisition of phonological sequences and syntactic patterns, the stringing together of several responses is evident. For example, learner of a second language string together individual sounds and words learned to form appropriate words and sentences respectively. Verbal association learning, this involves learning of chains that are verbal. In the second language learning situation, verbal association involves making distinction between verbal and non-verbal chains. (Adopted from Owu-Ewie, 2019)

Multiple discrimination learning. The learner learns to discriminate or make different responses to different stimuli, which may resemble each other in physical appearance. Although the learning of each stimulus-response connection is a simple occurrence, the connections tend to interfere with one another. This type of learning is very relevant to second language learning where for example, a word takes on several meanings or a rule in the native language is reshaped to fit a second language context.

Concept learning. In this type of learning, the learner acquires the ability to make a common response to a class of stimuli even though the individual members of the class may differ widely from each other. The learner is able to make responses that identify an entire class of objects or events. This types of learning explains the notion that language and cognition are closely related. Besides, the rules of language themselves-rules of syntax, rules of conversation, rules of semantics, rules of phonology-are linguistic concept that have to be acquired by learners.

Principle learning. Principle learning is simply a chain of two or more concept. It functions to organize behavior and experience. It is an extension of concept learning to the formation of a linguistic system, in which rules are not isolated in rote memory, but conjoined and generalized in a total system.

Problem solving. It is the learning process where previously acquired concepts and principles are combined in a conscious focus on an unsolved or ambiguous set of events. Problem solving is evident in second language learning as the learner continually faced with sets of events that are problems to be solved. The learner, for example has apply rules learned to solve a syntax problem, to determine correctly the meaning of a word, figure out the interpretation of an utterance or conversationally appropriate response. (Adopted from Owu-Ewie, 2019)

2.1.1 Transfer, Interference and Overgeneralization in Learning

According to Brown (2000), transfer is a general term used to describe the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to subsequent learning. Simply defined, transfer is the application of previous learning experience to solve novel problems. For example, if a child learns how to read in his or her native language (L1) and then applies the same skill in reading L2 materials (materials written in second language), transfer has occurred. Transfer can occur in all areas of language learning. Transfer can occur in the same language (intralingual transfer) or between two languages (interlingual) transfer. Transfer can either be positive or negative. Positive transfer is where prior knowledge is correctly applied to present learning situation or subject matter.

Interference: In the transferring process, sometimes learners do not transfer correctly as expected. Negative transfer occurs when previous performance disrupts the

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performance of a second task. This is termed interference. Previously learned material interferes with subsequent material-a previous item is incorrectly transferred or incorrectly associated an item to be learned. Interference is very common in second language learning. It is common for second language teachers to stress on the interference of L1 on L2. L1 interference is the most noticeable source of error among L2 learners. From learning theories, a person will use whatever previous experience he/she has had with language to facilitate the second language learning process. The native language is an obvious set of prior experiences. For example, an Akan native speaker will say in English 'He come to Ghana every six weeks' as logical transfer of the comparable Akan sentence ')ba Ghana dap3n nsia biara' because the verb in Akan does not change its form whether the subject of the sentence is in the third person singular or not. It must be noted, however that the L1 of an L2learner is often positively transferred.

Overgeneralization: Overgeneralization is the process that occurs as second language learner's act within the target language, generalizing a particular rule or item in the second language-irrespective of the native language. Overgeneralization is a particular subset of generalization. To generalize means to infer or derive a law, rule or conclusion, usually from the observation of particular instances. Much human learning involves generalization. Second language learners of English, for example learn the past tense rules of regular verbs e.g. open-opened, kick-kicked and generalize the rules to irregular verbs like go-goed (instead of went), come-comed (instead of came). Overgeneralization is the incorrect application-negative transfer-of previously learned second language material to a present second language context. All generalizing involves transfer, and all transfer involves generalizing. The figure below

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illustrates the relationship that exists among transfer, overgeneralization and interference.

Transfer, Interference and Overgeneralization in learning (Adopted from Owu-Ewie, 2019)

Transfer

Positive (+)   Negatve (-)

Overgeneralization   Interference

(L1 $\longrightarrow$ L1)   (L1 $\longrightarrow$ L2)

(L2 $\longrightarrow$ L2)   (L2 $\longrightarrow$ L1)
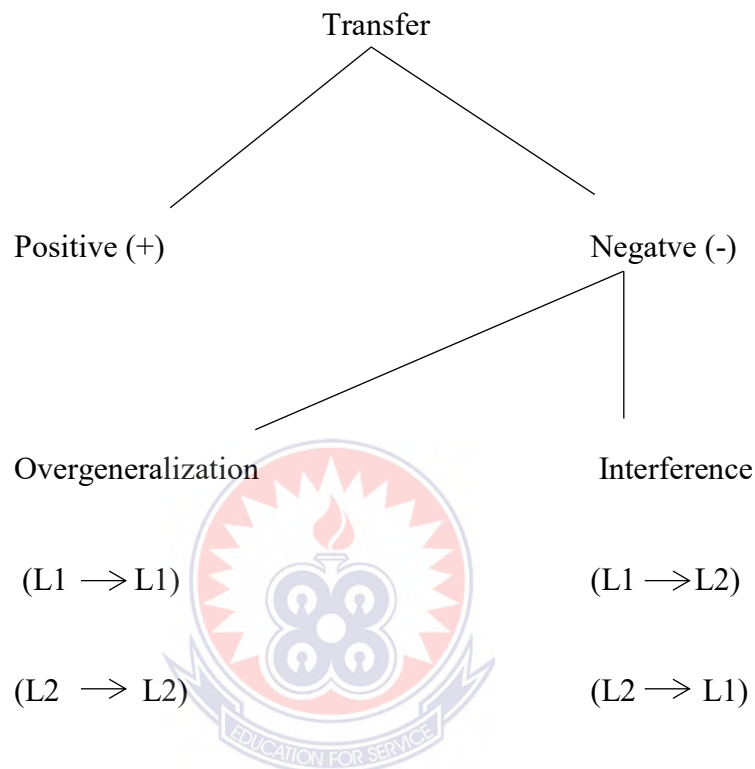
2.2 Teaching Listening

Listening does not occur in isolation. Language learners during listening activity use other skills simultaneously (Lynch, 1998). Underwood (1989), defines listening as activity of paying attention to and trying to get meaning from something we hear. Purdy (1997) also defines listening as the active and dynamic process of attending, perceiving, interpreting, remembering, and responding to the expressed (verbal and nonverbal), needs, concerns, and information offered by other human beings. Rost (2002) in an expanded form defines listening as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says, constructing and representing meaning, negotiating meaning

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with the speaker and responding, and creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empty.

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Effective listening requires concentration and the use of your other senses and not just hearing the words spoken. Listening is not the same as hearing and in order to listen effectively you need to use more than just your ears. To listen well, listeners must have the ability to decode the message, the ability to apply a variety of strategies and interactive processes to make meaning, and the ability to respond to what is said in a variety of ways, depending on the purpose of the communication.

Listening involves listening for thoughts, feelings, and intentions. This requires active involvement, effort and practice (Shen, Guizhou, Wichura & Kiattichai, 2007). In order for language learners to make sense of what they are listening to, they most of the time refer to three different areas of knowledge which include schemata, context and linguistics (White, 2008). These three areas in an expanded form involve activating various types of knowledge and by applying what the learner knows to what he/she hears and trying to understand what the speaker means. In real life situations, listening is linked with speaking; listener becomes speaker and vice-versa. This is interactive listening. Most of the time, this approach is neglected in the language learning classroom. It is important to note that listening only develops language learning when it is accompanied by production (White, 2008). According to Rost (1994), listening is important because it provides input for the learner. Basically, listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communicative process. Listeners must have the ability to decode the message, the

ability to apply a variety of strategies and interactive processes to make meaning and the ability to respond to what is said.

Listening is the first essential language skill because acquiring a language usually begins when we learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read and finally to write. Among these skills, listening involves 45% of time spent on communication. Infants acquire language by listening to the way parents or family members talk.

2.2.1 How to help Learners Develop Good Listening Skills

The following are ways learners can be helped to develop listening skills:

Provide more listening opportunities for learners (Griffiths, 2006). Examples are watching TV/movies, listening to eloquent native speakers and radio broadcast.

Promote active listening: Give learners something to listen to ensure that they are involved in the task e.g. exercise sheet.

Use authentic materials e.g. lecture or radio announcement in the language.

Organize pre-listening activities e.g. providing learners with relevant vocabulary.

The purpose of any listening activities is to help learners (L2 learners) fend for themselves in the communication situations. To accomplish the goal of helping learners to be able to use listening strategies to maximize their comprehension of aural input, language teachers need to focus on the process of listening rather than on its product. In the listening process, language teachers should focus on the following:

Develop students' awareness of the listening process and listening strategies by asking them to think and talk about how they listen in their native language, especially if you are teaching L2 (English)

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Allow students to practice the full collection of listening strategies by using authentic listening tasks.

Behave as authentic listeners by responding to student's communication as a listener rather than as a teacher.

Explicitly mention how a particular strategy can be transferred in a different type of listening task or with another skill.

2.2.2 Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

Top-down strategy: this strategy is listener based; listening taps into previous knowledge of the topic, situation, the type of text and the language. Top-down strategies include; listening for main idea, predicting, drawing inferences and summarizing.

Bottom-up strategies: this strategy is text based where the listener relies on the language in the message. The listener combines the sounds, words and grammar that create meaning .these strategies include listening for specific details, recognizing cognates and recognizing word-order patterns.

2.3 Teaching Speaking

Speaking is one of the most important four skills in language learning: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Speaking is essential since it aims at developing learners' abilities in producing oral utterances. It has many different meanings according to different authors involved in language teaching. In the view of Chastain (1998), speaking is a productive skill, which involves many components. It is more than making the right sounds, choosing the right words or getting the constructions grammatically correct. According to Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997),

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speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning, which involves producing, receiving and processing information. Cameron (2001) also defines speaking as the active use of language to express meanings so that other people can make sense of them. This implies that speaking is a way of communication that allows a person to express his/her ideas, emotions and feelings to others. On the other hand, speaking is the skill by which people judge others and form their first impressions.

Brown (2004) says that speaking is a communicative skill. He categorizes speaking into six according to speaker's intention. These are imitative speaking, Intensive speaking, Responsive speaking, Interactive speaking and Extensive speaking.

2.3.1 Strategies for Teaching Speaking at Early Grade and Upper Primary

Storytelling, Using open-ended question and answer, Group discussion, Reinforcing active speaking and listening, Description of places places/people, Use audio/audio-visual, Modelling speaking and listening and Conversation/dialogue are the most widely use strategies for teaching speaking.

2.4 Teaching Reading

Teaching reading in the classroom needs special attention because it enhances language acquisition, provides a good model for writing, and stimulates discussion. It also helps learners improve their vocabulary (Grabe, 2002). Generally, reading improves students' overall language proficiency and academic performance. Reading is a means of language acquisition, communication and sharing information and ideas (Chung, 2001). According to Goodman (1967), reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game because it involves an interaction between thought and language.

Approaches to teaching reading

Instruction in reading can be planned or unplanned (Durkin, 1990).

Planned reading instruction is where the teacher selects materials and procedures for the purpose of attaining pre-specified goal.

Unplanned reading instruction is where the teacher responds in helpful ways to students' questions, misinterpretations and overgeneralizations.

A combination of the two approaches is essential in enhancing the reading ability of learners.

2.4.1 Benefits of Reading

- Reading offers a productive approaches to improving vocabulary and word power.
- It improves mental development, especially children's IQ.
- It also improves writing skills.
- Reading improves academic success.
- Reading helps develop reading competence
  (https://basmo.app)

2.5 Teaching Writing

Writing is a system of graphic symbols that can be used to convey meaning. The writing skills are grouped into three. These are grammatical skill, compositional skill and domain knowledge.

2.5.1 Stages of Early Writing Development

This is the stage children begin to write. There are four levels early writing development. These are Drawing and scribbling. In early writing development,

children's drawing are their writings, and children make no distinction between the two when asked to write. Children then begin to make separate marks representing 'writing' apart from their drawings, a key developmental event indicating that children have begun to grasp the functionality of writing as separate from illustration. These are marks are often directionless scribbles. These scribbles then begin to take on the features of written text children see in their environment, becoming horizontal and moving from left to right on a page. The scribbles eventually evolve into separate, distinct characters (Lieberman, 1985).

- **Listening to a storybook being read aloud**.

Children at this level may not understand that the text carries its own meaning, and that the words the teacher is saying to tell the story come from the text (Justice, Pullen & Pence, 2008). Their alphabet knowledge and phonological awareness skills are at the beginning points in development. They may know a few letter names, such as the first letter in their name. They may also be working on phonological awareness skill that attend to larger units of spoken language, such as rhyme.

- **Letters and Letter-Like forms**

After the drawing and scribbling level, children begin to write with letter-like forms and a few letter shapes. Although these early forms mimic letters shapes, they are at first not conventional letters. When children do begin writing conventional letters, they often produce what may appear to be random strings of letters because they do not yet connect letters to the sounds in spoken language.

Children typically begin by reproducing letters found in their names. The first of their names, along with other name letters, is usually seen repeatedly in children's early writing (Treiman, Kessler & Bourassa, 2001). Children at this level may mix symbols

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and numbers with random letter-like forms and conventional letters. What connections have this to other literacy skills?

When children are consistently writing with seemingly random letters and letter-like forms, they understand that print carries meaning, but they still do not generally understand that letters represent the sounds in spoken words in a systematic way. Although they may be growing in phonological awareness and developing knowledge of the alphabet, including the names of some letters, they have not yet made the speech-to-print connection. Because they represent their knowledge of print in their writings without representing sounds, their messages cannot be understood by adults without children's interpretations.

- **Salient and Beginning Sounds**

Children reach a critical point in writing development when they start to represent the sounds that they hear in spoken language. Relying on their growing knowledge of both print and sound, children begin to invent spellings, which mean they create logical phonetics spellings based on their knowledge. They often represent salient sounds, or the sounds that are the most prominent because of the way they feel in the child's mouth (Bear et al, 2008). For example, a child might write B for the word baby, because her lips come together twice when saying the word. She might spell P for apple, because that sound is the most distinct due to the vibration felt when saying the word. The child might logically substitute F for V because the sounds feel similar on the lips. Beginning sounds in words are often the most salient ones, so children will have many beginning sounds in words represented. When writing a sentence, children may represent a letter for each salient sound they hear, for each word or for

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each syllable. For example, when writing the sentence, I like fufu, a child may write IKF without any spaces. What connections this to other literacy skills?

Children who are writing with salient and beginning sounds are beginning to grasp the alphabetic principle. At this point, children combine their knowledge of print and sound for the first time. They are just beginning to understand this principle and cannot yet identify where spoken words begin and end in written text (Morris, Bloodgood, Lomax & Perney, 2003), so they usually do not use spaces between words while writing. This understanding shows up in children's 'reading' as well. When finger-pointing to the words in memorized texts such as songs and nursery rhymes, children will most likely point to words according to stress units or syllables, getting off tract on multisyllabic words (Flanigan, 2007).

- **Beginning and Ending Sounds**

As children's phonemic awareness grows to the point at which they can attend to individual sounds in words, they begin to represent beginning and ending sounds of words in their writing. They also consistently write with spaces between words, indicating that they understand where word boundaries occur. When writing the simple consonant-vowel-consonant pattern word map, children at this level will write MP. Children also use a letter-name strategy when beginning to spell, using their knowledge of letter names to create spellings; for example, eight might be spelled AT. Children who are writing with beginning and ending sounds generally do not consistently represent the middle sounds in words, especially vowel sounds, until the next phase in their development (Bear et al., 2008).

The connections between this levels to other literacy skills are that children's invented spellings mirror their early reading ability very closely (Morris et al, 2003). At this

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level, they are able to finger-point accurately to the words of a memorized rhyme and make self-corrections if they get it wrong. They actively use their knowledge of letter sounds and letter names to help them identify words, but often guess based on the first letter and sometimes last letter of a word, not yet attending to the vowel sounds; cat and cut would be most likely read the same way CT (Ehri, 2005). As they progress, their spellings become more conventional as they learn to represent all the sounds in words.

2.6 Teaching Spelling

According to Graves (1983), spelling is a tool for a writer that allows them to communicate effectively and efficiently with readers. He further explained that 'spelling is for writing, Children may achieve high score on phonic inventories or weekly spelling tests. But the ultimate test is what the Child does under game conditions within the process of moving toward meaning'.

From the above, spelling is often treated as a separate subject in elementary classrooms, the end goal of spelling instruction is to spell a list of words correctly so that others can read their writing. English spelling is a complex process and attempts to teach spelling through weekly spelling list will not be successful. Some pupils can learn the words and write it for the test but later misspell them to written exercise and assignments. Hence, this approach shall be discarded by teacher. It is a kind of rote learning which is easily forgotten.

Learner (2003), says that 'spelling is one curriculum area in which neither creativity nor divergent thinking is encouraged. Only one pattern or arrangement of letters can be accepted as correct'. What makes it more difficult is that the written form of English language has an inconsistent pattern: there is no dependable one-to-one

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correspondence between the spoken sounds of English and the written form of the language. Hence, spelling is not an easy task even for people who do not have learning disabilities.

I, the researcher would have found that it is difficult for teachers to teach the English language. It will require dedication and hard work due to its nature. The teaching of spelling shall be incorporated in the teaching/learning process since it is a tool that will help people sail through the academic ladder.

According to Nelson contemporary English Dictionary (1977), spelling is the act of arranging letters to form a word.

According to Chambers English Dictionary (1988), spelling is to read laboriously, letter by letter, to come to understand: to name or set down in order of the letters to constitute or represent orthographically.

In accordance with the Longman Dictionary of contemporary English (1978), spelling can be define as:

1. The action of forming words correctly from letters

2. An ordered set of letters forming a word.

From the above, the teaching of spelling shall not be done anyhow. There are rules regarding correct spelling. If a Child spell a word and omits a letter, it will be wrong. Teachers will pay particular attention when scoring pupils' exercise and make sure that they have done their correction. The pupil can be asked to write the word more than once. All this will go a long way to enhance pupils spelling skills.

2.6.1 Importance of Teaching Spelling

Hammill, also believes that spelling is not a subject that should be taught entirely from reading and spelling. To be sure, some phoneme-grapheme correspondences, linguistic rules and a considerable number of different words can be taught in isolation.

Hodges (1981), suggests that no spelling program by itself is likely to acquaint the students with all the regularities, patterns and rules that make up English spelling. He further points out that a spelling curriculum can set the stage and points the direction for the students but that ultimately good spelling is a consequence of interaction with written language, especially, writing.

Again, Smith (1983), suggests that reading, as well as writing, is important to learning to spell. He mentions that people can actually spell more words than they were ever taught to spell and more than they are ever called upon to use in writing. To him, spelling competence is a natural by-product of learning to read. He speculates that, he is not asserting that anyone who reads will become a speller because that is not the case. Anyone who is a speller must be a reader. Reading is the only possible source of all the spelling information you have in your hand.

If Hodges and Smith are right, then, there should not be any remedial and developmental education of waiting until the student has mastered reading before introducing spelling and of teaching spelling largely in isolation. Instead, spelling should be integrated into a general language, arts programme. It goes hand in hand with word recognition, reading, comprehension, handwriting, punctuation and capitalization style. They necessarily complement and reinforce one another.

According to Dickinson (1990), it is embarrassing if we wanted to leave a note/message and we spell the words wrongly. Correct spelling helps readers understand other people's writings. One way to become a good speller is to read a lot of books. Reading helps you remember how words look like, spelling rules and exceptions can also help us spell words correctly. If you do not spell correctly people may not know what you mean.

Thoburn (1987), said that learning a few spelling rules could help one to spell many English words. When pupils study the rules it increases their spelling skills

From the above, if pupils become aware of the regularities in the English spelling system they can learn and apply the rules in their spelling. This will help them in their writing.

2.6.2 Stages of Spelling Development

Read (1986), one of the first researchers to study preschoolers' effort to spell words discovered the knowledge of invented spellings. These Children used letter name to spell words such as 'u' (you), me (me), they used consonant sounds GRL (girl) and NIT (night). The preschoolers used several unusual but phonemically based spelling patterns to represent affricates.

Based on Reads seminal work, other researchers began to systematically study the development of Children's spelling abilities. Henderson and his colleagues (Beers and Henderson, 1977, Gentry 1978, 1988, Templeton, 1979, Zittel, 1979), have studied the manner in which Children proceed developmentally from invented spelling to correct spelling.

Petty et al (1873) also found that the time and effort spent on readiness in pre-schools, kindergarten and first grades was generally directed towards the reading program. But this is not done for spellings. A similar level of readiness should be fostered toward writing and spelling. Of cause, the ability to recognize some words, a major step in learning to read is also ability important to spelling. A child who looks at 'ball' and 'tall' and does not see that 'b'and't' are letters is going to have difficulty in both reading and spelling. The one who cannot differentiate the difference in the way these words are spoken may likewise have difficulty. Readiness for spelling differs from individual to individual. Children at any age level are at various stage of development in their ability to express themselves orally and graphically.

Pupils first draw pictures and later learn about letters. Considerable attention is being given by researchers to such attempts by young Children to spell the words they want to write. These attempts have been labelled 'invented' spelling. These inventions change as Children also develop their skills of spelling words and as they see many words. Encouraging early writing is a definite factor in developing the readiness needed from success in the spelling programme, (Petty et al, 1973).

Researchers have found that as all Children do not invent spelling in exactly the same way or at the same speed, they develop spelling strategies in roughly the same sequence (Henderson, 1980). Based on observations of Children's spelling, researchers have identified five stages that Children go through on their way to becoming conventional spellers and at each stage they use different types of strategies, (Bean and Bouffler, 1987).

The stages are:

Pre-communicative spelling

Semi-phonic spelling

Phonetics spelling

Traditional spelling

Correct spelling

Pre-communicative spelling

Pre-communicative spelling represents a natural early expression of the alphabet and other concepts about writing. This stage is typical of preschoolers aged three to five. The Child uses scribbles, letter, letter-like forms, and sometimes numbers to represent a message. A Child may write from left to right, right to left top and to down randomly on the page. The Child shows no understanding of phoneme-grapheme correspondence and may repeat a few letters again and again or use most of the alphabet. He frequently mixes upper and lower case letter but shows a preference for upper case letters.

 Semi-phonic stage

At this stage, Children will begin to represent phonemes in words with letters, indicating that they have a rudimentary understanding of the alphabetic principle that a link exists between letters and sounds semi-phonetic spellers include five and six-year old children. The child uses abbreviated one, two or three letter spelling to represent an entire word. The child uses letter stratagem to spell words (Bean and Bouffer, 1987).

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Phonic spelling

Read (1971) says that phonic spellers are typically about six years old. (Herderson 1980) explains that words are 'bewilderingly homographic' at this stage because children spelling the basis of sound alone, for example: bat, bet and bait might all be spelled BAT. At this a child represent all essential sound features of a word in spelling. A child develops particular spellings for long and short vowels, plural and past tense markers and other aspects of spelling. He chooses letters on the basis of sound without regards for English letter sequences or other conventions.

Transitional spelling

Transitional spellers are generally around seven and eight years old. Transitional spellers come close to the correct spellings of English language words. They spell many words correctly but continue to misspell words with irregular spellings. This stage is characterized by children's growing ability to represent the features of English orthography. The also use common patterns in their spelling (Bean and Bouffler, 1987).

Correct spelling

As the name implies correct spelling is achieved by children at this stage for many (but not all) words. They will have to master the basic principles of English orthography and this achievement indicate that children are ready for formal spelling instruction. Children at this stage also learn about spelling alternatives that is different ways to spell the same sound. They will also learn consonant and vowel alternations and other morphological structure. They will be able to spell a large number of words.

Again, Learner (2003) also emphasize on the developmental stages of learning to spell. He is of the view that children go through several distinct stages of spelling

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development, following a general progression of spelling knowledge. The rate of progression differs from children with different spelling abilities, but all children pass through the stages in order. Hence, the errors children make reflect the child's current development stage. The five (5) stage are as follows:

Stage 1: Developing pre-phonic writing (age 1-7). At this stage, children scribe, identity pictures, draw, imitate writing and learn to make letters.

Stage 2: The use of the letter names and beginning phonetic strategic (age 5-9). At this stage children attempt to use phoneme representations but exhibit limited knowledge. They will be able to spell some sight words correctly.

Stage 3: Using written word patterns (age 6-12). At this stage spelling attempts are readable, pronounceable and recognizable. This child's invented spelling following rules of short vowels and long vowel markers most sight words will be spell correctly.

Stage 4: The use of syllabic junctures and multi-syllabic words (age 8-18). At this stage, students display errors in multi-syllabic words. Invented spelling error occurs at syllabic juncture.

Stage 5: Developing a mature spelling perspective (age 10-adult). At this stage, previously acceptable invented spelling are viewed as errors. Many individual continue to have great difficulty with spelling even if they follow the rules. This is due to many exceptions. To overcome this, individuals shall learn to rely on back-up sources such as dictionaries, computer, spelling checks and electronic speller.

For the purpose of this study, I the researcher will focus on the stage 1 only.

Children who were allowed to invent their own spelling at an early age tend to spell as well as or better than Children who were not given this instruction. Wilde, (1990) also comments on the comments on the importance of invented spelling. She said 'although the term invented spelling is sometime used as description of a process and the later a description of product'.

Goodman, (1982) comments on invented spelling. He says that invented spelling is equivalent to the reading process. Invention is not a failure to achieve convention but a step on the road to researching it.
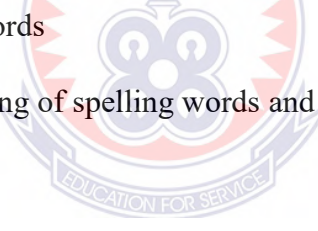
Looking at the stage above, it is clear that children go through changes before arriving at correct spelling. Wilde, (1990) observes that 'the goal of curriculum and instruction is to produce competent and independent spellers and that a development perspective is a crucial part of attaining that goal'. There will be a new way of looking at spelling in the writing process, and a consideration of curriculum and instruction in spelling. In the traditional view, learning to write was seen as a part-to-whole process the emphasis was on correct spelling. Children were to begin with correctly spelled words which they then learn to put into proper sentences, gradually working their way up structured paragraphs and eventually essays and term papers. It was an unquestioned assumption that each step in the process would be 'mastered' before moving on. Unfortunately, Children never did much writing under this system. They spent a good deal time filling blanks in word books, punctuating sample sentence and so on. If Children ever got a chance to apply this knowledge, the results were often disappointing mainly because they had never developed the habit of writing but also because the pressure to always be corrects was inhibiting. When pupils are given the

chance to write freely, they will be expected to use the dictionary or ask the teachers if they did know how to spell a word.

2.6.3 Strategies for Teaching Spelling

According to Hammill (1975), games and other activities are beneficial supplements to a spelling programme. It helps to foster interest in the teaching effort. Research has shown that learning to spell is not easy task, so if the teaching of spelling is not interesting, it will kill children's interest to learn to spell. If pupils are motivated using word games, it arouses and sustains their interest in the teaching/learning process.

Hammill (1975), also emphasizes that the important aim in spelling instruction is to guide each child to learn to spell correctly the words which he or she use in writing. In achieving this aim, the teacher will guide them to attain the following objectives:

- To learn to spell words
- To study the meaning of spelling words and to use these words expressively in writing
- To develop spelling conscience
- To develop a desire to spell correctly all words used in writing.
- To develop a spell consciousness that is a judgment concerning the correctness of the spelling words used in writing
- To acquire independence and confidence in learning to spell new words useful words in writing with the aid of the dictionary.

The researcher will find that the word games serve as entertainment for the pupils. It promotes competitiveness among children. Every team or group wants to win the game, hence, they put up their best. Word games teach a pupil to be a humble winner and a gallant loser.

Again, it promotes fair play among children. It also promotes co-operation and team work. It promotes fluency and work recognition.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter deals with the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection protocols, data collection strategies and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

The research design that were used in conducting this study was case study and the approach is qualitative. Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks an in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural settings. It aims to get better understanding through firsthand experience, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conversations. It allows the researcher to ask questions that cannot be easily put into numbers to understand human experience. Some of the types of qualitative research are phenomenological, ethnographic, grounded theory, historical, case study and action research. For the purpose of this study, the researcher uses case study to enable her obtain the information directly from the Teachers and Pupils in the study area.

3.2 Population

The targeted population for the study was class three pupils in the Amenfi Central District. Because there are many schools (174) and pupils in the Amenfi Central District, the researcher targeted thirty pupils in only three selected schools.

The accessible population for the study was one hundred and twenty pupils in the class which is made up of seventy-two girls and forty-eight boys with an average age of seven years.

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study was made up of thirty pupils from the total of the one hundred and twenty pupils in basic three, where ten pupils were selected from three different Primary Schools in the District. These thirty pupils sampled through the use of random sampling technique. The researcher wanted to avoid biases in the selection procedure that is why researcher used random sampling such that every member of the class will have equal opportunity of being selected to represent the sample for the study. To achieve this, ten pieces of papers containing YES and thirty NO was prepared for pupils to pick in turns. Those who selected the YES papers formed the sample for the study. This exercise was replicated in all the three primary schools selected in the study area till the sample size of thirty was obtained. One Teacher was also selected from each school, making a total of three Teachers by randomization means for the study.

3.4 Data Collection Protocols

The researcher sought permission from the District Education Directorate, the Head teachers and the class teachers of the three selected schools before data collection exercise.

3.5 Data Collection Strategies

The researcher used observations, documentation and interview as data collection strategies to ascertain the existence of the problem and determine if the intervention put in place would improve pupils' ability to spell simple words.

Observation

Observation is act of critically examining an event to get first-hand information about the observed individual, programme or situation. It is usually used to develop a source

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of data that can be used to assess children's performance over time. It enables the observer to gather data that cannot be gathered by conducting paper-and-pencil tests or questioning a young child.

Whiles observation is seen as useful tool, if not handle properly, the observer may lose objectivity. The subject may alter their behavior when they know they are being observed. It raises ethical questions of invasion of privacy.

There are many types of observation: direct observation, indirect observation, participant observation, non-participant observation, controlled observation and uncontrolled observation.

The researcher employed direct observation in her study because it is flexible and allows the observer to personally see and record events as they occur but does not take active part in the activities being observed.

In the study, pupils from each of the three selected schools were observed on four different occasion which covered all the one hundred and twenty pupils of the three selected primary schools in the study area. The information gathered from first observation were not used by the researcher because both teachers and students in the study area put on pretentious attitude and that the researcher was considered as spy and alien against their activities in the school. However, the last three observations for each of the selected schools were put on records.

Documentation

Documentation refers to materials that provides official information or evidence or that serves as record. Documentation help to obtain complete information and knowing how to properly deal with issues. It ensures data are recorded appropriately

and errors corrected. Documentation on the other hand, is prone to damage and being misplaced, higher cost, access time increases and hard to make changes. Kinds of documentation are learning-oriented tutorials, goal-oriented how to guides, understanding-oriented discussions and information-oriented reference material.

In the study, the researcher used information-oriented reference material because they could be easily obtained from both pupils and Teachers. The exercise books for the one hundred and twenty pupils in the three selected schools in the study area were collected from the teachers and examined by the researcher. The exercise books indicated that pupils did not do well in class exercises, homework and class test due to bad spelling of simple words.

Interview

An interview is essentially a structured conversation where one participant asks questions and the other provides answers. In common parlance, the word 'interview refers to one-on-one conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee'

Advantages of interview include: interview provide flexibility to the interviewers. The interview has a better response rate than mailed questions and the people who cannot read and write can also answer the questions. The interviewer can judge the non-verbal behavior of the respondent.

Disadvantages of interview are: conducting interview can be very costly as well as time-consuming. It can cause biases and provide less anonymity, which is a big concern for many respondents. Interview is of three types, including: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

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The researcher used semi-structured interview where open-ended questions based on the topic area the researcher intends to study. The open-ended nature of the questions provides opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss certain topics in more detail. If the interviewee has difficulty answering a question or hesitates, the interviewer will probe.

In this study, one Teacher and ten pupils each from the three selected primary schools in the Wassa Amenfi Central District were interviewed at different scheduled date. The teachers were interviewed in English Language and the Children interviewed in the local language but the records were made solely in English language, since majority of the Pupils did not understand and could not speak English properly.

3.6 Data Analysis

The various items in the interview that demanded responses to the research questions were noted and the data collected analyzed to ascertain the impact of the intervention on the pupils' spelling ability.
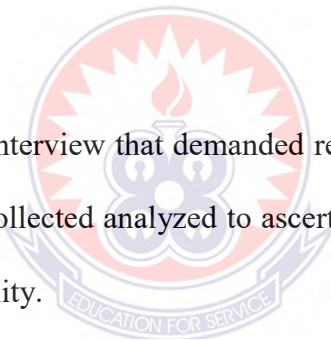
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the results of the study on the problem associated with children's inability to spell simple words in the study area, the causes of students' inability to spell accurately at their level and strategies teachers could use to improve children's spelling.

4.1 Demographic Information about Teachers and Pupils

✓ **Educational level of Teachers**

The data gathered from the Teachers interviewed showed that majority have had secondary education with very few having attained tertiary education. The above observation indicates that most of the teachers in the study area have little knowledge of the pedagogical skills and this might certainly affect their method of teaching in the schools.
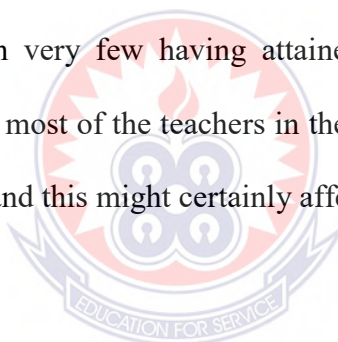
In support of this assertion, Twum-Barimah (1977) stated that with a good level of education and strong background knowledge of practice, one can readily demonstrate the skill and knowledge he seeks to impart, and that the general educational levels must be of standard which would make the rural folks adopt new ideas. This can make them accept the full responsibility to participate in measures calculated to bring enlightenment to their communities.

Having attained education at the tertiary level, would broaden the skills of teachers to impart very well into children with learning difficulties, especially in spelling simple words correctly.

✓ **Economic background of Pupils**

Data from the pupils interviewed, revealed that only few received three square meal daily and have access to learning materials from their parents while majority had no three square meals or learning materials. This means a greater number of the pupils report to school sometimes without food, hence could not pay much attention to what Teachers teach in class as a result of hunger and no learning materials to practice what they have been taught. These account greatly for their inability to spell, and consequently perform academically low in school.

4.2 What are the Causes of Pupils' Inability to Spell Accurately at their Level?

✓ **Non-availability of teaching and learning resources used in teaching spelling**

Teaching and learning resources help teachers to teach well and achieve their lesson objectives, and aid pupils to learn better since they arouse and sustain their interest throughout the lesson.

In the same way, in spelling, teaching and learning resources play very important role for pupils to understand and remember what they learn. However, in the interview, it came out that teachers do not use materials for teaching.

For example, in an interview, one teacher said that:

> *He is aware of the significance of teaching aids but his employer (GES) has not provided them for use and they are very expensive of which he cannot afford.*

The researcher observed that out of forty pupils in the class, the teacher had only four teaching resources to be used for spelling so most of the time, the teacher had to write on the chalkboard for pupils to write.

In this modern era and with the introduction of new curriculum in basic schools of which early grade classes form integral part, if teachers continue to teach without teaching aids, then their performance generally would be poor, hence pupils inability to spell simple words.

✓ **The use of wrong teaching method**

It was found out that teachers used wrong method of teaching. When the researcher interviewed the teachers, they said:

> *We were not trained on how to teach spelling at their various colleges of education.*

During class observation by the researcher, it was revealed that teachers knew nothing about the pedagogy of teaching spelling. This made it difficult for pupils to understand and practice what they are taught, hence, their inability to spell simple words accurately.

✓ **Absenteeism of pupils**

The attendance register clearly shown that the pupils absenteeism rate in the schools, particularly, market days were very high. According to the teachers interviewed, students absent themselves from school to assist their parents to sell. Observation by the researcher, indicated that greater number of students missed lessons on spelling, therefore, their inability to spell simple words.

✓ **Number of exercises given to students per week**

The researcher confirmed from the students' exercise books that Teachers gave fewer exercises to students. This was clear indication that Children were not given enough opportunities to practice what they were taught.

According to the Teachers interviewed,

> *Given homework, assignment and project work to students to*
>
> *take home and marking when they return them were worrisome.*

This seriously led to the students' inability to perform better in spelling.

These teachers forgot that learning as a permanent change in behavior occur as a result of practice and experience and that much exercises need to be given to pupils to practice what they learnt in school.

✓ **Irregularity in providing feedback to Pupils**

There is a great importance of feedback in improving learning experienced for pupils. This has also significant effect in professionalizing teaching. However, feedback is considered as a difficult issue in this arena.

Indications from the student's exercise books and interview of teachers, clearly shown to the researcher that, teachers did not regularly provide feedback on exercises, assignment, class test and End-of-Term examination to the students. With this attitude of teachers, students were not given the opportunity to make corrections on areas they fell short and to correct their shortcomings for better performance next time.

Teachers in the study area overlooked the importance of providing prompt feedback to pupils. This situation worsen the children's case in the area of spelling.

✓ **Early Grade Classrooms not conducive for learning**

Data from the observation made, proved that the classroom environment of the Early Grade classes at the study area were not conducive for learning, teachers attested to that during the interview. Fewer number of furniture (sitting and writing places), majority of the students have to sit on a mat while others lie on the floor with their

bellies to have lessons during instructional hours. Poor mud structure, leaked roof, no doors, and no windows with uncemented floor. No talking walls and many of the classrooms not painted. Example, in an interview, a teacher said that Basic 2 and 3 pupils are combined in one classroom due to non-availability of classrooms in the schools within the study area. The researcher found out that the classrooms were not cemented and had inadequate developmentally appropriate sitting and writing places for the pupils. These conditions affected general academics performance, hence very bad spelling skills in the children.

✓ **Failure of parents to provide basic needs for their Children at Early Grade Level**

Examples exercise book, pencil, pen and eraser

Response from the students interviewed showed that, only few received three square meal daily and have access to learning materials from their parents while majority had no three square meals or learning materials. This means a greater number of the Pupils report to school sometimes without food, hence could not pay much attention to what Teachers teach in class as a result of hunger and no learning materials to practice what they have been taught. Teachers interviewed attested to the fact that majority of the pupils report to school without pen, pencil, eraser and exercise books and sometimes they had to give pupils money to buy food. The researcher noticed in her lesson observation that most pupils slept in class during English period as a result of hunger. These account greatly to their inability to spell, and consequently perform academically low in school.

4.3 What Strategies can be Used by Teachers to Improve Children's Spelling?

- **The use of word games**

According to Hammill (1975), games and other activities are beneficial supplements to a spelling program. It helps foster interest in the teaching effort of spelling. To him, the important aim in spelling instruction is to guide each child to learn to spell correctly the words he/she uses in writing.

Example, Spelling Race

Description of game: This game is to be played by dividing the class into two teams. Each team lines up. The teacher has to display two sets of alphabet cards, each set has two letters of the alphabet. A table is to be placed in front of each team. Let pupils be aware of the rules of the game and how the winner emerges. The teacher pronounces the spelling word and tells the number of letters. Each team selects the members in the queue in order to pick the letters that make up the word. They then arrange themselves holding the letters in order to spell the word to the whole class. The group that spells its word first wins a point. If a player or team misspells a word and the opponent had it right they win the point.

The objective of this game is to help the pupils use the alphabet cards to form words correctly on their own.

- **Creation of conducive classroom environment for the Children**

Creating conducive classroom atmosphere for pupils involves changing the nature of seating arrangement to favour the activities of lessons to the benefit of the children, allowing freedom of choice and free movement of pupils, establishing routine ways of seeking permission to go out, and establishing democracy in the classroom.

With this, teachers are encouraged to identify pupils with hearing impairment and visually impairment disabilities and seated in front of the classroom so that they can read from his/her lips and also see clearly on the chalk board during instructional period. Pupils should be permitted to ask questions for clarification during lessons without intimidation and be allowed to discuss with others constructively to arouse and sustain their interest in the lesson and this gives the classroom a democratic environment. Children should be guided to set their own rules flexible enough to regulate the free movement in and out of the classroom such that instructional hours would not be wasted. Examples Pupils should seek permission from the teacher before going out to washroom during lessons. Children should raise up their hands and wait to be called before asking or answering questions in class. These rules instill discipline in the learners.

- **Jolly Phonics method of teaching should be employed**

Jolly phonics is a systematic, sequential, phonics program designed to teach children to read and write. It teaches the letter sounds in an enjoyable, multisensory way, and enables children to use them to read and write words.

The five basic skills for reading and writing are: Learning the letter sounds, Learning letter formation, Blending, Identifying sounds in words and Spelling the tricky words.

- **Learning the letter sounds**: Jolly phonics teaches the 42 main sounds of the English language, not just the alphabet. The sounds are grouped, with some sounds as single letters. Each sound is accompanied by an action helping children to remember the letters that represent it. As children progress they can perform the action and say the sound as the teacher points to the letter.

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- **Learning the letter formation**: Children need to form each letter in the correct way, holding the pencil in the tripod grip. They begin with the letter '**C**' as this forms the basic shape of some other letters, such as '**D**'. jolly phonics shows the correct formation of each letter.

- **Blending**: Blending is the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then running them together to make the word. This is a technique all children need to learn, and the skill improves with practice.

- **Identifying sounds in words**: Learning to spell words requires listening for the sounds in the word. This comes from the foundation of letter sounds and blending. Jolly phonics uses rhyming games, poems, finger tapping and other games to assist children in practicing the identification of words to make the practice enjoyable.

- **Spelling the tricky words**: many words are more difficult to sound out. These are called 'tricky words' such as was, mass, said and laugh. The child is taught to write the word in the air, saying the letters out loud. Then the child writes the word on paper.

A child will benefit greatly from a love of reading for pleasure. Once the child has begun to learn the letter sounds they will be able to pick them out in words. They should then move on to working out whole words through blending. As a result it is easier if reading begins with storybooks that use simple words. Once there is fluency in reading, the most important skills for a child will be comprehension and the understanding of more words.

- **Teachers should be well-trained in teaching spelling**

 Educators can impart knowledge meaningfully onto educants only when they are well trained. Not all English language teachers are familiar with the teaching of spelling and so much training is required to prepare them adequately to handle their pupils well in the classroom. The spelling teaching workshops must be organized regularly by the Inspectorate Unit of GES, School Information Support Officers (SISO's) or Head teachers of Schools on School-based, Departmental-based or Cluster-based in-service training to provide the needed competencies in teaching spelling to teachers.

- **Preparation and usage of effective teaching and learning materials**.

The educational values of teaching and learning materials can never be overlooked. Very few experienced teachers would dispute the educational value of teaching and learning materials as a means of making learning very effective and interesting, but unfortunately most of them do not often use any. Preparation and effective use of these materials are often seen as problems to teachers especially the beginning teachers. This section seeks to assist teachers in the production and effective use of appropriate teaching and learning materials.

Characteristics of good teaching and learning materials;

- ➢ Teaching and learning materials must be relevant to the subject and lesson in particular.
- ➢ It should be easily understandable by the class.
- ➢ The print of teaching and learning materials must be large, clear and neat.
- ➢ The materials must be attractive to look as its purpose is to stimulate learning through the senses.
- ➢ Make a habit of saving materials for possible future use.

➢ The material must be given appropriate heading and all parts well labelled.

Importance of using teaching and learning materials

✓ Teaching and learning materials stimulate the interest of pupils

✓ They ensure pupils active participation in the lesson

✓ They promote pupils' understanding of the lesson

✓ They focus the attention of the pupils on the lesson and reduces boredom to the barest minimum

✓ The teaching and learning materials reduces the amount of talking by the teacher in a lesson

✓ Their usage in a lesson makes explanation more vivid

(https://www.theclassroom.com)

Why some teachers fail to use instructional materials

➢ Teachers lack the knowledge about suitable and useful instructional materials.

➢ Failure of school information support officers (SISO) and other educational supervisors to insist on the usage of instructional materials by teachers

➢ Teachers lack the necessary skills in preparing instructional materials

➢ Some teachers hold the idea that Government/GES has to supply already made materials to teachers to use not teachers themselves

➢ The cost involved in acquiring instructional materials is a major reason why teachers fail to use such materials in their lessons.

• **Enough opportunity should be given to Children to practice spelling**

Pupils must be given opportunities to practice how to spell simple words at their level. Teachers can do this by writing set of words on the chalk board, take the pupils

through the pronunciation and spelling of those words. Give students some time to practice one after the other how to spell them. Sets of words must also be given to pupils as homework to practice how they are to be spelt. Passages can as well be given to students to read and take notice of how to spell some key words in them.

- **Parents should be advised during P.T.A meetings to see the need to purchase learning materials for their wards**

Parents or Guardians must be encouraged to see the importance of buying reading books, exercise books, pens and pencils to their wards through P.T.A meetings. Pupils will use the exercise books to write homework exercises that help pupils practice what they learnt at School. The reading books will also aid learners practice how to read and spell words simultaneously.
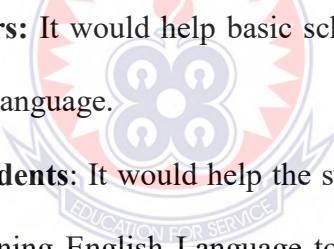
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Overview

This chapter covers the summary of the study, findings of the study, recommendations and conclusion.

5.1 Summary of the Study

Chapter one of this project dealt with the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation and delimitation. The problem researched on was inability of pupils in Basic three at Wassa Amenfi Central District to spell simple words at their level. The work would be beneficial to Teachers, Students and policy planners in education.

a) **Benefit to teachers:** It would help basic school teachers with new insight of teaching English Language.

b) **Benefit to the students**: It would help the students in basic school to acquire better way of learning English Language to improve their writing, speaking and spelling skills in and outside school.

c) **Benefit to Policy planners in education:** Indeed, it would help policy makers in the education sector in formulating language policies by revising and re-designing the English syllabus at the basic school level. School Improvement Support Officers (SISOs) can include it in in-service training course for teachers to be innovative in the teaching of English Language.

The work was delimited to three schools carefully selected from the study area due to poor road network, financial constraint and time.

The chapter two of the research work covered the Skills in teaching learning, Transfer, Interference and Overgeneralization in learning, teaching listening, Teaching speaking, Teaching reading, teaching writing, Definition of spelling, Stages of spelling development and Strategies of teaching spelling. The researcher postulated that teachers should guide pupils to spell words they use in writing correctly. This could be achieved by asking the pupil:

- To learn to spell words

- To study the meaning of spelt words and to use these words expressively in writing

- To develop spelling conscience

- To develop a desire to spell correctly all words used in writing.

- To develop spelling consciousness, that is a judgment concerning the correctness of the spelling words used in writing

- To acquire independence and confidence in learning to spell new words used in writing with the aid of the dictionary.

The chapter three dealt with the research design, population, sample size and sampling technique, data collection protocols, data collection strategies and data analysis. The researcher used thirty out of one hundred and twenty pupils and three teachers in the study area for the project. The sample size were arrived at by randomization means to obtained a true representative sample for the work.

The chapter four presented the results of the study on the problem associated with Children's inability to spell simple words in the study area, the causes of students' inability to spell accurately at their level and strategies teachers could use to improve Children's spelling. The demographics of the teachers indicated that majority were

not trained. The pupils' economic background were also seen as setbacks to their inability to perform well in school, particularly, the aspect of correct spelling.

5.2 Findings of the Study

- Teachers use wrong methods of teaching

- No teaching and learning resources used for teaching English (spelling)

- Early Grade classrooms not conducive for learning

- Teachers and Pupils were not punctual to school

- High absenteeism rate on the part of the Pupils in class

- Teachers gave lesser number of exercises on spelling to Pupils

- No opportunity for Students to practice what they are taught

- No remediation for Children to correct wrong spellings made.

- Failure of parents to purchase basic needs for their Children at Early Grade Level. Examples book, pencil and slate.
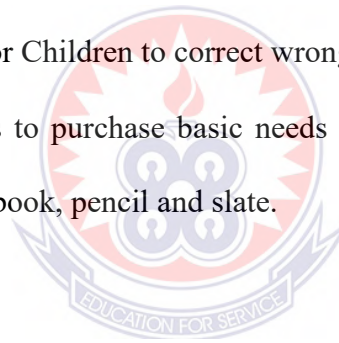
5.3 Conclusion

A study was conducted on teaching spell in Early Grade Class in three selected Schools in the Wassa Amenfi Central District of Western Region to improve on the inability of the Children to spell simple words.

The data for the study were collected through interview and oral discussion with the Teachers and the Pupils. The analysis of the data of the research study indicated that only few Teachers have attained tertiary education and were trained. It was observed that Teachers used wrong methodology in teaching spelling, they relied on their discretions to teach since they had no teaching and learning materials such as syllabus, textbook and teachers' handbooks. It was again established through personal

interaction with the Teachers in the study area that Teachers irregularly provided feedback to students and no remedial lessons were done for Pupils.

The class register revealed that absenteeism rate on the part of the pupils was very high, especially market days. Student's exercise books showed that lesser number of exercises, assignment and homework were given to Pupils to practice what they learnt in school by Teachers.

5.4 Recommendations

In the attempt to improve Students' spelling and academic performance as a whole, the researcher proposes the following:

i.   The Government and owners of private Schools should supply to the Teachers the appropriate instructional materials. Example syllabus, Textbooks and Teachers guide.

ii. The School Improvement Support Officers (SISO's) should visit the schools regularly and provide In-service training to Teachers to upgrade their knowledge in order to much up with the changing trend in Education.

iii. Teachers should give enough opportunities for Children to practice what they learn in Schools.

iv. Teachers should give prompt feedback to Pupils and guide them to correct their shortcomings.

v.   Parents should be encouraged at P.T.A meetings to purchase books, pens, pencils, slate and materials sets for their wards.

vi. Teachers should create conducive environment for Pupils learn with ease to solve the problem of incorrect spelling of simple words.

vii. Parents should be sensitized on the need to allow their Children to go to School regularly, especially market days and the dangers associated with the use of Child labour.

5.5 Recommendation for Further Study

i. The study was conducted in Wassa Amenfi Central District with the purpose of examining the teaching of spellings in Early Grade (P 3) classroom. It is, therefore, suggested that similar research be undertaken in other schools in the district and to larger extent the regions in the country in order to have a national view on teaching of spelling in Early Grade.

ii. The study was approached qualitatively. As such, the views of a small number of teachers and pupils of Wassa Amenfi Central District were sought.
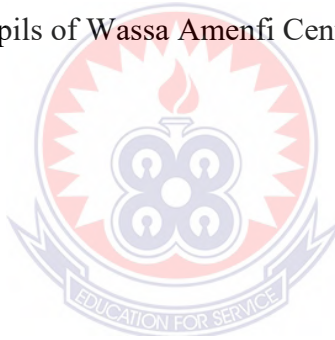
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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PUPILS

Q1. What is your name?

Q2. Which class are you?

Q3. Have you been attending classes regularly?

Q4. Which subject(s) did you fail in last term's examination?

Q5. How many exercises do you do per week?

Q6. Has your teacher been providing you with prompt feedback?

Q7. Do you have writing and seating places in your classroom?

Q8. Have your parents been providing learning materials such as pen, pencil, reading books and exercise books to you?

Q9. Is your classroom conducive for learning?

Q10. How often your teacher does teaches you spelling?

Q11. Does your teacher gives you the opportunity to practice what they are taught in class?

Q12. How regular does your teacher gives terminal report on your academic performance to your parent?

Q13. Do you understand what your teacher has been teaching you in class?

Q14. How often do you do correction(s) on exercises/homework?

Q15. How do you rate your academic performance in class?
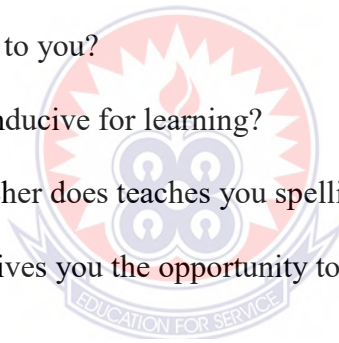
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

Q1. What is your name, please?

Q2. Which class do you teach?

Q3. Which subject(s) do you teach?

Q4. How long have you been in the present station?

Q5. How often do you attend classes?

Q6. Has your Students been attending classes frequently?

Q7. What pedagogy of teaching have you been employing in class?

Q8. How often do you use teaching and learning materials in your lessons to enhance learners' understanding in class?

Q9. How regular do you give exercises/homework to your children?

Q10. Do you provide prompt feedback on exercises/homework given to your pupils?

Q11. To what extent, do you provide remediation to correct pupils with spelling difficulties to catch-up with others in the class?

Q12. How conducive is your classroom to enhance learning in Early Grade pupils?

Q13. What is the performance of your pupils in reading and writing?

Q14. What is the overall performance of your pupils in English language?

Q15. How do you rate the academic performance of your pupils in class three?