

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

READING DIFFICULTIES AMONG KONONGO M/A JHS 1 PUPILS



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**of the requirements for the award of the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I **Nyanor Frank**, hereby declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and dully acknowledged, is entirely my own original works, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole, for any other 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 as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor: Dr. Rebecca Akpanglo-Nartey

Signature:.....

Date:.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my late father Mr. S.V Nyanor and Adom Serwaa Nyanor



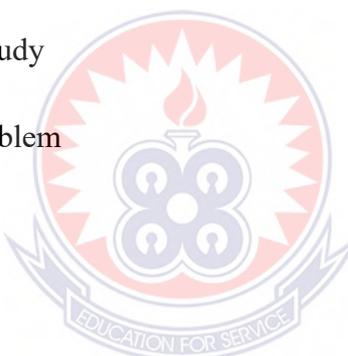
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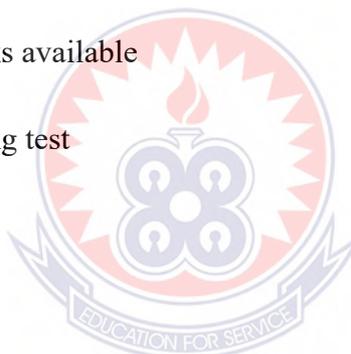
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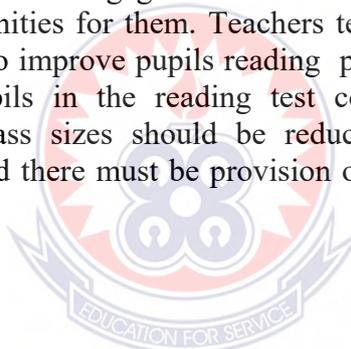
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ABSTRACT

Reading is one of the basic skills that children should master during their first school year to be able to assimilate new knowledge and skills in future. This case study was undertaken to investigate the reading difficulties among JHS pupils of Konongo M/A. The study also aimed at suggesting appropriate strategies to enable pupils to be competent readers. The study particularly attempted to find out the causes and effects of reading difficulties. The study was conducted on 20 sampled pupils and seven teachers. Qualitative research design was employed. Teacher and student questionnaire, classroom observation, oral interview and test were the research instruments used to obtain the required data. The study found that, most of the pupils in JHS1 were not able to read as expected at their level. As they read, they committed errors such as skipping and ignoring word endings, reading individual words and making several stops. In the course of teaching pupils reading, the study again found that, the classes were overcrowded with high student-teaching ratio of 1:3. Hence teachers could not have time to attend to individual students with reading difficulties. It was further found through the oral interviews conducted and tests that, some textbooks used were not suitable for the level of the pupils and were not adequate. The questionnaire presented to teachers and the tests assigned to the pupils indicated that the reading problems occurred because some parents engaged their wards in farming activities instead of providing reading opportunities for them. Teachers techniques used for teaching were not found to be adequate to improve pupils reading performances. That resulted in the poor performance of pupils in the reading test conducted for pupils. The study suggested that, large class sizes should be reduced. There should be organized workshops for teachers and there must be provision of adequate teaching and learning materials.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter points out the research work. It highlights the background of the study which gives a general view on reading, statement of the problem and the scope of the study. Also this chapter accents the purpose of the study and research questions. Finally, it captured the significance of the study, limitations and organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Reading is a very important aspect of literacy, without reading pupils cannot understand any subject they are taught in the school. One of the important ways through which one can upgrade himself in this contemporary world is through education. The essential skill that one needs to possess in order to make it through to the top of the academic ladder is reading. People are trained in various disciplines like science and technology, politics, economics and geography to enable them have vast knowledge to live a meaningful life in the society. Computer software provides information on a wide variety of topics but to be able to process all of this information, one must be able to read and have all the basic component of reading at hand. This is because, reading is a prerequisite skill. It forms the foundation for all further learning. Therefore, lack of skills or the basic components of reading results in reading difficulties.

Reading is one of the four language skills taught in English learning process besides listening, speaking and writing. However, among all the skills, reading is considered as the most important skill. John Snow (1998) stated that reading is essential to success in our society. The ability to read is highly valued and important for social

and educational advancement. Reading gives many benefits for us. Reading is of much importance; it helps people to get more knowledge and information from books, magazines, newspapers and others.

Reading is considered to be the most important component in the learning process and social interactions. This is because reading is an indispensable communication tool in civilized societies.

Secondly, reading for pleasure makes a big difference to pupils' educational performance. It is noted that, pupils who read for enjoyment everyday not only perform better in reading tests than those who do not, but also develop a broader vocabulary, increased general knowledge and a better understanding of other cultures.

Third, reading is bringing to and getting meaning from printed or written material. Through reading activities, students can enlarge their knowledge and can also make them wise and develop their thinking ability.

Despite the importance of reading outlined, pupils of Konongo M/A JHS find it difficult to read comprehension passages. Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill to obtain further academic learning success. To get knowledge pupils are required to have critical and analytical competence in comprehending academic texts in searching more academic

Information through various types of reading materials such as textbooks, journals, reports; however, not all students are good at comprehending the text being read. Perffetti (1998) asserts that, the reason why some students struggle to read is due to lack of reading comprehension strategies used as part of background knowledge. That is to say, students lack the basic strategies used in reading. English language students

may get difficulties in reading text, it may be because of faulty in word identification and recognition, limited special comprehension abilities or poor oral reading.

According to Nutal (1999), there are five problems students face when they are reading in the second language especially when they try to comprehend a text. These problems are the code of alphabet symbol, vocabulary and sentence structure, cohesion devices and discourse makers and problems beyond plain sense and concepts.

The inability to read among pupils of Ghanaian schools at different levels in recent times is as a result of lack of pre-reading skills on the part of pupils and Lack of appropriate skills on the part of teachers to teach English Language. Students are not exposed early enough to literacy and thus experience difficulties in reading later in school.

Also teachers do not use the appropriate strategies in teaching English Language and that affects literacy. Despite the importance of reading outlined, there are some reading difficulties which are mostly faced by pupils. Vocabulary acquisition is one of the reading difficulties faced by people.

Pupils find it difficult to learn keywords and pronounce them simply because they are not familiar with the words. Pupils are also faced with fluency difficulties. Pupils find it difficult to read with speed and accuracy. Difficulty in comprehending texts is also another problem for pupils. Pupils find it difficult to understand short passages read. It is as a result of the importance of reading and the inability of students to read comprehension texts as well as the difficulties in reading compelled the researcher to research into reading difficulties among Konongo M/A J. H. S 1 students.

1.2. Statement of the problem

It is a matter of fact that, students who normally succeed academically are those who are able to read well. Also students who fail in examination are attributed to inability to read and understand. For this reason, the researcher embarked on this study on the reading difficulties among Konongo M/A J. H. S 1 students. An observation made by the researcher in Konongo

M/A J. H. S 1 during a reading comprehension lesson revealed the average level of JHS 1 students who could not read at least a paragraph of the pupils textbook unit one fluently. The students were found skipping words, ignoring word endings, making several stops and reading individual words instead of reading according to sense groups. Also pupils had difficulties pronouncing function words which seemed to have been learned at the primary level. These problems seem to affect students very much when reading. Besides, the evaluation given to pupils after every comprehension lesson proves that pupils are faced with many difficulties. The researcher noticed that teaching would be in vain if the observed problems are unattended to.

The problems that pupils have during reading have not yet been clarified by many researchers. Therefore, the study is to find solutions to the reading difficulties among pupils in Konongo M/A JHS 1. This will enable others researchers to identify the reading difficulties of students and also help students to identify their weakness in reading. It is against this background that the researcher delve into the reading difficulties of Konongo M/A J.H.S 1 students.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify the difficulties students face in reading.

The study again seeks to come out with the causes responsible for the reading difficulties and finally, the study seeks to find reading strategies that can help pupils to overcome their reading difficulties.

The researcher observed and found out that, pupils of Konongo M/A JHS 1 have difficulties in reading. The study will help JHS 1 students of Konongo M/A and other students nationwide. It will help them to benefit and know the problems and causes of reading difficulties. Again it will help them to develop good habits and strategies towards reading.

1.4. Objectives

The objectives of the study is to;

1. Find what difficulties students face in reading.
2. Identify the causes responsible for the difficulties in reading among students
3. State the teaching strategies that can help students to overcome difficulties in reading

1.5. Research questions

Below are the questions set for the study;

1. What difficulties does students face in reading?
2. What are the causes responsible for pupils' inability to read?
3. What teaching strategies can be adopted to help pupils to overcome their reading difficulties?

1.6. Significance of the study

The outcome of this research will be of benefit to the JHS 1 students of Konongo M/A. The study will help pupils in the said school and other students from other schools to develop interest in reading and to guide them to know the basic strategies of reading.

The study will also benefit the English language teachers in the school and other English language teachers nationwide. It will serve as a guide to English language teachers and this will equip them in handling reading confidently to enable students understand the basic skills in reading. The study will serve as a reference material to other researchers who wish to investigate the same topic and further it.

Also, it will be of importance to policy makers and curriculum designers such as the Curriculum Research Development Division (CRDD) of Ghana Education Service to give more consideration to reading at the basic school level to help teachers tackle reading right from the scratch. Then again the study will be of benefit to other researchers who will use it as their source of reference materials.

1.7. Limitations

In compiling this research survey, the researcher was entangled with some problems.

There was problem of finance. The researcher faced a challenge financially in conducting the researcher. Despite the challenge, the researcher was able to seek some financial assistance from some personalities and also wrote for sponsorship to other institutions for assistance.

Also the researcher could not reach some personnel's personally for vital information needed for the study but through communication on mobile phones, the researcher was able to gather some information for the study.

Lastly time constraint was a challenge to the researcher in the face of other co-curricular activities which cannot be ruled out. The researcher irrespective of this challenge sacrificed and devised other means of making time for the study aside school sections.

1.8. Delimitations

The researcher seeks to investigate the causes of reading difficulties among pupils of Konongo M/A JHS1 and to ascertain any contributing factors to the poor reading of students. Konongo is within the Asante Akyem Municipality and there are about 87 public schools in the district. The researcher concentrated on only one school out of the 87 schools. Konongo M/A JHS was chosen for the study to help the researcher obtain his data collection because the mentioned school records low performances in the Basic Education Certificate Examination. Also there are about 12 classes in the Konongo M/A school but the researcher concentrated on only one class for the study which is the JHS 1 class. The class is made of thirty two pupils and the study covers twenty of them representing about 63% of the general population of the class.

1.9. Organization of the study

The first chapter contains the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations, and delimitations.

The second chapter entails review of related literature. Chapter touched on the research methodology which entails the introduction, research design, population, sample and sampling, research site, research instrument, data collection protocol, data analysis and the data presentation.

Chapter four covers analysis of the data and finally chapter five contains the summary of the whole research work.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Reading difficulty is one of the greatest challenges of many students of which Konongo M/A JHS 1 pupils cannot be ruled out. Some people attribute the difficulty in reading to be the fault of teachers who handle the English language as a subject and the students as well and others argue that it is the making of the students themselves. In this chapter, the researcher looks at relevant ideas such as the difficulties students face in reading, causes responsible for the difficulties in reading, teaching strategies that can help learners in reading made by some authorities, personalities from books, scholars and others.

Basically, a literature review is supposed to offer a combination of what has already been written on the topic in terms of theories or concepts and empirical evidence.

2.1. Difficulties student's face in reading

Reading difficulties are faced by most children and can occur due to several reasons. Learning information is a sequential process involving a combination of three components, namely decoding, comprehension and retention. It is critical for teachers and parents to identify the source of children's difficulties in reading and employ practical strategies to help resolve them.

2.1.1 Decoding as a reading difficulty

Decoding is a major problem student's face in reading. Students with reading difficulties may face problems in decoding the sound of different letters in a word. An important aspect of reading involves breaking up of the phonemes in order to

recognize a word. For instance, children with appropriate learning skills may be able to separate the different sounds in the word 'bag'. However students with reading difficulties may have to judge the meaning between the three letters and how their sounds can be combined to form a word. There are signs of problems in decoding which includes issues in sounding out words, difficulties in recognizing individual words and confusion between various letters and their sounds.

According to Goud (1999, pg.16), "One major difficulty students face in reading is associated with issues of decoding" Goud emphasized that decoding is when students are able to put sounds to letters in order to sound out written language. Therefore if learners are unable to put sounds to letters reading becomes a problem. He emphasizes that, lack of expression in reading, missing punctuation marks while reading and slow pace are all signs of problems in decoding.

Reid Donaldson (2000, pg. 26) opined that, "A key to becoming a good reader is the ability for learners to sound out words they do not know. This process is called decoding and kids typically start learning it in kindergarten" He further explained that, kids pick up decoding skills through their regular classroom instruction. He said some kids learn it easily, some take a little more time and others really struggle. Therefore when a child struggles with decoding it can be a flag that he might have a reading issue like dyslexia thus inability to read.

Saywitz (2001), stated that "dyslexia is caused by learners' inability to decode words". He emphasized that, decoding is a key skill of learning to read that involves taking apart the sounds in words (segmenting) and blending sounds together. It requires both knowledge of letter relationship as well as the ability to apply that knowledge to successfully identify written words and make meaning. Therefore if

learners lack the skills to decode automatically, they are likely to face difficulties in reading.

The opinions given by the scholars mentioned on decoding as a difficulty students face in reading is supported by the researcher because they clearly underline the fact that, it is common for beginner readers to struggle when they meet new or unfamiliar terms, but typically decoding becomes easier with phonics instruction and repeated practice with reading out loud. If a student continues to struggle there may be a specific learning difficulty present or a physical impairment that is preventing them from physically seeing the letters or hearing the sounds in spoken language. Such learning difficulties may be associated with problem of decoding.

Also the researcher supported the views opined by the scholars and added that, kindergarten is the foundational stage in the educational level. The basics of reading start at the early stage at the kindergarten level hence learners who are unable to acquire the skills of decoding face difficulties in reading. Again decoding is essential to reading. It allows learners to figure out words they have seen in prints as well as sound out words they are not familiar with. If learners lack the skills to decode, they may face difficulties in reading because the ability to decode is the foundation upon which all other instructions such as fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension are built.

2.1.2 Comprehension as a reading difficulty

Pupils with learning disabilities often experience poor comprehension due to their failure to read strategically and to spontaneously monitor their understanding while reading. It is necessary for pupils to understand any text or passage read. Reading without understanding cannot help the reader to focus according to Plafield (2014).

Pupils with reading comprehension problems struggle with the basic reading skills such as decoding but comprehension is the greater weakness. Some students with a learning disability in reading comprehension can read aloud with or with no difficulty pronouncing words, but they do not understand or remember what they have read. When reading aloud, their words and phrases are often read with no feeling, no change in tone, no logical phrasing no rhythm or pace. Their reading abilities may or may not seem fine but they may or may not understand what they have read.

Pupils who struggle to understand what they are reading may experience deficits in a variety of academic beyond reading and writing. Any class that relies on reading, understanding and explaining written materials including language arts, science, history and related topics can become a struggle for those with reading comprehension problems. There are signs of reading comprehension problems that result in pupils' problem in reading. Having difficulties understanding the important ideas in reading passages. Having weak phrasing and fluency make students face difficulties in reading. Comprehension is also one of the difficulties students face in reading. Bryant (2001) states, "comprehending any information requires the ability to decode it". He stated that, when children successfully decode the sound and connection of different words, they are in a better position to concentrate on the paragraph that they are reading. When word reading is not problematic, children can easily understand and remember the information.

Bradley (2001) opined that, difficulties in connecting different contexts in a paragraph and missing out or skipping significant details constitute comprehension problems. Bradley emphasized that, most learners are unable to connect different paragraphs to deduce meaning. This makes learners unable to understand texts read and also

students miss out words or skip some important details in texts when reading because of pronunciation problems or inability to decode.

According to Webster (2002), one major problem student face when reading is lack of concentration and the inability to distinguish between important and trivial information. He explained that, reading demands attention hence if learners do not attach seriousness to reading to figure out important facts from insignificant ones, reading becomes a problem. The inability for pupils to recognize a word nor understand a text read leads to comprehension problems. Confusion in the meaning of individual words and their usage in sentences is a sign of problems in comprehension. Therefore if learners can overcome reading difficulties, they must have the ability to comprehend a text. Comprehension involves reading and understanding. Therefore students who cannot pronounce words when reading cannot understand the passage read. Most students skip words especially unfamiliar ones and this result in comprehension problems. Also for pupils to overcome reading difficulties, they must actively involve themselves when reading and also pay massive attention to the texts read to enable them understand the passages paragraph by paragraph. Retention requires both decoding and comprehending what is written. This relies on high level cognitive skills, including memory and the ability to group and retrieve related ideas. As pupils progress through grade levels, they are expected to retain more and more of what they read. The inability for them to retain what is read causes reading problems.

According to Luther (2002), students need to retain what is read to enable them progress in studies. He further explained that, learners must be capable to store information and later retrieve them. Also learners need to memorize things without any difficulty. Therefore if pupils lack the skills of retaining information they may

face problems with reading since they will not be able to recognize the sounds of letters to decode.

Whitney (2003) opined that, trouble remembering or summarizing what is read is a sign of retention difficulty which can lead to difficulty in reading. That is, the inability for pupils to connect what is read to prior knowledge and the difficulty in applying content of a text to personal experience result in reading difficulties. Reading skills span a spectrum from the lower-order skills of remembering that is retention and understanding (comprehension) to higher order skills of analyzing and evaluating Fletch (2009).

This is not to say that, retention and comprehension are unimportant. Rather, they are necessary in becoming a good reader and thinker. One cannot comprehend a text without applying the information for something meaningful. Therefore it important readers have the skills of retention to enable them comprehend texts read.

The opinions can be supported in the sense that, successful reading is the ability to read fluently and remember what is read and understand. Therefore, learners need to build a strong foundation in reading retention and comprehension. They need to build their retention skills to enable the overcome reading difficulties.

2.1.3 Dyslexia as a reading difficulty

Difficulty reading could be a sign of a common condition called dyslexia. If a learner has trouble reading, it can affect his self –esteem and social life. A common cause of reading issues is dyslexia. Dyslexia is the inability for pupils to read. With tis disability, pupils struggle to recognize letters, match letters to sounds and blend them.

Also they may have difficulty in pronouncing words. Dyslexia is a brain –based condition which is a common learning issue.

Learners with dyslexia have trouble recognizing letters and knowing which sounds the letters make. They may struggle with rhyming and sounding out new words. They may forget words they have seen before. It can take a long time for learners with dyslexia to become familiar with words and know it at a glance. They may also skip words and lose their place.

Scott (2009) stated that, the most common brain-based condition in childhood, can make it hard to stay focused during reading and other activities. Learners who face such problems have Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Marcus vey (2010) shared an opinion that, auditory recessing disorder affect learners’ ability to process information they hear. It makes them hard to understand what people say or to follow a story that is read. Such issues are all as a result of dyslexia.

Learners who struggle with visual processing have a hard time seeing the difference between letters and shapes. They may also not be able to see them in the correct order. Having blurred vision or seeing double are common complaints. Learners often try to compensate by squinting or closing one eye. Such symptoms is as a result of visual processing issues which accounts to dyslexia. Bruno (2010).Pupils inability to read as a result of dyslexia can be related to the attention deficit because, pupils’ needs to stay focused and attentive to have a successful studies therefore if learners have a disorder in attention –deficit hyperactivity, it may affect their reading skills resulting in dyslexia.

Once reading involves decoding that is the ability to connect sounds with letters, learners with auditory processing disorder are likely to have difficulty in reading since they will find it difficult to hear sounds and relate them with letters.

The nature of a school can influence the inability of pupils to learn. The school's climate can influence the effectiveness of learning positively or negatively. Schools with good climate are able to engage their pupils fully in the teaching and learning process to enhance their ability to learn. Reading requires a serene environment to capture the attention of pupils to read. If the school's environment is not calm, pupils will always feel disturbed which can obstruct reading. Schools sited near high streets are often disturbed by the horns of vehicles, others are located near trading centers which are full of noises. These affect the climatic conditions in schools as a result of noise pollution. Noises created by horns and vehicles and trading centers distracts pupils reading because they lose concentration through the noise making.

Warden (2011) stated that, if there is no quiet place for students to read at school, they may face reading difficulties. The survey made by Warden indicated that, several students do not have a conducive environment at school for reading. Those who are fortunate to have a quiet pace to read might also be facing problems with time. These obstacles hinders reading. Loudness in the school environment, time constraints and so on leads to reading difficulties. School climate constituted by human relationship affects students and teachers.

Mizzele (2011). That is, noise pollution as a result of the activities of humans distracts learners attention in schools which influence their reading negatively. This is due to the fact that, pupils lose attention in reading due to human activities such as noise pollution.

The climate of a school determines how successful reading will be. That is, if the climatic condition of a school is not conducive, it may affect reading. Also the home can have a negative influence on learners reading. Some learners do not have ample time at home to read. Some are engaged in other activities at home; running errands and other activities do not allow them to practice reading. Parents' attitudes can also have effect on children's reading. Parents who assist their children to read at home help them to overcome reading difficulties. Learners who are assisted by their parents are able to acquire the basic skills in reading. Some parents on the other hand do assist their children in reading. Some do not provide reading materials for them to practice reading and hence affects pupils reading abilities. It is the duty of parents to get reading materials for their children and also motivate them to read. If parents do not perform these responsibilities, there is the tendency for pupils to have difficulties in reading.

Williams (2012) opined that, the breakdown of parents and poor parenting style affects pupils' attitude in reading. Broken homes can have influence on the children. Parents with broken homes mostly do not have time for their children. They spend time on their job activities to help the family rather than guiding them to read. This tends to affect learners negatively because they lack assistance and motivation to read from parents.

Smith (2012) also stated that, lack of motivation results in reading difficulties. He emphasized that, the only obstacle most students have in them is wanting to read. Therefore to overcome the obstacle of reading among students they need to be motivated to read. If learners are not motivated, they feel reluctant to read hence

resulting in reading difficulties. Therefore it is the duty of teachers and parents to motivate learners to read.

The interest of students are risen if they are motivated to learn. This implies that if students are not motivated their interest in learning and for that matter reading may be minimized resulting in reading difficulties. Most students don't push themselves to pick up a book to read and start reading unless they are motivated. This means that if learners are not motivated it slows down their level of studies which in turn affects reading causing a problem.

Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in the reading process, and contributes greatly to a reader's comprehension. A reader cannot understand a text without knowing what most of the words mean. Students learn the meaning of most words indirectly, through every day experiences with oral and written language. Lack of vocabulary does not allow students to understand comprehension passages and therefore creates difficulty in reading.

Joshi (2013) also opined that, vocabulary is another difficulty student's face in reading. He explained by saying, "vocabulary development and the role it plays in reading skills acquisition have received much less attention than decoding and comprehension strategies". He further elaborated that, there is a close relationship between vocabulary and comprehension hence individual with poor vocabulary have difficulty understanding written text.

Vocabulary refers to the words we must understand to communicate effectively. There are four types of vocabulary: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading vocabulary refers to the words we need to know to understand what we read. It is vital

for pupils to acquire good vocabulary skills to enhance their reading. Students with poor vocabulary knowledge read less and acquire fewer new words while students with better vocabulary knowledge read more and improve their comprehension. This goes on to say that, lack of vocabulary is a challenge to students in reading.

Fluency in reading refers to the ability to read connected text aloud with accuracy, speed appropriate phrasing. The aim of all reading instruction is to increase the level of silent reading comprehension. In order to be able to devote attention to the meaning of sentences and paragraphs, learners have to be fluent readers. The inability of learners to read fluently poses a problem to learners. Students face challenges in reading if they lack the skills to read fluently and accurately.

According to Louises (2013), lack of fluency skill is one of the difficulties students face in reading. Louises gave explanation that, reading fluency is important in so many ways. Firstly if students need to put effort into reading individual words, they tend to loose comprehension. Also students with poor fluency often experience reading as laborious and difficult, so they lose motivation to read. Based on this assumption the researcher supported the opinion that fluency can be a major difficulty learners may face in reading by adding that, students with poor fluency have difficulties keeping up with high volume of reading required for academic success beyond the elementary grade. Also difficulty with reading fluency are nearly universal among students with reading disabilities. Reading fluency is the ability to read text not just accurately, but also quickly and effortlessly. Therefore students who are unable to read accurately and quickly are faced by fluency difficulty.

2.2 Causes of reading difficulties

There is a wide range of students who experience reading difficulties. According to Rockets (2013), there are students who are diagnosed with reading related disability but there is an even larger group of students without diagnoses who still require targeted reading assistance. There has been many criticisms over the years on reading of which educators never accept any of the responsibility for students' problem in reading. This comes to the fact that, there are many causes of reading difficulties. These problems may be related to the teacher, the learner, environmental factors among others.

2.2.1. The teacher as a cause of reading difficulties

Teachers are considered as a major cause of pupils' inability to read. The ability for students' to understand lessons and also to know how to read depends on teachers. An effective teacher must be able to adopt strategies to help pupils acquire basic skills for reading. Therefore teachers who feel reluctant to adopt to appropriate methods of teaching reading make learners find it difficult to read.

The duty of the teacher is not only to enable students understand what he intends to teach but also it is the duty of the teacher to understand what the students want and say. Padmore (2014).He emphasized that, in teaching learning process, two things play the vital roles; one is the delivering capacity of the teacher and the other is the receiving capacity of the students. It is therefore the teacher who serves as a facilitator in the teaching and learning process to put up his best to enable students to understand what is taught.

According to Robert (2015), a teacher is a facilitator who helps students to acquire reading skills. Teachers are important figures in modern education because they help

in inculcating knowledge and instilling discipline in learners. Therefore, the competence of teachers may go a long way to developing effective reading skills in children and vice versa. Teachers with low competent level mostly do not deliver up to expectations due to inadequate preparations. This affects the way teachers introduce pupils to reading.

Matin (2016) stated that, “the reading difficulties of pupils is as a result of poor methods of teaching reading adopted by most teachers”. That is, most teachers are fond of teaching reading without adopting to any proper methods. Teachers are fond of reading and asking pupils to read after them. Such strategy does not encourage pupils to do reading by themselves. This makes reading a difficult task for learners Blay (2011).

Roland (2016) also stated that, teachers do not motivate learners to practice reading. Teachers are found of engaging learners who are classified as good readers to read and abandon poor readers. This does not encourage most pupils to involve themselves in reading. The interest of pupils to read relies solely on the attitude of teachers. Therefore, if teachers do not engage all the pupils in reading activities but chooses to concentrate on good readers, it will affect the poor readers.

According to Rexford (2016), the attendance of teachers can also have effect on pupils reading. Teachers’ absenteeism does not help to improve pupils reading. Learners practice reading by themselves without any guide because of poor attendance of teachers. This results in reading difficulties among pupils.

The views opined by the various scholars can be concluded that, teachers’ actions and their methods of teaching can result in the reading difficulties of students. Again, the

competence or performance of the teacher can either affect the student positively or negatively. Therefore difficulties in reading among pupils can be related to teachers.

2.2.2 The learner as a cause of reading difficulties

Many of the reading problems students encounter are related to the five components of reading (phonological and phonemic awareness, word decoding and phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension). There may be other secondary complicating problems for some students in reading such as, attention, memory or the challenge of learning English as a language.

Developing strong reading skills in students is one of the key goals of every education program. It is through reading that students expand their vocabulary and learn about the words. Through reading, learners are able to adopt skills to decode letters and sounds of the alphabets. The inability of students to pay attention to reading and learning the five basic components of reading makes it difficult for learners to read.

Gray (2016) argued that, every student or learner has his or her own abilities to Learn and that, performance varies from learner to learner hence some students may face difficulties in reading while others may not. Every child is unique and this affects the learning behavior of an individual. According to Aimer (2016), ‘probably the greatest flaw in instruction which can lead to reading difficulties or failure is the fact that, students in a class are so different from each other in so many ways’ The attitude of students in a learning situation is of crucial importance. Learners who are being mocked by their colleagues and teachers may develop hostile reactions to reading.

Rockets (2015) pointed out that, “no group has yet been found in which the individuals composing it possess equal amount of ones ability” this implies that

performance varies so greatly as to indicate that no single requirement is adequate as a stimulus of a majority of the group. No matter how learners may be grouped under a teacher, each of them has different stimulus. This can result in reading difficulties especially those with low achievers.

According to Waxfort (2014), successful reading and writing requires that a student is able to process several types of information. Some students may have difficulty with auditory, phonological and language processing. Processing difficulties may co-exist with other difficulties, such as dyslexia and attention deficit disorders. Students who have difficulties in auditory, phonological and other components of reading are unable to read better.

Louis (2015) also stated that, auditory processing refers to a set of skills related to how the brain recognizes and interprets information presented orally. This includes not just speech, but also processing of non-speech auditory stimuli like music and environmental noise. Students who are unable to recognize and interpret information orally are likely to have difficulties in reading because they may also lack the skills to decode sounds of letters orally. Children with auditory disorder can have difficulty in reading. They often find it difficult to pay attention, listen to and remember information presented orally.

The researcher supported the ideas shared by the various scholars and added that, every child is unique and has special unique characteristics towards teaching and learning. Some students are gifted and others are slow learners hence students who are low achievers are mostly embarrassed by their classmates. This makes slow learners develop negative attitude or no interest towards reading. Also in order to read, students must be able place information into their memories and retrieve it when

needed. What helps students to understand vocabulary and comprehend what they read is being able to efficiently move back and forth between what they see in print and what is stored in their memories. Therefore students with short span memory are unable to remember words and decode them leading to problems of reading.

2.2.3 The school environment as a cause of reading difficulties

Reading difficulties can be associated to the school environment. The environment of the school can determine the progress of pupils teaching Ernest Dix (2014). The environment is classified as the physical things around us. According to Felix (2016) it can contribute greatly to pupils reading difficulties. A noisy environment cannot promote good reading because reading requires great attention. If the environmental conditions at home and in the school is not conducive enough for pupils, reading becomes a problem.

In some homes, there are no adequate spaces provided for students to practice reading or to learn. The environment is mostly polluted with noise. Students who find themselves in such homes find it difficult to practice reading. There are schools which are sited near industrial areas, high streets and markets centers. Schools sited at such areas always experience noise in the school premises which distracts academic work. This therefore affects reading. Classroom environment also hinders successful reading. Most teachers are not good in classroom management hence the sitting arrangements and the arrangement of desks make it difficult for pupils to learn or practice reading. A crowded classroom hinders the teacher who tries to adjust his or her instructions to meet the individual needs of learners opined by Aaron (2015). Overcrowded classroom does not give the teacher opportunity to pay equal attention to learners. In such situations learners are likely to face difficulties especially in

reading because the teacher cannot supervise the whole class size due to the overcrowding.

Smith (2015) stated that the “climate of a school creates reading difficulties” some schools are located near noisy places. This makes the climate of the school to be a noisy one as such. This in turn affects the learners in the school because the noise reduces their attention when learning particularly reading.

According to Flesch (2014), poor classroom management can also result in reading difficulties. That is to say, if teachers do not arrange or organize the classroom to be a lively one, it distracts the attention of learners when reading. The views of the scholars can be supported in that, learners face difficulties in reading if there is a large class size because teachers cannot devote their time to attend to most of the learners who might be facing difficulties in reading. It becomes a problem for a single teacher to handle a large class size because he cannot attend to all students. This makes some children feel neglected and pay little or no attention to reading in the classroom.

Also, noise making distracts learners’ attention when learning as opined by Smith (2000). Schools which are located near noisy environments affects teaching and learning processes in the school. Before a child can be able to read, he needs a good conducive environment for reading. Hence, if the environment is polluted with noise reading cannot be effective. This makes reading a problem to pupils.

Then again, students prefer sitting by their close friends to enable them do their own things whiles reading is in session. Therefore there must be proper sitting arrangements of students during reading lessons to enhance effective reading. This comes to say that poor classroom management creates reading difficulties. Students

are found of making unnecessary noise which needs to be checked while reading is in progress.

2.2.4 The home as a cause of reading difficulties

Apart from the school, the home is another place students learn or acquire knowledge from. The home can contribute to the poor reading of students in that, most homes do not provide any space for students or children to practice reading at their leisure times. Parents or guardians in some homes do not supervise their children to practice reading at home. Moreover parents do not motivate their children to read. They do not assist them or guide them to practice reading. This makes it difficult for pupils to have enough time to read because they only do reading at school the time allocated for reading is not enough.

Children from homes with good educational background mostly develop interest in reading than children from poor educational background Sheldon (2016). Children from homes with good background have larger vocabulary than those from homes where opportunity for verbal growth is restricted.

Southgate (2014), opined that, the home play an important role on pupils' reading ability. The home can affect someone either positively or negatively. In the home environment, there are many factors which contribute to children's reading difficulties. These include mother tongue interference, lack of text books and many others. If a child will be able to become a good reader the home must play an important role by guiding the child through reading activities. Parents who do not have ample time for their kids to read or teach them reading affects the children negatively.

Brainny (2015, pg. 32) share a view that, “the difference between cultures as well as socio economic status might affect children’s attitude towards reading. In some communities, adults may see very few functional roles for literacy so they may be unlikely to provide conditions in the home that are conducive to enhance pupils reading skills” how parents and children perceive and use reading varies across families and different ethnic groups.

Ekwall (2014) is of the view that most learners are unable to read because of lack of motivation from homes. Learners feel encouraged when they are motivated to learn. There are some homes that do not practice the act of motivating children to read books. This makes children from such homes not to engage themselves in reading because they see no importance of reading. This affects children and creates reading difficulties.

Some parents guide or assist their children to practice reading especially those from good educational background. Some children are mostly neglected because there is no one to assist them in reading. This creates difficulties in reading among some learners. Again learners copy attitudes from home and transfer them to school. If the home does not instill good reading habits in children, it will be difficult for them to develop interest in reading. This can create problems in learners reading abilities.

Also parents from different ethnic groups pay more attention to cultural practices and other socio economic activities rather than assisting their children to learn at home. They pay little or no attention to their children to see their progress in reading. Such situations make children feel relaxed since they are not under any pressure to learn. This as a result creates reading problems for children.

Motivation arises the interest learners. Therefore if children are not motivated at home to read then they will not practice at all at home or less reading will be done by children as compared to if they were motivated. To this regard reading becomes a problem to children who come from homes who do not motivate their children to read.

2.2.5 Reading materials as a cause of reading difficulties

The inadequate supply of reading materials contributes to reading difficulties. It is through the reading materials that pupils can help pupils to practice reading to develop reading skills.

According to Shonel (2010) 'Effective reading requires the availability of adequate reading materials. Inadequate reading materials do not promote effective reading. Reading materials needs to be adequate to enable students get access to them. Classes with large class size are likely to face problems of distribution of reading materials like textbooks. Pupils in the class are usually more than the reading materials. As a result pupils are compared to share them in ratios for instance three pupils is to a textbook. This does not enhance successful reading.

The choice of words in textbooks also causes reading difficulties. Students feel discouraged if they come across difficult words or unfamiliar words in reading. That is, if the words used in the reading materials do not interest learners, they feel reluctant to read. Also, textbooks with interesting pictures generate interest in pupils to read. Reading materials which have no interesting pictures does not encourage pupils to read.

Aimer (2010) stated that, ‘for many students, textbooks are too difficult, dull and frustrating to read’ he explained that children of today have their own interest in materials they love to read and their choice of reading materials may be different from what the syllables require or what was used some years ago. Also some textbooks do not suit the level of the learners hence children feel reluctant to read or involve themselves in reading.

Children are found of looking at picture rather than reading. Also, learners feel comfortable reading a book of their choice rather than the required books assigned to them base on their level. As a result learners do not acquire the basic skills gradually to enhance reading.

Smith (1994) introduced another dimension to the nature of the reading materials and stated that, fluent reading demands knowledge of conventions of the text from vocabulary and grammar to the narrative devices employed. This place emphasizes that, children need to know the structure in a book. If the sentences are familiar to the reader, the reader would have interest to read but if the reader does not have adequate knowledge about the structure used, then the reader will feel reluctant to read and such a situation can cause reading difficulties.

The nature of books read by pupils can determine how successful their reading skills will be. That is to say some reading materials are not meant for some learners at certain educational level.

Therefore the choice of books given to students must be taken into consideration before giving them out. Students feel excited when they see materials thus textbooks which contains interesting stories and pictures. Such books compel learners to read all

pages in the book. By so doing, reading skills is developed but if the books are above the learners' standard, no reading will be done which at the long round affect the reading abilities of most learners.

According to Aaron (1993), every class starting from the basic school to the secondary level have recommended textbooks. These textbooks vary in content and structure and may not be child friendly. Though textbooks have improved greatly, the many changes in the world today have introduced new ideas, new concepts and new vocabulary constantly. Therefore, unrealistic readability levels and limited comprehensibility of texts due to concept loading and related problems, contribute to reading difficulties.

The view opined by Aaron (1993) can be supported in that, the loading of textbooks with much vocabularies which are at times are above the level of learners creates difficulties in reading because learners find it difficult to comprehend texts with vocabularies above their standard.

2.3 Teaching strategies that help learners in reading

Reading is a fundamental skill that we all use every day of our lives. From reading the mail to a food menu, to reading text messages and email, there is no escaping it, reading is everywhere. This makes the development of proficient reading skills for learners even more essential, not only for their academic success, but for their daily lives as well. Unfortunately reading is a skill that many children struggle to master. In order for students to be confident readers, teachers can provide students with effective teaching strategies for reading.

Various researchers have examined the instructional practices of teachers who have had success in teaching children to read. (E.g. Presley, 1994; Yokoki, 1996 & Yankin, 1994). Effective teachers of reading used an approach that combined a variety of language-based and literature based with comprehensive, explicit instructions (Honin, 2001). These teachers adopted the skills or strategies of phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding and other word recognition skills to enhance children to read.

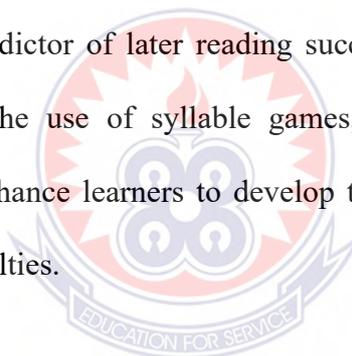
2.3.1. Phonemic awareness as a reading strategy

Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness in which listeners are able to hear, identify and manipulate phonemes, the smallest mental units of sound that helps to differentiate units of meaning (morphemes). Separating the spoken word ‘cat’ into three distinct phonemes, /k/, /æ/, /t/, requires phonemic awareness. Teachers must adopt to the use of phonemic awareness to guide pupils to practice reading.

Belvins (1997) emphasized that phonemic awareness is about oral and listening activities. Once children can name and identify the letters of the alphabet, they are ready to move into learning the alphabetic principle. Many poor readers in the basic school levels have weak phonemic skills. Therefore there is the need for teachers to adopt to the use of phonemic awareness to enhance pupils reading capabilities. There are wide differences in the amounts, forms, acquisition and forms of phonemic awareness and experiences children will need to enhance their reading abilities. Phonemic awareness offer systematic instructions with language in children home, pre-school and kindergarten experiences. It also engages students in spoken and written languages. Therefore teachers can adapt to the use of phonemic awareness as a strategy to help students to become good readers.

(Marilyn, 1998) stated that “good instruction begins with laying a solid foundation on which to build, and for reading that foundation is phonemic awareness.” Phonemic awareness is the understanding that, the individual speech sounds of English known as phonemes have unique differences and blend together to form words. This strategy help learners to be able to blend sounds to form words to make pronunciations. This strategy enhances reading and help children to overcome their reading difficulties.

According to Henry (2001), phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual sounds – phonemes spoken words. That is before children learn read prints, they need to be aware of how the sounds in words work and how it is pronounced. This help students in effective reading. A student’s skill in phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty. Therefore it is important to adopt to the use of syllable games, rhyming games, blending and segmenting games to enhance learners to develop the phonemic awareness skills to overcome reading difficulties.



Barn (1991) also opined that, the act of teaching learners phonemes enable learners to read efficiently. Teaching of phonemes by using syllabic games for instance dividing words into parts or “chunks” helps speed the process of decoding and this equip learners in the reading process. Knowing the rules for syllable division can help students read words more accurately and fluently. Then again, understanding syllable through the creation of phonological awareness can help students to spell words correctly. (Adams, 2004) stated that, phonological awareness has nothing to do with intelligence, but children but children without it will have difficulties if not impossible time learning the sound-spelling correspondences(phonics). He explained that, phonemic awareness is all about hearing sound and has nothing to do with

printed letters. Reciting rhymes, producing rhyming words, clapping sounds and syllables are means of building the phonological awareness in learners. Teachers can encourage students to not skip words that are unknown but rather to look carefully at its spelling and sound out its pronunciation. By so doing, it enhances learner's phonological awareness. By teaching learners phonemes, it help students to have and use knowledge about word patterns and recognize letters accurately and quickly. This can produce sound translations and hence enable learners to overcome reading difficulties.

The National Reading Panel has found that phonemic awareness improves learners word reading and reading comprehension, as well as helping them learn to spell. Studies by Vickier Snider (2014) have shown that, phonemic awareness has a direct correlation with students' ability to read as they progress level by level. Phonemic awareness builds a foundation for students to understand the rules of the English Language. This in turn allows each student to apply these skills and increase his or her oral reading fluency and understanding of texts.

The view outlined indicates that, children with dyslexia are hindered by faulty representation of speech sounds, which leads to problems involving the precise processing of spoken words. Assessing and improving the cognitive processing of spoken words should be an objective of every teacher because phonemic awareness is a prerequisite to a suite of critical skills including letter sound decoding(phonics), rapid word identification(use of sight words) and fluency.

Therefore it is necessary for teachers to adopt the strategy of using phonemic awareness skills to guide pupils overcome reading difficulties.

2.2.3 Focusing on fluency and phonics

Fluency is the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. It is the duty of teachers to guide pupils to develop fluency skills to enable them read better. In order for learners to understand what they read, they must be able to read fluently whether reading aloud or silently. During reading, fluent readers read in phrases and add intonation appropriately. Their reading becomes smooth and has expression. This enables poor readers to adopt to reading fluently with speed and accuracy.

The ability to read fluently depends on the ability of learners to blends sounds of letters (phonics). It is important for teachers to assist learners to be able to blend or decode sounds of letters to be readable. Learners' ability to blend sounds of letters and pronouncing them enhances fluency and with time they will improve and become fluent readers.

Brown (1992) emphasized that, phonics and fluency truly go hand in hand that teachers cannot really have one without the other. In order for learners to become good readers, teachers need to take learners through the act of breaking words into syllables and how to blend them before pronouncing. By so doing, it will enhance their fluency level. Fluency can help learners to decode text and read with accuracy, speed and proper expressions.

Also phonics is often thought of as a precursor to fluency. It deals with beginning readers understanding the correspondence between letter sounds. Without phonics it will be pretty tough to become a fluent and a good reader. Therefore by teaching phonics and fluency, students have the opportunity to grow exponentially as readers.

Tolbert (2016) stated that, phonics is a method of teaching reading in which teachers teach students the letters of the alphabets and sounds first before teaching them how to blend the sound phonetically to form words. This strategy best works well for low or poor readers to become good readers because knowing the sounds of the alphabets and being able to blend those forms the main basis of reading.

The view can be supported in that, when learners are able to identify sounds of the alphabet and blend them to form words naturally it builds the vocabulary and increase their fluency level and comprehension.

According to George (2015), teachers must assess students to make sure that word decoding and word recognition is not the source of the difficulty(if decoding is the source of the problem, decoding will need to be addressed in addition to fluency(reading with speed and phrasing). It is vital for teachers to give students independent level texts that he or she can practice again and again. Also students need to be timed and calculate words-per-minute regularly. This will help check the fluency level of the student.

Students can be guided by teachers to read short passages and have students immediately read it back to you. Also students can be made to practice reading a passage with certain emotions such as, sadness or excitement to emphasize expression and intonation. This activity helps build the fluency level of pupils.

Megax (2015) also stated that, engaging pupils in model fluent reading help learners to acquire reading skills to enable them overcome reading difficulties. He stated that, in order for learners to read efficiently, students must first ear and understand what fluent reading sounds like. From there, they will be more likely to transfer those

experiences into their own reading. It is necessary for teachers to expose students to a wide variety of genres including poetry, excerpts from speeches and folk and fairy tales with rich, lyrical language-texts that will spark their interest and draw them into reading experience.

Constant reading helps student to be confident in reading. It exposes them to new words and to know the basic skills in reading. This will enable students' to fluent readers. Learners will find it easy to break words into syllables and pronounce them easily through constant practicing of blending and decoding of sounds. By so doing, they will be fluent in reading which will enable those overcome reading difficulties.

2.2.4 The look and say approach

The look and say method can be used to by teachers to guide pupils to read effectively. Students are able to recognize or remember things visually. Therefore the use of look and say method in reading can help learners to recognize letters and words in relation to their specific sounds to enable them read better. It is method whereby words on flashcards are shown to pupils to pronounce. The constant use of the flashcards help pupils to recognize words and help them to read effectively.

Montessori (2001) opined that, the look and say approach teaches children to read and recognize whole words. For example, a child may be shown the word “cat” on a flash card and is told “this reads cat”. The child over time then learns that, when he sees the symbol (cat), it is read as cat. Montessori (2001) emphasized that the use of look and say approach makes the teaching of reading easier for children and reduces the workload of teachers.

Other scholars (Ellian, Rex, Leonard) also opposed the view of the use of the look and say as opined by Montessori (2001) to teaching reading. Dickson (2005) stated that, the look and say treats the English language as if it were Chinese. The Chinese written language is holographic language, meaning there are thousands of detailed symbols that represent individual symbols.

The failure is however that, the English language is supposed to be a phonetic script. When we fail to teach children phonics properly and we teach them using the whole word approach, they are required to memorize thousands of words by rote and are incapable of decoding new words they come across independently.

The researcher shared the same with Dickson (2005) in that, if children are taught reading using the whole word approach instead of their brain having to remember approximately 26 letters and their matching phonemes, children who are taught the look and say method have to use their memory space to remember each and every word as a symbol. This can have effect of drastically reducing a child's vocabulary because they have no knowledge of decoding new words they have not been explicitly taught to recognize.

According to Brat (2015), with the "look and say" method children learn to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds. Thus students look at a word shown to them and repeat the sound made to their hearing by the teacher. This practice guides pupils to recognize and hear words with their correct sounds and pronunciations.

James (2016) stresses that, flashcards provided to pupils in practicing the look and say methods must contain words and their related pictures. He explained that, if teachers

do not use pictures with the word, the learner will probably make a wild guess as to what the word reads. Therefore if words on the flashcards are not accompanied by their related pictures, the look and say method cannot be a good method for teaching reading.

The opinion expressed by James (2016) can be seconded in that, pictures can easily draw attention to those who read it. Therefore, if words on the flashcards are accompanied with their related pictures it will help pupils to simply pronounce the word without the facilitator pronouncing it for them before repeating. Pictures are self-explanatory and that pupils can deduce from the pictures they see from the flashcards and pronounce the words on them. Also it will be difficult for teachers to find related pictures of every word to show to pupils as opined by Jacqueline (2016). Therefore it is necessary for teachers to provide related pictures to words which pictures are easily to come by and ignore those words they cannot make pictures of. The aim of look and say method is for teachers to write words or letters on flashcards and guide pupils to be able to pronounce the words and recognize them when reading. Therefore teachers must adjust to any means of making the look and say method of teaching reading effective either by the use of related pictures to their correspondent words or not.

2.2.5 The use of drills

The use of drilling is another strategy to help learners overcome their reading difficulties. It is an act of repeated exercise. That is, teachers can adapt to training learners by repeated exercises.

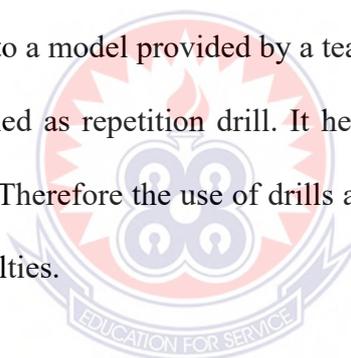
Giving students words to pronounce them repeatedly is a method of drilling. It makes learners recognize words easily and pronounce them effectively. Keywords in passages

can be written on chalkboard and learners can pronounce them constantly either in rolls or in columns. This repeated act enables poor readers to recognize the pronunciation of words and as a result they can read or pronounce words with time.

Julie (2009), emphasized on the fact that, based on the behaviorist view that, learning to speak a language which is foreign like other skills was simply a question of correct habit formation. It was thought that, repeating phrases correctly lots of times would lead to mastery of the language.

Therefore, for teachers to teach English reading, they need to stick to the drilling approach to help learners acquire good reading skills to become good readers.

Drilling means listening to a model provided by a teacher or a tape and repeating what is heard. This is classified as repetition drill. It help learners to acquire vocabulary skills and fluency skills. Therefore the use of drills as a strategy for teaching can help overcome reading difficulties.



Naccino (2002) also stated that, “for learners, drills provide for a focus on accuracy. Increased accuracy(along with increased fluency and complexity) is one of the ways in which learners language improves so there is a need to focus on accuracy at certain stages of the lesson or during certain task types” this implies teachers who use drills in teaching reading must focus on accuracy as children repeats words frequently. Drilling students also help them notice the correct form or pronunciation of a word or phrase. Noticing or consciousness raising of language is an important stage in developing language competence.

According to Bruce (1995), drilling as a strategy of teaching reading help in terms of classroom management. The approach help teachers to vary the pace of the lesson or

to get all learners involved in the lesson. This will ensure active participation of all learners and that none of the learners will be isolated in the course of the reading.

The opinions can be supported in that, drilling help teachers recognize if new language is causing problems in terms of form or pronunciation. That is to say, drilling checks on accuracy therefore it enables teachers to figure out if new language is causing problems and find solutions to solve it.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

The chapter talked about how the related literature was reviewed. The chapter talked about and discussed the difficulties students face in reading. Views from several authors and other scholars were reviewed and discussed. Then again the causes of pupils' inability to read were discussed.

Finally, the strategies teachers can adopt to enhance pupils to overcome reading difficulties were reviewed. Several opinions from scholars were analyzed. The researcher reviewed the literature by adding his opinions to what other scholars and writers have already written.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methods and procedures employed in conducting the research. The chapter is divided into the following sub-sections; research design, population, sample and sampling, data collection instruments, distribution of instruments and many more.

3.1 Research design

A research design is a set of methods and procedures used in collecting and analyzing measures of the variables specified in the problem research Gypson (1997). It is a framework of methods and techniques chosen by researchers to combine various components of research in a reasonably logical manner so that the research problem will be efficiently handled.

Research design is about how the researcher planned and obtained answers to the research Hypotheses Martins (1999). The study basically aims at investigating reading difficulties among J.H.S 1 pupils of Konongo M/A school. The researcher chose traditional research design and employed a qualitative research design. The qualitative research design was used because 'it is the type of design that gives detail descriptions, characteristics and natural setting using a variety of empirical materials such as case study, ethnography and others for the study and its data collection' Floyd (2001). The researcher chose qualitative research design because 'it is an enquiry process of understanding, based on clear methodological process that uses a social or human problem by building on a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, report detailed views of informants and conducted in a natural settings' (Creswell,1998).

It also involves deriving information from observation, interviews or verbal interactions and focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the participants Holloway and Wheeler (1985).

The researcher chose case study under the qualitative research design for his work. Case study was chosen because it gives an in-depth analysis of one or more events, settings, programs, groups or one or more individuals. Case studies are restricted by time and activity Charles (2012).

3.2 Population

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done.

However, due to the large sizes of populations, researchers often cannot test every individual in the population because it is too expensive and time consuming. This is the reason why researchers rely on sampling techniques Jerry (2004).

The focus of the study was the reading difficulties among J.H.S 1 pupils of Konongo M/A school. The population consisted of the entire students of Konongo M/A JHS 1. The target population was 32 students representing the JHS 1 students of Konongo M/A. This mentioned school was used because pupils there show characteristics of poor reading during reading exercises. In class and during examinations, majority of the pupils are unable to read and understand. The student population of Konongo M/A J.H.S is about 120. Out of the school's total population, J.H.S 1 students constitute 32. There are seven teachers who teach in the school and since the teachers

can help in providing useful information on issues concerning the study under taken, the researcher intended to include the 7 teachers to the target population.

3.3 Sample and sampling

A small population from the total population selected for observation and analysis is classified as sample. ‘Sampling is an act or process used in selecting a suitable sample or a respective part of the population for the purpose of determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population’ Turkman (1999).

According to Mohammed Adams (2012), a sample is a subset from the whole population. The population or the target population is the total population about which information is required. The researcher adopted the purposive sampling technique to select the group from the 32 pupils constituting J.H.S 1 pupils. The researcher concentrated on 20 pupils for the study of which 12 were boys and 8 were girls.

The rationale behind the use of purposive sampling in selecting the students of J.H.S 1 was that, ‘purposive sampling is a non –probability sampling that is selected based on characteristics the objective of the study’ Ashley (2018).

The researcher conducted a reading test for the sample chosen that is the 32 students in Konongo M/A JHS 1. During the reading, pupils showed characteristics of reading difficulties; mispronouncing words, regressing, skipping of words, omitting word endings among others. This particular class was chosen because they were the pupils who had been graduated from the primary level to the JHS level. Hence the researcher chose to observe the interest they have in reading from the primary level. All pupils were given a J.H.S 1 English textbook. Each student was to read at least a paragraph in turns from a passage in unit three of the textbook. At the end of the exercise, the

researcher identified the students with reading difficulties. This exercise was replicated the next day, this time with different reading textbooks and these same pupils showed characteristics of reading difficulties. Finally the researcher concluded by picking the 20 pupils as the sampling for the study. Also, the researcher selected all the teachers in the school to be part of the target population to be used for the study. Teachers were involved because they could provide vital information on the issues under discussion. There were seven teachers in the school and the researcher engaged all of them in order to have useful information.

The researcher again selected 15 parents whose wards were in the JHS 1 class to give responses to the oral interview that would be conducted. The researcher engaged the parents because they could also help in providing useful information.

3.4 Research site

Research site is mainly a place where people conduct research. Common research sites can include universities, hospitals, communities, schools research institutions and field research locations Rockson (2013). The research was conducted in Konongo M/A JHS. The school is located at Konongo Municipality in the Ashanti Region. Konongo is considered to be among the towns which are well noted for farming activities. This is a site where farming is the major reliable source of income for the inhabitants to survive. There are people from all walks of life residing in Konongo who are mostly farmers.

Most of the pupils in Konongo M/A have relatives who are into farming. They do not regard schooling to be of any importance to them. In view of this, children of school going age at Konongo M/A and other schools in the Municipality have no interest in schooling. They place high value on farming rather than education.

3.5 Research instrument

Research instruments are the measurement tools designed to obtain data on a topic under study Rhoda (2012). They are the tools used to collect measure and analyze data related to the topic under study. Such tools can be interviews, questionnaires, observations, and test. For this study the researcher used observation, interview and questionnaires as research tools. A set of questionnaire was given to students to respond to. Also both teachers and students were observed and interviewed. Some parents also responded to interviewed questions. These instruments helped the researcher to obtain the needed information from the students as well as teachers and parents.

3.5.1 Observation

Observation as a method of collecting data is the selection and recording of behaviours of people used for the research work, Watsey (2002). Observation is useful for generating in-depth descriptions of organisations or events for obtaining that is otherwise inaccessible, and for conducting research when other methods are inadequate.

Observation offers first-hand information without relying on the reports of others. Bright and wells (2013). This is because observation gives a direct report to the researcher without relying on any previous information. Observation was used to find out how students behave in and out of the classroom.

This was done by the researcher when he sat in the class to witness while the reading comprehension lesson was ongoing. The researcher also observed from pupils exercise books and found that pupils had difficulties in reading. The performances in

their exercise books were not encouraging therefore observation was adopted by the researcher to gather information about pupils reading difficulties.

Besides, the researcher observed different lessons in which pupils had opportunities to read. During a reading comprehension lesson, some selected pupils were given textbooks to read. The researcher observed the class and it became apparent that some students could not even read a paragraph of the comprehension passage fluently. When students were invited to read aloud individually, the researcher observed their deficiencies in reading individual words instead of reading according to sense group, ignoring word endings and skipping of words among others.

The researcher observed how students read and how the teachers responded to students reading challenges. Again the researcher observed how students interact with their colleagues speaking English in the school compound, outside the classroom. The researcher carried out these observations in a conducive environment.

3.5.2 Interview

An interview in qualitative research is a conversation where questions are asked to elicit information Seidman (1998). The interviewer is usually a professional who poses questions to the interviewee, in an alternating series of usually brief questions and answers. According to Akbayrak (2000), interview helps to offer complete description and analysis of research subject without limiting the scope of the research and the nature of the participant's responses.

In addition to the observation, interview was used. The interview was conducted orally for some parents whose wards are in J.H.S1. The parents were interviewed to find out how they motivate their children at home to read. Some of the interviews

were done in classrooms and under trees. Some parents were interviewed during one of the school's P.T.A meeting. It was conducted in a 'face to face manner'.

The process taken was informal which was characterized by free discussions, notwithstanding the set of questions involved. No grid rules were involved. Time was allocated for the interviewees to give responses. Whenever the interview questions posed problems of misunderstanding to the respondents, the researcher repeats or reframes the questions to suit the understanding of each category of respondents. The responses given helped the researcher in analyzing and interpreting the data.

3.5.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents Mcleod (2018). Questionnaire provides a relatively cheap, quick and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. Balkay (2016) also emphasizes that; questionnaire can be an effective means of measuring the behavior, attitudes, preferences, opinions and intentions of relatively large numbers of subjects more cheaply and quickly than other methods.

The researcher employed a third instrument for the study which is questionnaire. Two set of questions comprising ten items were administered for pupils and teachers. The questionnaires were designed with alternatives to choose from. The researcher grouped the pupils and teachers.

The questionnaires were read and explained to them. They were left to complete the forms independently. This was done so that the pupils would understand and respond well to each item.

The second sets of questions were given to 7 teachers from different subject areas. The structure of the questionnaire followed the pattern set for students. Teachers questionnaires were used to identify how teachers identified learners with reading difficulties and their comments with regard to that. There were 10 items in all. The researcher did not assist the teachers as to how to react to each item. However, the researcher was available to clear any doubt. These tools helped to bring out the causes of reading difficulties among students. Both teachers and students questionnaires are found in the appendix.

3.6 Data collection protocol

A data collection protocol describes the procedures for collecting and recording data. It outlines systematic procedures to ensure that high – quality data is collected. It emphasizes on the purpose of the survey and how samples were selected Bruce and vaynik (2014).

After selecting and finalizing the research instruments to be used for the study, the researcher visited the head teacher of the school under investigation personally for taking prior permission from him of the class under study for collecting the necessary data. Subsequently the researcher discussed in details about the his study with the head teacher and the rest of the teachers in the school and sought the permission from them for collecting the data and the students were explained about the nature and purpose of the study.

In the first phase, good rapport with the teacher in the class under study was established to do the assignment carefully thus helping in making the research instruments selected for the study to run smoothly.

In the second phase, before administration of the interview and questionnaires, necessary steps were followed and appropriate precautions were taken for the students chosen for the study.

After being satisfied with the arrangement, the researcher organized the variables for the study and urged them to be sincere in the answering of the questionnaires to aid him gather a concrete data for the study.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of systematically applying statistical or logical techniques to describe and illustrate , condense and recap and evaluate data. Robinson (2004).

The researcher analyzed the data using the qualitative method of data analyzes. By so doing, the researcher placed emphasis on groups set for the interviews, questionnaire and observations. The data analysis involved identification of common patterns within the responses given on the interview and questionnaire and critically analyzed them in order to achieve the objectives of the research. The qualitative data analyzes focused on analyzing the responses in a tabular form from the interviews and questionnaires presented.

3.8 Data presentation

This refers to the organization of data into tables, graphs or charts, so that logical and statistical conclusions can be derived from the collected measurements Kassey (2011).The researcher organized the data in a tabular form and also used graphical representations. Bar graphs were used by the researcher to represent the data collected to aid people to easily read the chart. The charts given would be used to serve as a guide in the discussion of results in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on reading difficulties among Konongo M/A JHS 1 students. In this chapter, the researcher presents results as well as offer a detailed interpretation of the results gathered. The data was presented in accordance with the questionnaires posed and the responses the students and teachers gave. However, observation was done, and oral interview was also conducted for both teachers and parents. Furthermore, the researcher also analyzed the questionnaire in relation to the statement of the problem, objective of the study and the review of the literature. A summary of the data collected is given and analyzed.

4.1.1 Presentation of data

The analysis is mostly based on the research questions set for the researcher (Bruklyn 2002). In order to ensure the information collected on the reading difficulties among Konongo M/A JHS 1 student's under investigation was reliable and consistent, data was collected through observations and test as well as questionnaires which were distributed to the respondents.

The findings are presented as follows:

1. The difficulties students face in reading
2. The causes responsible for the difficulties in reading.
3. Teaching strategies that can help students to overcome difficulties in reading.

4.2 The difficulties students face in reading.

This section outlines the difficulties students face in reading. The outcomes from the study are analyzed in relation to the questionnaires, tests and observations made. The researcher gathered the following as the main difficulties students face in reading.

4.2.1 Difficulty in decoding words

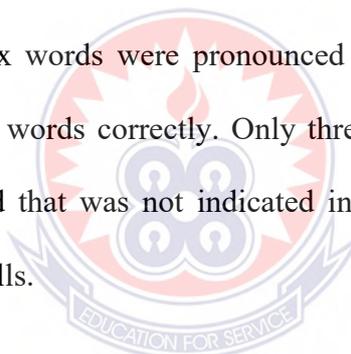
The study revealed that, most students could not decode words. Some students found it difficult to identify the sounds of letters as opined by Goud (1999). An observation was made by the researcher during a reading comprehension class. The researcher wrote ten keywords on the chalkboard and asked pupils to pronounce them. The researcher observed that half the class was unable to pronounce the words. They had difficulty in associating the sounds of the letters. The pupils could not break words into syllable and also they were not able to blend the syllables and the sounds of the letters to pronounce the words. How the pupils pronounced the words and how they were expected to pronounce them are presented in Appendix A. Out of the twenty pupils used for the study, the researcher observed through the pronunciation of the keywords on the chalkboard that, twelve pupils representing 60% could not decode. This implies that decoding is one of the difficulties pupils faced in reading.

According to Reid (2000), ‘ a key to becoming a good reader is the ability for learners to sound out words they do not know and this process is decoding’. This means that for pupils to become good readers, they need to have decoding skills. Pupils of Konongo M/A JHS 1 were not able to pronounce five letter and six letter words which were the keywords in the passage they were set to read. From the observation, only two pupils were able to pronounce six words correctly from the ten words. Also, five pupils were able to give few sounds of the letters in the words but could not pronounce the words correctly as it should be. This indicates that, decoding accounts to difficulty in reading. Table 1 shows the list of words and pupils pronunciation of them.

Table 1: Pupil's pronunciation of words

List of words	Correct pronunciation	Pronunciation by pupils
livelihood	/lɪvliːhʊd/	/lɪvliːhʊd/
bed - ridden	/bedˌɪdən/	/bedˌɪdən/
apparently	/əˈpæɪəntli/	/əˈpæɪəntli/
Couple	/kʌpəl/	/kʊpəl/
Strange	/streɪndʒ/	/strændʒ/
Plunging	/plʌndʒɪn/	/plɒndʒɪn/

From table 1, it can be read that, out of the ten keywords written on the chalkboard for pupils to pronounce, six words were pronounced wrongly. Seventeen pupils were unable to pronounce the words correctly. Only three pupils were able to pronounce four words correctly and that was not indicated in the Table 1. This indicates that pupil's lack decoding skills.



4.2.2 Difficulty in reading fluently

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression (Hudson 2010). The researcher found out that pupils had problems with fluency. A reading test conducted in the classroom proved fluency as a reading difficulty for pupils. Pupils were assigned to read the first two paragraphs on the topic 'A family by the sea' in their reading text book. At the end of the reading test, only one person out of the 20 pupils used for the study was able to read on time. It was recorded by the researcher that, one person used 45 seconds to read the two paragraphs. This represents 5%. The rest of the pupils could not read within the time.

There were lot of mistakes while reading. The table shows the number of mistakes made by the pupils while reading.

Table 2: Mistakes pupils made while reading.

Mistakes made by pupils	Number of pupils	Percentage
Wrong pronunciations	11	55%
Skipping of words	5	25%
Making of stops	4	20%
Total	20	100

It can be read from the table that, pupils were fond of making three mistakes when reading. 11 pupils which represent 55% were used to pronouncing words wrongly. 5 pupils representing 25% used to be skipping words while reading and 4 pupils were fond of making several stops when reading and it represents 20%.

The test conducted will be shown at the Appendix 'B' the researcher read from the reading test that, pupils lacked fluency skills. The 19 pupils (95%) could not read with accuracy, speed and proper expressions. The analysis indicates that, the JHS 1 students of Konongo have difficulty in reading fluently.

The literature review pointed out fluency as a reading difficulty. Bradley (2001) emphasized that, for pupils to be good readers, they must be able to read fluently. He stated that, 'fluency goes in line with speed'. From his point of view, the researcher is in full support in the sense that, the reading test conducted indicates that, the pupils are not good reader readers. This is because almost all the twenty pupils lacked

fluency skills and as a result, 19 pupils representing 95% of the total population of the pupil used for the study could not read two paragraphs within 2 minutes.

4.2.3 Difficulty in comprehending text

From the literature review, Bryant (2001) emphasized that, comprehending any information requires the ability to decode it. Also he stated that comprehension involves reading and understanding hence pupils have challenges of reading if they cannot read to understand. A test conducted by the researcher on the passage read helped the researcher to identify difficulties in comprehending text as one of the reading difficulties. From the test conducted, pupils' performance was low. The researcher gave five comprehension exercises to the pupils. The marks scored by the pupils indicated that, they did not understand the passage read. The exercise contained five questions and was marked over five. Out of the 20 pupils used for the study, only one person scored all the marks and it is represented by 5%. Also, two pupils scored four out of five marks and it was represented by 10%. From the results, 17 pupils scored from three to five marks. Three pupils scored three marks and represents 15%. The remaining 14 pupils scored from zero to two marks and it also represents 70%.

This analysis given indicates that, pupils did not understand the passage read. The inability for pupils to comprehend the passage read made majority of the pupils score low marks. Understanding in the course of reading is the most important skills pupils must acquire Lyndbx (2014). It is therefore important for pupils to derive the meaning or understanding to any passage read.

4.2.4 Skipping of words.

Skipping of words is another problem the researcher found out to be a reading difficulty among pupils. Skipping of words refers to an act of passing over words without reading (Harison, 2013).

The researcher detected in a reading comprehension test conducted that, almost all the pupils were used to skipping most of the words in the passage. It was observed that, only four pupils which represents 20% had no problem with skipping of words. Those pupils despite having no problem with skipping of words were facing pronunciation problems. About 80% of the pupils faced the problem of skipping words. Pupils were seen skipping words in sentences especially words pupils classify as bigger words. As a result of this the researcher indicated that skipping of words is among the difficulties pupils face in reading. Table 2 shows the analysis of the responses pupils gave to questions in relation to the type of challenges they face during reading. The questionnaire contained ten items. The responses pupils gave are analyzed below. The questionnaire can be found at the appendix as well as the words pupils skipped.

Table 3: challenges of pupils in reading

Pupils response	Number of pupils	Percentage (%)
Mispronounce words/ read individual words	5	25
Making several stops/ slow reading	5	25
Skip words or ignore word endings	4	20
Difficult to understand what has been read	6	30
Total	20	100%

The responses the pupils gave in the questionnaire given to them clearly indicates that, pupils were faced with many difficulties in reading. It can be traced from the table that, the answers some pupils gave shows that, they had problems in pronouncing words. Five pupils' answers (25%) given proved that they had challenges in reading. Then again, from the table, four pupils representing (20%) indicated that they had problems in reading because they normally skipped words when reading. Also, the researcher realized that, five students (25%) were slow readers. They were found making several stops when reading. The results from the questionnaire indicate that, pupils did not understand what they read. The responses meant that, pupils did not understand the content of anything read therefore their interest in reading diminishes. Greater portion of the pupils (30%) responded to difficulty in comprehending text as their major problem. From the literature review, dyslexia was identified to be one of the difficulty pupils face in reading. According to Scott (2009), dyslexia is the inability for pupils to read. This problem makes pupils find it difficult to sound out letters and recognize letters. The researcher detected from pupils' class exercise that, half of the class had reading problems.

The low performance by pupils proved to the researcher that, pupils find it difficult to read and understand. The inability for pupils to read and understand led them to score low marks in the class exercise. It can be concluded that, dyslexia is among the reading difficulties pupils are facing.

4.4 Factors responsible for pupil's inability to read.

(Causes for pupils inability to read)

4.4.1. Teachers as a cause of reading difficulties

Teachers are considered as a cause of pupils reading difficulties. This may be due to several factors. The researcher presented some questionnaire to teachers to find out why teachers account to reading difficulties.

Table 4 - professional qualifications

Professional qualification	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
Diploma(D. B. E)	2	28.5
Cert 'A'	1	14.5
Untrained	4	57.1
Total	7	100

From the responses teachers gave with regard to their qualifications, it was gathered that, two teachers representing 28.5% had Diploma in Basic Education (D. B. E). one of them representing 14.5% held Cert 'A' and four teachers(57.1%) were untrained teachers. The findings as shown in table 3 indicates that about four teachers representing 57.1% in the Konongo M/A JHS were untrained. Therefore, the school under study needed enough trained teachers on the staff. Even though the research did not research into the qualifications of all teachers in the school, according to the data collected on the seven teachers who participated in the study, only two of them had the Diploma qualification, one of them had Cert 'A' and four were untrained. Smith (1999), shared a view that, teachers with low academic qualifications lack the skills to

teach pupils reading. Such teachers lack teaching strategies and experiences to handle pupils with reading difficulties.

As pointed out by Padmore (2014) teachers play vital role in the teaching and learning processes, and students reading skills development cannot be build unless they are assisted by competent teachers. it is therefore important that, teachers attain the higher academic qualification before assigned to classes to teach reading.

According to lyndry (2015), Education is a phenomenon where many ideas, strategies, methods and concepts do emerge every now and then. It is important that teachers upgrade their knowledge to embrace new methods and strategies in teaching particularly reading.

To add up, if more professional trained teachers are recruited into the school and teachers upgrade their teaching methodologies, it will go a long way to developing the students reading skills and improve upon their performances.

The researcher again observed that, aside the professional qualification being a cause of pupils' reading difficulties, poor methods of teaching was identify as another cause. The researcher wanted to find out how teachers teach reading comprehension in class. Therefore, the researcher held an oral interview with the teachers about the methods they used when teaching reading comprehension. All the seven teachers in the school were interviewed. The researcher used all the teachers because they had taught in an English lesson before. Table 4 indicates the responses given by teachers

Table 5: how do you teach reading comprehension?

Teachers response	Number of teachers	percentage
I read for pupils to repeat after me after guiding them to pronounce the keywords	5	71%
I allow pupils to read aloud in paragraphs after guiding them to pronounce the keywords	1	14%
I make pupils do silent reading after guiding them to pronounce the keywords	1	14%
Total	7	100%

It was gathered as shown in Table 4 that, most of the teachers in Konongo M/A used inappropriate teaching methods to teach reading. Five teachers representing 72% indicated that, they read the passages for pupils to repeat after them after guiding them to pronounce the keywords.

This shows that, majority of the teachers do not allow pupils to decode words by themselves rather they pronounce all the words in the passages for pupils to repeat. This response given indicates that, teachers lack appropriate teaching methods. one teacher (14%) responded that, he taught reading by making pupils to read aloud after taking them through the keywords. This method can be considered good in the sense that the teacher could correct any wrong pronunciation as pupils decode the words. one teacher representing 14% said he made pupils do silent reading after taking them through the keywords. This method is not considered best since the teacher could not

identify any mistake pupils made in the course of silent reading. The findings as shown in Table 4 indicate that poor method of teaching causes reading difficulties.

4.4.2 The learner as a cause of reading difficulties.

The attitude of pupils in a learning situation is of crucial importance. As a result of this the researcher observed the pupils and found out that, pupils resort to other things rather than learning. Through the observation made by the researcher, it was revealed that, pupils spent most of their leisure time on non educative ventures. That is, pupils could have used their leisure times to practice reading to build their reading skills but rather, they are fond of playing most times which affects their reading skills. It was observed that eight pupils representing 40% play around when there is no teacher to handle a lesson. Two pupils (10%) were mostly seen by the researcher doing their own private reading during their leisure times at school. Ten pupils (50%) left the class to roam about doing nothing in the absence of their class teachers. The attitude of pupils made them score lower marks in the reading test conducted. With reference to Table 2, 11 pupils (55%) were fond of making wrong pronunciation. 5 pupils (25%) were having problems in making several stops when reading and 4 pupils which represents 20% were fond of skipping words when reading. The researcher after conducting the reading test realized that, pupils who spend their leisure times in practicing reading improved in the reading test than those who used to roam about during their leisure times. The results of the marked scripts will be shown at Appendix E. The analysis from the observation indicates that, the attitude of pupils towards learning can have positive or negative impact on them.

4.4.3 The school environment as a cause of reading difficulties.

The researcher presented a questionnaire to teachers to find out why the school environment can contribute to reading difficulties. The table below shows the responses teachers gave.

Table 6: how the schools environment causes reading difficulties

Teachers responses	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
Large class size	2	28.5
Noisy environment	1	14.2
Lack of teacher motivation	1	14.2
Inadequate furniture	2	28.4
Reading materials available	1	14.2
Total	7	100

The table 6 above clearly shows that, the school and the school's environment cause reading difficulties. It can be read from the table that, all the seven teachers given the questionnaire indicated that the causes of reading difficulties among pupils could be related to the school and the school's environment. For instance, two teachers representing indicated that;

" large class size causes reading difficulties because we are unable to cater for individual differences in the course of reading We are not able to find out the reading difficulties faced by individual students due to large class size".

Also, a teacher said,

“Teachers do not motivate pupils to read and that contribute to the reading difficulties of pupils. Pupils get excited when they are motivated by teachers hence lack of teacher motivation makes pupils lose interest in reading resulting in reading difficulties”.

Inadequate reading materials were indicated by one teacher as a cause of reading difficulties and he said

“teaching materials help learners to understand lessons. Pupils involve themselves actively in lessons when there are adequate supply of teaching materials. Therefore, inadequate supply of teaching materials result to reading difficulties

Two teachers also said;

“pupils are made to sit in three’s on dual desks due to lack of furniture. This makes pupils pay less attention when reading thereby causing reading difficulties”.

One teacher responded that;

“some schools are sited near noisy environments. The noise pollution distract pupils attention when learning To read”.

Some school practices can contribute to students reading problems. Students with reading difficulties are not practicing enough to improve their reading abilities due to large class size. Students who do not read well in class as a result of lack of attention from the teacher due to large class size stand the chance of being poor readers. The reason being that the number of pupils in a class can influence the effectiveness of teaching reading.

Specifically if the class size is large, it becomes difficult for teachers to deal with all students and pay attention to individual differences.

According to Flesch (2014), large class size can result in reading difficulties. That is, large class size distracts pupils attention in reading. This is because, pupils do not get much attention to study. They are mostly disturbed by others in the class. Also teachers find it difficult to attend to each of the pupils to meet their challenges.

Noisy environment in schools also disturbs pupils reading. The researcher observed the nature of the schools environment and realized that, the environment was polluted with noise. The researcher could hear horns from buses disturbing the schools environment. The noise distracted pupils attention during reading lessons because pupils found it difficult to listen to each other in the course of the reading.

The responses given indicate that, the school environment causes reading difficulties. It can be read that, two teachers (28.5%) said large class size is one of the school factors that cause reading difficulties. One teacher which represents 14.2% answered that, noisy environment causes reading difficulties. One teacher (14.2%) responded that, lack of teacher motivation causes reading difficulties. Inadequate teaching materials was indicated by one teacher as a cause of reading difficulties and it represents 14.2%. The appendix C will give evidence of the responses teachers gave.

4.4.4 The home as a cause of reading difficulties

The home in which children grow also influence their ability to read. Homes that are plagued with poverty and family instability produce children who are at risk of school failure Scaldof (2013). The combination of individual and environmental causes produce an increased risk of reading difficulties. Children who are homeless have

little energy to focus on school. They are overburdened and have little or no time for school. Often, parents who are under educated may lack the time and skills to nurture literacy by providing reading materials and motivating children to read.

According to Southgate (2014), the home plays an important role on pupils' reading ability. In order for a child to become a good reader, the home must provide the child with adequate reading materials and a conducive environment to practice reading.

Lack of motivation factors causes reading problems because some pupils are not motivated by their parents to read.

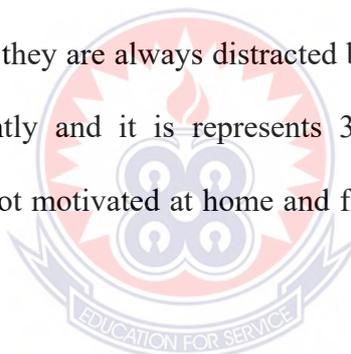
The researcher observed pupils' attitude in school and found out that, most pupils are not motivated or encouraged to read. The researcher assigned pupils to practice reading the first two paragraphs of unit 18 in their test book at home. A reading test was conducted on that same assignment given to pupils. Most of the pupils could not read the two paragraphs which were assigned to them to practice at home. This made the researcher draw a conclusion that, pupils are not motivated to read or encouraged to read. Pupils could not read the passage as the researcher expected of them. Out of twenty pupils, only three pupils read up to perfection and it represents 15%. The rest of the pupils could not read at all. About half of the pupils could not read a passage given to them to practice at home. This indicated that, pupils are not advised or made to do private studies at home and this affects their academic performances.

The researcher wanted to find out from pupils if they have challenges at home that prevent them from practicing reading. The table below shows the questionnaire and responses pupils gave as the home being a cause of reading difficulties.

Table 7: how the home causes reading difficulties

Pupils response	Number of pupils	Percentage
Lack of motivation	5	25%
Lack of reading materials	9	45%
Noisy environment	6	30%
Total	20	100

The findings indicated that, the home is a cause of pupils reading difficulties. 9 pupils responded that, there are inadequate reading materials to practice reading at home and it represents 45%. 6 pupils also stated that, the noisy environment at home causes reading difficulties since they are always distracted by the noise therefore they cannot practice reading frequently and it is represents 30%. 5 pupils representing 25% indicated that, they are not motivated at home and for that matter they are faced with reading difficulties.



4.4.5 Reading materials as a cause of reading difficulties

Reading materials cause reading difficulties in many ways. The inadequate supply of the reading materials to pupils, the content of the materials to be read and the nature of the materials create problems for pupils during reading. According to Smith [1994], students need to know the structure in a book and get familiar to the vocabularies used in the book. If the sentences and words used in the book are familiar to the reader it will generate the interest of the reader.

Aimer states that, ‘for many students, textbooks are too difficult, dull and frustrating to read’. He opined that, children of today have their own interest in materials they love to read and their choice of reading materials may be different from what the syllables require or what was used years ago. As a result of this pupils may develop negative attitude towards reading if the reading materials given them is not interesting to them. Also stated the lack of textbooks or materials causes reading problems. Thus, some schools have inadequate reading materials and as a result of that, it is not every student who gets access to the reading materials. The few that have access to the reading materials are able to overcome their reading problems with others facing reading difficulties.

The researcher as a permanent class teacher in Konongo M/A JHS 1 took it upon himself to collect data on the number of reading textbooks In the school from JHS 1 to JHS 3. After the exercise, the researcher found out that, all the three classes lacked reading textbooks. The table below shows the number of reading materials in each level of class.

Table 8: number of textbooks available

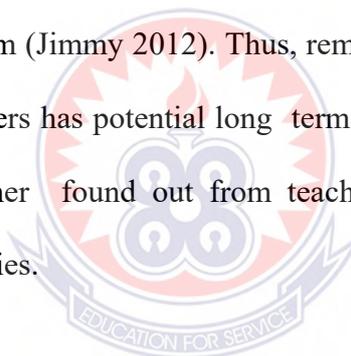
Level / class	No. of reading books available	Population of pupils
JHS 1	11	32
JHS 2	18	52
JHS 3	10	36

From the table it can be seen that all the three levels lack reading materials. Out of 32 pupils in JHS 1 class, the number of textbooks available to them was 11. JHS 2 were having only 18 reading textbooks out of a population of 52. Finally the JHS 3

students had 10 books available out of 36 to be their class population. It can be read from the table that pupils reading difficulties can be attributed to inadequate reading materials. The findings made the researcher to support the view opined by Aimer [2010] and Thompson [2011] that, the nature of textbooks and inadequate supply of textbooks account to pupils reading difficulties. From the table, it could be realized that, there are inadequate reading in the school and that has resulted in the reading difficulties of pupils.

4.5 Strategies to improve reading difficulties

Reading difficulties present serious and potentially lifelong challenges. Children who do not read well are more likely to drop out of school, become teen parents, or enter the juvenile justice system (Jimmy 2012). Thus, remediating reading difficulties early in children's school careers has potential long term benefits to the individual as well as society. The researcher found out from teachers ways that could help better students reading difficulties.



4.5.1 Teaching of the basic components of reading

The researcher through his observations on pupils reading abilities saw that, pupils lacked the basic skills of reading. Pupils did not have any knowledge about decoding and blending of sounds of letters to form words. Pupils lacked the basic skills of reading that is vocabulary, reading, comprehension and speaking and writing.

This made the researcher conduct oral interview with some teachers in the school to solicit their idea on the best method to help improve pupils reading. The responses indicated that, the teachers did not know the appropriate methods to be used to teach reading.

The researcher adopted an intervention to help pupils by teaching them sounds of letters and guiding them to blend them to form words. Through the exercise pupils were able to pronounce words and gradually they started reading sentences and passages. The researcher then concluded that, teaching pupils the basic components of reading will help pupils improve their reading skills.

4.5.2 Small class size

The population of Konongo M/A JHS 1 was 32. The researcher selected a target population of 20 pupils for the study. The 20 pupils are considered to constitute a small class size as compared to the 32 pupils. The target population chosen by the researcher helped him to improve upon the pupils reading abilities. This attest to the fact, small class size help teachers to deliver effectively.

Also much attention is focused on all the pupils. Therefore the use of small class size is a strategy to enhance pupils reading.

4.5.3 Reading test

Organization of reading test helps pupils to improve reading. This is because, the test enables pupils to do advance preparation and also search for reading materials to practice reading. This helps pupils to improve upon reading skills. The is researcher conducted a reading test to check on pupils phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension skills. The findings from the test showed that, pupils reading skills were improved. The table below shows the reading ability of pupils on the components of reading before and after conducting the test.

Table 9: Results from reading test

Reading components	Number of pupils with the reading component skills before test.	Number of pupils with the reading component skills after test.
phonics	1	4
Phonemic awareness	2	3
vocabulary	1	4
fluency	2	4
Reading comprehension	3	5
Total	9/20	20/20

The outcome of the reading test clearly shows that, reading test can improve pupil's ability to read. It can be seen from the table that, before conducting the test, pupils lacked skills in almost all the reading components. Before the reading test, only one pupil had the phonic skills and also 2 pupils were having the phonemic awareness skills. The findings also indicate that, one pupil had vocabulary skills, 2 pupils had fluency skills and lastly 3 pupils had reading comprehension skills before the test was conducted.

The researcher conducted the reading test in order to help pupils acquire the skills in reading. Pupils prepared adequately for the reading test and it yielded good results in the test. After the test, 4 pupils acquired phonic skills, 3 pupils acquired phonemic awareness skills, 4 pupils acquired vocabulary skills, 4 pupils also acquired fluency skills and finally 5 pupils acquired reading comprehension skills. The analysis indicates that, reading test help improve pupils reading.

4.5.4 The use of drills.

From the literature review, other scholars Naccino (2002) made emphasis on the use of drills to help improve pupils reading. Naccino (2002) that, drilling provides focus on accuracy and fluency'. Therefore it is advisable for English teachers to drill pupils to enable them become good readers.

The researcher adopted the use of drilling to also enhance pupils reading. The researcher wrote keywords on the chalkboard and help pupils through drilling to pronounce the words. Also short sentences were written on the chalkboard and pupils were taken through drilling to read them. This enabled the pupils to improve upon their reading skills. The use drilling helped pupils in pronouncing words correctly. Also almost all the pupils were found reading passages correctly as required of them. Out of the twenty pupils used for the study, eighteen pupils who represent 90% were able to pronounce and read short sentences written by the teacher on the chalkboard. This indicates that, the drilling method helped improve pupils reading abilities.

4.6 summary and conclusions

This chapter dealt with the analysis of the data. It discussed the research questions and the objectives set for the study. The chapter gave analysis on the observations, tests and questionnaires given to pupils based on the research questions and objectives.

Analysis was given on the difficulties students faced in reading. There was a breakdown on the difficulties students face in reading. Again, the causes of pupil's inability to read were looked at.

The researcher presented some tables to explain some responses of the questionnaire given where necessary.

Lastly the strategy to improve pupils reading was discussed. The researcher outlined some strategies and explained how he used those strategies to help pupils over their reading difficulties. Some strategies outlined in the literature reviewed were also discussed. The researcher explained how he used those strategies to help pupils improve upon their reading skill.



CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a summary of the study is presented; conclusions are drawn on the basis of the research questions and on the literature review. Also a summary on the findings gathered through the study will be presented. Recommendations will be drawn for further studies as well.

The researcher observed that, some pupils at Konongo M/A JHS 1 were finding it difficult to read. The few pupils who could read were faced with some challenges such as making several stops when reading, skipping of words and mispronunciation of words among others. Against this background, the researcher decided to find out ways to help improve upon pupils reading skills.

Observations, questionnaire, oral interview and tests were the research instruments adapted by the researcher to gather the necessary information needed for the study. These tools helped the researcher to find out the causes, effects and strategies to help pupils improve upon their reading skills.

5.2 Summary of findings

Reading, writing and arithmetic have become identifying marks of the literate in modern society. Children who get the opportunity to receive formal education are taught to read. Yet, some pupils have reading problems that need to be addressed and tackled. During the study, it was found that, about 62% of JHS 1 pupils at Konongo M/A had difficulties in reading. The study helped the researcher to find out the causes

of reading difficulties as; the teacher, the learner, the school's environment, inadequate teaching materials and poor methods of teaching.

Also, the difficulties pupils face in reading were identified. It was found from the study that, the difficulties pupils face in reading could be attributed to; dyslexia, decoding, fluency, comprehension and phonics. The strategies to improve pupils reading were identified as using the drilling method, look and say, the use of reading test, availability of reading materials and the use of proper methods of teaching.

5.3 Conclusions

From the research work , the researcher discovered that, proper methods of teaching help pupils improve upon their reading skills. Therefore it is advisable for teachers to adapt to the use of good teaching methods.

Then again, it can be concluded that, teachers and parents need to motivate pupils at home and in the school to help pupils cultivate good habit for reading. There is the need for the provision of adequate reading materials to help pupils do advance reading.

5.4 Recommendations

This outlines what the researcher suggested to help pupils and teachers in the teaching and learning process to make reading effective.

The researcher recommended that, teachers must upgrade themselves to enrich their teaching methodologies. This will enable them to teach effectively with confidence. Also, workshops need to be organized consistently to equip teachers on methods to employ to diagnose proper assessment of reading to find out pupils who need more attention in reading.

The researcher again recommended that, teachers and parents should be encouraged an to assist pupils to practice reading. Also the Ministry Of Education and other stakeholders should provide adequate and relevant materials to enhance reading in schools. Teachers in the basic schools should be provided with the necessary support to identify and teach learners with reading problems.



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APPENDIX A

Pupil's pronunciation of words

List of words	Correct pronunciation	Pronunciation by pupils
livelihood	/lɪvliːhʊd/	/lɪvliːhʊd/
bed - ridden	/bedˌɪdən/	/bedˌaɪdən/
apparently	/əˈpæɪəntli/	/əˈpæɪəntli/
Couple	/kʌpəl/	/kʊpəl/
Strange	/streɪndʒ/	/strændʒ/
Plunging	/plʌndʒɪn/	/plʊndʒɪn/

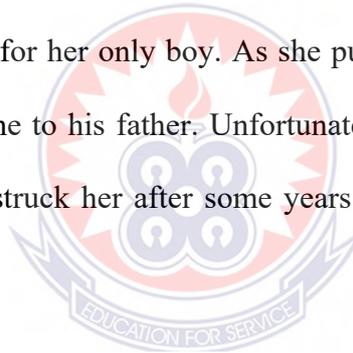


APPENDIX B

A FAMILY BY THE SEA

Part of the passage that the researcher used to test pupils to observe their reading difficulties.

A fisherman and his family lived in a small village near the sea. The family consisted of himself, his wife and their five year old daughter. Though the couple were very poor they were very honest. The sea was the source of livelihood for the family. Upon it, the fisherman and his parents had depended for years until his father went to the sea one day and failed to return. The fisherman was only five years when this incident occurred. In order to raise her son, the mother began working harder, all by herself. She had very high hopes for her only boy. As she put it, she did not want the sea to devour him as it had done to his father. Unfortunately, she too became bed-ridden when a strange disease struck her after some years. A few months later, she passed away. ...



APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

I kindly request that you provide me with genuine responses to enable me have a successful study on the strategies to improve teachers and pupils attendance in basic schools.

Gender: Male Female **Marital status:** Single Married Divorced

Age: 0-25 25-40 40-60

Literacy Education: Formal Education Informal Education

Working Experience: 1-3yrs 3-5yrs 5yrs and above

(Tick what you consider necessary)

1. What is your professional qualification?
A. Cert A---- B. DBE----- C. Untrained-----
2. How do you teach reading comprehension?
A. I read for pupils to read after me-----
B. I allow pupils to read aloud in paragraphs-----
C. I make pupils do silent reading-----

Tick which condition in schools causes reading difficulties

3. Large class size.....
4. Noisy environment.....
5. Inadequate reading materials-----
6. Poor method of teaching.....

Tick which is the best strategy to improve pupils reading

7. Small class size -----
8. Adequate teaching and learning materials-----
9. Proper methods of teaching -----
10. Teacher motivation-----



APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

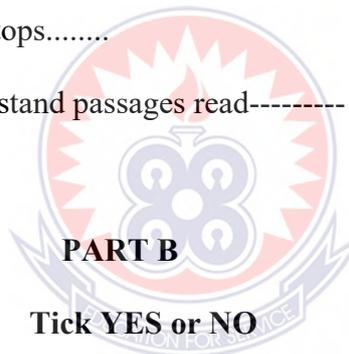
I kindly request that you provide me with genuine responses to enable me have a successful study on strategies to adopt to improve teachers and students attendance to school.

PART A

(Tick where you think necessary)

What can you identify as your reading difficulty?

1. Wrong pronnciation.....
2. Skipping of words
3. Making several stops.....
4. Difficult to understand passages read-----



PART B

Tick YES or NO

5. Your parents engage you to read at home.....
6. Your teacher motivates you to read.....
7. Do you have enough reading materials
8. Do you like the content in your english reading books?.....
9. Is there noise in the school premises?.....
10. Do you feel distracted by the number of pupils in your class?.....

APPENDIX E

Marked scripts of the reading test given to pupils

