



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**EXAMINING BASIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT
KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND THEIR CLASSROOM
TEACHING PRACTICES: THE CASE OF ASSIN SOUTH DISTRICT.**



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**A Dissertation in the Department of BASIC EDUCATION, Faculty of
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the award of Degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, BASIC EDUCATION of
the UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

OCTOBER, 2015

DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original research. With the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which I have identified and acknowledged, the entire dissertation is my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Candidate's Name: Boateng Rockson

Signature:

Date:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

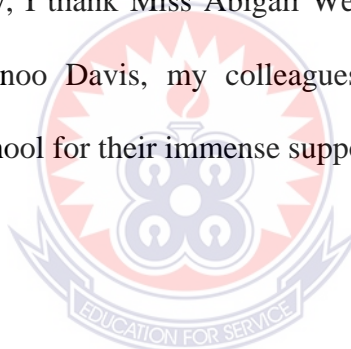
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Date:

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family especially my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Boateng.



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ABSTRACT

Little is known about the basic school Language teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and their Classroom Teaching Practices. Through interview and observation, this qualitative case study sought to examine and unearth the Pedagogical Content Knowledge and the Classroom Teaching Practices of basic school English Language teachers in the Assin South district. A total of 10 basic school English Language teachers were purposively selected for the study. Data collected was analyzed through the thematic approach and the verbatim comments of the participants was also applied. Key findings from the study revealed among others that: teaching of the English Language is geared towards improving the oral aspects and hence, teachers concentrate more on teaching the oral aspects of the language. Again, there is the need for subject specialization in order to teach it effectively. Besides, teachers hold the belief that English Language teaching is a social practice. This implies that, the interactive classroom environment is the preferred one. More so, the study showed that years of teaching experience form part of Pedagogical Content Knowledge. Further revelation from the study is that Pedagogical Content Knowledge of teachers influence their decisions on instruction. Among other recommendations, the study recommends that, stakeholders should work together towards streamlining the focus, methods/strategies and the theoretical basis that will help shape the focus of English Language teaching. It is also recommended that, teachers' beliefs about the subject should be shaped during pre-service and in-service training.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Personal, social and economic importance of English Language at the global level cannot be over emphasized. Globalization is generally turning our world into one massive community. Language choice, language loyalty or language shifts are all subject to multiple influences within this massive community. Bruthiaux (2003) defines global English as a set of related varieties with an infinite adaptation to each local setting. English is becoming more and more triumphant in demographic as well as in functional terms. McArthur (1999) describes English as ‘omnivorous’; devouring all languages on its path. English is gradually becoming a mass language. The more speakers the language attracts, the more the language is becoming diversified along regional lines. It is spoken around the world with different varieties existing and evolving across the globe. Africans are becoming contemptuous of their languages. This is because a good number of young people consider their languages as uneducated, primitive and non-prestigious. Young people especially in Africa in search of economic opportunities are leaving their villages into cities where they gradually speak less and less of their languages and more of English Language. These cosmopolitan cities provide them with an opportunity to for instance, intermarry. It often turns out that these mixed couples have no common language apart from the language of wider communication like English. Most of the children of such mixed marriages grow up to speak the English Language as their first and only language.

Crystal (1997) has stated that English has repeatedly found itself in the right places at the right times. My readings in the area of English Language points to the fact that no language of wider communication has been employed by speakers so

divergent in cultures, nationalities and backgrounds as English is today. This wide range of usage is being encouraged by the loose control which the English Language exercises over form and usage in diverse sociolinguistic contexts.

English is not only used as an official language in many nations, but also to influence many different cultures in a large number of countries; it is the central language of communication in the world-wide (Susanna, 2007). The expansion of the English language has rapidly increased the need to gain better communication in English throughout the world because the aptitude to use English is very much needed for further studies, journeys in other countries as well as for social and professional global contacts of different kinds (Hashemi, 2011; Susanna, 2007). I think foreigners and school children are able to adjust to new communities easily mainly due to their fluency in English. It appears English is currently seen as the best option for communication among people from different language backgrounds, thereby being labeled as ‘English as an International Language (EIL)’ or English as a Lingua Franca. Graddol (2006, p. 66) writes to agree that:

‘The English language finds itself at the centre of the paradoxes which arise from globalisation. It provides the lingua franca essential to the deepening integration of global service-based economies. It facilitates transnational encounters and allows nations, institutions, and individuals in any part of the world, to communicate their world view and identities. Yet it is also the national language of some of the most freemarket economies driving economic globalisation,

and is often seen as representing particular cultural, economic, and even religious values''.

Khader & Mohammad (2010) hold the view that English as a global language can equally be used for communication with native-speakers and non-native-speakers in the worldwide, especially in the education section, where all university students need it for their studies in order to search information and obtain knowledge; therefore, a lot of the universities throughout the world need to include English language as one of their educational tool requirements. It is widely accepted that English has become the language of choice for many international scholarly journals. The trend is on a rise, and academia is left with almost no choice but to publish in English in order to obtain international recognition.

For Crystal (1997), conversation without a common language between academicians from different nationalities, both in the virtual and real world, would prove impossible. People's demands toward English in International Journal of English Language Education in many countries in the world make English language a key factor and has become the international language that spreads quickly (Carlo, 2012; Hessein, Demirok, & Uzunboylu, 2009; Richards, 2001; Wozniak, 2010). It is therefore not surprising that English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education (Murray & Christison, 2010). With English being considered by more and more individuals as a global language, individuals around the world are striving to learn English, leading to a large English teaching and learning business. In respect of this global demand for English Language, a good number of countries in Africa, including Ghana employ English Language as its official language. Owing to this, the issue of Ghana's official language has been the subject of many discussions

for many years. It has been debated in parliament, schools, and homes. It was the subject of a paper presented at the National Festival of Arts and Culture 1998.

In fact, English Language has become the national language and continues to have a deep impact on its society, and will, it seems, be an important issue in the shaping of its future (Morris, 1998). To say the least, English language now has a commanding power in the Ghanaian society. The Ghanaian public sector is essentially designed for an English reader and speaker. Most signs and newspapers for adult and children are all printed in English. This explains why English Language has become an important issue in Ghana so much although a number of Ghanaian Language exist. Our ability to use English language lies at the centre of the development and expression of our emotions, our thinking, our learning and our sense of personal identity. According to the UNESCO Statement for the United Nations Literacy Decade, 2003–2012 cited in Ministry of Education of Ontario (2004), those who use English take it for granted but those who cannot use it are excluded from much communication in today's world.

Success with English language is fundamental to children's academic development and achievement (Bennett, Weigel, & Martin, 2002). Also, English Language unlocks access to the wider curriculum in Ghana's educational system. A student needs at least an aggregate of five (5) in Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E), a credit pass in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (S.S.S.C.E) and its equivalent C6 in West African Examination Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in English Language in order to pursue further studies. In short, a Junior High School (JHS) student cannot enter the Senior High School if he or she fails the English language examination. Similarly, one cannot proceed to the tertiary institutions if one is unable to pass the English

Language examination at the Senior High School level. This goes to support the claim by Ovando, Collier and Combs (2003) that good English is a pathway to academic success and good job opportunities for English Language students. Also, to be literate, is to have access to a significant amount of knowledge stored in coded form (Egan & Gajdamaschko, 2003). Formal education in Ghana is seen as the one that gives students the opportunity to read and write English Language which can earn them white-collar jobs. This is in agreement with (Ministry of Education of Ontario, 2006 p. 8) that, “a learning to read” and “learning to write” philosophy is dominant in the early years and greatly influences society’s definition of what it means to be literate.

The importance of English Language in Ghana is stated even clearer in the rational and the general aims of the English Language teaching syllabus:

‘RATIONALE

The status of English Language and the role it plays in national life are well known. As the official language, it is the language of government and administration. It is the language of commerce, the learned professions and the media. As an international language, it is the most widely used on the internet and in most parts of the world. English is the medium of instruction from Primary 4 in the school system. This means that success in education at all levels depends, to a very large extent, on the individual’s proficiency in the language. It is for these and other reasons that English Language is a major subject of study in Ghanaian schools.

GENERAL AIMS

The syllabus has been designed to help the pupil to:

- 1. develop the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.*
- 2. attain high proficiency in English to help them in their study of other subjects as well as in the study of English at higher levels.*
- 3. cultivate the habit of and interest in reading.*
- 4. communicate effectively in English.’’*

*(Curriculum Research and Development Division
2007pg: ii).*

For these reasons, Ghana attaches much importance to the classroom practices (teaching) of English Language in her educational system. However, “Teaching is highly complex, and most teachers have scant opportunity to explore common problems and possible solutions, or share new pedagogical approaches with their colleagues” (Danielson & McGreal, 2000, p. 24). Again, Johnston and Goettsch (2000, p. 439) posit that “language teaching is first and foremost an educational enterprise, not a linguistic one”. Due to this, L2 teachers have the unique ability to tailor their linguistic output to serve both linguistic and pedagogical ends. It therefore requires developing the educators’ (English Language teachers) “skills and knowledge to create, locate, analyse, comprehend and use a variety of written, visual, aural and multi-modal texts for a range of purposes, audiences and contexts” (Wing Jan, 2009, p. 3). Ouadraogo (2000, p. 89) has attested to the complexity of education and specifically language teaching in general by pointing out that “education and

language issues are very complex in Africa because of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual situation”.

The situation is even more severe when the official language of the nation is different from any of the indigenous languages. There is always controversy over which language to use in school especially at the lower primary level in multilingual societies of which Ghana is of no exception. Many of the current educational research has demonstrated that knowledge is a powerful force in learning and instruction, and it is also pervasive, individualistic, and modifiable (Alexander, 1996). According to Smith (2005), the significant role of pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in preparing qualified teachers such as English Language teachers, is almost an uncontroversial issue in teacher education literature. It is through these programmes that teachers take the rudimentary steps to become professionals (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Smith, 2005), gain more confidence about their teaching (Darling-Hammond, Chung, & Frelow, 2002), and enlarge the domain of their knowledge base (Akbari & Dadvand, 2011). Pre-service teacher education programmes in general focus on equipping potential teachers with pedagogical and content skills. Freeman and Johnson (1998, p. 397) point out that the “core of the new knowledge-base must focus on the activity of teaching itself; it should centre on the teacher who does it, the contexts in which it is done, and pedagogy by which it is done”. The word pedagogy mentioned here according to Leach and Moon (1999) argue is the practice that a teacher, together with a particular group of learners creates, enacts and experiences. This definition calls for social learning environment in the English Language class.

Van Driel, Verloop, & De Vos (1998) assert that knowledge related to any subject matter content is an essential component of teacher professional development.

Shulman (1986) studies about teacher knowledge is important to instructional practice. Shulman counted teacher's knowledge as content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational contexts and knowledge of educational ends. In all of these, (Shulman, 1987) added that two of such knowledge, Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) are needed in teaching a subject matter like English Language.

Having content knowledge in any language according to Robert (1998, p. 105) means that "teachers show knowledge of the systems of the target language and competence in it". This means that teachers should have declarative knowledge of the language (Bailey et al., 2001, p. 23; Day 1990, p. 43) and according to Barnes (2002, p. 199), "declarative knowledge consist of knowledge about English grammar and phonetics, for instance, and be simultaneously proficient and confident users of it as they will become language models for their learners". In fact, Content Knowledge, is the "what" of teaching or the "subject-matter knowledge" (Lafayette, 1993, p. 117).

Pedagogical Knowledge is however, the general knowledge that teachers have about teaching. Shulman (1986) describes it as what teachers know about teaching. Pedagogical Knowledge includes the how of teaching, generally acquired through education coursework and experiences in the schools (Ball, 2000). Pre-service educational programmes focusing on equipping teachers with pedagogical skills is aimed at assisting them to acquire pedagogical knowledge. Khale (1999) writes that for effective classroom instructional practices in English Language for instance, teachers are to possess adequate knowledge of English Language content and pedagogical knowledge and possessing these two domains will help teachers to develop Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is an “amalgam” (Shulman, 1986b, p. 13) of content and pedagogical knowledge. This integrated idea was proposed by Shulman (1986). The knowledge that teachers use in transforming Content Knowledge into forms that are comprehensible to students is what (Shulman 1987) defines as Pedagogical Content Knowledge. Although Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Knowledge are very important to the teaching profession, (Shulman, 1986) considers Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as the understanding of how topics and strategies in specific subject areas are understood and misunderstood. The intent of Shulman in proposing PCK is to highlight the role of subject content knowledge and emphasize the intersection of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge for teaching purposes (Berry, Loughran, & vanDriel, 2008). According to Powell, Taylor & Gess-Newsome (2005), educational research in instruction and learning in many subject disciplines, and most especially in Language education in recent times have pointed out that a well integration of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge yields effective results.

To this end, it will not be over exaggeration to say that PCK is specific to the subject being taught. Pedagogical Content Knowledge is expected to create an impact on teaching practices since it relate directly to “the ways of representing and formulating the subject that makes it comprehensible to others” (Shulman, 1987, p. 9). In view of this, the methods course for English Language teachers’ preparation should focus on the pedagogical content knowledge that deals specifically with the nature of the subject (English Language) and with ideas, strategies, and techniques for teaching English Language at the appropriate level. Pedagogical Content Knowledge is central to L2 teaching in Ghana since the content is typically the medium of instruction, and

language teachers actively use the target language while simultaneously modelling speaking and writing skills to students.

However, Quartey (1984) observes that each teacher (in this case English Language teacher), needs to possess a philosophy of the subject of teaching and learning. This is because, beliefs, knowledge, and practice are inextricably intertwined (Foote, Smith, & Ellis, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978), acting as a 'contextual filter' through which teachers screen their classroom experiences, interpret them, and adapt their subsequent practice (Clark & Peterson, 1986, cited in Wilcox-Herzog, 2002, P. 7). The philosophy provides guidance and direction in choosing objectives, and nature of instructional practices. Therefore, for students to attain the aims of teaching English Language in basic schools in Ghana, teachers of the subject need to possess a philosophy about the teaching and learning of English Language and also have a strong Pedagogical Content Knowledge in the subject. Sources of this includes English Language courses, education courses, experience, and professional development. "It should however be noted that the basic objective of language teaching is no simply to transmit the language teacher's views or knowledge on a language" (Guru Prasad, 2014, p.175) but for developing language learning skills in English, the language teacher should adopt appropriate approaches and methodologies from time to time. In the process the listening and speaking, which are two important aspects of communication, is focused on this new approach.

Unfortunately, in the Ghanaian community, a common held view is that one's ability to speak fluent English means he or she is the best person to teach English Language. But, what about knowing how to teach English Language? In a study of "good language teachers" and their knowledge of language, Andrews and McNeill (2005, p. 170) found that for each participant in their study "content issues form the

core of their thinking, planning, and teaching’’. In other words, PCK is ultimately “the ‘application’ of knowledge about language” (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000, p. 440) that teachers convey as they instruct their students.

Ghana’s official language as noted earlier, is English Language, yet, its teaching and learning often pose some challenges to teachers and students in schools, colleges and even universities. Studies and reports have however revealed that the challenges posed by the use of English Language as a second language in Ghana is as a result of how the language is taught and learned at all levels of education in the country. Studies such as (Afful, 2007) have revealed that some teachers of English Language as a second language do not have the requisite training or qualification before teaching the subject in some schools, colleges and even universities in Ghana. Afful’s (ibid) assertion brings back to mind the importance of the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge of the teachers of the subject (English Language).

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has therefore introduced a number of interventions and programmes to promote the teaching of English Language especially at the basic levels. In 1996 for instance, the Child School Community Progress in Education (Child Scope) sponsored by the United Nation International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) to improve children’s reading, writing and numeracy skills; and this was one of such intervention towards quality education in Ghana (Akyeampong, 2010a). The education sector and other stakeholders also organize reading clinics for basic school teachers and pupils. Because naturally human beings look back and claim that the past offered the best (Susuwele-Banda, 2005), it appears some teachers notwithstanding this, still continue to teach the way perhaps they themselves were taught. This may be, as a result of teachers own knowledge, beliefs and ideologies about classroom teaching. This crisis is gradually

choking the academic standard of the entire nation as it reflects on the dismal performance of pupils in the B.E.C.E and also, affects the demand for English Language. Clearly, this situation calls for investigation since English Language has become the official language of the business and scientific world (Schütz, 2005).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The quality of schools of a country depends on the quality of teachers (Feminmser, 2001). Provision of good teachers is, thus, crucial for the quality of teaching in schools. Research examining teacher quality confirms the logical conclusion that poor quality of students' learning correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers' teaching and that effective student learning and achievement is hampered by weaknesses in teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and classroom practice (Pontefract & Hardman 2005; Akyeampong, Pryor & Ampiah 2006, Moon et al. 2005; Byamugisha & Ssenabulya, 2005). Khale (1999), also found that many teachers complete Colleges of Education with blurred ideas, concepts and principles in their specific subject disciplines. The implication from the above submissions is that effective teaching and excellent performance of pupils in a subject like English Language is jeopardized if such situations exist.

According to Ministry of Education (2002), the situation is no different in the Ghanaian context. In fact, it appears there is a mismatch between the kind of education provided by the Teacher Education Institutions and what teachers actually practise in the classroom. The Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (2008) states that the dismal performance of Basic School Students in a subject such as English Language in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) clearly mirrors the kind of education provided by the Colleges of Education and other tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. This is because Colleges of Education and other

tertiary institutions in Ghana are responsible for training and equipping potential teachers with among other things, the modern pedagogical knowledge, subject-matter knowledge and curriculum knowledge. However, the type of knowledge teachers need to have and the way they acquire that knowledge have been largely ignored (Dinkleman, Margolis, & Sikkenga, 2006; John, 2002), resulting in the lack of an agreed-upon set of standards for teachers' professional knowledge (Murray & Male, 2005). Since this has the potential of endangering a nation's educational fortunes, Ghana has been making efforts to turn the abysmal performance of English Language pupils most especially at the basic level (Primary and the Junior High School). The education sector for instance, organizes in-service training and workshops regularly for English Language teachers. Other stakeholders like the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) and the Canadian Teacher Federation (CTF) jointly organize yearly in-service training workshop for selected English Language teachers. Despite all these important attempts, the performance of Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) graduates after receiving 11 year basic education, is nothing to write home about.

“The performance of students in the 2013 B.E.C.E was just above average. For instance, on expressions, there was a recurrent problem in candidates' essays (the use of sub-standard and unidiomatic English) and that most of the candidates have not mastered the structure and idiom of the English Language. They wrote grammatically incorrect sentences and outright vernacular translations. Consequently, most candidates did not get beyond average mark in respect of

expression. Some of the candidates' essays fell short of the required length due to inability to develop points fully. Most times, candidates only gave topic sentence points without discussing them" (Chief examiner's report, 2013).

Again, the Ministry of Education report (2013) on pupil's in the performance in the 2012 English Language shows that the performance strength (above average) of the deprived districts in the entire country which includes the Assin South, was 11%. This is an attestation to one of the findings of the presidential committee's report (2002) that reviewed educational Reforms in Ghana that the underserving performance is due to some weaknesses in teacher education. For example, there was an indication of basic fundamental weaknesses in subject disciplines such as English Language as evident in the Chief Examiner's report above. The report also underscored the dire need for proper representation and expression of subject matter to be taught in order to make ideas clear and understandable to students. A critical examination of these two issues reflects the importance of the idea of PCK proposed by Shulman (1986, 1987). According to Pan and Carroll (2008, p. 18), "teachers are the instructional drivers in the classroom". Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2005) have cited two authors, Griffin and Smylie who are of the opinion that teaching involves a number of decisions related to pedagogy and materials of instruction. Teachers do not use a template to solve problems at work; rather, they develop their own solutions based on their personal understanding of the circumstances. Decker and Rimm-Kaufman further assert that such an understanding is based on teachers' belief systems.

It can therefore be inferred that where teacher education programme plays a vital role in improving the quality of teachers and consequently the quality of teaching in classrooms, it is the teachers' own educational beliefs about teaching that play a significant role in their classroom teaching (Baer, as cited in Tan, 2001; Fernstermacher & Soltis, as cited in Tan, 2001; Chan, 2004). Therefore English Language teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and beliefs must be prioritized in Ghana's educational system in order to avert the current state of students' performance and also to forestall future occurrences in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). My observation as a practicing teacher and a research student indicates and confirms that efforts are been made by all those who matters in Ghana's educational system. For instance, English Language teachers are produced by the educational institutions every year, Workshops and In-service Training are organized. Also, English Language teaching is going on earnestly but the performance of pupils in the Basic Education Certificate Examination remains abysmal. Several questions arise from this situation. Could it be that English Language teachers do not have adequate Content or Pedagogical Knowledge? How do they teach English Language? What beliefs do they have about English Language teaching? How do these Knowledge and Beliefs influence their Classroom Teaching Practices? Answers to these and more remains unknown. This state of affairs is a big bother to parents, teachers and all those who a have stake in Ghana's education. Investigation into the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language teachers and their Classroom Teaching Practices seeks to provide better understanding to what, how and why behind the research questions in the study.

1.3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of teaching English Language among the English Language teachers of Assin South basic school and their Classroom Teaching Practices.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guided the study.

1. To explore the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of basic school English Language teachers in the Assin South district.
2. To find out the beliefs (philosophical orientation(s) Assin South basic school English Language teachers possess about English Language teaching.
3. To explore the specific classroom teaching practices Assin South basic school English Language teachers employ in their class.
4. To identify how Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language teachers and their beliefs (philosophy) influence their classroom teaching practices.

1.5. Research Questions

In meeting the purpose of the study, the following research questions guided the study.

1. What Pedagogical Content Knowledge does Assin South basic school English Language teachers have in the teaching of English Language?
2. What beliefs (philosophy) do Basic school English Language teachers possess about the teaching of the English Language?
3. What specific instructional practices do Assin South basic school English Language teachers employ in their class?

4. How does the basic school English Language teachers' pedagogical content knowledge influence their instructional practices?

1.6. Significance of the Study

Quashigah (2005) supports Wing Jan's (2009) assertion about the complex nature of teaching by writing that teaching is a complex art and to do it well requires a strong knowledge base and a working understanding of the general educational aims and that of the particular subject one is teaching. This is so because such knowledge and its understanding influence the classroom practices (teaching).

The study will provide an opening step in determining the Assin South teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and their Classroom Teaching Practices. It is envisaged that revelations from the exploration will in the first place, assist the district educational directorate by providing valuable insight into the most beneficial and workable avenues in the form of In-Service training and Workshops for English language educators in the district and ultimately, improve students' achievement gap in English Language learning.

Not only that, investigations about Language in the Ghanaian community abound in terms of language of instruction (i.e. whether or not L1 or L2 should be used as a medium of instruction) however, there is a paucity of literature in terms of actual Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Classroom Teaching Practices. For all intents and purpose, this investigation will bridge the gap.

Besides, the findings will assist educational authorities in developing English Language programmes since the revelations may have implications for reforms and innovations. It may subsequently lead to local policies and programmes for the effective teaching of the English Language. Thus, the findings may serve as a

reference material to policy makers and all those who have a stake in education in the district.

Again, the findings from the exploration will to a very large extent, be of interest to universities and educational training colleges where English Language teacher programmes are designed and implemented. Basic school English Language teachers after receiving professional academic training from these institutions will be equipped with better Pedagogical Content Knowledge for effective Classroom Teaching Practices. Finally, other researchers who wish to investigate the language practices and its related subjects may be inspired by the findings.

1.7. Delimitation

This study is delimited to the Assin South District only rather than covering the entire 20 educational districts in the entire central region. The Assin South educational directorate is divided into 10 circuits. Out of the number, 1 school from each circuit was selected for the study. Again, the study focuses only on the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Basic School English Language teachers and their Classroom Teaching Practices.

1.8. Organisation of the Study

The study is organised into five chapters. Chapter one comprises the introduction of the study. The introduction provides the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and organisation of the study. Chapter two deals with review of related literature focusing on Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Language teachers and Classroom Teaching Practices, theories in Pedagogical Content Knowledge in Language teaching as well as Philosophical Orientations (beliefs) in Language teaching and Social Learning Theories. Chapter

three describes the methodology used for the study. This includes the research approach and design, population, sample and sampling techniques, procedures and instruments used to collect data as well as methods used to analyse the data collected. Chapter four presents the data collected and discusses the findings of the research. Chapter five is the summary of the key findings, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

This section presents related literature from books, journals, articles, related studies and the internet. The review of related literature focuses on the models of pedagogical content knowledge, concept of pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, teachers' knowledge base, and beliefs of English Language educators, effective teaching practices and the influence of the pedagogical content knowledge on instructional practices. It also highlights some of the pedagogical content knowledge theories and social learning theories that would help analyze issues that may come out of the study.

2.2. Theoretical Frameworks

Underpinning this investigation are two broad theories. These frameworks are deduced from Scaffolding/Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky 1978) and Gess-Newsome's (1999) integrated model of PCK which was originally, proposed by Shulman's (1986/1987) Pedagogical Content Knowledge. These well-crafted theories help to shape my study.

2.2.1. Social Learning Theory for Language Learning

Many researchers and reflective practitioners feel that the strategies that will best accomplish enhanced learning are those that support learning within the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1933/1978). Very often in education, our focus and attention are on the child's actual development as indicated by particular assessment procedures. Educators have looked to particular methods and or programmes, usually expecting the child to conform to the programme rather than observing the child and developing strategies, methods and experiences that build

upon the child's competencies. However, from a socialist perspective, new learning does not occur at the actual level of development, but rather, it occurs in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

A social learning theory (SLT) looks at learning that occurs within a social context. Socially-guided learning also encourages self-directed learning by providing children with the conceptual tools needed to gain new knowledge and to deal intelligently with the varied situations they encounter in their everyday life. Sociocultural theory as Larson (2008) writes, calls for a shift in our definition from one that is limited to reductionist notions of skills to one that is focused on the social practices in which language is used. Approach to language has emerged from more general sociocultural theory, developed by Vygotsky (1962; 1978). Three central aspects of sociocultural theory have contributed to a new interpretation of language learning: the concepts of (1) genetic analysis, (2) social learning and (3) mediation (Wertsch, 1991).

Critical to this study is the social learning. Social learning is the notion of the social origin of mental functioning. According to Vygotsky (1978), "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later, on the individual level; the first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological)". Vygotsky further believes that this development principally takes place through a form of apprenticeship learning; interaction with teachers or peers allow students to advance through their Zone of Proximal Development (i.e., the distance between what the language learners could achieve by themselves and what they could achieve when assisted by others). This concept has been developed by contemporary scholars such as (Lave 1988; Lave and Wenger 1991) and Rogoff (1990), who have demonstrated that apprenticeship learning is not

unique to children but is also an integral part of formal and informal adult learning throughout the world. In this view, learning, whether by children or adults, is not an isolated act of cognition, but rather, a process of gaining entry to a discourse of practitioners via apprenticeship assistance from peers and teachers.

From this point, we gain the concept that language learning is a social practice rather than an individual skill. Language theorists have demonstrated that language is instead a complex social practice (Gee 1990; Lankshear 1994; New London Group 1996; Willinsky 1994). Therefore, Language theorists analyze the social, cultural and cognitive aspects of language in a society. Those who are considered literate in any community are those who have apprenticed into certain social practices. Once language is understood as a complex social practice, English Language instruction is viewed as apprenticing students into the discourses and social practices of literate communities. Vygotsky (1978) proposes that children interact with others in social contexts and that these interactions are critical to shaping the learning, thinking and behaviour of the child. Vygotsky's ideas supported the theory that the child's thinking develops through social interaction mediated by language, and that words provided the labels for the concepts that would be developed cognitively (Vygotsky, 1986; see also, Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

A very important component of Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory is the idea that less experienced individuals rely on More Experienced Individuals (also known as More Knowledgeable Others or Significant Others) to facilitate their growth and development. Vygotsky calls it "Scaffolding". Scaffolding refers to the particular kind of help, assistance and support that enables a child (in this case, a language learner) to perform a task which he/she cannot quite manage on his/her own

and which brings them closer to a state of competence that will enable them to carry out other similar tasks independently in the future (Maybin, Mercer & Stierer, 1992).

Activity within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) would encourage and develop the language learner to reach just beyond his or her current level of understanding and proficiency in English Language. The support provided by the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) would be reduced gradually as the learner's competencies increased. Additionally, once a level of mastery has been obtained, new levels of challenge would be presented within the learner's new ZPD.

The relationship of the ZPD/Scaffolding to language teaching is that, the child's proficiency in language would best be enhanced when the teacher scaffolds the learner within his or her ZPD in language activities such as reading aloud. Rogoff (1990) in elaborating on the Vygotsky's idea of ZPD, came out with the notion of guided participation. In this idea, less experienced children are guided in their participation of learning activities in the classroom. This guidance is done by More Knowledgeable and Skilled Individuals and occurs through collaboration and shared understanding in routine problem-solving activities. This is similar to Vygotsky's theory as it claims that, the learner gradually assumes more responsibility for the learning task as his or her competency level increases. Thus in the English Language class teachers should assist the learners to communicate using the English Language even as they make mistake. As the learner become more and more aware of the rules regarding the language, the teacher's responsibility for guiding the learner reduces thereby allowing the learner to assume more responsibility for the learning activity. Gibbon (2002) argues therefore that, it is only when scaffolding is needed and adopted that learning actually takes place because it is only then that work is taking place within the child's ZPD. Zone of Proximal Development in promoting children's

learning through scaffolding generally has a strong appeal to teachers (Maybin et al 1992). Mercer (1994) attributes this situation to the way it resonates with intuitive conceptions of what it means to intervene successfully in learner's learning.

Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) in their original formulation of scaffolding, identified six characteristics. These were:

- creating children's interest in the task
- simplifying the task, for example, breaking it down into stages
- keeping children on track by reminding them of the goal
- pointing out key things to do and/or showing the child other ways of doing parts of the task
- controlling the child's frustration during the oral proficiency task
- demonstrating an idealised way of doing the task.

These characteristics touch a chord of validity in the context of English Language teaching to children in the Assin South District. As Wood et al. (1976) put it; if a child is succeeding at a task such as reading, then adult assistance can be reduced. Similarly if the child is struggling to read, then greater assistance needs to be provided. This means that in the English Language class, the teacher (MKO) need to scaffold at the right time. The definition of the ZPD also implies the meaning of teaching as co-construction of knowledge between the teacher and the learner and further transformation of that knowledge into individual knowledge of the learner. The teacher-learner interaction becomes that of collaboration and co-learning. A particular importance is placed on the active position of the learner, which is essential for becoming a self-regulated learner. According to Vygotsky, the educational process should be based on the student's engagement in an activity where "the teacher is the director of the social environment in the classroom, the governor and guide of the

interactions between the educational process and the student" (Vygotsky 1997, p. 49).

"The teacher's role is to provide the path to independence – a goal of all educators"

(Bodrova & Leong 1996, p. 3).

2.2.2. The Integrated model of PCK

The concept of pedagogical content knowledge, (a type of knowledge exclusively used by teachers) which is an aspect of my study was grounded by the integrated model of Pedagogical Content Knowledge proposed by Gess-Newsome (1999). Shulman (1986, 1987) posited that to accomplish effective teaching, teachers need to combine the subject and pedagogy so that they demonstrate “an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8). In other words, in order to make knowledge understandable and teachable to students, teachers transform knowledge into forms of representations, analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations (Shulman, 1986, p. 9). To transform knowledge, teachers need to apply several discrete categories of knowledge synergistically (Abell, 2008). These categories of knowledge include subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, and knowledge of teaching contexts (Fernandez-Balboa and Stiehl, 1995; Gess-Newsome and Lederman, 2001; Grossman, 1990). To illustrate, teachers first need to understand the subject they are teaching.

In Shulman's words, a teacher's knowledge of English Language may reasonably be expected to be equal to that of a non-teacher or non-expert. However, what distinguishes the teacher from the non-teacher is that the teacher knows how to teach English as a subject, and is also familiar with students' cognitive understanding of English Language. Finally, the English Language teacher is clear about the general

educational environment where teaching occurs such as the school, the community and the culture (Gess-Newsome, 1999). Researchers (Park & Oliver, 2008) believe that the categories as components (e.g. content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge) of PCK are interrelated to each other to guarantee teachers' effective transformation of knowledge to learners. Therefore, in teaching English Language to learners, teachers integrate or draw on all these needed knowledge bases for effective teaching. However, how these components are integrated and interact with each other is still a question that calls for empirical research, especially in English Language. Generally, effective English Language teaching is viewed as the ability to implement a stock of strategies. For example, Communicative language Teaching (CLT) was once applauded as an effective approach to teach in different English Language and even English-as-Foreign-Language (EFL) contexts because it helps learners develop fluent use of English by involving them in accomplishing tasks in interactive ways (Maley, 1984). With this understanding of teaching English, teacher education is supposed to convey popular strategies to teacher candidates (Richards, 1990). Thus, it is expected that English Language teacher educators are to help pre-service English Language teachers develop the type of pedagogical content knowledge that is integrated with different components such as knowledge of English (subject matter knowledge) and knowledge of teaching English (pedagogical knowledge). In other words, teacher knowledge for English Language does not exclusively refer to subject matter knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. Based on this assumption, it is significant to explore the interactive or integrative relationship among different components of teacher knowledge, which is molded into Pedagogical Content Knowledge for effective English Language teaching in a social learning environment to particular students in particular learning contexts.

2.3. Pedagogical Content Knowledge models

Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as a construct of several components and models is usually employed in PCK research to present this complex construct. Gess-Newsome (1999) cited in Gess-Newsome & Lederman (1999, p. 3), suggests that good models need to “organize knowledge in new ways, integrate previously disparate findings, suggest explanations, stimulate research and reveal new relationships”. In the same way, PCK models should organize PCK components into a construct by illustrating their inter-relationships so that PCK can be precisely described and new research can be inspired based on those models. Previous PCK models are discussed for the purpose of establishing a PCK model for English Language teaching. Several models have been proposed by other educational researchers in line with the Shulman’s (1986) model which includes knowledge of analogies, example, illustrations and demonstrations in order to represent to learners in understandable ways.

The Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model of Grossman (1990, p. 17) consists of four components, namely, “conception of purposes for teaching subject matter,” “knowledge of students’ understanding,” “curricular knowledge,” and “knowledge of instructional strategies”. Among these four components, “conceptions and purposes for teaching subject matter” is the most important PCK component as it reflects the goal of teaching. This component refers to “knowledge and beliefs about the purpose for teaching a subject at different grade levels” (Grossman, 1990, p. 8). English Teachers for instance, have different purposes of either teaching students the skills of communication via English or inputting linguistic knowledge.

Grossman’s model is widely cited in PCK research but it is also widely criticized from the integrative perspective. Grossman treats the four components as

static and independent elements. The static or independent view of PCK components is of little significance to teachers, for PCK components do not exist separately but rather interact and integrate when comparing PCK (Fernández-Balboa & Stiehl, 1995). Effective teaching will occur if teachers integrate all PCK components and apply them to their specific teaching environments.

Andrews (2001) has established a Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model for English as Second Language (ESL) teachers. This model clarifies PCK components of English as Second Language (ESL) teachers, but fails to show the inter-relationship among the components. Andrews stresses the role of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA). Teacher Language Awareness is a crucial PCK component for language teachers since it interweaves teachers' language proficiency and their knowledge about language (content knowledge). TLA will facilitate teachers to make the right decisions in class teaching by understanding language cognition and by understanding the learners' difficulty in language learning. However, TLA is overstressed in this model and it overlaps with other PCK components of subject matter cognition and knowledge of learners. This overlapping leads to the confusion in clarifying the inter-relationship among PCK components. The confusion may lead to the misunderstanding of the PCK concept and the misuse of PCK in teaching practice. What is more, the model of Andrews blurs the distinction between PCK, knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of context. In his model, knowledge of pedagogy and knowledge of context are treated as two PCK components, but they are widely regarded as independent categories of teacher knowledge paralleled with PCK (Shulman, 1987).

Cochran, DeRuiter & King (1993) also introduce a Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) model which is made up of subject matter knowledge, knowledge

of general pedagogy, knowledge of context and knowledge of students. Teachers develop the four categories of knowledge independently through teaching experience or other channels. Therefore, Pedagogical Content Knowledge is in continuous development among teachers since the four categories of knowledge are inter-related and exert collective influence on PCK. In this model, PCK and other categories of teacher knowledge “theoretically become so integrated and so interrelated that they no longer can be considered separate” (Cochran, et al., 1993, p. 267). This model illustrates the dynamism of PCK and explains the development of PCK by expanding the four categories of teacher knowledge. However, this model fails to clarify the boundary of PCK from other categories of teacher knowledge or to illustrate PCK components when PCK is regarded as a combination of other categories of knowledge.

Van Driel, et al. (1998) posit that regardless of the different PCK models showing their different components, all the researchers have two components in common. These components according to the researchers are the knowledge of representations of subject matter and knowledge of students’ difficulties and conceptions (pedagogy).

2.4. Teachers’ Knowledge Base

Abundant educational research in recent times has demonstrated that knowledge is a powerful force in learning and instruction, and it is also pervasive, individualistic, and modifiable (Alexander, 1996). According to Day (1993) and Richards (1998), a knowledge base for teachers refers to the repertoire of knowledge, expertise, skills, and understanding that teachers need to possess in order to become effective in their profession. Since the 1990s, teacher knowledge has attracted increasing attention in second language teacher education research (Borg 2003, 2006;

Freeman 2002; Freeman and Johnson 1998; Gatbonton 2000, 2008; Golombek 1998; Johnson 2006; Johnston and Goettsch 2000). Exploring the knowledge base of language teaching can offer important implications for the development of language teacher education programmes and the continuous growth of English Language Teaching professionals, which will ultimately elevate the status of the English Language Teaching profession. Despite the importance of teachers' knowledge base for the field, there is little consensus as to what effective second language teachers need to know. Following Shulman's (1987) highly influential work on teacher knowledge base in general education, Day (1993) suggests that second language teacher education consists of four types of knowledge: content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, and support knowledge. Richards (1998) proposed six core dimensions of second language teachers' knowledge base, namely theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills and language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision-making, and contextual knowledge. Also, Freeman and Johnson (1998) proposed a re-conceptualized knowledge base framework for language teacher education from a sociocultural perspective that includes three domains: the teacher-learner, the social context, and the pedagogical process. Tarone and Allwright (2005) argued for the inclusion of another key element in second language teachers' knowledge base: the language learner. All these frameworks aim to delineate the knowledge base that language teachers need to know in order to be effective in their classrooms, but since language teaching is highly contextualized, the knowledge and skills required of teachers working in a certain context should be different, not to mention the diversity within language teachers. It is in the light of this that Shulman (1986) proposed different types of knowledge of teacher necessary for teacher

practice. These are: content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curriculum knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, knowledge of learners, knowledge of educational context and knowledge of educational ends. Shulman (i.e. from the same source) selected Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) as the most special and important area of teachers knowledge base. Following the continuous investigation into the knowledge base of teachers, Grimmett and MacKinnon's (1992) work affirmed that teachers need to develop specific pedagogical learner knowledge which comprises knowledge of the way individual learners reason and think, the problems they have in learning, how they learn best and how they are motivated. The implication is that, teaching English Language is not just an issue of general pedagogies but it is about developing a complex set of knowledge to apply to specific concepts or skills or aspects of the language. It also pre supposes that, the ability to reason and reorganize content knowledge and guide students through the use of appropriate teaching methods and strategies is important to bring about a better understanding of English Language concepts among language educators.

A painstaking examination of Grimmett & MacKinnon's work reveals that pedagogical content knowledge is incorporated in the pedagogical content knowledge proposed by Shulman (1986), if elements of pedagogical content knowledge include knowledge of context which also involves knowledge of learners. My study considers and discusses content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge proposed by Shulman as being important for exploration.

2.5. Content Knowledge

As stated earlier, one of the basic knowledge bases needed for effective teaching is content knowledge. It is also referred to as subject matter knowledge. Content knowledge (CK) refers to the amount and organisation of knowledge per se

in the mind of the teacher and it makes the distinct subject matter of the profession (James, 2001, p. 5; Shulman, 1986, p. 9; 1987, p. 9). Richards (2011) also sees content knowledge as what teachers need to know about what they teach (including what they know about language teaching itself), and constitutes knowledge that would not be shared by teachers of other subject areas. Shulman (1995) holds the view that for a teacher to be able to teach effectively, he/she needs to understand the subject matter deeply so that he/she can relate one idea to another, and address misconceptions in students. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields of study and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for pedagogical content knowledge that enables teachers to make ideas accessible to others. It is the reason why McNamara (1991) contends that teachers with strong CK may teach in a more interesting and dynamic way whilst those with little CK may shy away from the more difficult aspects of the subject, or approach their teaching in a didactic manner. Roberts (1998, p. 105) points out that, having content knowledge means that teachers show knowledge of the systems of the target language and competence in it. According to Clark & Walsh (2002), content knowledge forms a significant part of teacher education or training.

It is also asserted that experienced teachers have a better grasp of content knowledge in specific areas on which to base specific teaching decisions (Wilson, 1992). But, Ahtee and Johnston (2006) found that lack in content knowledge can lead to difficulties in teaching. Nevertheless, research showed that quite a number of teachers complete teacher education programme having insufficient content knowledge and lack in-depth understanding of basic concepts (De Jong, 2001; Loughram, Mulhall & Berry, 2008).

A report by Baldwin (1998, p.2) in an interview with Louks – Horsley showed that

“the programme for teacher preparation are always not up-to-date and rigorous. Often teachers don’t have enough work in classrooms before they’re certified or have a deep knowledge of content. Also, they haven’t learned their content in the way they need to be teaching it to meet current standards”.

The implication is that teachers may have knowledge of concepts and skills in a discipline such as English Language without necessary understanding how they fit in. Major and Palmer (2006, p. 621) state “Teachers learn through studying, by doing and reflecting, by collaborating with other teachers, by looking closely at students work, and by sharing what they see”. According to Hill, Rowan, and Ball (2005), many professional development activities are aimed at improving content knowledge because evidence has shown that teacher knowledge in the subject area can strongly influence student learning and that, The United States Department of Education (2004) states, Teachers of English Language must prove that they know the subject they teach.

In an attempt to establish whether or not content knowledge influences student learning outcome, Hill and Ball (2009), found that content knowledge acquired by teachers through the attainment of degrees and courses taken contributed to students’ academic performance. On the other hand, Cirino, Pollard-Durodola, Foorman, Carlson, and Francis (2007) studied teacher characteristics and the literacy and language of bilingual students. Many conclusions were made. One of such conclusions that is very important for the current study is that teacher content knowledge was consistently not related to student outcomes (Cirino et al., 2007). This outcome shows that having content knowledge in a subject such as English Language

does not make one an excellent teacher. Hence, more knowledge base is needed for effective classroom practice and that pedagogical knowledge remains one of such knowledge.

2.6. Pedagogical Knowledge

Another important element of Shulman's studies on teachers' knowledge base which has been expanded by other scholars is Pedagogical Knowledge which is seen as the knowledge of how to teach. According to Rodgers & Raider-Roth (2006, p. 280), "Many at times, a teacher is knowledgeable of his or her subject matter without necessarily being able to decompress it in a way that makes it accessible to their students". Having Pedagogical Knowledge is the way to decompress the subject matter knowledge. Shulman (1986) explains that Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) is any theory or belief about teaching and the process of learning that a teacher possesses that influences that teacher's teaching. This process includes the ability to plan and prepare materials; time and classroom management skills; implementation, problem solving, and teaching strategies; questioning techniques; and assessment (Hudson, 2007).

Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, Anders, and Flood (2008) did a massive literature review and critique on studies about teacher pedagogical knowledge in relation to an aspect of English Language (reading). They coded the data and came to the conclusion that pedagogical knowledge is essential for teaching and that it can be changed through tertiary education coursework and fieldwork such as student teaching (Risko et al., 2008). Pedagogical knowledge can be gathered from many ways other than the tertiary institutions classroom and fieldwork. Experience is one such means to gather pedagogical knowledge. Gatbonton (2008) did a qualitative study to compare the pedagogical knowledge of novice teachers (teachers with less

than two years' experience) and experienced teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Four novice teachers were chosen to teach eight English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons to adult learners. Comparing the findings to earlier study by the same researcher, Gatbonton (ibid) found that the pedagogical knowledge was similar between the two groups, but the experienced teachers' group seemed to have more detailed pedagogical knowledge, especially in regard to student attitudes and behaviours. This study shows that college courses and fieldwork are helpful in developing a teacher's pedagogical knowledge, but several years' experience will help build upon that knowledge to make it more specialized and useful.

My readings in this area points to the fact general pedagogical knowledge also needs to be combined with other knowledge such as content knowledge. When content knowledge or subject-matter knowledge intersects with general pedagogical knowledge, a new element for the knowledge-base becomes essential. This new type of knowledge will make all the difference between an English Language teacher and other subject-matter teacher. This is known as Pedagogical Content Knowledge.

2.7. Pedagogical Content Knowledge

The Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of English Language teaching is worthy of thorough and in-depth research to improve classroom teaching practices. Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is generally defined as a construct of several components associated with how to transform content knowledge into pedagogically powerful strategies, but PCK components need to be identified in a specific subject. The essence of Pedagogical Content Knowledge lies in the application of teacher knowledge to specific class teaching, which is similar to the claim of Shulman (1986b, p. 8) that teachers need PCK because “mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill” in teaching practice. This view

indicates that PCK is more helpful and practical for teaching performance compared with content knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. Basic school English Language teachers need PCK to represent their idea of the best method of teaching English in basic schools to their students. For Shulman (1987, p. 9), “pedagogical content knowledge is core as it identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching”. It represents the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems, or issues are organized, represented, and adapted to the diverse interests and abilities of learners, and presented for instruction. “Pedagogical Content Knowledge is the category most likely to distinguish the understanding of the content specialist from that of the pedagogue” (Shulman, 1987, p. 8).

Thus, where general pedagogy, subject-matter and the teaching of a particular content interact, it distinguishes one teacher from another in terms of specialisation. Shulman’s concept of PCK focuses on two crucial points in teaching, namely, understanding and representation. Pedagogical Content Knowledge is highly relevant to teaching practice, and provides teachers with pedagogical reasoning based on specific content and specific learners and context. Ball (2000), adds that teachers must possess pedagogical content knowledge of their content area in order to facilitate students’ learning. According to Mumby & Russell (1995), knowledge is at the core of teacher education programmes and the foundation of teaching and learning, teachers’ understanding of a subject matter and the ability to share information with students comes from the foundations of knowledge they (teachers) have gained. In effect, the knowledge base for teaching defines a set of knowledge necessary to be an effective teacher. In describing PCK, Marks (1990, p. 9) posits that it represents a class of knowledge that is central to teacher’s work and that would not typically be held by non-teaching subject matter experts or by teachers who know little of that

subject''. In the case of English Language PCK, we can paraphrase his quote as, English Language PCK represents a class of knowledge that is central to teachers' work with English Language. This knowledge would not typically be held by language proficient subject matter experts, or by linguists who know little of the subject or of pedagogy, or by teachers who know little of that subject or about English Language. The implication is that developing good content requires a thoughtful interweaving of all three key sources of knowledge: English Language, Pedagogy, and Content. Therefore, it can be argued that there is no single solution (strategy) that applies for every teacher, every course, or every view of teaching. Quality teaching requires developing a nuanced understanding of the complex relationships between English Language, Content, and Pedagogy, and using this understanding to develop appropriate, context-specific strategies and representations. Productive language teaching needs to consider all three issues not in isolation, but rather within the complex relationships in the system defined by the three key elements. At this points it is clear that just like other subject disciplines, neither pedagogical knowledge nor content knowledge alone is sufficient for effective English Language teaching. Therefore, "if beginning teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical knowledge or knowledge as well as general pedagogy or generic teaching principles" (Grossman, as cited in Ornstein, Thomas, & Lasley, 2000, p. 508). Teacher training programmes in Ghanaian tertiary institutions are expected to equip potential subject teachers such as English Language with this kind of knowledge. However, research into the pedagogic behaviour of language practicing teachers have revealed that teachers do not carry out their occupations in the light and formation of the principles taught to them during the training programmes at universities and other tertiary institutions (Binnie-Smith, 1996;

Almarza, 1996). Partly so because, within the web of personal and social interactions, teachers of English appropriate new information and knowledge as to how best teaching should be conducted as well as what the nature of foreign language learning is. Furthermore, teachers' accumulated experience over the years on the issue of what the most effective ways of teaching are will play a vital role in their approach to and practice of teaching. This is seen as beliefs.

2.8. Teachers' Beliefs and Classroom Teaching Practices

Most human activities are shaped by an individual's beliefs, values and perceptions (Ahsan & Anjum, 2012). Borg (2001, p. 186-187.) explains that “a belief as a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behaviour”. The Implications of this general description of beliefs is clear for teachers; for beliefs to be beliefs, they need to be evident in their behaviours. Teachers' beliefs are thought to have a profound influence on their classroom practices. This is because Akinlaye (2002, p. 4) claims that “what teachers' believe to be good instructional content to teach and appropriate methods to use in the classroom are greatly influenced by teachers' pedagogical content knowledge of the subject”. This implies that teachers who are indoctrinated with a given concept will be difficult to be de-indoctrinated and this will influence their teaching.

Decker and Rimm-Kaufman (2005) have cited two authors, Griffin and Smylie who are of the opinion that teaching involves a number of decisions related to pedagogy and materials of instruction. Teachers do not use a template to solve problems at work; rather, they develop their own solutions based on their personal understanding of the circumstances. Decker and Rimm-Kaufman further opine that

such an understanding is based on teachers' belief systems. Tan (2001) has cited the work of Baer; Fernstermacher and Soltis; and Simonton and asserted that teachers' beliefs, attitudes and educational philosophies influence their teaching approaches. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes also influence the classroom climate and roles that teachers may adopt. Similarly, Henson (as cited in Yilmaz & Cavas, 2008) argues teachers' beliefs affect classroom management, which is essential for effective classroom teaching. Uztosum (2013) has also highlighted a number of studies, which claim that teachers' practices are determined by their beliefs and that teachers' beliefs can be categorized in a number of areas. Again, Uztosum (ibid) has cited Calderhead who found five areas of teacher's beliefs, including, beliefs about learners and learning, beliefs about teaching, beliefs about the subject, beliefs about learning to teach and beliefs about self and the teaching role.

An inter-related set of beliefs and intentions that gives directions and justifications to someone's actions is called a perspective. It is a lens through which teaching and learning is viewed. Perspectives are philosophical orientations to knowledge, learning, the role and responsibility of being a teacher (Pratt, 2002). Pratt has identified five perspectives on teaching. Out of the five perspectives identified by Pratt, the transmission perspective encourages teachers to adopt a teacher-centred teaching approach. A teacher-centred approach persuades teachers to take charge of the teaching and students' learning processes and decide what and how to teach and assess. All other perspectives of classroom teaching will promote a student-centred or a learner-centred teaching approach.

Likewise, Lim, Cock, Lock and Brook (2009) have cited two sets of teachers' beliefs highlighted by Berry and Brady. Berry asserts that believers of traditional, teacher-centred teaching approach consider teaching the dissemination of information,

thus encouraging rote learning and the reproduction of information. Brady on the other hand, affirms that proponents of a constructivist student-centred teaching approach believe that teaching is a process of guiding and facilitating students for an active construction and reconstruction of knowledge, thus encouraging the development of competencies of students that may be used throughout their lives. It is more difficult to unlearn existing beliefs than it is to learn new beliefs (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, as cited in Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2005). Therefore, the biggest task for teacher education programme in the colleges of education and other tertiary institutions is to challenge those beliefs of prospective teachers, which promote mere rote learning, and the reproduction of knowledge. Femin-nemser (2001) found that a typical teacher education programme is a weak intervention compared with the influence of teachers' own schooling and their on-the-job experience. A typical programme does not challenge the teaching beliefs of prospective teachers but rather encourages them to stick to survival techniques whether or not they represent "best" practice in the situation (Femin-nemser, (ibid). In the light of these differing beliefs about the best and effective teaching practices, there is the need to find out the specific instructional practices English Language teachers engaged their language learners in.

2.9. Effective Language teaching Practices

What makes a teacher effective has been a subject of prime importance to many scholars and researchers concerned with education. Pettis (1997) identified three main characteristics for a professionally competent teacher. According to her, an effective teacher must first be principled and knowledgeable in addition to being skillful. Secondly, professional needs and interests of an effective language teacher

must change over time and develop during his/her teaching. Thirdly, a teacher must be personally committed to his/her professional development.

Although effective teachers in general may share some characteristics, there are certain qualities that differ among them depending on the subject matter they teach. In language teaching, the low level of language proficiency has led to many modified approaches and got them adopted in the Language teaching and learning process in the 21st century. Learning the basic skills necessary to become an effective educator can be difficult especially for the novice teacher. According to Guru Prasad (2014), effective teaching does not involve presenting your exciting lessons or activities to the class, it is a craft learned over time. Hence, in order to develop language learning skills in English, the language teacher should adopt appropriate approaches and methodologies from time to time. The pedagogic approach should be shifted from form-based approach to meaning-based approach (Guru, *ibid*). In other words, the move is towards a diverse approach from a rigid method, in a way, it is from teacher fronted to learner-centred method, otherwise, called a Communicative Approach. The implication is that in new state (learner-centred approach), the teacher is the agent of change and sets the right condition for the exchange of ideas, as a result, they all learn together, and they all teach each other. In the process, the listening and speaking, which are two important aspects of communication and for that matter language, is focused on this new approach. Similarly, Freire (2002) believes in a more fluid relationship between teachers and students, so that learning goes both ways; teachers are learners and learners are teachers (cited in Giroux, 2004). I refer to Freire's assertion as "pedagogical alliance".

Again, Ruddell (2006) designed instructional principles aimed at increasing awareness among practitioners, policy makers, and administrators. These well-crafted

principles aim at directing the attention of Language educators with regard to their responsibility towards creating learning environments for linguistically and culturally diverse learners (Ruddell, 2006). Among other principles, Ruddell (ibid) states that, teachers should create a context-rich, interactive, supportive classroom environment for language exploration and use; teachers can also help children develop social language skills that facilitate language interactions both in and out of school; teachers need to help children build positive self-concepts by providing frequent academic and social opportunities for interactive meaning-based language use. These well-crafted principles demonstrate that students' language acquisition is greatly enhanced through active participation in meaning construction with their peers, teachers and other individuals (Significant others) in their school and community, and this is in line with Vygotsky's (1986/1987) concepts of ZPD and Scaffolding grounded within the social learning theories.

In an investigation of the characteristics of good language teachers, Brosh (1996) found the desirable characteristics of an effective language teacher to be: having knowledge and command over the target language; being able to organize, explain, and clarify, as well as to arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students; being fair to students by showing neither favouritism nor prejudice; and being available to students. Both language teachers and learners counted command over the target language and teaching comprehensibility as the most important characteristics to be possessed by an effective language teacher.

Kalebic (2005) conducted an investigation on the development of standards in Foreign Language Teacher Preparation. And as a result, fourteen competences were reported to be needed by would-be language teachers. Those characteristics reported to be highly valuable for a beginning language teacher were: linguistic and

communicative competence; communication and presentation skills; ability to motivate learners for learning; ability to choose appropriate teaching strategies; ability to deal with unpredictable situations and to maintain discipline; ability to plan the lesson; ability to organize learning activities; ability of pedagogical action; ability to create friendly atmosphere in the classroom; ability to respond to learner abilities and needs (flexibility); knowledge about teaching strategies; knowledge about the culture and literature of the target language; ability to assess learner language knowledge/competence; and knowledge of methods and theoretical concepts in English language teaching. In view of the findings, English Language teachers are expected to demonstrate diverse characteristics for effective teaching.

Also, Park and Lee (2006) investigated the characteristics of effective English teachers, a self-report questionnaire consisting of three categories: English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. Their findings indicated that on the whole the teacher's perceptions of characteristics important for an English language teacher, differed significantly from those of the students in all three categories, with the teachers ranking English proficiency the highest and the students ranking pedagogical knowledge the first. The ranking stresses the importance of both content and pedagogical knowledge which when put together results in pedagogical content knowledge. Hill, Ball, & Schilling (2004, p. 34) agree to all these characteristics that "In performing the process of teaching and learning, teachers bring along with them the knowledge components, contents knowledge, good knowledge about the students and the various ways of using content knowledge in a classroom's teaching and learning process indeed play a role" and the integration. From this, it is important for us to review literature on how teachers PCK influence their teaching practices.

2.10. Influence of English Language Teachers Pedagogical Content Knowledge on Classroom Instruction

Based on the literature reviewed, it has been discovered that Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is an essential and critical element in determining a teacher's success in handling the teaching and learning processes in the classroom (Shulman 1986; Ball & Bass 2000; Hill et al. 2004). Teacher quality includes pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, teacher certification, and teacher experience (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004). These elements which are imbued with pedagogical content knowledge were found to influence teachers' instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Stronge et al.; Superka, 1977). Ferguson & Womack (1993) opine that education courses that focus on pedagogical knowledge positively affect teacher performance in the classroom. Similarly, Content knowledge or teachers' knowledge of the subject they teach, influences teacher instruction (Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Superka, 1977). The combination of these knowledge (content and pedagogy) results in pedagogical content knowledge. Because of this, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) (2006), includes content knowledge as one of six standards for preparing individuals to become teachers. The council (ibid) states that individuals wanting to be teachers must know the subject matter that they are going to teach.

Also, experience, which forms part of pedagogical knowledge (an element of PCK), is another factor that affects teacher effectiveness in the classroom (Stronge et al., 2004). On the other hand, unexamined experience can have little effect on knowledge, practice, or performance. Knowledge gained through reflective practice grows with each year on the job and helps develop expertise in all aspects of teaching

(Holly, 1993; Matthews & Jessel, 1998). These researchers found that teachers engaging in reflexive examination were influenced to study in more detail the performance of their students, and show more progress in improving teaching practices. Experienced teachers are able to alter their teaching strategies to meet the learning styles of their students and are more likely to take risks and try new instructional strategies than novice teachers. Thus, teachers should be exposed to experience teaching approaches that are similar to those being used in classrooms. According to contemporary cognitive theories, learning is situated in a particular context and is an active constructive process that is heavily influenced by the individual's existing knowledge and beliefs (Borko & Putnam, 1996). Research on learning to teach shows that teachers' existing knowledge and beliefs are critical in shaping what and how they learn from teacher education experiences. Borko & Putnam (1996) also argue that prospective and experienced teachers' knowledge and beliefs serve as a filter through which their teaching and learning take place. In order to be an effective English Language teacher, a teacher needs both a strong background in English and a thorough understanding of pedagogy. This is because, research in student learning indicates that there is a positive correlation between teachers' content knowledge and their students' success in learning mathematics (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Other research has demonstrated a connection between teachers' pedagogical knowledge and students' performance (Rowan, Chaing & Miller, 1997). In their extensive survey of teacher education and learning research, Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy (2002) pointed out that there were some indications that there is a third type of knowledge teachers need to be effective teachers. It is the knowledge that combines English content and pedagogical skills. Thus, teachers need both an

understanding of the central concepts and structures of English and an ability to use that conceptual understanding to support their students' learning.

Additionally, Martin & Shulman (2006) found that, teachers with student-centred pedagogical beliefs implement more variety in their instructional practices compared to teachers with teacher-directed pedagogical beliefs. This study among other intents, seeks to find out how basic school teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and beliefs influence classroom teaching practices.

2.11. Gaps in the Literature

My readings indicate that literature on pedagogical content knowledge and classroom teaching practices abounds globally. For the last 20 years, pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) has been a focus of research in the literature of teacher knowledge (Magnusson, Krajcik & Borko, 1999; Shulman, 1986). The focus has been on both pre-service and in-service educators. Findings yielded by the research of PCK help researchers deepen their understanding of teacher knowledge in specific areas such as mathematics (Marks, 1990) and science (Lee and Luft, 2008). They also help to professionalize teaching by setting standards in teacher education programs. For example, as stated earlier in the literature reviewed, in the United States, the National Science Education Standards (National Research Council, 1996) integrates the concept of PCK as an important part of professional development for prospective science teachers (Lee & Luft, 2008) and the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) also establishes standards of specialized teacher knowledge for beginning teachers. However, I found no specific studies on Basic School teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language. The few studies conducted on Pedagogical Content Knowledge were found in other subject discipline other than English Language. Again, studies in the Ghanaian community

regarding language teaching focus on the language of instruction. Thus, whether or not the L1 should be used as a medium of instruction in the Ghanaian basic schools but not on the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Classroom Teaching Practices. Most of the literature on Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Instructional Practices on language teaching were also found to be over a decade. Hence, the need for current study on PCK and classroom teaching.

2.12. Summary of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed highlight on Teachers' Knowledge Base, Models of Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, Pedagogical Content Knowledge, Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching, Effective Teaching Practices and How Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Beliefs Influence the Classroom Teaching Practices. Teachers' knowledge base was generally seen as the body of knowledge and understanding that teachers (English Language teachers) need to possess in order to become effective in the teaching profession. Good and qualified teachers are essential for efficient functioning of basic education systems and for enhancing the quality of learning. Research supports this notion that a good teacher and actions to be taken on his part in the classroom play a vital role in provoking effective and efficient learning on the part of the students (Markley, 2004). Thus, the teacher is indispensable in providing quality basic education. The lack for such teachers increase the dire need for measures to assist teachers acquire Pedagogical Content Knowledge in addition to their already acquired Content and Pedagogical Knowledge. The literature reviewed also indicates that language is best taught and learnt in an interactive manner and this is in support of Vygotsky's Scaffolding/Zone of Proximal Development.

Unfortunately, it is clear from the forgoing discussion of the literature that research in the area of pedagogical content knowledge of English including beliefs and classroom teaching is inconclusive. For instance, Lim, Cock, Lock and Brook (2009) cited two sets of teachers' beliefs highlighted by Berry and Brady. Berry asserts that believers of traditional, teacher-centred teaching approach consider teaching the dissemination of information, thus encouraging rote learning and the reproduction of information. Brady on the other hand, affirms that proponents of a constructivist student-centred teaching approach believe that teaching is a process of guiding and facilitating students for an active construction and reconstruction of knowledge, thus encouraging the development of competencies of students that may be used throughout their lives. There is also a contention that it is more difficult to unlearn existing beliefs than it is to learn new beliefs (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, as cited in Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2005). Again, while Grossman (1990) model of PCK talks about the integrative nature of PCK, Andrews (2001) fails to show the inter-relationship among the components. Andrews however stresses the role of Teacher Language Awareness (TLA). The confusion may lead to the misunderstanding of the PCK concept and the misuse of PCK in teaching practice. Thus, there exist a troubling gap in literature about basic school teachers' PCK in English Language particularly in Ghana. Investigation in this area in is warranted.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This section presents methods used to obtain information for the study. These include; research approach and design, setting, case selection and access issues, population, sample and sampling technique(s), instrumentation and piloting of the instruments, data collection, validity of the findings and data analysis.

3.2. Research Approach

Quite a number of 21st century researchers are of the view that enough benefit is not being derived from the emerging trends in educational practice owing to the fact that, “process can be neither understood nor measured with the rational or experimental research model” (Caine & Caine, 1994, p. 21). In respect of this, they argue, “We urgently need more qualitative measures in education”. Premised on this argument, Babbie (2001) argues that there are research questions where the breadth and depth of educational practice within the classroom setting cannot be appropriately represented with the numbers of quantitative data and that through observations, a breadth and depth understanding about the human experience were gained. Anderson (1998, p. 119) also agrees that studying and interpreting human experiences in authentic settings cannot be best represented quantitatively and that, “Qualitative research is a form of inquiry that explores phenomena in their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them”.

According to Creswell (1998), qualitative research explores a social or human problem by building a complex holistic picture, analyzing words rather than numbers and providing detailed information on the views of the participants (researched) in their natural settings. Further, it allows researchers to bring forth a critical

understanding of the phenomenon under study rather than test a hypothesis (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992).

Goodman and Martens (2007) express the connection between early language literacy and qualitative methodology by asserting that Interpretive Research (paradigm) in early language literacy builds sensitivity to the range of literacy experiences in which children engage. A paradigm in research is 'a set of assumptions about how the issue of concern to the researcher should be studied' (Henn, Weinstein & Ford, 2006, p. 10). Guba & Lincoln (1994), also posit, paradigm may be define as the worldviews or belief systems that guide researchers. Interpretative paradigm argues that social reality is created jointly through meaningful interaction between the researcher and the researched on an agreement (Grbich, 2007, Rugg & Petre, 2007) in the latter's socio-cultural context. These descriptions places my study within the interpretive paradigm as it seeks to provide better understanding to what, how and why behind Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Classroom Teaching Practices of English Language teachers.

With this in mind, and having critically considered these experts opinions, I considered Qualitative Research Approach as an appropriate in order to build an understanding of English Language educators' PCK and Practices. Therefore, my study is a typical qualitative study.

3.3. Research Design

The specific qualitative design for the investigation is Case Study which explores the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and the Classroom Teaching Practices of basic schools English Language practitioners. Case Study according to Creswell (2007) is an empirical inquiry which involves an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon in its real-life context through an extensive data collection. Miles and

Huberman (1994, p. 25) think of the case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. For the research to be a Case Study, one particular phenomenon, in this case English Language educators (a bounded system), was selected as the unit of analysis (Duke & Mallette, 2004; Merriam, 2009). Kusi (2012) citing Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2000) asserts that Case Study researchers neither aims at discovering generalizable truth, nor look for causes and effect relations as quantitative researchers do, instead they focus on describing, explaining and evaluating a phenomenon. The researcher gains a deeper understanding of the topic by spending extended periods of time examining a teaching learning environment and the participants in the study. Through in-depth Case Study, the researcher presents a rich description of the events being studied to enhance understanding of the phenomenon (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995).

Stake (2004) identifies three kinds of Case Studies. One of such kinds is Instrumental Case Study. Stake (ibid) opines that an instrumental Case Study is chiefly conducted to provide an insight into or to understand a phenomenon by examining a particular Case. The Case assists our understanding of something else. In understanding the theoretical research questions (Berg, 2001; Stake, 1995), I selected English Language teachers from 10 schools in the Assin South district. They (English Language teachers) helped me understand how PCK is defined, discover the PCK of English Language teachers, the philosophies they possess about the English Language teaching, the characteristics of language educators, the specific instructional practices, effective language practices and the influence of their PCK on their instructional practices.

But in all of these, Denscombe (2008, p. 45) opines that “the boundaries of the Case can prove difficult to define in an absolute and clear-cut fashion”. Case

results just like all qualitative studies are generally difficult to generalise since the study focuses on few instances of the phenomenon. Regardless of these weaknesses, Case Study was chosen because it is in agreement with the interpretive paradigm regarding knowledge construction and hence help to achieve the purpose of the study in the Assin South district. Also, Kincheoloe (1991) asserts that the experience (data) collected in qualitative studies are shaped in their context and will be impossible to be understood if removed from that context. Base on this assertion, I selected Case Study. Also, I selected Case Study because of its flexibility that allows for multiple use of instruments to gather data from the researched (English Language educators) in their natural context.

3.4. Issues about Setting

Qualitative studies take place in the socio-cultural setting of the research participants. Providing detailed information or description about the participants “can transport the reader to a research site or help the reader visualize a person” (Creswell, 2008, p. 225).

3.4.1. Location & size

Assin South District is located on latitude 50 30” N and on longitude 10 2” W. The district shares boundaries with Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira on the West, Abura Asebu Kwamankese District on the South, Asikuma Odoben- Brakwa and Ajumako Enyan Essiam on the East and Assin North Municipal on the Northern border. The district covers a total land area of 1100, 89650 km² (square kilometres) which is about 11.4 percent of the region’s total land area, and the largest, in the Central Region. (Ghana statistical Service Report October 2014).

3.4.2. Demography

The 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC) puts the Assin South District population at 104, 673. According to a survey conducted by GERGIS (2008) cited in Ghana statistical Service Report (October 2014), the District has more than 1500 settlements scattered all over the district. The settlement is linear along the road network of the district. Most of the bigger settlements are located along the main Cape Coast – Kumasi road.

3.4.3. Case Selection and Access Issues

Although the low level of English Language standards as evident in the Chief Examiner’s report (2013) remains a big bother to the entire nation, the study was carried out in the Assin South district in the central region of Ghana. The district was “handpicked” (O’Leary, 2005) because the study could be conducted at any educational district in the country. The implication is that, the case is a typical one.

“The common justification to be offered for the selection of a particular case is typical. The logic being invoked is that the particular case is similar in crucial respects with others that might have been chosen, and that the findings from the case study are to apply elsewhere” (Denscombe, 2003, p. 33).

Finally, the size of the district means that it will be manageable within the academic time frame. Creswell (2005) on access issues states that, it is unethical in research to enter into an organization or social groups to collect data without permission from the ‘gate keepers’ of the organization. In respect of this, I sought permission from the Assin South Educational directorate with permission letter signed by the head of department of the Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba

upon which I was permitted to enter the selected schools in the district to administer my instruments. I also sought for the consent of the headteachers and English Language teachers in the selected schools.

3.5. Population

Seidu (2007) refers to population as the aggregate or totality of objects or individuals (participants) regarding which inferences are to be made in a sampling study. These participants shares similar characteristics. All English Language educators in the central region constituted the targeted population for the study. Statistics from the District Educational Directorate shows that there are (84) public Kindergarten schools, seventy (70) public Primary schools and sixty three (63) public Junior High Schools in the district. There is an average of four (4) English Language teachers in each primary school and one each in both Kindergarten and Junior High Schools. Hence, the accessible population for this Case Study is four hundred and twenty seven (427) Basic School English Language teachers in the Assin South District at the time of the study.

3.6. Sample and Sample technique

According to Creswell (2005, p. 54), selecting a large number of interviewees (participants) ‘‘results in superficial perspectives...the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site’’. With this assertion in mind, I selected ten (10) English Language teachers from different levels of basic schools (5 primary and 5 J.H.S) from the ten (10) circuits as my sample size. The schools are identified as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I and J whiles the English Language educators are identified as ET1, ET2, ET3, ET4, ET5, ET6, ET7, ET8, ET9 and ET10 (i.e. pseudonyms). My study intends to explore the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and the Classroom Teaching Practices of

Basic School English Language teachers in the Assin South District for a better understanding. This is in agreement with the assumptions of the interpretative paradigm. Also, the sampled size of ten (10) English Language teachers made data collection and analysis manageable. Creswell (2005, p. 207) says that, “collecting qualitative data takes considerable time and the addition of each individual or site only lengthens that time”. I envisaged that massive amount of data will be generated since the interview guide offers opportunity for the participants to express their views. Therefore, to do transcription, coding and analysing such data manually will be difficult within the academic duration if I had involved many interviewees. Additionally, selecting ten (10) English Language teachers from ten (10) educational circuits gives adequate representation of the accessible population in the selected case.

The sample was selected through a homogeneous sampling strategy, a type of purposive sampling strategy (Creswell, 2005). The Basic school English Language educators were purposively sampled because the intent was to explore the PCK and the Classroom Teaching Practices of the English Language educators. This purpose makes it impossible to select any other participants apart from English Language educators. They are key to this study. Creswell (2002) opines that in a purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand a phenomenon. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) cited in Kusi (2012) also assert that purposive sampling enables researchers to handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment and typicality. Again, Patton (1990) explains, “purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 182). The implication is that, the researcher selects a sample to satisfy a particular need. Because of the typicality of the participants, I

ended up selecting one (1) English Language teacher each from the ten (10) educational circuits because Maxwell (1998) contends that in purposive sampling, particular settings, persons or events are deliberately selected for information which otherwise could not be obtained elsewhere.

3.7. Instrumentation

Exploring Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Instructional Practices of English Language practitioners in the Assin South District is not simple because (Choi & Ahn, 2003) assert that knowledge is intangible. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (pp. 340–341). Qualitative researchers believe that participants have lived in their communities or socio-cultural context (English Language class) and as such possess extensive knowledge about a phenomenon (PCK and Instructional Practices) which is under exploration. Again, in Qualitative Research, the researcher interacts with the participants in order to understand and construct knowledge with them. Flick (2006) adds that this knowledge contains explicit and implicit assumptions (philosophies) which are expressed when interviewees are offered opportunity to respond to open ended questions. Additionally, the researcher goes directly to the particular setting in which he/she is interested to observe and collect data (Fraenkel & Norman, 2003). In line with this, data for my study was collected using Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Non Participant Observation Guide. These instruments were used to ensure triangulation (i.e. testing of consistency of the findings obtained from each of the instruments used). In attesting to this, Bekoe (2006) opines triangulation in research is to test for consistency of findings obtained through different instruments. These instruments are described below:

3.7.1 Interviews

According to Kothari (2006, p. 97), “interview as a data collection method involves presentation of verbal stimuli and recording of verbal responses”. This method is conducted through personal or telephone interviews. In the personal interview (which I used in my study), the interviewer collects information by asking questions to the respondent personally. They go to the spot and meets the respondents and administer the interviews. Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (2002) assert that interview is used to gather data on subjects’ opinions, beliefs, and feelings about the situation in their own words. Although, observation provides access to the behaviour of individuals, Seidman, (2006, p. 10) claims “interviewing allows us to put behaviour in context and provides access to understanding their action”. Similarly, Patton (2002, p. 340–341) holds the belief that “researchers interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe...feelings, thoughts and intentions. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective”.

Interview as a data collection method, has some advantages. For instance, interviewers can collect more information and in greater depth. Also, there is greater flexibility under this method. Thus, knowledge is jointly created as a result of the interaction between the researcher and the researched. However, one of the disadvantages of this method is ‘more-time-consuming’.

Notwithstanding this weakness, I used this method because it is in agreement with the interpretive paradigm regarding knowledge construction. English Language educators’ perspectives are central to this study (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver, & Thwaite, A. 2001) hence, Semi-Structured Interview was selected for data gathering. Thus, I used semi-structured interviews Guide to explore the PCK and Classroom

Teaching Practices of the English Language teachers. This instrument allowed me to ask initial questions, followed by probes meant to seek clarification of issues raised. Kumekpor, (2002) agrees and writes that, with Semi-Structured interview guide, if the question is misinterpreted, the interviewer may follow it up with a clarifying question. Probes are either pre-stated or posed in the course of the interview, making the process flexible (Wragg, 2002). I conducted Semi-Structured Interviews with the participants during the course of this study in order to “generate depth of understanding” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30) of English Language teachers PCK and Classroom Teaching Practices.

I interviewed the participants about their PCK, past events, their thoughts and opinions about their Teaching Practices which also allowed me to explore their beliefs and also their Instructional Practices. The interview guide (see appendix A) was made up of four (4) main research questions and fourteen prompt items. The interview guide was developed based on English Language educators’ understanding of PCK and Social-Learning Theories/Orientations regarding language teaching. The interview guide used for the study was scrutinized by my supervisor. The responses from the participants were recorded and also handwritten to ensure that all the responds were captured.

3.7.2 Observation

According to (Kumekpor, 2002, p. 31) “observation brings the investigator into contact with the phenomenon being studied”. In this way, observation becomes an effective means of reporting precisely what prevails about the phenomenon under study. Bell (2008) holds the belief that, observation is useful in determining what people actually do or how they actually behave in their context. I used observation, in this research because,

“Observation does not rely on what people say they do, or what they say they think. It is more than that. Instead, it draws on direct evidence of the eye to witness events at first hand. It is based on the premise that, for certain purpose, it is best to observe what actually happens”
(Denscombe, 2008).

These descriptions make observation an effective instrument for reporting exactly what the happenings are about a case or phenomenon under study with much validity. Therefore, using Non Participant Observation for data collection provided me the opportunity to see and also have first-hand information about Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Instructional Practices of English language educators in the selected schools within the Assin South District. My role in the classroom was that of “complete observer” (Hatch, 2002, p. 73), whereby there was no intervention or participation on my part as a way of preserving the natural goings in each setting. The observations were conducted as a follow-up to the Semi-Structured Interviews. Pieces of evidence were also gathered to support main areas in which the study focuses through Observation (PCK and the Instructional Practices of English Language teachers). The major areas of classroom observation included activities of both teachers and students, observation of teachers’ demonstration of content and pedagogical knowledge, student–student interactions and student–teacher interactions, methods/strategies and teacher’s attitude towards Language use. The main advantage of this method is the elimination of its subjective bias. It is independent of respondents’ willingness to respond because it does not demand any active co-operation from the respondents. The observation guide (see Appendix B) was equally scrutinized by my supervisor.

3.8. Piloting the instruments

Piloting the instruments according to Opie (2004) helps in checking the clarity of the questions/items; the length of the item taken to respond to the scheduled; the extent to which the information provided by the interviewee could be kept confidential; and the measures taken to maintain their anonymity during the study. Before administering the two instruments, I conducted a pilot study in a nearby basic school (Anyinabrim Methodist Basic School) in the selected district with among other intentions as outlined by Opie, developing the standard of the questions on the Interview and the Observational guides and also to make the questions easily understood by the participants who were to answer them in an attempt to get the much needed data. Anyinabrim Methodist Basic School was selected for the pilot study because both the school and the English Language teachers have the same characteristics as the rest in the district. This suspended any disbelief that different professional characteristics exist among English Language teachers from different schools in the selected circuits. Two teachers (one from primary and one from JHS) were used for the pilot study. The items on both instruments were edited and modified in the light of the challenges the participant faced in answering them. Thus, the items were finalized for the fieldwork.

3.9. Data Collection

As noted by Creswell (2005), the aim of every research study is to extend the boundaries of knowledge. This becomes possible when methods for data collection are in agreement with both theoretical and philosophical underpinnings. According to Blaxter Hughes, & Tight, (2001, p. 59), “underpinning...research tools are more general philosophical questions about how we understand social reality, and what are

the most appropriate ways of studying it”. Data collection in this study was in two phases.

In the first phase of my data collection, Semi-Structured Interview Guide was administered to explore the Content Knowledge, Pedagogical Knowledge, the Beliefs of English Language practitioners and their specific Classroom Teaching Practices in the district. I conducted Semi-Structured Interviews with the participants during the course of this study to “generate depth of understanding” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 30) of English Language teachers PCK and Classroom Practices through the varied responses as participants had the opportunity to express their views on the phenomenon in detail. I conducted the Interview personally, and also had the opportunity to seek clarification in the interviewing process. While recording the interviewing process with an MP3 recorder, I also prepared a Field Note on all the varying responses of the English Language teachers.

In the second phase, Non Participant Observation Guide was used to further explore English Language teachers’ PCK and Classroom Teaching Practices. As Bell (2008) holds the belief that observation is useful in determining what people actually do or how they actually behave in their context, the Observation Notes which I made helped in determining what English Language teachers say they do and how they do it (what and how they teach, how their PCK as noted during the interview stage, influence their Instructional Practices). It provided a supporting evidence to the interview data. In all, the data collection exercise lasted for five weeks.

3.10. Data Analysis

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) define data analysis as the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials that are accumulated to enable you produce findings. Hatch (2002) sees data

analysis as a way of transforming data that emphasizes interpretation. Hatch agrees with (Denzin, 1994; Patton, 2002) that interpretation is a defining element that permeates all qualitative research through making inferences, developing insights, attaching importance, refining understandings, drawing conclusions, and extrapolating lessons. According to William (2005), a chosen data analytical framework for a study is dependent upon the theoretical and philosophical underpinnings, the goal of the study, the questions addressed and the methodological approach. My qualitative case study is informed by the assumptions that, knowledge is acquired, subjective in nature and the results of human cognition (Cohen et al., 2000; Sikes, 2004). Also, it is informed by the interpretive paradigm which is premised on the fact that, knowledge is jointly created through the interaction between the researcher and the researched. Therefore, using Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Non Participant Observation Guide produced qualitative data. Hence, I analysed the data thematically (Creswell, 2005; Grbich, 2007) because these instruments allow for interaction between the researcher and the researched.

Since researchers carry out interpretations in the research process, they make interprets the phenomenon under investigation. My thematic analysis which agrees with the interpretive paradigm was therefore intended to link interpretation to the data gathered in order to result in meaningful data. This non-mathematical data analysis process was used to guide the researcher to identify themes and patterns within individual cases (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). In preparation towards the main analysis, I organized the data collected by paraphrasing the research questions and also highlighting the various prompt items on the Interview and Observational guides that seeks to answer the research questions and which also relates to my research data. In other to familiarize myself with the data collected, I spent time reading through the

data several times. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), reading, reading, and reading through the data once more forces the researcher to become intimately familiar with those data before the main analysis. Results from each participant's (English Language teacher's) Interviews and Classroom Observations were combined, compared and analyzed across all the ten (10) participants for emerging themes and patterns. Themes were categorized using the research questions as frameworks from which I started. The themes were further analyzed for common patterns, similarities and differences. I analyzed the consistencies and differences in the response in order to identify the influence of PCK on Classroom Teaching.

3.10.1. Analysis of Data from Interview

Following Hatch (2002) description about the steps in the analysis of the interview data, I first, read the data after organizing it to immersed myself in them to get a sense of the overall impressions. I then, reviewed the impressions, identified the impressions and recorded them. After studying this data for essential interpretations, I read the data again, coding places where interpretations were supported or challenged. Finally, based on Koul, (2000) cited in Patton (2002) assertion that responses from open-ended questions in the form of direct quotations reveal the level of emotions of respondents, the way in which they have organized their world, their thought and experiences about certain happenings, and their perceptions, I identified the excerpts that supported the interpretations.

3.10.2. Analysis of Data from Observation

Analysis of the Observation data in this Case Study was done by reading the Field Notes. I followed the Observation Guide and conducted the analysis by reading through my Field Note of the ten (10) English Language teachers. I then reviewed my detailed Field Notes coupled with the transcribed Interviews and identified themes

that emerged. I described and supported these themes with evidence from the Interview and the Observational Notes. During the main analysis, I explored the consistencies and differences in the responses. I also looked for the influence of PCK on Classroom Teaching and that of their beliefs.

Finally, through the analysis of lessons from both the Semi-Structured Interview and the Non Participant Observation data, I demonstrated the influence of PCK on Classroom Teaching Practices of English Language in the Assin South district with quotations that support and add realism (Creswell, 2008) to the interpretations leading to the development of themes.

3.11. Validity (Trustworthiness) of the Findings

According to Punch (2005), the criteria for examining the rigour in both qualitative and quantitative studies have traditionally been internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity. Wolcott (1990) however argues that the use of reliability and validity in qualitative research is unjustified on axiomatic grounds. This is as a result of the dissimilarities between the interpretative and the positive paradigms. In view of this argument, Merriam & Associates (2002) assert that qualitative researchers are therefore, at liberty to select their own criteria for judging the rigour of their studies depending on the topics, methods, audiences and performers of the research. My study is a Qualitative Case Study located within the interpretive paradigm and hence, validating the findings is achieved through methodological triangulation.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), triangulation is the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of a phenomenon or some aspect of human behaviour. Using triangulation technique in the social sciences according to these researchers attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and

complexity of human behaviour by studying it from more than one stand point. Similarly, Sarantakos (2005, p. 145) defines triangulation as “the practice of employing several tools (instruments) within the same research design”. Triangulation is a strategy that assists in eliminating bias and dismissing plausible rival explanations so that some “truthful proposition about some social phenomenon can be made” (Mathison, 1988, p. 13). The use of different data sources helps the researcher to “validate and crosscheck findings” (Patton, 1990, p. 244). Therefore, my belief is that triangulation has helped in explaining Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Classroom Teaching Practices of English Language teachers in the Assin South district by providing better understanding to what, why and how behind them. The complementary function of these instruments for data collection has enrich this exploration and hence, minimized the weakness of any single approach (Nau, 1995). Triangulation is however, not a guarantee of error free as Thomas and Nelson (1996) hold the view that multiple methods may serve to magnify error. Due to this, the content was also judged by my Supervisor, an English Language lecturer at the Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba. Senior and colleague researchers also reviewed and commented (peer examination) on my findings (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Finally, I continually read and reread transcripts to interpret what I saw, heard and recorded.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter provides the analysis and discussion of findings of the study. The data collected were analysed in relation to the research questions posed in this study.

The data were analyzed to reflect the following themes:

1. The knowledge base of teachers (General Knowledge about teaching and Knowledge about language teaching, subject specialization and focus of English Language teaching).
2. Beliefs about English Language teaching (language teaching as social practice and what support(s) the teaching of English language)
3. Instructional Practices (Child-Centred methods of teaching)
4. Factors that drive pedagogical decisions (teaching experience and how teachers make decisions about teaching).

These are variables of Basic School Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language and Classroom Teaching Practices in the district.

4.2. **Research question 1: What pedagogical content knowledge does Assin south basic school English language teachers have in the teaching of English Language?**

Examining English Language teachers' knowledge is very crucial for effective delivery of basic education. It is a powerful source for examining the instructional practices in Ghanaian basic schools which can offer important implications for the development of language teacher education programmes in the various tertiary institutions and the continuous growth of English Language Teaching professionals. This will ultimately elevate the status of the English Language teaching profession in

Ghana and beyond. In investigating English Language teachers' knowledge base, Teachers' General Knowledge about teaching, Knowledge about language teaching, subject specialization and focus of English Language teaching dominated the exploration as sub-themes on the above research question.

4.2.1. Teachers' General Knowledge about teaching and knowledge about English Language teaching.

Data from the interview Guide with the teachers indicate that teaching in general involves two persons. The experienced and the less experienced. It is about helping the less experienced (i.e. the learner) to acquire new knowledge. Teachers also understand English Language teaching as a way of developing the communication skills of the language learner. That is, teaching the various aspects of the English Language to assist them to communicate in the various forms such as speaking, writing, reading and listening. For instance, some of the teachers who participated in the study made the following comments as their understanding of the General Knowledge about teaching and English Language teaching:

“Imparting knowledge to bring permanent change in the learner. Language teaching is helping the child to understand the language to use in the day to day activities and also in future as well as facilitating the learning of other subjects” (ET4).

Another teacher made it simple:

“Transferring knowledge to the less experienced one. English teaching is about empowering learners with proper communication tools for speaking and listening with general understanding of a giving concept” (ET2).

Another comment was:

“The process of imparting knowledge to the learner in a conducive environment. English teaching involves the teaching of all the aspects. That is, using the methods to

understand grammar, reading, writing, and speaking. Storytelling, discussion, role play, dramatization and all the other child centred approaches are used in English Language teaching'' (ET9).

One more teacher answered that:

‘Teaching is basically imparting knowledge and looking for feedback. In English Language too, we teach them to be able to read and write and also to articulate well. We have the spoken and the written language so we teach them to know these two’’ (ET7).

From the responses by the teachers, it is evidently clear that while teaching in general aims at imparting knowledge, English Language teaching rather focusses on building the communicative aspects of the learners by assisting them to learn the rules of the language. And for these communicative aspects to be enhanced, English teachers have to find proper ways of meeting this objective based on their general understanding of teaching as well as their understanding of English Language. This is so because, according to Rodgers & Raider-Roth (2006, p. 280), “Many at times, a teacher is knowledgeable of his or her subject matter without necessarily being able to decompress it in a way that makes it accessible to their students”. Having and combining these two understandings reflect the concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) which has already been described by Shulman (1987) in this study. This is the means by which the English Language teachers can help improve the communication aspects of the learner. Shulman (1995) holds the view that, Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields of study and to everyday life. This kind of understanding provides a foundation for Gess-Newsome’s (1999) interactive model of Pedagogical Content Knowledge on which part of my study is grounded, thereby enabling teachers to make ideas accessible to others.

Shulman (1986b, p. 8) opines that teachers need PCK because “mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content-free skill” in teaching practice. This view indicates that Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) is more helpful and practical for teaching the aspects of the English Language compared with Content Knowledge or Pedagogical Knowledge. My classroom observation points to the fact that teachers teach English Language based on their level of pedagogical understanding. For instance, they use questions and answers to find out the pupils Relevant Previous Knowledge (RPK) before introducing the new lesson. The next sub-theme that emerged from research question 1 (one) was subject specialization.

4.2.2. Subject Specialization

English Language teachers by their responses during the interview showed that Pre-Service Training imbued with subject specialization is very helpful in acquiring Content Knowledge. They explained that receiving specialized training in English Language is needed for effective teaching of English Language. To them, English Language teaching requires special skills and specialists are needed in its teaching. Hence, the subject cannot be taught by anybody with any educational background.

Below are samples of their opinions:

“English language cannot be taught by anybody from any educational background because it requires special skills so accounting teacher for instance, will have problem in grammar and vocabulary” (ET1).

“Language is special, specific, one has to be equipped with methodology because of technology. It is not like any other subject. There is the need for specialization” (ET3).

“Teaching English is 100% different from other subjects. It has technicalities. A person speaking it does not mean he/she can teach it” (ET4).

“English Language can never be taught by any teacher because there are rules such as subject verb-agreement” (ET5).

“English is a language that has several aspects so science teacher for instance, can speak but cannot teach” (ET6).

“Without having the background knowledge, teaching will be difficult since he or she is not a scholar of the subject” (ET8).

“It can be taught by any teacher but it will not be effective because any English teacher need to acquire the skills and the rules regarding English Language teaching” (ET10).

Two more teachers who seem to agree that English Language can be taught by a teacher with any educational background even acknowledged the fact that their teaching will not be as effective as that of a specialist. The following are their comments:

“English Language can be taught by any teacher because nobody can become a professional teacher without going through the necessary English Language skills. However the performance will not be like that of a trained English Language teacher” (ET7).

“Everyone can teach English but because of his or her background, it won't be perfect as a trained English Language teacher” (ET9).

The teachers' reason for the need for subject specialization during Pre-Service Training is that teaching English Language is not the same as teaching other content subjects.

ET1 for instance said:

“Different aspects. That is reading, grammar, listening and speaking and writing but for others only one point of view. It has some simple rules. For example, Subject-Verb agreement but in other subjects we don't consider

grammatical rules. There is no punishment for a mathematics teacher when he/she makes a mistake in using English Language in his/her mathematical class. It has some aspects which needs specialisation before teaching'' (ET3).

''The principles and facts governing it'' (ET4)

''It is different because English is use to teach other subjects. It is the foundation for teaching other subjects'' (ET10).

Other teachers who see English Language teaching as the same as other subjects still appreciate the technicalities involved in the teaching of the subject.

''It is not different from other subjects but it is language so any other teacher who is not an English teacher when asked to teach, may not be able to deliver well because of the technicalities involve'' (ET9).

It is apparent from the teachers' responses that receiving training in a specific subject area like English Language is very much needed due to the various aspects and the unique technicalities involved. According to them, all teachers may have adequate knowledge about English Language but those who are trained purposely in the English Language may end up performing better than their colleagues who received only general training during their Pre-Service Training. Their responses affirm one of the findings of Borg's (2006) study that in terms of content, language teaching was regarded to be more complex and varied than other subjects and that McNamara (1991) suggests that teachers with strong Content Knowledge (CK) may teach in a more interesting and dynamic way while those with little CK may shy away from the more difficult aspects of the subject, or approach their teaching in a didactic manner. Again, Roberts (1998) points out that, having content knowledge means that teachers show knowledge of the systems of the target language and competence in it.

Clark and Walsh (2002) also assert that, content knowledge forms a significant part of teacher education or training.

However, my classroom observation agrees with De Jong (2001), Loughram, Mulhall & Berry, (2008) that quiet a number of teachers complete teacher education programme having insufficient content knowledge and lack in-depth understanding of basic concepts. This is because, although some of the teachers commented that English language is different from other subjects they failed to demonstrate mastery over the subject matter with some of them fumbling. The next sub-heading that emerged out of the teachers' responses was about the focus of teaching the English Language in Ghanaian basic schools.

4.2.3. The Focus of English Language teaching.

The focus of English Language teaching was seen as the foundation for other subjects and also as a way of developing the communicative skills aspects of the learner as per the teachers' responses based on the interview. They (English Teachers) were of the opinion that English Language is an important subject and that the teaching of other subjects is dependent on it. The teachers provided the following responses to back their claim:

“Because without reading, definitely you cannot read other subjects. It is the core of all other subjects” (ET1).

“Without English Language, it is difficult to learn other subjects. It facilitates the learning of other subjects. It has become our second language following the colonial pressures. Without English Language, I wonder how education can be possible” (ET2).

“It is the root of all other subjects” (ET3)

“To help children to acquire the basic skills for reading and also express themselves in basic schools. It also helps the pupils in the higher class” (ET4).

“It helps to develop the listening and speaking skills. It also helps in the acquisition of vocabulary, writing and reading skills. Also, reading determines the success of the learner in other subjects” (ET9).

Another teacher argued that the basic aim for teaching the English Language to the children is:

“Just to be able to read and write and as you know, every student who can read and write performs well in almost all the subjects” (ET7).

From the supporting evidence provided by the teachers above, there is no denying the fact that, the focus of English Language teaching is to improve the communicative aspect of the learner. It confirms the rationale stated in the English Language syllabus quoted in chapter 1. Again, it is the most dependable subject in the educational system. The findings here support the assertion of Bennett, Weigel, & Martin (2002) that success with the English language is fundamental to children's academic development and achievement. This explains why a lot of universities throughout the world need to include English language as one of their educational tool requirements (Khader & Mohammad, 2010). English is often used as the medium of instruction in higher education (Murray & Christison, 2010).

In summary, teachers' General Knowledge about teaching and Knowledge about English Language teaching, Subject Specialization and The Focus of English Language teaching have been discussed as sub-themes based on research question one.

4.3. Research Question 2: What beliefs do basic school English Language teachers possess about the teaching of the English language?

My investigation of the beliefs of language teachers has brought out some relevant findings. As beliefs shape the way of life of an individual, the beliefs of English Language teachers shape their way of practice. Beliefs serves as a guide to thought and behaviour. The sub-themes that emerged from investigating beliefs of English Language teachers are: language teaching as social practice and what supports the teaching of English language.

4.3.1. Language Teaching as Social Practice

Teachers consider the teaching of English as a social practice where there is an interaction between the teacher and the students. To them, the English Language class should be interactive for pupils to communicate freely in an atmosphere devoid of threat of punishment. Pupils must be active communicators in the classroom because the essence of teaching English Language is geared towards the improvement of pupils' communication aspect. Teachers supported their claim with the following responses:

“English Language teaching is a cooperative work. It brings socialization” (ET4).

“The teaching of English Language in basic schools must be interactive because our aim is that pupils can communicate. This teaching style encourage pupils to talk” (ET2).

“English Language teaching shouldn't be lecture method. Encourage the children to communicate as time goes on, they will realize their mistakes and correct them themselves. I also advise them to read” (ET3).

One more teacher was emphatic:

“The teaching of English Language in basic schools must be interactive” (ET5).

Other teachers hold the view that:

“The classroom should be social. The reason is that, when you interact with them they are able to express themselves and this improves the way they understand the subject” (ET6).

“The teacher should interact with the pupils because if they are not able to make the class interactive through discussion, the children won't talk and will not understand” (ET7).

The responses given above indicate that English Language teachers consider English Language teaching as a social activity. They hold the belief that, English Language teaching is a process of guiding and facilitating students for an active communication. This belief is not in disagreement with what language experts and studies have said about language teaching in chapter two. For instance, Language teaching is instead a complex social practice (Gee 1990; Lankshear 1994; New London Group 1996; Willinsky 1994) and according to Chacón, (2005), a teacher's beliefs, perceptions and assumptions about teaching and teacher efficacy affect the way he/she understands and organizes instruction.

Uztosum (2013) has also highlighted a number of studies, which claim that teachers' practices are determined by their beliefs and that teachers' beliefs can be categorized in a number of areas. The beliefs of the teachers also agree with Vygotsky's idea of social learning which underpins an aspect of my study. Vygotsky (1978) proposes that children interact with others in social contexts and these interactions are critical to shaping the learning, thinking and behaviour of the child. Vygotsky's idea supported the theory that the child's thinking develops through social interaction mediated by language, and that words provided the labels for the concepts that would be developed cognitively (Vygotsky, 1986; see also, Dixon-Krauss, 1996).

Within this social learning theory, a very important component is the idea that less experienced individuals rely on More Experienced Individuals, also known as More Knowledgeable Others or Significant Others to facilitate their growth and development. Vygotsky calls it Scaffolding. Based on this, researchers and reflective practitioners feel that the strategies that will best accomplish enhanced learning are those that support learning within the child's Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978). It is therefore argued (Gibbon, 2002) that it is only when scaffolding is needed and adopted that learning actually takes place because it is only then that work is taking place within the child's Zone of Proximal Development. The next sub-theme that developed from the broad theme was centred on teachers' beliefs about what support English Language teaching.

4.3.2. What supports the teaching of English Language.

Based on the teachers' beliefs about language teaching (i.e. as a social practice), they were of the view that Teaching and Learning Materials also support the teaching and learning of the English Language. They claim that teaching with instructional materials best support the teaching of the English Language by allowing students to interact with the teacher and also among themselves (i.e. by way of asking questions and manipulating the materials) which end up building the communication aspects of the students. They indicated again that appropriate and proper usage of Teaching and Learning Materials facilitate pupils understanding of basic concepts about the English Language. The following are the comments by seven out of the ten teachers on what support the teaching of English Language.

“So many things support the teaching of English. The tables, books, pupils etc. I hardly go to class with materials from outside the classroom” (ET3).

“The paintings and Teaching and Learning Materials in the classroom” (ET5).

“The availability of the materials and the proper usage of other Teaching and Learning Materials. Sometimes too, the materials may be available but teachers may not use them properly” (ET6).

Others have these to say:

“To me, the discussion method and the use of Teacher Learner Materials support the teaching of English Language because our main aim is to help pupils to read and write good English so as we discuss, we are assisting them to improve” (ET7).

“Lack or inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials and other text books make pre-reading difficult. Workshops and Seminars for teachers are crucial. Motivating teachers by giving awards is also important in teaching English Language. English Language teachers should not be overloaded by adding any other subjects” (ET8).

“Teaching Learning Materials including audio ones” (ET10).

Evidence from the responses above show that appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials enhance the teaching of English Language. Teachers are able to involve their students in English Language lessons by way of asking and responding to questions about the use of Teaching and Learning Materials. This social environment which characterizes the language class agrees with Vygotsky’s (1986) scaffolding concept of teaching and learning which is embedded in the Communicative Approaches also known as the Social Learning Theories. This was confirmed by English Teacher nine.

“Using Teaching Learning Materials. For example word bank where you have variety of words on cardboard in a box so that you show to pupils for them to pronounce” (ET9).

The responses also means that the availability of Teaching and Learning Material is not a guarantee of effective teaching. But what matters is the teacher's ability to use the materials appropriately. This opinion form part of pedagogical understanding and it is in agreement with Shulman's (1986) claim that the definition of pedagogical knowledge is any theory or belief about teaching and the process of learning that a teacher possesses that influences that teacher's teaching. This process according to Hudson (2007), includes the ability to plan, prepare and use materials properly. Also, the PCK model of Grossman (1990, p, 11) which grounds part of my study, consists of four components, namely, "conception of purposes for teaching subject matter," "knowledge of students' understanding," "curricular knowledge," and "knowledge of instructional strategies". The knowledge of instructional strategies includes knowledge of instructional materials since methods/strategies impact the selection of teaching materials.

To sum it up, research question 2 which sought to find out teachers beliefs about English Language teaching has discussed Language Teaching as a Social Practice, and also discussed Teaching Learning Materials as an answer to the question raised.

4.4. Research Question 3: What specific instructional practices do Assin south basic school English language teachers employ in their English language class?

In an attempt to establish the link or otherwise between beliefs and practice, I explored the specific instructional practices English teachers use in their classrooms. The sub-themes identified are Child-Centred methods/strategies of teaching and the reasons for employing these methods/strategies.

4.4.1. Child-Centred Methods/Strategies

The respondents submitted during the interviewing process that they employ the various Learner-Centred methods/strategies in teaching English Language. By this, they only act as facilitators in the language teaching process. Ruddell (2006) states that teachers should create a context-rich, interactive, supportive classroom environment for language exploration and use; teachers can also help children develop social language skills that facilitate language interactions both in and out of school; teachers need to help children build positive self-concepts by providing frequent academic and social opportunities for interactive meaning-based language use. In respect of this, the teachers provided the following responses to the kind of instructional practices (methods/strategies) they employ in their class:

“Question and answer, completion, quiz, and demonstration. But question and answer is my favourite because it helps to link up with the learner. It helps in getting the attention of the learner more. I used the quiz type in reading comprehension exercise. With that one they see themselves as competitors and are able to give off their best” (ET1)

“I blend the methods. Discussion is helping. Discussion is my favourite and sometimes role playing because it is language and we need to interact” (ET2).

“All child-centred approach and role play. Role play because children feel involved in the lesson” (ET3).

“Think-pair-share. That is you let the children think and share ideas among themselves and finally sharing their ideas with the entire class. With this, no one is wrong. It gives the children opportunity to interact” (ET4).

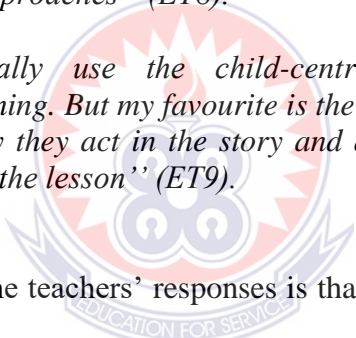
“I use the interactive and gestures in the phonological aspect. I does that when doing reading with the pupils” (ET5).

“I employ almost all the strategies. Both child and teacher centred methods of teaching” (ET6).

“I employ the discussion method and in some instances, the lecture method. Storytelling is my favourite. With storytelling, the child has a plot in the head so it is up to the child to change the plot from L1 to L2 and that becomes very simple for the child” (ET7).

“Discussion, role play, storytelling and other pupils’-centred approaches” (ET8).

“I normally use the child-centred method and brainstorming. But my favourite is the role play because of the way they act in the story and also how they get involve in the lesson” (ET9).



Indication from the teachers’ responses is that, they are aware and supposedly employ the various Child-Centred methods/strategies of teaching. Child-Centred (also known as communicative) approach to language teaching means the learner is at the centre of the teaching process. Here, there is a shift from the traditional teaching process where the teacher transfers knowledge to the learner. This approach to language teaching provides opportunity for learners to become active participants in the teaching process as they interact among themselves in the classroom. This is very important especially in the English Language class where social interaction is believed to be the best approach. Their responses affirm Ruddell (2006) instructional principles that, teachers should create a context-rich, interactive, supportive classroom environment for language exploration and use; teachers can also help children

develop social language skills that facilitate language interactions both in and out of school; teachers need to help children build positive self-concepts by providing frequent academic and social opportunities for interactive meaning-based language use. These well-crafted principles demonstrate that students' language acquisition is greatly enhanced through active participation in meaning construction with their peers, teachers and other individuals (Significant others) in their school and community (Ruddell, *ibid*). It is also in line with Vygotsky's (1986/1987) concepts of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Scaffolding grounded within the social learning theories where the teacher scaffolds the learning of the child within his or her ZPD.

The essence of Scaffolding the child within his/her Zone of Proximal Development in language teaching is that, the child's proficiency in language would best be enhanced when the teacher scaffolds the learner within his or her area of potential learning in language activities such as reading aloud. Thus, in English Language class teachers should assist the learners to communicate using the English Language even as they make mistake because the learner will later become more and more aware of the rules regarding the language where the teacher's responsibility for guiding the learner reduces thereby allowing the learner to assume more responsibility for the learning activity.

One language teacher has this to say:

“My belief is that, we should encourage and guide the pupils to speak the English language. For me, I sometimes encourage my pupils to speak Pidgin English and as they speak, they will later identify the rules regarding the language and they will be able to correct their mistakes themselves” (ET7).

Rogoff's (1990) idea of guided participation which elaborates on the Vygotsky's idea of ZPD and Scaffolding, is also an attestation to the responses the teachers gave.

4.4.2. Why teachers employ Child-Centred Methods

In assigning reasons for the choice of the Child-Centred methods/strategies, the teachers indicated that:

“It is because of the topic and the Relevant Previous Knowledge of the pupils that is why I use the Child-Centred methods” (ET1)

“Because of the focus of the language. So you need to build up the interest. So activities should focus on building the interest” (ET2).

“It depends on the level and the aspect of the language you want to teach” (ET3).

“Teaching shouldn't be teacher-centred. So I use cooperative methods. For instance, I invite the children to come to the board and write something and it makes them happy” (ET4).

The rest also indicated that:

“The pupils' responses always motivates me to choose the learner-centred methods” (ET5).

“Because I want all pupils to be involved. I don't want to do the talking alone that is why I use the Child-Centred methods in my English Language class” (ET9).

“I use both pupil and teacher-centred methods because they help me to know their Relevant Previous Knowledge” (ET10).

Clearly, but for teacher 2 and teacher 3 who use Child-Centred strategies/methods because of the focus of the English Language, all the responses show that the teachers employ the Child-Centred methods/strategies in their Language

class basically to develop the communicative aspects of the learner. What this means is that, the other aspects such as literature is not given prior consideration in terms of methods/strategies for instruction. The reasons teachers gave for the choice of their instructional methods/strategies does not cater for other aspects of the subject.

Although teachers can list almost all the Child-Centred methods/strategies, I can confirm based on my observation that what they practice is different from what they claim they do. I observed that the common methods they employ in their class are the lecture methods which is in sharp contrast to their own belief about language teaching (i.e. as a social practice). My observation also agrees with Bell's (2008) belief that observation is useful in determining what people actually do or how they actually behave in their context.

It also confirms the findings that, teachers do not carry out their occupations in the light and formation of the principles taught to them during the training programmes at universities and other tertiary institutions (Binnie-Smith, 1996; Almarza, 1996). The few teachers who tried to use the Child-Centred methods/strategies mostly do that just to know the Relevant Previous Knowledge of the pupils. This attest to Khale's (1999) findings that many teachers complete Colleges of Education with blurred ideas, concepts and principles in their specific subject disciplines as well as pedagogical issues.

In a situation like this, research examining teacher quality confirms the logical conclusion that poor quality of students' learning correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers' teaching. Therefore, effective student learning and achievement is hampered by weaknesses in teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and classroom practice which includes appropriate usage of teaching methods/strategies

(Pontefract & Hardman 2005; Akyeampong, Pryor & Ampiah 2006, Moon et al., 2005; Byamugisha & Ssenabulya, 2005).

In summary, Child-Centred methods/strategies and reasons for employing the Child-Centred strategies have been raised and discussed in relation to research question 3.



4.5. Research Question 4: How does the basic school English Language teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge influence their instructional practices?

Data based on the responses of the teachers indicate that the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) that Assin South basic school English Language teachers possess influence their classroom instructional delivery. In this situation, the instructional success or otherwise of a teacher is influenced by the Pedagogical Content Knowledge possessed by the teacher. Investigation of the influence of PCK on instructional practices generated two sub-themes. These sub-themes are Teaching Experience and issues about Instructional Decision Making.

4.5.1. Teaching Experience

The responses given by the teachers indicate that they have an appreciable years of teaching experiences. They further indicated that the experiences that they have acquired over the years impact their Instructional Practice. According to their explanations, their knowledge over the years as practicing teachers has helped them in diverse ways. They provided the following responses to substantiate their claim.

“I have taught for six (6) years and the experience I have gained over the years has built my confidence level. For instance, I sometimes teach without materials. It motivates me a lot because I always enjoy my lesson and my students also enjoy it. I always get feedback” (ET2).

“I have been in the service for twenty three (23) years. Because I have taught for many years, I go to class without lesson note, books and I find it interesting. I don't find it difficult to teach English Language” (ET3).

“I have taught for twelve (12) years. It has sharpen me, I have the experiences and also am eloquent. It makes me decent. Teaching English even affects your character. I have improve a lot. I am now confident

compared to the previous years. It has exposed me to many strategies and methods'' (ET4).

Another teacher explained that:

''I have seven (7) years working experience. It has improved my understanding of the subject. Formally, I was of the view that, you can't learn English but teaching it has demonstrated to me that it can be learnt just like other subjects'' (ET6).

Others have these to say:

''I have been a teacher for seven (7) years. The experience over the years has made me understand how children think with regards to the speaking of the language. My experience is that allowing the pupils to use the L1 helps. That is, if we allow the pupils to fuse the English with the L1, the pupils develop very well in the speaking of the English Language. So I will say my experience over the years has influenced my teaching greatly''. (ET7).

In the words of one more teacher who has taught for six (6) years:

''My experience has made me a master of the subject. For instance, I use to consult an experience teacher for help but now I have learnt the aspects very well and that I am confident'' (ET8).

From the data presented above, evidence abounds that having experience in teaching is very essential for Instructional Practice. According to research work, experience is one of the teacher qualities (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004). This element which form part of Pedagogical Content Knowledge was found to influence teachers' instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Stronge et al.; Superka, 1977). The responses given by the Assin South basic school English Language teachers match with Gatbonton's

(2008) qualitative study which sought to compare the pedagogical knowledge of novice teachers (teachers with less than two years' experience) and experienced teachers' pedagogical knowledge. Comparing the findings to earlier study by the same researcher, Gatbonton (ibid) found that the pedagogical knowledge was similar between the two groups, but the experienced teachers' group seemed to have more detailed Pedagogical Knowledge, especially with regards to student attitudes and behaviours. This study shows that college courses are helpful in developing a teacher's Pedagogical Knowledge, but several years' experience will help build upon that knowledge to make it more specialized and useful.

Again, the responses given by the teachers also agree with Stronge et al., (2004) findings that, experience which forms part of Pedagogical Knowledge and hence element of PCK, is another factor that affects teacher effectiveness in the classroom. Similarly, knowledge about the English Language (content knowledge) which is embedded in Pedagogical Content Knowledge influences teacher's instruction (Ferguson & Womack, 1993; Superka, 1977). The implication is that teachers' knowledge in the English Language instruction improves as they teach the subject for a long time. Besides, teachers alter their instructional practices based on their accumulated experiences over the years. They indicated that they do that by reflecting on their performances after instructional delivery. Responses given below back their claim:

“I was formerly teaching base on the syllabus and the text book only, but now I use laptop and other reading materials” (ET5).

“At first, when teaching pronunciation I do the pronunciation myself but now I play an audio tape for the pupils to listen to the tape themselves” (ET6).

“In previous times, I only enter the class asking the pupils to open the book and tell me what they can see but in recent times, I will rather brief them about the topic before I asked them to guess what we are going to read about. Because it helps them to take part and I also want their communication skills to improve” (ET8).

The claim by the teachers is in agreement with (Holly 1993; Matthews & Jessel, 1998) assertion that, knowledge gained through reflective practice grows with each year on the job and helps develop expertise in all aspects of teaching. Pettis (1997) in identifying three main characteristics for a professionally competent teacher opines that, professional needs and interests of an effective language teacher must change over time and develop during his/her teaching. Also, experience teachers are able to alter their teaching strategies to meet the learning styles of their students and are more likely to take risks and try new instructional strategies than novice teachers. On the other hand, unexamined experience can have little effect on knowledge, practice, or performance. As Vygotsky (1976) asserts in his social learning theory (i.e. which underpins an aspects of my study), English Language teachers are able to scaffold their students within their Zone of Proximal Development better partly due to their experience. The last sub-theme has to do with how teachers make decisions about teaching.

4.5.2. How teachers make decisions about Instructions

Making instructional decision remains one of the important pedagogical process teachers go through in discharging their duties professionally. The responses given by the teachers in this study indicate the kind of instructional considerations they make before delivering their lessons. This demonstrates the level of teachers' Knowledge Base. During the interviewing process the teachers indicated that they

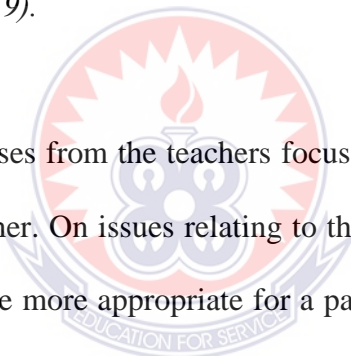
make the following considerations as part of their instructional decision making process:

“It depends on the level and the aspects. For oral English, sometimes you have to play cassette. It simply depends on the topic, level and objective” (ET3).

“It depends on the aspect. For example, reading sometimes introduces pupils to spelling. I always consider the environment. I consider whether or not the pupils will get some materials such as dictionary to read when they go home” (ET5)

“It depends on the topic. In a story for instance, I always narrate the story to the pupils. The Teaching Learning Materials also remain a determining factor” (ET8).

“My teaching decision making is simply based on the topic” (ET9).



The above responses from the teachers focus more on the aspects of the subject and issues about the learner. On issues relating to the aspects, they indicated that some methods/strategies may be more appropriate for a particular aspects than others so they select their methods/strategies based on the aspect they are to teach. By considering the aspects in making decisions about instructions, Assin South English Language teachers agree with Richards (1998) proposition of six core dimensions of second language teachers' knowledge base, namely theories of teaching, teaching skills, communication skills and language proficiency, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical reasoning and decision-making, and contextual knowledge. Similarly, their responses side with Grossman's (1990, p. 17) model of PCK (i.e. which underpins an aspect of my study) which consists of four components, namely, “conception of purposes for teaching subject matter,” “knowledge of students' understanding,” “curricular knowledge,” and “knowledge of instructional strategies”.

The following responses also give detailed attestation to the fact that teachers consider Teaching Learning Materials and other issues that concern the learners themselves:

“Before I teach, I consider the interest of the pupils”
(ET2).

“I consider the text books and other Teaching Learning Materials available and in fact, the level of the pupils”
(ET6).

“Their knowledge base or R.P, K. I mean the Relevant Previous Knowledge of the pupils” (ET10)

“I normally consider the background. For instance, where the child is coming from and I also think about the availability of Teaching Learning Materials. This is also important” (ET7).

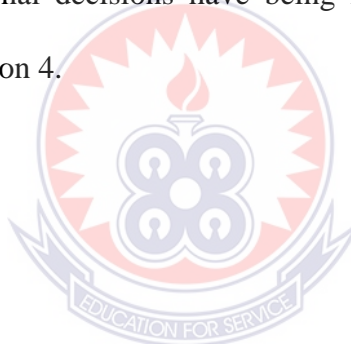
One other teacher who consider the aspect to be crucial equally acknowledge the importance of Teacher Learner Materials:

“It depends on the topic. In a story for instance, I always narrate the story to the pupils. The Teacher Learner Materials are also among the crucial factors”
(ET8).

The use of the teaching learning materials in the language class makes the class interactive because pupils manipulate and communicate by way of asking and responding to questions about the materials. This social environment which characterises the language class agrees with Vygotsky’s (1986) scaffolding concept of teaching and learning which is embedded in the Communicative Approaches also known as the Social Learning Theories. Also, the revelations from the interview with the language teachers confirm Shulman’s (1986) proposition which is made up of different types of knowledge necessary for teacher practice of which knowledge of learners is cardinal. Equally, Grimmett & MacKinnon’s (1992) work which found that

teachers need to develop specific pedagogical learner knowledge that comprises knowledge of the way individual learners reason and think, the problems they have in learning, how they learn best and how they are motivated is been affirmed by the teachers. Thus, teaching English Language is not just an issue of general pedagogies but it is about developing a complex set of knowledge to apply to specific concepts or skills or aspects of the language. It also pre-supposes that the ability to reason and reorganize content knowledge and guide students through the use of appropriate teaching methods/strategies (pedagogy knowledge) is important to bring about a better understanding of English Language concepts among language students.

In the above question, issues that relate to teaching experience and how teachers make instructional decisions have being identified and discussed as sub-themes to research question 4.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the summary of the key findings, conclusions and recommendations made based on the findings from the study which was on Basic School Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language and their Classroom Teaching Practices at the Assin South district. This final chapter is presented under:

- i. Summary of findings of key findings;
- ii. Conclusions;
- iii. Recommendations;
- iv. Suggestion for further Research.

5.2. Summary of key findings

The study was intended to examine the English Language teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge and their Classroom Teaching Practices in the Assin South district. It sought to find out the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language teachers, their beliefs about English Language teaching, the specific classroom teaching practices they employ in their class and how their Pedagogical Content Knowledge and beliefs influence their classroom teaching practices.

The study was a typical qualitative case study. Semi-Structured Interview Guide and Non participants' observation Guide were the instruments used for data collection. The sample size was ten (10) English Language teachers. Purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. There were four main research

questions which were raised and analysed. The key findings out of the study are summarised below:

Research question 1 (one) sought to find out the Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) of Basic School English Language Teachers in the Assin South district. The findings indicated that teachers understand teaching as a way of imparting knowledge to the learners. They however understand English language teaching as a way of improving the communicative aspect of the learner which makes the rational different from other subjects. Their teaching is therefore geared towards improving the oral aspects of the language. They describe English Language teaching as being technical.

Research question 2 (two) was on the beliefs teachers possessed about the teaching of English Language. It elicited the revelation that, teachers hold the belief that language and for that matter English Language teaching, is a Social Practice which is best taught and learnt using Learner-Centred methods/strategies so that learners can communicate among themselves and with the teacher as well. Again, teachers believe that Teaching and Learning Materials support the teaching of English Language since it gives the learners the opportunity to manipulate the materials and interact with their friends and teachers.

On research question 3 (three), my Classroom Observation shows that English Language teachers specifically employ the Teacher-Centred methods/strategies although during the interview, they had acknowledged the fact that Child-Centred methods/strategies are very appropriate in the teaching of English language.

Findings from research question 4 (four) also sought to elicit the influence teachers' PCK have on their Classroom Instructional Practices (i.e., how they make instructional decision as well as how they teach). The findings indicated that teachers

consider the aspect of the subject, issues about the learner and the availability of teaching learning materials in making Instructional Decisions regarding the teaching of the English Language. Also, because of years of teaching experience, their PCK in terms of what and how they teach has improved.

5.3. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that:

English Language teaching in basic schools in the Assin South district focuses on developing the communicative aspects of the learner such as listening and speaking. Teachers without Specialisation are not able to teach the subject effectively due to the Technicalities and the Aspects. Again, English Language is best taught and learnt in an Interactive Classroom Environment where the Learner-Centred strategies/methods are employed. Teaching Learning Materials also support the teaching and learning of English Language. However there exists no Link between teachers' Belief about appropriate Instructional Strategies/Methods and the actual Classroom Instructional Practices (i.e., how they teach).

Teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge drives their Instructional Decision Making and that Teaching Experience also improve both the Content and Pedagogical Knowledge of English Language teachers resulting in effective teaching.

5.4. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. In-Service Training for English Language Teachers should be regularised and uniformed in order to address the specific Content and Pedagogical needs. The Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) and other stakeholders like the Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT) should work together towards streamlining the Focus, Methods/Strategies and the Theoretical Basis that will

help shape the Focus of English Language Teaching through In-Service Training and Workshop. Teachers should specialise in English Language teaching through Distance Education and Sandwich programmes. This when done, will establish adequate Teacher Knowledge Base in English Language.

2. Teachers Beliefs about Instructional Strategies/Methods should be shaped for proper linkage through adequate orientation.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to employ Child-Centred Strategies/Methods that allow for classroom interaction.
4. The Ghana Education Service (GES) in collaboration with other relevant authorities should work together towards streamlining the Pedagogical Content Knowledge of English Language teachers, and brought to bear when making Instructional Decisions. Teachers should also carry out self-reflection exercise on their Instructional Practices regularly in order to make the necessary adjustments based on their experiences in English Language teaching.

5.5. Suggestions for Further Research

1. It is suggested that the study should be conducted in other districts in the central region and even beyond since one district cannot be a representation of the entire nation. If possible, such studies should use different instruments.
2. Further study should be conducted to find out English Language teachers' PCK and its impact on Classroom Assessment Practices.

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APPENDIX A

SEMI-STRUCTURED TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Question 1 (What Pedagogical Content Knowledge does Assin South basic school English Language teachers have in the teaching of English Language?)

What is your general understanding of teaching and also your understanding specifically of English Language teaching?

Prompts

1. Why can or can't English Language be taught by any teacher from any educational background?
2. In your view what makes the teaching of English Language different from other subject(s) or the same as the other subjects?
3. What is the focus of English Language teaching in Ghanaian basic schools? (i.e. finding out the rational).

Research Question 2 (What beliefs do Basic school English Language teachers possess about the teaching of the subject?)

What is your belief(s) about English Language teaching?

Prompts

- 4) What do you think supports the teaching and learning of English Language in the language classroom (exploring for the personal and professional beliefs).
- 5) In your opinion, why do you or do you not consider language teaching as a social practice?

6) How and why do you reflect on your belief(s) about your strategies/methods/activities in the teaching of English Language?

Research Question 3 (What specific instructional practices do Assin South basic school English Language teachers employ in their English Language class?)

What teaching strategies/activities/methods do you use to teach English Language?

Prompts

7) How do use these strategies/methods/activities? (Finding out the link between beliefs and practice).

8) What is the motivation/reason for choosing a particular classroom practice?

9) Tell me about any classroom activity that you recently engaged your students in that was particularly motivating for the students. What made it special?

10) Tell me about any classroom activity that you recently engaged your students in that they did not find it interesting and that did not impact positively on your pupil as had hoped it would. Why do you say so?

Research Question 4 (How does the basic school English Language teacher's pedagogical content knowledge influence his/her instructional practices?)

How does your knowledge in teaching influence your classroom teaching practices?

Prompts

11) For how long have you been teaching English Language?

12) How do you make decisions about English Language instruction (Teaching)?

13) Why have you or have you not tried to modify anything in the way you taught English Language in recent times as compared to previous times? (Exploring for ways

teacher knowledge has expanded over time and its influences on beliefs and practices).

14) In what way (s) has/have your experience in teaching helped you in the teaching of English Language? (Establishing the influence of PCK on classroom teaching).



APPENDIX C

SEMI-OBSERVATIONAL GUIDE FOR CLASSROOM PRACTICES

Focus of the observation:

- 1) How do English teachers teach generally? Using what methods?
- 2) What English language activities does the teacher takes his/her learners through during classroom teaching?
- 3) Is there any interaction between the teacher and the learner? What is the nature of the teacher's interaction with the students?
- 4) How does the teacher ask and respond to the students' questions in class?
- 5) What actions/inactions does the teacher attend to or neglect in the English Language class? (Establishing the ideological position of the teacher).
- 6) Is there any group work or paired work in the classroom teaching and learning? If there is, are they guided? By who?
- 7) Is there any translation exercise in the classroom teaching?
- 8) Is there any oral English Practice in the classroom teaching?
- 9) How is English used in Reading/Writing and Listening/Speaking classes?