

**TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION IN BASIC TWO:
A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY BASIC SCHOOLS, LEGON**

BY

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN
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ABSTRACT

The study examined the effect of the Schema Reading Approach on pupils in Basic Two (lower primary) in the University Basic Schools, Legon.

It also explored the effect of two language teaching approaches, The Schema Reading Theory as against the Basal Reading Approach in teaching reading comprehension. It involved experiments on two different groups, the experimental and the control groups. A preliminary investigation and test were conducted before the experiments.

Pre-test and post-test conducted to determine the outcome of the study was also performed before and after intervention lessons.

The pupils were taken through either the Schema or the Basal Reading Approach in their classroom lessons and exercises to determine the outcome of the study. There were observation periods where classroom activities were monitored, a preliminary test and a pre and post intervention exercises on a selection of comprehension passages and other related activities from their English Reader.

There were 142 pupils from four classes of Basic Two comprising 70 girls and 72 boys in the study. After being divided into the two groups, the pupils were taught using the approach assigned to them.

Both groups were administered with the end-of-year Reading Comprehension Examination at the end of the final term. The scores from the pre-test were compared with the test scores from the post-test.

The results showed that pupils taught with the Schema Theory performed significantly better than those taught through the Basal Reading Approach.

Findings on the reading testify the assumption that the application of the Schema is beneficial to lower primary pupils' reading interest and understanding.

DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that apart from the quotations and references to other works which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own original research carried out under the supervision of Prof. K.K. Saah and Dr. J.A.N. Saanchi all of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana, Legon.

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DEDICATION

To my three beautiful daughters Barbie, Phoebe and Princess-Melissa

And

Yoofo

“No man stands as tall as when he stoops low

To help a child”

(ABRAHAM LINCOLN)



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He who began a good thing has brought it to completion in His own time. To Him be all the glory.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. 0 Background to the study

In today's world, reading is not a luxury. It is a necessity, an important tool and skill every child needs in order to progress in all subjects and to fit well in society. An efficient reading habit leads to understanding, retention, recall and general development. Reading is essential since it leads to the ability to decipher meaning and information from text to facilitate progress in all academic work. Reading also broadens a reader's horizon through the gathering of information. As Anyidoho (1999:2) rightly puts it, "the printed matter still remains the most convenient and it is cheaper, contains a wide range of information, deals with more problems and a reader can read and re-read at his or her convenience, and can reflect on the issue discussed and return to it at will."

It is therefore imperative that children develop confidence in reading and understanding what they read in order to enjoy the benefits of reading. "Developing confidence in reading is critical for both improving academic reading skills and becoming not only merely a competent reader but a good one and a good reader is the one who knows what to look for and is actively involved in the text, by thinking, questioning and evaluating." Milan (1995:1). That is why it is very crucial for learners to acquire effective reading ability as early as possible in their academic endeavor.

The idea of this research is to promote the teaching of English reading as early as possible in a reader's life so that he/she may be able to achieve the ultimate. As the Ghana Education Service (GES) puts it, "Success in education at all levels depends to

a very large extent on the individual's proficiency in reading." Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD of GES (2007:1).

To be in the right frame of mind for reading and to know which letter combination create words, the GES in 1987, came out with a policy on reforms which states in part that "by the time a child left the primary level to the Junior Secondary School, he/she must have an appreciable level of reading competence to enable him/her perform quite easily any reading task," (CRDD syllabus, 2001:1). This statement is in line with Milan's (1995:1) assertion that "a good reader is the one who has ... the ability to read carefully, thoughtfully and confidently." A good reader knows what to look for and is actively involved in the text by thinking, questioning and evaluating.

Teachers have the responsibility of making sure that their students/pupils read efficiently. Lack of efficiency in reading has contributed to the poor performance of students in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) in many basic schools including the University Basic Schools, Legon.

Another problem is that although most pupils in the primary level are able to read, they lack the appropriate degree of speed for their age and grade and are not able to make meaning of what they read. Reading, as has been suggested, "is not as natural as breathing, talking or even walking; it is a complex activity which involves a number of skills" Anyidoho (1999:9). It however has its roots in oral language proficiency and children must be able to express themselves in English before being taught to read for better comprehension. No one is born with the ability to read; rather it is acquired, taught and learnt.

This study therefore aims at investigating the performance of Basic Two pupils of University Basic Schools using the Schema Reading Approach (SRA).

1.1 Statement of the problem

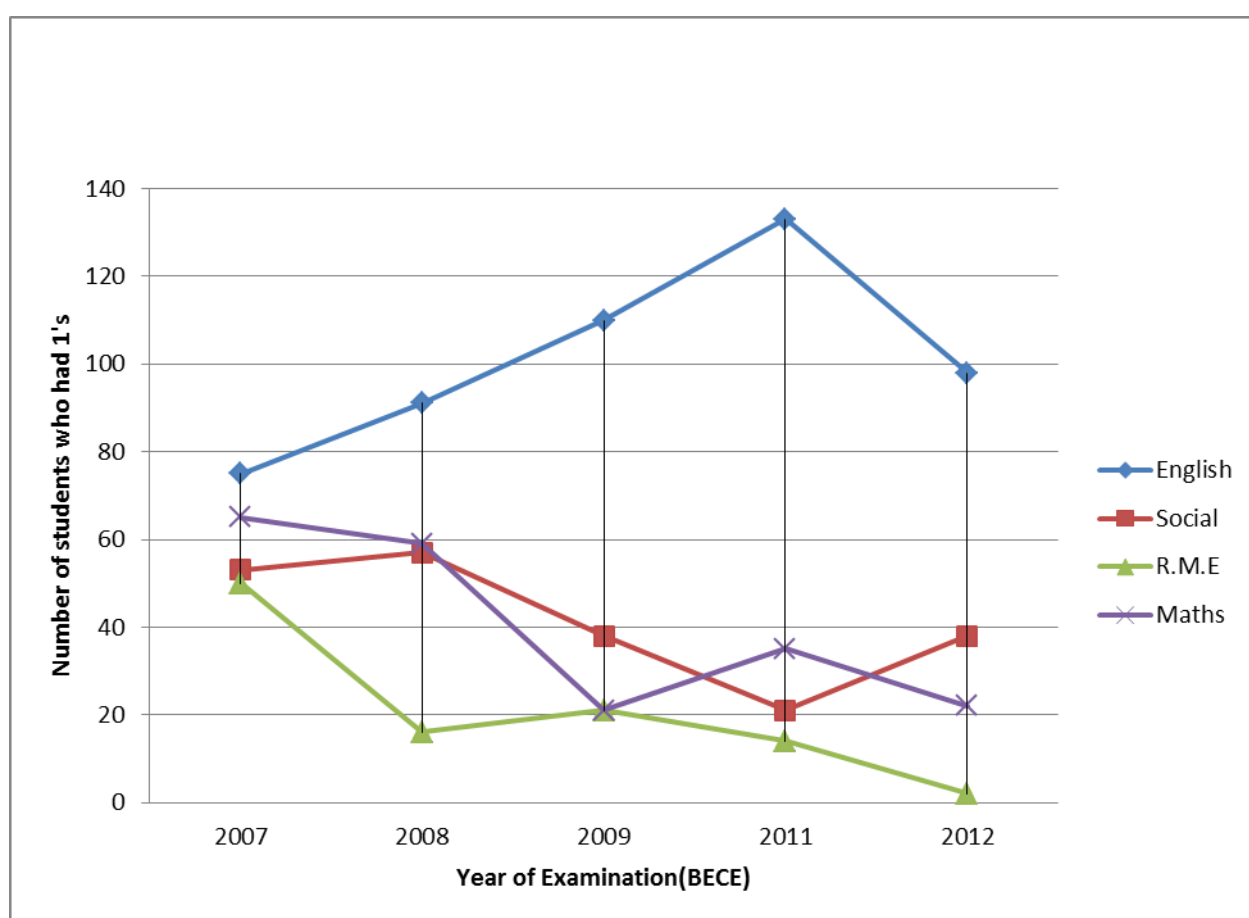
In recent years there have been debates and discussions about the falling standards of academic performance in general and English in particular in Ghana. Immediately the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) releases the B.E.C.E results, the media and other stakeholders come alive with analyses of the results and debate extensively on what might have gone right or wrong. This is due to the progressive decline in examination results.

Over the years, the performance of the University Basic Schools (UBS) in the B.E.C.E exams has been falling to the extent that the school is no longer regarded as one of the best in Ghana. In the past five years or more, the results have been particularly 'bad.' Regardless of this being a nation-wide phenomenon, the poor performance of UBS is a disturbing trend in the history of the school. The steep decline in the performance of the school over the past half decade or so leaves much to be desired.

Although this problem does not necessarily stem from an inability to read on the part of the pupils, it may be as a result of lack of comprehension of what is read. Reports indicate that apart from English Language, performance in Mathematics and other subjects that require more reading is on the decline despite occasional surprises where students do better. Table 1 shows the number of students who attained aggregate one in each subject between 2007 and 2012, excluding 2010.

Table 1: Sample of Candidates' Results from 2007-2012.

Subject	2007	2008	2009	2011	2012
English Language	75	91	110	133	98
Social Studies	53	57	38	21	38
R. M. E.	50	16	21	14	2
Mathematics	55	59	21	35	22

Figure 1: Trends of Sample Candidates' BECE Performance

The school usually registers between 150-200 students for the BECE examinations annually. For the years represented in Table1 and Figure 1 above, the

results show that in English Language as indicated earlier, the results are much better than the other subjects with an increase from 75 students obtaining aggregate 1 in 2007 to 98 in 2008, 110 in 2009 and 133 in 2011. In 2012 however, it nose-dived to 98 students obtaining aggregate 1.

In social studies, the number of students who obtained aggregate 1 in the 2007 B.E.C.E examination was 53. 2008 saw an increase of 4 students, bringing the number to 58 students gaining aggregate 1, but in 2009 the number decreased again to 38 students, with a further decline in 2011 bringing the number to 21 students. By last year, 2012, the number had increased slightly to 38 students.

The results of Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E) suffered progressive decline from 50 students obtaining aggregate 1 in 2007 to only 2 students in 2012.

In Mathematics, even though the 55 students who gained aggregate 1 in 2007 increased to 59 in 2008, it dropped woefully to 21 in 2009, increased again slightly to 35 students in 2011 and dropped again to 22 in 2012.

It is my conviction that when pupils are taught to read well with comprehension from an early stage, it will help them to develop the skills that will make it possible for them to perform well in examinations. It is because of this conviction that I want to explore new ways to help Basic Two pupils to develop the skills of reading with comprehension, something they will build upon as they climb the educational ladder.

1.2 Significance of the study

Language teaching is a special skill that can be very challenging especially when dealing with learners of a second language (L_2). Many teachers resort to methods that

they are comfortable with and which they think will impact positively on their students. The approaches available to language teachers afford them the opportunity to decide which will make teaching and learning interesting and fun. Each of these approaches is designed to tackle or solve a particular problem in reading and finding the appropriate approach is therefore every language teacher's desire.

Some of the different approaches to reading are the Basal Approach, the Direct Instruction, the Individual Reading Approach, the Whole Language Approach, the Communicative Language Teaching and the Language Experience Approach and so on.

The Basal Approach, for example, is the most widely used in Ghana and the world over because it places emphasis on phonics and word identification and recognition. This approach, however, like all other approaches has its limitations since it goes through a longer process therefore making it more difficult to use.

The Schema Theory has been chosen for this study to find out how effective it will be in teaching reading in Basic Two since it is shorter and requires the prior knowledge of the learner.

The Schema Reading Approach (SRA) offers an interactive approach to reading by combining the learner's prior knowledge and the teacher's method of teaching reading. This is in contrast with the idea that a child's brain is a "tabula rasa" (clean slate) which must be filled with information/knowledge.

1.3 Objective of the study

The objective of this study is to compare the Basal Reading Approach (which is commonly used in the University Basic School) to teaching reading comprehension in

Basic two to the Schema Reading Approach to test whether it could be an alternative method that will promote good reading habits among pupils.

1.4 Hypothesis

This study is based on the hypothesis that there may be significant improvement in the reading ability of pupils who are taught reading through the Schema Reading Approach over those who are taught using the Basal Approach.

1.5 Methodology

The study is experimental in nature and it involves comparing the performance of pupils taught reading with the Schema Approach and others taught with the Basal Approach. The methodology is fully described in chapter 3 and the results discussed in chapter 4.

1.6 The Reading Process

French (2004:9), quoting Van Den Broek and Kremer, (2000) says “learning to read is a difficult gradual process that involves all the senses including cognitive and linguistic abilities already in place. It also involves identification of letters and mapping them onto sounds, as well as the recognition of words and syntax. To be able to read, one must learn to communicate with the writer and the text”. To be an effective reader, the learner must be able to generate from the text, the writer’s intention or purpose in engaging in the discourse in the first place in order to have an interaction between the writer and the reader through the text.

As stated earlier, reading is a gradual process, a skill that is not learned all at once because there are numerous components that must come together to be learned and practiced. French 2004:9 cites Carroll (1976:31) outlining these components as follows:

1. “The child must know the language that he is going to learn to read.
2. The child must learn to dissect spoken words into component sounds.
3. The child must learn to recognize and discriminate the letters of the alphabet in their various forms (upper and lower case letters, printed and cursive).
4. The child must learn the left-to-right principle by which words are spelled and put in order in continuous text.
5. The child must learn that there are patterns of highly probable correspondence between letters and sounds, and he must learn those patterns of correspondence that will help him recognize words that he already knows in his spoken language, or that will help him determine the pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
6. The child must learn to recognize printed words from whatever cues he can use, their total configuration, the letters composing them, the sounds represented by those letters, and or the meanings suggested by the context.
7. The child must learn that printed words are signals for spoken words, and that they have meanings analogous to those of spoken words. While decoding a printed message into its spoken equivalent, the child must be able to comprehend the meaning of the total message in the

same way that he would comprehend the meaning of the corresponding spoken message.

8. The child must learn to reason and think about what he reads, within the limits of his talents and experience”.

This assertion by Carroll (1976) about the component of reading emphasizes the fact that learning to read is an aspect of total language development. The child first learns to respond to the speech of others. He next learns to speak himself, and then learns to read. Thus the process of learning to read is a case of associative learning. The association is between the sight of the word and the child's response to the sound of it. As the child matures in his reading ability, it is expected that he can flexibly and independently process written language for meaning. This may, according to French (2004:10), still quoting (Van Den Broek and Kramer, 2000), “involve being able to recall the text, answer questions about character motives, extract themes, to critique the structure, or a combination of these activities”.

1.7 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in the study is the Schema Reading Theory. The Schema Reading Theory is an interactive approach to reading that taps into the prior or background knowledge of the learner and uses it to achieve a better meaning of what is read.

According to Ajideh (2003:4), proponents of the SRA such as Bartlett (1932), and Rumelhart (1977), believe that there ought to be an instructional and interactive process by learners to process information. The SRA model dwells on the fact that

information processing is a dual affair between the learner and the text in which case what the reader comprehends must be in tune with his prior knowledge of the subject or text. These proponents of the theory and others have defined the Schema Theory in a number of influential ways.

Li, Wu and Wang (2007:18) argue that some of the proponents of the schema theory like Bartlett (1932) defined Schema as “an active organization of past reactions of past experiences, which must always be supposed to be operating in any well-adapted organic response”. (Rumelhart 1980:77-85) defines the Schema Theory simply as “a theory of how knowledge is mentally represented in the mind and used.” He believes that “all knowledge is packaged into units. These units are the schemata”. We are able to interpret what we read because of the context in which it is presented. Widdowson’s (1983) definition which came later claimed that “Schema is a cognitive construct which allow for the organization of information in a long-term memory.” It could be concluded therefore from the above definitions that schema is the prior knowledge (PK) gained through experiences stored in the mind, an abstract structure of knowledge.

1.8 The Schema Reading Theory

According to the Schema Reading Theory, reading comprehension is an interactive process between the text and the reader’s background knowledge (Collins & Havilland 1979:1). “Schema is the knowledge and experience stored in the brain throughout life that helps prepare a learner to understand new material and gives a model for coping with new tasks or experiences” (Dry 2013:1).

Collins & Havilland (1979) suggest that reading comprehension involves one's knowledge of the world which may be culturally based and culturally biased. The first language (L_1) of the child dictates how he/she comprehends reading. The child already has prior knowledge of things and events in his environment which create patterns that he brings to any new event. In this case his mind is not blank or empty (*tabula rasa*). Contrary to the views of some psychologists, the child's mind is active and full of experiences. Instead of viewing the mind as a clean slate, cognitive psychologists now see the child's mind as a "set of empty shelves or slots" which are filled, modified, or expanded by learning. The child's schema therefore may include values, culture, beliefs, expectations and systems of what he already possesses. These, according to Savage (1998), constitute the schemata by which the child organizes information.

The theory asserts that the ability to learn is based on the existence of a schemata framework which are patterns of background knowledge that a person brings to bear on these new ideas or events.

Schema (plural schemata) is a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory, Ajideh (2003). According to *Webster's Universal Dictionary & Thesaurus* (2007), it "is an outline of a plan or theory." It also refers to background or prior knowledge. Schemata are therefore created through experiences with people, objects and events in the world and are supposed to consist of two main components: Our assimilated direct experiences of life and its manifold activities and our assimilated verbal experiences and encounters (Swales, 1990:5).

Every learner, even children, have some knowledge about their home, environment or school, and these are modified or expanded by learning to make up the

schemata by which information is organized. The schemata are thus, patterns of mental structures representing the reader's knowledge of ordinary events as put forward by Nassaji (2002:14).

Hatten, Redish and Garcia (2001), cited in Anderson and Pearson (1984:255). agree that "all schema is rooted in additional schemata and contains what they describe as subschemata". They believe that when schema is activated it involves the relationship of how the different knowledge parts stored connects to make meaning of text. These parts are what they refer to as 'nodes', 'variables', or 'slots'.

Every child comes into the classroom with different reading abilities and some come under- prepared for its reading demands. The schema theory therefore explains how the child reads and by identifying this, how to become a better reader.

1.9 The Schema Theory and Reading

As a widely accepted theory for reading comprehension, the schema theory is based on the assumption that every reader's prior knowledge directly impacts on his new learning. French (2004:12) citing Kitao (1989) explains "that most linguists now see schema theory as a framework that organizes knowledge in memory by putting information into the correct slots". Kitao (ibid) states that "a schema includes information about what can or must fill each slot and the relationship among the slots".

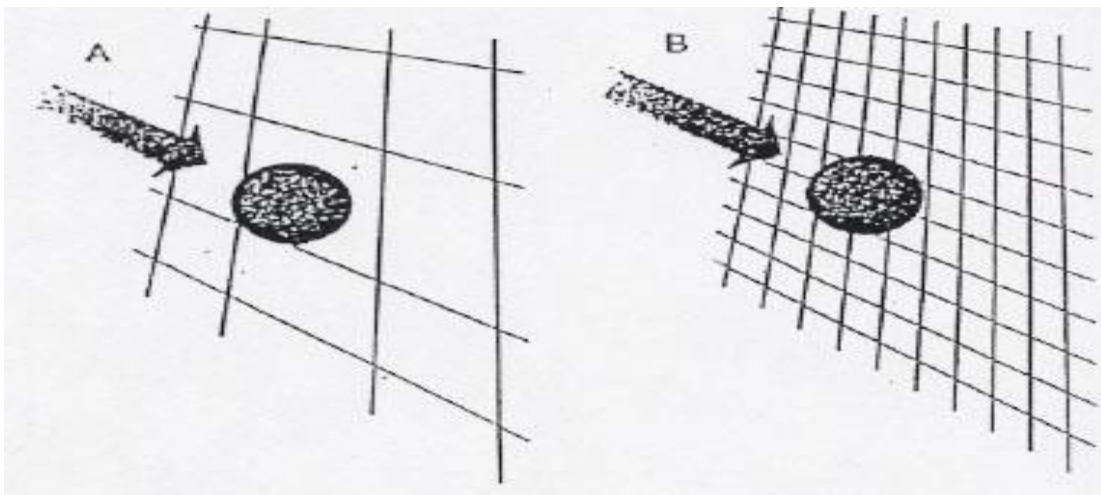
The schema theory emphasizes the importance of prior knowledge in reading. Dry (2013:1), believes that "most of us do not realize how much we have already stored in our memories, or how we draw upon it when we deal with new situations or challenges. As we learn more, we add to our knowledge or develop our schema".

The schema development net is a visual representation of the schema theory. In example A in fig. 1, the net has wider gaps (less developed). So the tennis ball (information) can get right through. This represents a student who has little background knowledge about a text, so many of the unknown concepts may slip by. However, in example B, the net is much closer together (more developed), so the ball (information) is less likely to get through, representing a student who has more experience with the concept in the text, so the information is more likely to be understood and retained. The more experience and background knowledge a student has with the topic at hand, the easier it will be for him or her to comprehend the material.

(Dry 2013:1)

Manzo and Manzo (1995:61) used the illustration in Figure 2 to explain Dry's Schema development net. Thus, making it clear that the more background knowledge a learner has, the more experience he/she will have in retaining and making use of text.

Figure 2: Illustration of schema theory



Source: Manzo, A.V. & Manzo, U. C. (1995:61)

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is organized in six chapters.

Chapter One: This is a general introduction of the study including background to the study, statement of the problem, the scope of the study, hypothesis, methodology, the reading process, the schema reading theory, the schema theory and reading, theoretical framework, organization of the thesis and definition of terms.

Chapter Two: Literature Review will be a discussion of the different methods and explanations on the definition of the concept of reading, review of the history of reading instructions and processes, empirical evidences related to studies on teachers' background and approaches on reading ability, the Basal Approach as against the Schema Approach and other approaches to teaching reading and pedagogic implications and applications of the Schema reading Approach in the ESL classroom and some problems associated with learning like dyslexia.

Chapter Three: Methodology. This chapter discusses the data collection, techniques and procedures related to the study.

Chapter Four: The data collected is analyzed in this chapter and the results presented accordingly.

Chapter Five: In this last but one chapter, all the findings of the study will be summarized and discussed.

Chapter six: The final chapter to this study is the conclusion and recommendations made for future research work or studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Children are expected to learn to read in the primary stages where most reading instruction is given. By upper primary, children are expected to read to enhance learning. This is because, over time, learning becomes more complex with heightened demands on students to use reading skills to analyze and or solve problems. Students must become effective readers to meet the demands of literacy and learning in the 21st century. It is imperative, therefore, that pupils in the lower primary are taught to read with comprehension, to enable them to handle reading exercises as they climb the academic ladder.

2.1 Definition of Reading

Reading is a basic life skill. It is a cornerstone for a child's success in school, and indeed throughout life. Without the ability to read well, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost. According to Anyidoho (1997:3), "the term "reading" may have different meanings for various people. For some, it is the act of running the eyes across and down the page, recognizing and understanding the words. For others, it is the act of turning a page into speech that is, turning the visual images into their spoken form." Anyidoho, however, believes that reading must go beyond word recognition and understanding. Linguists, especially Grabe & Stoller (2001), agree that reading is the most important academic language skill, pointing out the special focus that it receives in foreign language teaching.

Citing Grabe and Stoller (2001), French (2004:16) defines reading as “the ability to draw meaning from the printed page and interpret this information appropriately”. This brings to the fore the assertion that “reading is a decoding process involving the breaking down of visual and auditory codes by assigning sounds to printed words, and reading as a comprehension process, making meaning out of printed matter through interplay of the reader’s background knowledge and the printed text” (French, 2004:16).

This assertion makes it imperative the need for beginners or pupils in the foundational classes to get it right, right from the start. My perspective on teaching reading in Basic two is to make a plea for teachers in Ghana to begin teaching reading comprehension with methods or approaches that will benefit learners to enable them do well in their academic pursuits.

Among the many definitions that have arisen in recent decades, three prominent ideas emerge as the most critical for understanding what “learning to read” means. These are:

1. Reading is a process undertaken to reduce uncertainty about meanings a text conveys.
2. The process results from a negotiation of meaning between the text and its reader.
3. The knowledge, expectations and strategies a reader uses to uncover textual meaning all play decisive roles in ways the reader negotiates with the text’s meaning. (coerll.utexas.edu/methods).

In my opinion reading engages the mind to bring out the meaning embedded in the written text. This brings to the fore the hidden and expected results of the texts and recall to memory past experiences and interactions about a text. Skilled reading therefore becomes constructive, bringing about the meaning of the written material using knowledge about the environment and everyday life and from disciplined fields of study. Being able to read clears doubt, while dispelling uncertainty and bringing joy through negotiated meaning between the text and its reader. When young learners are able to read with meaning, there is a sense of accomplishment that show on their faces, giving them a feeling of self-worth and motivation to explore more.

Anderson (1977), cited in French (2004:18) believes in this assertion that reading is constructive, that is, learning to reason about written material using the same knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study such as being;

“Fluent: mastery of basic processes to the point where they are automatic so that attention is freed from the analysis of meaning.

Strategic: controlling one’s reading in relation to one’s purpose, the nature of the material and whether one comprehends.

Motivation: able to sustain attention and learning that written material can be interesting, informative, and a lifelong pursuit”.

This claim by Anderson, I believe is in line with the schema theory which states in part that a learner’s prior knowledge plays a vital role in reading. A learner therefore uses his or her past experiences in learning new things.

Ajideh (2003:2), citing Alderson and Urquhart (1986), states that:

It is possible to view reading both as a product and as a process. According to them focusing on only one aspect of the reading process is an underestimation of

what the whole act of reading is about. They believe that a reader benefits from what he/she gets from the text in the product oriented view while using the process view point in investigating how his/ her prior knowledge makes meaning of what is read.

Since the product view relates only to what the reader gets out of the text, and the process view investigates how the reader may arrive at a particular interpretation, prior knowledge enhances the comprehension ability of the learner to bring the views of the writer to light for better understanding.

As children love to create their experiences from memory, the Schema Theory provides them the opportunity not only to recall but to share with others what they remember for the purposes of decoding texts while obtaining insight and building their vocabulary.

Early and Sawyer (1994:35-36) claim that educators generally accept the following characteristics of reading:

- (a) “Reading is a receptive language activity that has to do with recovering the message which is intended by a writer.
- (b) Reading is a cognitive activity involving a constant interaction among all the mental processes and structures that operate in the brain.
- (c) Reading is more than a decoding task; it deals with phonemic, syntactic and semantic Processes.

Thus, reading goes beyond a simple mechanical skill of assigning sound to printed text or recognition of symbols to a mental and thoughtful process,

requiring the ability to call to mind particular meaning within the reader's experiences".

2.1.1 The Nature of Reading Comprehension

Wikipedia (the free encyclopedia), defines reading comprehension as "the level of understanding of a text or message". It explains that this understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text or message. Rayner, et al. (2001:31) explains that "proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, which interferes with their ability to comprehend what is read".

This statement is a crucial point in what I am trying to bring to attention in the University Basic School (UBS). Since students read and speak better English than their counterparts in the public schools, one might assume that taking too long to read and comprehend might be a setback to performing well in other subjects in the B.E.C.E.

Reading Comprehension is an intentional, active and interactive process that occurs before, during and after a person reads a particular piece of writing. It is one of the pillars of the act of reading. When a person reads a text, he/she engages in a complex array of cognitive processes. He/she is simultaneously using his awareness and understanding of phonemes (individual sound "pieces" in language), phonics (connection between letters and sound and the relationship between sounds, letters and words) and ability to comprehend or construct meaning from the text.

Brummit-Yale (2008:1)

Since the pupils that were selected for this study are in the beginning stage of learning, it is vital to incorporate these aspects of reading comprehension into their regular routing of learning. This I think will help them to involve all their

senses before, during and after they read any particular piece of writing. They will also retain what they have read as indicated by the schema net (Figure 1).

According to K12 reader, (page 1)

“There are two elements that make up the process of reading comprehension: vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. In order to understand a text, a reader must be able to comprehend the vocabulary used in the piece of writing. If the individual words do not make sense then the overall story will not either. Children can draw on their prior knowledge of vocabulary, but they need to continually be taught new words and the best instruction occurs at the point of need. It is therefore imperative to pre-teach new words that a child will encounter in a text or aid him/her in understanding unfamiliar words as he/she comes upon them in the writing”.

K12 (ibid) further states that, in addition to being able to understand each distinct word in a text, “the child also has to be able to put them together to develop an overall conception of what it is trying to say”. To them this is text comprehension and it is much more complex and varied than vocabulary knowledge.

But to say this is to point to wider implications for teachers in Ghana. UBS teachers in the past for instance relied on methods that made them comfortable or suited them in the teaching of Reading Comprehension, since there has not been any serious monitoring or enforcement of the use of any particular method or approach. This in my view cannot be simply corrected by including the Schema Reading Theory in the curriculum of the GES unless a drastic approach has been introduced, hence this study.

Readers use many different text comprehension strategies to develop reading comprehension. These include “monitoring for understanding, answering and generating questions, summarizing and being aware of and using a text’s structure to aid comprehension” Brummit-Yale (2008:1).

Aside from the fact that educators differ in their understanding of what reading is and even in their approach to looking for that understanding, the search for the “best” approach to teaching reading according to Birch (2002:23), is hindered by the fact that reading really means many things.

I see reading comprehension as being able to decipher meaning and getting what the writer intended in the text for the reader and using it to influence the ability to understand. Since meaning is embedded in a text (as pointed out before), the reader can only extract it if he/she understands it through letters and the words they form. Reading with comprehension creates room for the reader to be in the mind of the writer to experience the feeling of being part of what he/she is impacting on others.

Reading can be done using a number of processes that can be divided into two main categories: bottom-up processing and top- down processing. Alderson and Urquhart (1986) affirm that “reading can be viewed as a product and as a process. They assert that focusing on only one aspect of the reading process is to under-estimate the whole act of reading. They believe that a reader benefits from what he/she gets from the text in the product view while using the process view point in investigating how his/her prior knowledge makes meaning of what is read.” Ajideh (2003:2).

2.2 Schema: a Brief History

In Ajideh’s (2003:3) brief history of schema, he clarifies the nature and functions of schemata. “Plato elaborated the Greek doctrines of ideal types- such as the perfect circle that exists in the mind but which no one has ever seen. Kant further developed the notion and introduced the word schema. For example, he describes the

“dog” schema as a mental pattern which “can delineate figure of a four-footed animal in a general manner, without limitation to any single determinate figure as experience, or any possible image that can be represented in concerto” (Kant, 1781). Thus, the important feature of the schema-concept can already be found in the writings of the philosopher Immanuel Kant in the 18th century where he speaks of ‘innate structures, which organize the world’.

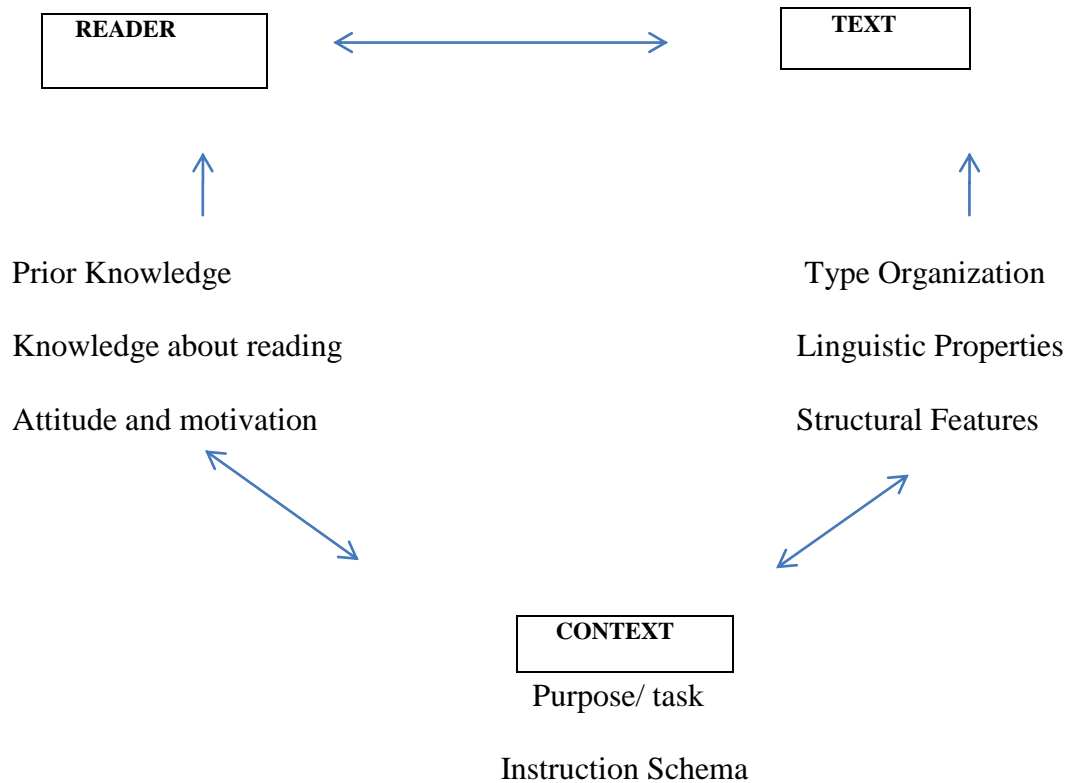
According to Brewer (1999) Bartlett developed the schema construct in the 1920s, yet the idea had its main impact on cognitive psychology and cognitive science in the 1970s and 1980s. In developing the schema-construct, Bartlett was essentially proposing a completely new form of mental representation. In 1932 he published his famous book, *Remembering*, which contained a more detailed account of his empirical findings. The schema-concept is frequently attributed to Bartlett (1932) who posited that people’s understanding and remembrance of events is shaped by their expectations or prior knowledge, and that these expectations are presented mentally in some sort of schematic fashion.

Khemalani and Lynne (2000) assert that since the late 1960s, a number of theorists (Goodman, 1970; Smith, 1978) have developed interactive theories of reading which place great importance on the role of the reader and the knowledge he/she brings to bear on the text in the reading process. These interactive theories which now dominate reading research and strongly influence teaching practice draw heavily on schema theory, (Ajideh, 2003:3-4).

2.2.1 Reading as an Interactive Process

According to Lipson and Wixson (1991:1) factors that influence reading include the reader, the text and the context.

Figure 3: Factors that Influence Reading



Source: Lipson & Wixson (1991)

Comprehension is the result of the interaction between the reader and the text. As can be seen from Figure 3, factors that influence reading include the reader, text and the context. This is a cycle that is interdependent on each other. The reader reads a text to gain understanding using type organization, linguistic properties and structural features to bring into context the purpose for reading. His/her schema then takes over

bringing on board his/her prior knowledge about the text and about reading in general, and attitude and motivation to gain understanding about what is read. In this case pupils who could not read are able to recall some characters, problems, some events and some solutions. This explains;

1. Reader knowledge: as the type of prior knowledge stored in reader's memory.
2. Script knowledge: as the knowledge and beliefs about the word derived from repeated experiences with people, places, events and situations in day- to- day living.
3. Knowledge about language: which include graphophonic information, syntactic information, semantic information and pragmatics and
4. Knowledge of text structure: i.e. text cohesion and different types of texts.

I believe therefore that the most effective instructional strategy begins with connecting attitudes, past experiences and knowledge with new information. Children like those in this study, may gain more experience from interactive reading where they are able to share experiences from their environment, home or even school. It is for this reason that this study targets young learners rather than adults.

To Goodman (1988:12), "reading is a receptive language process. It is a psycholinguistic guessing game. There is an essential interaction between language and thought in reading. The writer encodes thought as language and the reader decodes language as thought".

What the writer has been able to put down as text must therefore be interpreted as thought by the reader in order to make meaning of it. Every child must see this clearly before he/she can make progress in his/her reading comprehension class. In this

regard, reading intervention lessons are essential where there is lack of understanding between the reader and the text.

2.2.2 Reading Interventions

Based on the “Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading”, Carrell, Devine and Eskey (ed.) (1988), mention three interventions to assist reading deficiencies in learners. These are:

- A. The Top - Down Approach
- B. The Bottom - Up Approach
- C. The Interactive Approach

The ability to read the written language at a reasonable rate with good comprehension has long been recognized to be as important as oral skills, if not more important (Eskey, 1988).

Goodman’s (1988) psycholinguistic model of reading (or top- down or concept driven model) showed that the reader is active, makes predictions, process information and construct a message encoded by a writer. This was viewed as a substitute for the bottom-up perspective, but the schema theory makes clear, efficient and effective reading (in L1 and L2) and requires both top-down and bottom-up strategies operating interactively, thus, interactive model (Rumelhart, (1977). Both the top- down and bottom-up processes, functioning interactively, are necessary to an adequate understanding of L2 reading and reading comprehension (Carrell, 1988:1-4).

A. Top-down (Concept Driven) Approach

The “top-down” approach includes searching for meaning, selectively reacting to print, confirming or rejecting predictions made and emphasizes readers bringing meaning to text based on their experiential background and interpreting text based on their prior knowledge (whole language). Top refers to higher order mental concept such as the knowledge and expectation of the reader.

Bottom-up refers to the physical text on the page. The top-down model of reading therefore focuses on what the readers bring to the process. The readers sample the text for information and contrast it with their world knowledge, helping to make sense of what is written. The focus here is on the readers as they interact with the text.

B. The Bottom-Up (Serial) Approach

The bottom-up approach operates on the principle that the written text is hierarchically organized (that is on the graphophonic, phonemic, syllabic, morphemic word and sentence levels) and that the reader first processes the smallest linguistic input (for example, gradually compiling the smallest units to decipher and comprehend higher units such as sentence syntax. The emphasis in this approach is on text processing. It stipulates that the meaning of any text must be “decoded” by the reader and that students are reading when they can “sound out” words on a page (phonics). It emphasizes the ability to de-code or put into sound what is seen in a text. It ignores helping emerging readers to recognize what they, as readers, bring to the information on the page.

This model starts with the printed stimuli and works its way up to the higher level stages. The sequence of processing proceeds from the in-coming data to higher level encodings.

C. The Interactive Approach

The Interactive Approach essentially emphasizes parallel processing of the print. It is an amalgamation of the two processes (top-down and bottom-up). Interactive model (Rumelhart, 1977, Stanovich, 1980), stresses both what is on the written page and what a reader brings to it using both top-down and bottom-up skills. It views reading as the interaction between reader and text. This emphasizes the Schema theory that is the basis of this study. The interactive approach incorporates the written text and the reader's prior knowledge about the text, thus according to Carrell, (1988:239), the overreliance on either mode of processing to the neglect of the other mode has been found to cause reading difficulties for the learner.

The interactive model of reading assumes that skills at all levels are interactively available to process and interpret the text (Grabe, 1988). In this model, good readers are good decoders and good interpreters of text, their decoding skills becoming more automatic but no less important as their reading skills develop (Eskey, 1988).

According to Rumelhart (1977), "linear models which pass information only in one direction and which do not permit the information obtained in a higher stage to influence the processing of a lower stage contain a serious deficiency. Hence the need for an interactive model which permits the information contained in a higher stage of processing to influence the analysis that occur at a lower level. He says when an error

in a word recognition is made, the word substitution will maintain the same part of speech which will make it difficult for the reader to understand (this is orthographic knowledge)".

Semantic knowledge influences word perception. Perception of syntax for a given word depends upon the context in which the word is embedded (syntactic knowledge). Our perception of what we read depends upon the context in which a text segment is embedded (lexical knowledge).

All the aforementioned knowledge sources provide input simultaneously. These sources need to communicate and interact with each other, and the higher order stages should be able to influence the processing of lower – order stage.

Stanovich's (1980) model states that "any stage may communicate with any other and any reader may rely on better developed knowledge sources when other sources are temporarily weak because top-down processing may be easier for the poor reader who may be slow at word recognition but has knowledge of the text topic".

The bottom-up processing may be easier for the reader who is skilled at word recognition but does not know much about the text topic. To properly achieve fluency and accuracy, developing readers must work at perfecting both their bottom-up recognition skills and their top-down interpretation strategies. Good reading (that is fluent and accurate reading) can result only from constant interaction between these processes. Fluent reading therefore entails both skillful decoding and relating information to prior knowledge (Eskey, 1988).

Reading is a bi-directional process that concerns both the reader and the text. The level of reader comprehension of the text is determined by how well the reader

variables (interest level in the text, purpose for reading the text, knowledge of the topic, foreign language abilities, awareness of the reading process and the level of willingness to take risks), interact with the text variables (text types, structure, syntax and vocabulary) (Hosenfeld, 1979).

In the UBS some teachers use methods that favour the top-down approach, while others prefer the bottom-up approach. This study therefore adapted to merger of these two approaches in order to have a greater impact on the reading comprehension abilities of the pupils involved in the study.

2.2.3 Pre-Reading Plan (PReP)

According to Abisamra, (2007:1) there are strategies for reading. These must be planned to achieve the ultimate.

Purpose: to diagnose learner's prior knowledge and provide necessary background knowledge so they will be prepared to understand what they will be reading.

Rationale: A diagnostic and instructional procedure used when learners read informational books and content area textbook.

Procedure:

1. Introduce key concepts to learners using word, phrase or pictures to initiate a discussion.
2. Have learners brainstorm words about the topic and record their ideas on a chart. Help make connections about brainstormed ideas.
3. Present additional vocabulary and clarify misconceptions.

4. Have learners draw pictures and /or write a quickwrite about topic using words from brainstorm list.
5. Have learners share quickwrites and ask questions to help clarify and elaborate quickwrites.

This programme is in line with the Schema Reading plan for this study. This could be done a day before the actual lesson (drawing period for instance) because the time allotted for reading comprehension is not enough for all these activities. The advantage of this will be to help pupils learn about a subject before starting a lesson. However, lessons may be disrupted as classroom management may become a problem with all the excitement of everyone trying to make their ideas known. Children learn through play and this time affords them the opportunity to feel relaxed to share in the activities planned for the day while bringing on board their own expressions of the topic under review.

2.2.4 Effectiveness of Schema Reading Theory

It is asserted that no particular approach to reading is a key to unlocking the entire problems teachers encounter in the reading class. Lapp and Flood, (1976) claim that “all approaches to teaching reading can work or fail to work, depending on the particular mix of individuals and the environment”. Estill, (1983) has also indicated that research has led to the conclusion that, “no one method or model is the best for beginning reading, but that an eclectic approach – a combination of the best elements of several programmes or model appears desirable”. With this in mind, PReP comes in handy as this enables the teacher to explore other methods of teaching, for example,

Language Experience Approach (LEA) which uses the child's own experiences, vocabulary and language pattern to create text for reading instruction and make reading a meaningful process.

Empirical evidence of L1 rhetorical organization of a text interacts with the reader's formal schema to affect reading comprehension. This effect has been proved to be operative for both narrative and expository texts. Specialists emphasize that L2 reading teachers should instruct students to recognize and use the information provided by the form of a text. The reason that underlies this claim is that once learners recognize the pattern that is being used, they can apply their reading strategies to follow the text and predict what is likely to follow.

A number of researchers have conducted studies into the use of the Schema Theory to substantiate their argument that it is effective in teaching reading comprehension in EFL/ESL situations. These include: Kitao (1989), Ajideh, (2003), Xiaoguang & Lei (2012), Khodadady (2012), Li & Lai (2012) and French, (2004).

2.2.5 Kitao (1989)

Kitao, (1989) conducted a research on the contributions of schema to the reading comprehension of East Asian readers of English as a second language. The result of the study indicated that second language readers, particularly those with intermediate reading proficiency, made use of prior knowledge in reading. It shows that students make use of their prior knowledge to make up for inabilities in their reading proficiency. The results also indicate that reading ability improves on content

vocabulary, which they use together with their schemata to achieve comprehension (French, 2004).

2.2.6 Ajideh (2003)

Ajideh, (2003:1) worked with a group of intermediate-level students for one academic term, with special focus on schema – based pre-reading activities. At the end of the term, student’s feedback on their impressions and thoughts of the strategies covered during the term were positive. According to some of the students, they were not afraid of unfamiliar texts as they were previously, because thinking about the key words and making relationships among them helped them get the main idea.

2.2.7 Xiaoguang and Lei (2012)

Xiaoguang and Lei have recently conducted a study of the Schema Theory and College English Reading Testing in Jinan, China on college students and report that the research shows the application of the theory is fulfilled throughout the whole reading process by designing various activities before and after the reading. Thus achieving positive results as the outcome. They used the experimental method in which there was a pre-reading activity compared with a post-reading activity. They also employed the use of questionnaires. They report that there was a pilot study conducted before the real survey in order to secure the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. This was conducted among 10 students and 2 teachers. A descriptive analysis of the data was conducted after data were collected. The feedback of students’ questionnaires showed that majority (79%) of the students found the reading class without using schema theory

was quite boring and 85% of them said that in class they were passive receivers of what the teacher said and they seldom thought for themselves. Xiaoguang and Lei (ibid) again reported that the response from the teachers was also positive and all found their classes more active than before.

2.2.8 Ebrahim Khodadady (2012)

The effect of Scheme Theory was tested in this case in comparison with the Translation-Based Instruction on Persian Medical students' learning of General English. Khodadady claims that the study explored the effect of employing two language teaching approaches, Schema-Based Instruction (SBI) and the Translation-Based Instruction (TBI) on the structure and vocabulary knowledge as well as reading comprehension abilities of 60 undergraduate students studying general English in a medical school in Mashhad, Iran. While the SBI approaches the words/phrases comprising texts as schemata having syntactic, semantic and discursal relationships with each other, the latter considered offering their translation equivalents as the only necessary and sufficient condition to understand texts. After being divided into two groups, the learners in the experimental and control groups were taught via SBI and the TBI, respectively. The administration of a 120-item schema-based cloze multiple choice item test (SBCMCIT) developed on the syllabus and administered as a pre-test at the beginning of the term showed that the two groups were homogenous. The administration of an unseen final examination (UFE) consisting of structure, vocabulary and reading comprehension subscales at the end of the term showed that the learners taught via the SBI performed significantly better than those taught via the TBI not only

on the UFE and its subscales but also on the SBCMCIT administered as a post-test. The findings were discussed within the specified language components and abilities.

2.2.9 Chen-Hong & Shu-Fen (2012)

Chen-Hong & Shu-Fen (2012) used the Schema Theory on some Chinese students' reading comprehension performance and reading time that examined the effects of cultural familiarity. In the first phase of the study, participants were required to read a culturally familiar text, write down the time they spent reading the passage, and immediately complete a cloze test without referring back to the culturally-embedded text. In the second phase, they went through the same procedure for a culturally-unfamiliar text. Upon completion of the reading task, a topic familiarity questionnaire was distributed to complete in order to screen out those who were culturally familiar with both reading texts a survey about their attitude toward the role that background knowledge played in their reading process was administered to them following the topic familiarity questionnaire. The results showed that the students' reading comprehension performance and reading time were both significantly affected by their familiarity with the target culture. They spent less time on and comprehended better the culturally-embedded text they were familiar with. Analysis of the survey also substantiated the claim that they relied on the facilitative role of background knowledge in reading so as to read in a faster and more efficient way. The findings suggested that a readers' cultural schemata impacts memory, reading comprehension, interpretation and reading time.

Although these studies were conducted on learners much older (intermediate and under graduate students), than the lower primary (Basic Two) pupils in this particular study, the idea behind it is to see whether pupils in the foundational classes could do better with the SRA as they climb the academic ladder. Some of the learners were students from EFL countries learning English as a foreign language. My research targeted the Basic Two pupils because being a foundational class, and since pupils use English as a means of instruction in school, I hope will give them a head start in their academic pursuit and provide a better understanding of their academic work as they learn to employ their prior knowledge to improve upon their reading and of their content vocabulary.

These researchers also focused on fewer respondents as their target groups in foreign language studies (EFL). Kitao (1989) and Ajideh (2003), for instance, focused on fewer populations, since they both used intermediate students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), while Xiaoguang & Lei (2012), Chen-Hong & Shu-Fen (2012) and Khodadady (2012) all worked with more matured students.

2.3. Studies on SRA in Ghana

2.3.1 French (2004)

Not much research has been found on the use of the Schema Reading Theory in teaching reading comprehension in Ghana. However, one research that was found at the Department of Linguistics in the University of Ghana focused on this approach.

In 2004, French worked with primary six pupils of some selected basic schools in the Greater Accra Metropolis in Ghana (Teshie South Cluster of Schools) and reported

positive results from the research. She used the experimental method to conduct her research in which there was a pre-test and a post-test to determine the outcome. She undertook a six-week survey of the basic schools she worked with. Since she used an experimental and a control group for the study, the Schema Reading Theory was used as an intervention exercise for the experimental group. At the end of the intervention period she compared the results of both the experimental and the control groups and writes that “the results revealed that the Schema Reading Approach had a positive effect on the reading performance of the pupils who were instructed through it”. French conducted her research on pupils in Public Basic School in an area of the metropolis that could be classified as a peri-urban community. Though this area is a suburb of Accra, it is a fishing community and in 2004 the government of Ghana had not initiated the free education for public schools yet, therefore the conditions in the school and attendance was compromised during any bumper harvest of the fishing season. Compared to the situation at the UBS, though also a Public Basic school situated on the campus of the Premier University of Ghana and initially opened to senior members only, the disparity could not have been greater. This was the major reason why this study was chosen and for basic two, to see if the pupils would respond better since it worked well for the pupils of Teshie. Incidentally, this was the school of my first posting and therefore has a fair idea about facilities and the caliber of pupils there. French (ibid) used upper primary pupils with average age of 12 years. Their progress report gave me the encouragement to use much younger pupils for this study (considering the setting, environment and background of pupils as well as their parents

of these two scenarios) so that they would benefit more should the study produce positive outcome.

Overall the progress reports of these studies from both ESL and EFL countries gave me the encouragement and the zeal to research on much younger pupils (lower primary) so that they would learn to make use of their stored prior knowledge of activities much earlier in life and to benefit more from it in the long academic years ahead of them.

Pupils in the basic classes that I worked with had a lot of practice in oral work where they expressed their prior knowledge in stories and rhymes they told about what they read and through songs and pictorial activities (drawing) and in written work. At this stage, while pupils write, they can also express themselves better through pictures, rhymes and songs if they can connect with the text.

Unlike the Basal Reading Theory, teachers who use the Schema Reading Theory do not have difficulty in finding words or the appropriate materials for instructing children. The children themselves can bring on board their rich store of prior knowledge to make each reading lessons as interesting as possible.

2.3.2 The Basal Approach and the Schema Approach

Although the Basal Approach is the most widely used approach in teaching reading the world over, is a phonic-centered approach to reading and sees reading as a precise process which involves exact, detailed, sequential perception and identification of letters, words, spelling pattern and larger language units, it has come under attack especially in the United States Of America since according to Magnum II and Forgan

(1989) “learners knew what words letters referred to and how to use them, but their idea about the words were rather amusing. According to them, one little boy said an airplane is called an airplane, because ‘it is a plain thing that goes in the air’. Also several respondents thought that Friday is called Friday, because ‘it is the day that one eats fried fish’”. Some of the criticism is that the language or vocabulary does not meet the level of the spoken language of the child, and that this is a source of frustration to most beginning readers. Another criticism they put forward is the difficulty reading teachers’ encounter in finding appropriate materials for instructing children. They noted that with the Basal Reading Programme, the materials that are selected are sometimes inappropriate, because of the vocabulary, sentence structure and the content. The result is that readers get frustrated and lose interest in reading.

French (2004) refers to reading experts who feel that effective reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all the elements in a word, but from the skill in selecting the cues that assist the reader to understand the word. She points to linguists such as Goodman (1988), as claiming that “readers have a prior sense of what could be meaningful in a text, based upon their previous knowledge (schema)”. Readers are not, in his view, confined only to one source of information – the letters before their eyes, but have at their disposal two other important kinds of information which are available at the same time: semantic cues (meaning) and syntactic cues (grammatical sense).

To me this is what makes the difference between the Basal and the Schema Reading Approaches. In this case, children possess a wide range of knowledge that are waiting to be explored and are happy and eager to share with others.

Clark and Silberstein (1977:136-137) stress the importance of the Schema Reading Process in ESL/EFL reading and argues among other things that:

...readers understand what they read because they are able to take the stimulus beyond its graphic representation and assign its membership to an appropriate group of concept already stored in their memory.... The reader brings to the task a formidable amount of information and ideas, attitudes and beliefs. Skills in reading depend on the efficient interaction between linguistic knowledge and knowledge of the world.

The Schema Theory which deals with the reading process, where readers are expected to combine their previous experiences with the text they are reading, is now widely accepted as an important component of reading comprehension since it is culture specific because of each person's unique background or prior knowledge and thus impacts directly on this new knowledge.

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2002:142-143), explain how the Schema theory was developed by the gestalt psychologist Bartlett "who observed how when people are asked to retell an event from memory, filled it with details which did not occur in the original, but conformed to their cultural norms".

The perspective of this is that any text either spoken or written does not itself carry any meaning. It only provides direction as to how they should retrieve or construct meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge. Thus a reader's comprehension depends on his ability to relate to the information that he gets from the text with his pre-existing background knowledge.

I think, therefore, that if a child is having problems with comprehension, they are not merely caused by a deficiency of requisite knowledge and the solution is not just to build in that knowledge but to create an available and appropriate background knowledge necessary for comprehension since many reading problems may be

traceable to mismatches between background knowledge presumed in a given text and that actually possessed by the reader. It is assumed that even when an appropriate schema is brought to bear while reading; it is not automatically the case that it will be used appropriately. This is where the teacher needs to pay more attention to the child in order to find other processes that go beyond schema availability such as the “Top-down” (knowledge-based or process oriented), and the “bottom-up” (text-based product oriented) approaches, making use of Alderson and Urquhart (1984), assertion that “it is possible to view reading both as product and as process.”

2.3.3 Conclusion

The focus on this chapter has been to find enough literature in relation to this study. Though there are many definitions to reading, the fact still remains that reading is not just assigning sounds to letters but I think making meaning of text and using what is produced profitably. Children learn quickly and are therefore able to adapt to new ideas and method especially in learning.

This chapter has also sought to throw more light on what the SRA is and the choice of using this approach in the study.

Although many studies have been conducted in the use of the SRA in both EFL/ESL countries, only one so far has been found in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Ghana. This study and hopefully many more that will follow will throw more light on the approach in order to help those struggling to read well or make meaning of text.

In the ensuing chapters, the methods used in gathering information and the various interventions used will be discussed to establish the effectiveness or otherwise of the approach chosen. In her research work on the same approach in 2004, French conducted her studies on primary six pupils of Teshie South Cluster of schools and gave a thumbs up for its effectiveness. It is therefore my fervent hope that if they could benefit from it then so could these little ones.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, my aim is to describe the research design, sampling techniques used and population sample procedure of data collection.

The University Basic Schools (UBS), Legon, (University Primary School Legon UPSL) is located on the compound of the University of Ghana, Legon. It was established in the early 1960s to cater for the educational needs of the senior members of the University community. Since its inception, it has produced some of the best professionals in academia and elsewhere as it was also the best school in the vicinity around the University then. This situation however, cannot be said to be the same at the moment. It is for this reason that I chose to do the study on reading in the school. Another reason for this choice is the fact that I have for close to two decades been a teacher in the school and have observed the downward trend in the school especially in the last few years. This study as stated earlier therefore is to see if the decline is due in part to the pupils' inability to comprehend what they read and if another approach to teaching Reading Comprehension would be a better option.

Prior to the study which took one academic year of three terms, about 6 weeks of the first term were devoted to the observation of classroom activities of both teachers and pupils to find out the approach or approaches teachers use in teaching reading comprehension. An introductory study was also conducted to find the general reading habits and level of reading of the pupils in the area under study. Simple exercises were conducted to grade the pupils before the main study. The main study was conducted

after these investigations to ascertain whether teaching reading using the Schema Reading Approach will impact positively on their ability to comprehend and improve on the reading ability of pupils in basic two in the (UBS).

3.1 Introductory Study

The 6 weeks' introductory and observation activities gave me a bird's eye view of the prevailing situations in the various classes included in this study and also to establish what approach or approaches some teachers in the school use to teach reading comprehension. I wanted to know whether they use the Basal Reading Approach or any other method. This introductory study was also done in order to select two out of the four classes in basic two that would have had averagely the same level of performance for the main study. It comprised of a preliminary study of the reading abilities of the pupils in the form of a test in all the four classes using one of the simplest Units (chapters) in their English Course for Ghanaian Schools Book 3, Unit 6, titled Mr. Boama's Shop. (See appendix 1)

This preliminary study showed that about eighty percent of the about 164 pupils in basic two who were used for the study could read well and were able to pronounce most of the words in the passage correctly especially the sight words. However, some were unable to give meaning to or explain some difficult words they encountered in the course of their reading activities.

As a result of the introductory (preliminary) study, Basic 2P and 2S were selected as the experimental groups for the main study while Basic 2U and 2L were used as the control groups (UPSL is University Primary School Legon an acronym of the original

name of the school in this study which is used to identify the various classes). This was based on the class sizes and the scores obtained in the introductory tests. (See Table 2)

Table 2: Preliminary test scores (raw data)

Name of class	No. of Pupils	Scores						Total number
		0	1	2	3	4	5	
2u	40	2	4	0	10	14	10	40
2p	42	3	7	11	7	10	4	42
2s	42	8	7	10	6	11	0	42
2l	41	3	1	0	10	12	15	41
Total	165							165

Table 2 above shows the results of the preliminary scores conducted to select those classes which will be in the experimental and those which will be in the control groups. There are 4 classes in basic two (UPSL) with 40, 42, 42, and 41 pupils respectively in each class. Out of a maximum score of 5 marks ranging from 0-5, 2 pupils from 2U, 3 from 2P, 8 from 2S and 3 from 2L scored 0 marks while 4, 7, 7, 3 pupils scored 1 mark respectively, 0, 11, 10, and 10 pupils scored 2 marks respectively, 10, 7, 6, 10 obtained 3 marks respectively with 14, 10, 11, and 12 pupils respectively scoring 4 marks and 10, 4, 0, and 15 pupils respectively obtaining the maximum marks. From the score sheet, it is clear that classes 2U and 2L obtained higher marks than classes 2P and 2S. These results made it easier to put the classes into groups. Those classes that performed rather poorly (2P&2S) were used in the experimental group while those who did better (2U&2L) were used as the control group.

Due to the lateral movement of the teachers in University Basic School where teachers are randomly and frequently moved from and to different classes and departments, it was very necessary to sample the opinion, qualification, experience and methods of teaching English (especially reading comprehension) by teachers of English language in the school in order to incorporate them into the research. It was noted that most teachers had similar academic and professional qualifications and had taught for quite a number of years. It was also noted that teachers used different approaches and methodologies as explained earlier, (Basal Approach, Phonic Method, Look and Say, Reading Aloud) in teaching reading comprehension in order to arrive at their desired conclusions. In fact most teachers taught English Language simply because they are trained teachers and had no idea of any other approach(es) to teaching reading comprehension other than what they had been taught.

3.2 Population

The target groups of the study is the pupils of the four classes of basic two in the school, all the 18 teachers who teach English one way or the other, and parents/guardians of the pupils. Basic two classes were chosen because as a foundational class, most of the pupils can read fairly well. All the English teachers were also included in this research since as a school policy; they can be re-assigned to any class at any time. The choice of inclusion of the parents/guardians was to figure out the roles they play and the effects their ability or inability to assist their wards can have on their academic performance.

Working in the school was another reason for its selection in the study. Also the fact that the school is open mostly to staff of the University of Ghana and a few non-University employees also make it a good choice since punctuality and regular attendance are prerequisites for successful assessment of the reading performance of the pupils. In any correlation study, it is a necessity and a requirement to have the same learners participating in both the pre-intervention and the post-intervention tests of the study in order that their performances before and after the intervention lessons could be compared.

As explained in table 2, two classes out of the four used were chosen after the preliminary study as the control group and two as the experimental group to aid the comparison of the Basal Reading Approach and the Schema Reading Approach. The idea is that from the initial observation and introductory studies two classes could be used in each case to be fair on all sides and to use the stipulated time to complete the research on the whole since it is very expensive and time consuming to conduct any study. These choices were made because the enrolment and scores of the respective classes from the introductory tests made it possible to pair them in the same groups.

Basic Two was chosen for the study because as indicated earlier, they are in the foundational stage of their education and have their whole academic carriers ahead of them. It was deemed prudent therefore that if the Schema Reading Theory proves positive in teaching Reading Comprehension, it should then be better to start from the basic level of education.

3.3 Pre-study Activities

3.3.1 Data Collection Method and Techniques

Different techniques of data collection were employed in this study. There were questionnaires, interviews, lesson observations pre-intervention lessons and test and a post-intervention lessons and end-of-year examination (post-test). Questionnaires were distributed to all participants of the study including teachers, pupils and their parents/guardians. There were 18 questionnaires for teachers and 164 for the pupils as well as their parents/guardians (questionnaires for parents and pupils were provided on the same sheet to cut down cost). The questionnaires enquired about teacher's academic background, mode of teaching and experience in teaching among others. Those for the parents/guardians sought their bio-data and languages spoken with their wards/children, while questionnaires for the pupils elicited information about their actual age, class, where they lived and language of communication with parents and among other siblings if any.

3.3.2 Classroom Observation

As stated earlier I undertook a term's (about 6 weeks) observation of how lessons in the various classes that were going to be part of the study and most of the rest of the Primary section of the UBS are conducted. During this period, I observed teachers and how they interact with the pupils as lessons progressed and noticed that none of the teachers involved in the research had ever used the Schema Reading Approach. However some used the "Look and Say" or the Basal Approach or as others stated, the "Phonic" or the "reading aloud" Approach. These classes were visited at random at

least once a week each for about 20-30 minutes a session. These sessions enabled me to be part of the Reading Comprehension lessons as class teachers and their pupils interacted. I also reviewed teacher's lesson notes to make sure that they did not deviate from their original note plan. (See appendix 2).

A noteworthy observation about the UBS is that, all classes use the English Course Reading Book of the class that is ahead of it (*An English Course for Ghanaian Schools*). So that class two for instance uses class three Course book. This is because initially the school was rated higher academically than their mates at the GES. Although the same cannot be said of the school at the moment, a look at the English Course Book indicates that the Course Book 3 had very little reading material and most pupils are relatively familiar with the contents and words in each passage in Book 3 which makes for easy reading. I also observed that since the scope of vocabulary of the individual pupils in each class was quite below average, their reading rates were quite slow as well. That is probably why Sackeyfio (1996:222) declares that "where a text is full of words that the reader has not yet encountered, it slows them down and the objectives of the reading comprehension lesson, that is, to broaden student's knowledge of life and to improve the quality of student's English, may not be achieved". She continues that "the teacher must make a deliberate effort to bring into the classroom visual aids that will show the pupils, as vividly as possible, those elements that are culture-bound in any given passage".

3.3.3 Interviews with Teachers

During the observation period, interviews were conducted for teachers in the quest of ensuring a good study. Citing Moore (1998), Addy (2004:56) notes that “personal interviews help the researcher to draw conclusion from information collected”. With this in mind, interviews were conducted only in classes that participated in the study and with participating teachers. They were asked questions that brought out their general perceptions about teaching reading comprehension. Pupils were especially asked if they enjoyed their lessons in reading comprehension and how often they wished to have the lesson. In order to make sure that nothing important was missed during the interviews, specific questions were used to elicit responses on three important areas of the study, specifically if teachers thought the pupils enjoyed lessons on reading comprehension, whether they enjoyed the reading aspect or answering the questions and whether there was the need to increase the number of times they had reading comprehension. These were the specific questions asked the teachers:

1. Do you think the pupils enjoyed reading comprehension?
2. Which area of the lesson do they enjoy?
3. Do you think there should be the need to have more lessons in reading comprehension?

Since the interview was unstructured, and to ensure that teachers felt at ease, they were not given any prior notice on any specific times of visits and no notes were taken in during the session. Questions were also asked in an informal manner to blend

with the lesson as it progressed. These unstructured interviews have the advantage of yielding data that are unplanned for, but which are very useful.

3.3. 4 Interviews with the Pupils

It was also during the observation period that the pupils involved in the study were informally interviewed. This took the form of questioning during and after the lessons. For instance when I noticed that a pupil was distracted or inattentive, his/her attention was gently drawn back to the lesson by asking a simple question (are you enjoying the lesson?). These intermittent promptings were not to interrupt the lessons and though they sometimes created giggles among the children it made all of them sit up quickly and paid attention.

3.4 Research Instrument

3.4.1 Questionnaires/Consent Forms for Parents and Pupils

Questionnaires, according to Agordjor (2004:54) “are one of three techniques by which the attitudes to language are measured”. Consent forms (see appendix 3) were distributed to the pupils for their parents first and foremost to seek approval for their wards to partake in the study. This is very vital in an investigative study of this nature because the respondents are very young and may not have been able to answer all the questions (especially those concerning their parents) on their own. Parents also had to give their consent for their ward’s participation in such a project for obvious reasons.

3.4.2 Details of Questionnaires/Background of Parents

One hundred and sixty-five (165) questionnaires were distributed for both the parents and the pupils with 142 returning the completed forms. Forms for parents and their wards were provided on the same sheet (to cut down cost) and were in two parts, section A for the pupils and B the parents. Parents were required to state their occupation, academic/educational background, number of children they have, languages spoken and the language of communication with their ward/children at home (See appendix 4).

Parents of children/wards of the UBS are diverse in their academic and professional backgrounds. Their background is a contributory factor to the reading abilities of the pupils. Majority of the parents are employees of the University of Ghana. They together with the non-University employees play vital roles in the decision making processes of the school. These forms sought their names, academic background, status (University/non-University employee), and the number of children, language(s) spoken at home and whether they lived on or off campus.

TABLE 3: Academic Qualification of Parents

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
SHS and below	37	26%
Diploma/Degree	85	60%
Masters and above	20	14%
Total	142	100

Three categories were recorded for the academic/educational background of parents of pupils who are involved in the study. As shown in table 3, 37 parents (representing 26%) are Senior Secondary School (SHS) certificate holders and below, 85 parents (representing 60%) have diploma or first degree and 20 parents (representing 14%) have second degree or higher qualifications.

Most pupils, who come from homes where parents/guardians have higher academic status (PhD, MPhil, M.A. graduates), tend to do better on the whole but there were a few cases that differed. Alternatively, pupils from homes with little or no education failed to impress me even after the intervention lessons. A few however, did such marvelous work that though they were below average in the pre-test, they were able to move to above average or average in the post test.

Again, the status of parents indicating whether they are employed by the University or not was a factor to consider since the school was put up initially to cater for the educational needs of senior members (SM) of employees of the University of Ghana. As the intake of students has expanded to include senior staff (SS), junior staff (JS) and outsiders (OUT) or non-University employees, so have the population and the performance of students. It was observed that over 50% of the student population is made up of wards of non-University employees (outsiders), 26% are wards of senior staff, 13% are from junior staff and only 8% are wards of senior members.(See table 4)

TABLE 4: Status of Parents

Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Junior Staff (JS)	19	13%
Senior Staff (SS)	37	26%
Senior Members (SM)	12	8%
Outsiders (OUT)	74	53%
Total	142	100

The environment from which parents live with their wards was also a factor that was considered in this study since it contributed to their ability or inability to do well. The responses from the questionnaires were put into two categories indicating whether parents resided on or off campus. This showed that about 85% of respondents lived outside the University premises. Although this was a concern, it also pointed out the fact that most parents were not employed by the University. Table 5 shows that only 15% of parents resided on the premises of the University.

TABLE 5: Residence of Parents

Residence of Parents	Frequency	Percentage (%)
On campus	22	15%
Off campus	120	85%
Total	142	100

There were varied languages indicated on the returned forms as spoken by the different families represented. This shows how culturally diverse the school is. However, most people expressed that they combined English with their particular Ghanaian language used at home. For the purpose of this study, three categories were created and table 6 points out that only 19% use only English with their wards at home, 28% combine English with vernacular and 53% use only vernacular at home.

TABLE 6: Languages used at Home

Language Spoken	Frequency	Percentage (%)
English only	27	19%
Vernacular only	40	28%
English and Vernacular	75	53%
Total	142	100%

3.4.3 Details of Questionnaires for Pupils

As stated above, there were one hundred and sixty-four (164) questionnaires given to the pupils while one hundred and forty-two (142) returned the completed forms, the same number of questionnaires given and received from parents. These elicited their names, class, age, where they lived and whether they lived with both parents or not. This was to ascertain whether their area of residence had any influence on their ability to read with comprehension and to determine if their home environment provided extra support in terms of availability of reading materials, access to library and motivation from parents and other school-going children. (See table 5). Pupils were

asked also to state their mother tongue and the language(s) spoken at home. (See table 6).

3.4.4 Details of Questionnaires for Teachers

Eighteen (18) questionnaires were distributed and received back completed from some teachers of English Language in the Basic School (see appendix 5). This was divided into 4 different sections (A-D). Section A (table 7) was about the teacher's personal details that is, their academic background and how long they have been teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), while section B required respondents to provide method of teaching, text-book availability and type used. All basic two pupils use the same text book (*English Course for Ghanaian Schools Pupils Book 3*), it was also clear that parents are able to provide these for their wards. In section C, respondents were to provide the level of difficulties pupils encountered and to indicate the number of workshops and/or in-service training they had participated in, in the last three years. Since this is an independent and close-knit Public School, all teachers participate in activities that are meant to promote its image and progress. Thus all teachers including basic two teachers have participated in three (3) in-service training and two (2) work-shops in the last three years. This is in connection with Anyidoho's (1997:2) assertion that "the challenge to teachers and supervisors at all levels of education, as a matter of urgency is to declare war against the lack of efficient reading abilities among students in Ghana and if the issue is tackled with all seriousness at the basic level, then it will not be necessary for the government to spend huge sums of money on adult literacy programmes".

Teachers were also to state the approach(es) they employ in teaching Reading Comprehension and why they preferred that/those particular approach(es). Approaches and methods that were indicated, as mentioned earlier include; Basal Reading Approach, Phonic method, Look and Say and Silent or Group Reading. Reasons for the choices ranged from their simplicity as were expressed, “for better cognitive perception and response”, “they are able to pronounce words with the Phonic method”, “on the part of group reading, weaker ones are able to learn fast” to “that is what I am familiar with” and so on. From the responses given it was quite clear that some teachers were not very conversant with methods/approaches to teaching reading comprehension. The final section for the questionnaires requested teachers to rate pupils reading from very high to very low, whether they used teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and which types were available to their pupils. They were further required to state pupil’s response to reading tasks with and without TLMs. Many teachers indicated that their pupils enjoyed reading comprehension because of the interesting stories and rated them high in reading. Almost all the teachers used enough TLMs and this was evident in the numbers that were posted on their chart boards in the classrooms. As some pupils drew pictures during Creative Art/Drawing lessons, it was obvious that they enjoyed their reading comprehension lessons as some of their art works showed what they had done.

To make sure that there were no errors in the information provided by the teachers since it would have rendered the study invalid, I ensured that most of them filled the forms in my presence while the rest submitted them within a couple of days. I also ensured the early and accurate completion of the questionnaires to arrive at the appropriate answers hoped for. These were important points in this research as the

teacher plays a vital role in the acquisition of language proficiency in the academic pursuit of the child. Apart from this, the teacher is generally a source of motivation and inspiration and most children see them as role models. These are idealistic tendencies that inspire most of them to aspire to greater heights.

A section of the questionnaire required teachers to indicate the number of pupils in their class who had textbooks. The required textbook as indicated above is *An English Course for Ghanaian Schools, Pupils Book 3*. This is the required textbook published and recommended by the GES to be used throughout the nation. It is interesting to note that although most pupils in the school have copies of the textbooks because they are provided by their parents or guardians, others are not so fortunate to acquire them. Most of these are unfortunately either wards of those who live outside the University community, those of the junior staff of the University or some of the non-University employees. Most of these are not proficient in reading because of the non-availability of the textbooks or any other reading materials for that matter. In school, however, they are paired and made to read with others who have copies of the Course book.

The overriding principle here was to find out if teachers saw reading as just decoding printed matter by assigning the printed words to sounds, or learning to reason about written materials using knowledge from everyday life and from disciplined fields of study, making use of SRA to make meaning of the text by the use of prior information selected from stored prior knowledge and experiences and from the content of the text.

3.5 Actual Study

3.5.1 Pre-intervention Lessons and Test

The pupils in all the four classes were taken through pre-intervention lessons for me to be abreast with their standard in reading comprehension using the usual reading approach by the class teacher. This followed the Basal Reading Approach to teaching Reading Comprehension by the respective teachers, which begins with the introduction of the lesson followed by explanation of key words and model reading by the teacher. (See appendix 2 for teachers Note Plan, SRA)

Next, pupils were drilled in some new and unfamiliar words and the correct pronunciations were stressed. At this stage difficult words were given quick explanations by the teacher. The next step was oral reading by selected pupils. A few pupils were chosen randomly to read aloud. Oral dictation followed the reading aloud session and individual pupils were called to spell some of the words. After this, the whole class was made to read, spell and answer questions from the course book and the scores recorded. The passage used for this reading session was Unit 23 titled; *The Ant and the Bird* of the Course Book (See appendix 6). Pupils were then tested by answering the questions based on the passage in exercise A.

3.5.2 The Experiment

There were two groups of pupils in this experiment. The experimental group and the control group were made up of two classes each. The average age of pupils in Basic Two is 7 years, with initial 82 pupils in the experimental groups and 81 in the control group who began the study, but due to the inability of some of them to either return the

questionnaires or unable to partake in some of the intervention exercises their results were not included in the final compilation, thus reducing the numbers to 72 in the experimental groups and 70 in the control group bringing the final total number to 142 pupils made up of 75 boys and 67 girls altogether in the study.

3.5.3 The Experimental Groups

Classes 2P and 2S who were used for the study were chosen as the experimental groups. The choice was based on their proximity to each other, performance in the introductory/preliminary test, number in class and their attitude towards reading. There were 36 pupils in each class comprising of 20 females and 16 males in class 2P and 19 females and 17 males in class 2S. They had an average age of 7 years and had different linguistic backgrounds.

3.5.4 The Control Groups

The control groups comprised of classes 2U and 2L. These two classes were further apart and away from the other classes. This is due to the arrangement of classrooms in the UBS. Their selection was also informed by their performance in the preliminary tests, proximity to each other and their attitude towards reading. There were 33 and 37 pupils respectively in each class comprising of 18 females and 15 males in 2U and 16 females and 21 males in 2L. Their average age was also 7 years and had different linguistic abilities.

3.5.5 The Reading Intervention Lesson

During the last term of the academic year, the pupils in the experimental groups (2P and 2S) were taken through the intervention lessons in Reading Comprehension using predominantly the Schema Reading Approach (SRA).

The reading intervention lessons took the same form as the actual classroom lessons in Reading Comprehension. The syllabus allocates two double periods of one hour each for English Reading Comprehension lessons per week in basic two. These are on Mondays and Fridays however, individual teachers are allowed to reschedule these periods to suit their pupils in order to accomplish the desired results. This notwithstanding, the teacher must make sure that the number of periods allocated for each subject is fulfilled each week. Sometimes, the pupils are able to accomplish their tasks in some subjects much faster than the allotted time while other subjects use longer time to complete. This was experienced during the intervention lesson using the SRA because it takes a longer time to use the Schema Theory than the Basal Theory to teach children. It is a normal practice in classes that I teach to put the pupils in mixed ability reading groups on Fridays so that they can help each other. This time was therefore spent often to brainstorm on topics treated in SRA reading comprehension lessons class and to help the weaker and slow readers to catch up with the rest of the class.

A number of objectives were taken into consideration before the intervention lessons. These included the reading ability of the pupils, the length of passages chosen, and the number of unfamiliar or new words in each passage. A number of Units (chapters) were used during the lessons throughout the term and the ensuing exercises

were answered as classwork, homework or class test and recorded as part of their normal studies. The pupils did not feel in any way that they were doing something different from their colleagues in the control groups and their class assignments were not affected in either. Lessons were grouped into three activities; preliminary or pre-reading stage, reading stage and post-reading stage (see appendix 7 for note plan).

During the pre-reading stage, pupils are taken through a prediction stage where the teachers guided them through the passage by asking questions that brought their minds to the topic or passage. The picture on the title page also triggered their minds to quickly get what the topic was about. In Unit 18 of the course book for instance, questions were asked about how to bath babies. The title of the passage is *Mother Washes Baby Ato*. (See appendix 8) Questions asked included; how do babies behave? What food do they eat? How old is the baby you know? By doing this the pupils were able to recall aspects of their lives or the environment that had something to do with the passage being dealt with. It generated a lively conversation with contributions from everyone because some of the children had younger siblings at home and have observed how their mothers wash them and care for them. Some recalled how their mothers put the babies on her laps while washing them. Others express how the babies cry or play in the washing basin when left for a few minutes especially during the hot season or in the afternoons. I then took them through the vocabulary (unfamiliar words), explaining where we could, and used the dictionary where possible. This afforded me the opportunity to teach them the proper use of the dictionary which incorporated the correct pronunciation of each word, the right intonation and at this stage the accompanying pictures in the dictionary help imprint the meanings in their memories.

When asked to explain the word “sponge”, for instance, some pupils gave varied meanings including, “something that is used to bath, a towel that mummy folds around her hands to bath you, it is a long hard net that is used to scrub your skin”. Whenever the pupils became overly excited, the lesson is always interspersed with rhymes, songs or poems. One such poem is “There is an old Woman” (see appendix 9). They also express themselves through drawing (see appendix 10).

At the reading stage, pre-reading questions were written on the board, for example, what is the lesson about? Who is a baby? How many babies are we going to talk about? Who takes care of a baby? After reading carefully to them, the passage was taken in paragraphs and discussed to facilitate recall of their background knowledge and to help them answer specific questions on each section they had been asked to read. These questions were asked to aid their thoughts and to arrive at the correct predictions based on their knowledge of the topic and their background knowledge. Part of the Schema Theory ensures that readers skim and scan the passage being used for quick and general overview of the story, but with lower primary pupils it is difficult to get them to do all that so we read through the passage a number of times to get the message.

They were then asked to answer the pre-reading questions already on the board. This brought to mind some aspects of the topic they had heard read to them, which activated their memories and background knowledge about the text. Pupils read silently within a given time frame in each segment to find answers to the questions and to get the details of the passage for themselves. It was hoped that by end of the silent reading

period the pupils would have had a good idea about the text and be able to answer the comprehension questions provided with ease.

At the post-reading stage, the correct answers to the pre-reading questions were discussed with the pupils. Only two pupils were called from each row to read out aloud due to time constraint. Thus eight in all are allowed to read at each session, giving ample opportunity to everyone throughout the term. They were then asked to answer the comprehension questions in exercise A in their class exercise books.

For fairness and transparency, the teachers in the participating classes in both the experimental and the control groups were involved in the teaching. They were briefed on the procedures and asked to teach in the final trial. The teachers in the control groups used the Basal Reading Approach to teach their lessons while the teachers in the experimental groups continued with the Schema Reading Approach that I had introduced. They followed the procedure used by reviewing the background knowledge of the pupils, then guided them to skim and scan the text by reading a couple of times to the pupils before allowing them to read on their own. The pupils were also guided and allowed to make predictions about what they had read and given the opportunity to answer and ask questions at the end of each lessons.

It should be noted that there were other passages from the Course book that were used throughout the term. This is because the study was conducted as part of the school's programme teaching reading comprehension which followed the term's forecast. Other passages used include Unit 22 *A Game of Ludo*. (See appendix 11)

3.6 Post-Intervention Test

3.6.1 End-of-year Examinations

The final examination in Reading Comprehension for pupils in Basic two at the end of 2012/2013 academic year in UBS was modeled after the Schema Reading Approach. Based on what they had been taught and the instructions given to the various class teachers in the course of the study, the passage was read to the pupils and after reviewing their background knowledge, pupils were drilled in their own understanding of the passage. Due to the age and stage of the pupils, it is usually the norm for class teachers to read all questions to them before they answered each paper in their examinations. For lack of time however, and considering the fact that the Schema Reading Approach usually took a much longer time than other reading approaches such as the Basal Reading Approach, pupils were not permitted to ask many questions or use the dictionary, but ample time was given to them to finish their examination. The questions were read and explained, and instead of the normal one hour given for Reading Comprehension examination, they were given an hour and a half to complete their examinations. The results from this examination are analyzed together with the other tests and the findings presented in chapter four of the study. Pupils were thus tested on all aspects of a good comprehension including recall, understanding of text, reading skills analysis and personal opinion. Appendix 12 is a sample of the 2012/2013 end-of-year examination question paper. Samples of various pupil's test and examination papers are provided in appendix 14.

3.6.2 Limitations to the Study

There were a few challenges that almost became drawbacks during the study. One major factor was time. Since this programme (TESL) is not offered on regular basis, I had to combine it with my regular work schedule which was already very demanding and time consuming. Again working with seven-year-old children is another issue I had to contend with since these children have a mind of their own and sometimes even if they are able to write or read, they may decide not to do it. During the end-of-year examination in reading comprehension, some pupils refused to write even though they are average and above average pupils because they thought I should have been there to direct them as to what they should do throughout the examination. The inability of some parents of average and above average pupils to return their completed questionnaires meant that they could not be included in the final analysis to boost the outcome of the overall results.

In addition, since this is a new approach being introduced to lower primary pupils, I think the time frame was quite short because in basic two, some pupils may not have acquired competence in writing yet. Even though they may understand what is read to them, answer questions and flow with the rest of the class, left on their own they had difficulty putting what they had learnt down. Moreover the research was conducted in one school so the population was not that large and the difference in the ability of the groups was not all that much.

3.6.3 Conclusion

This research sought to find out if using the SRA as an approach to teaching reading comprehension would be a better option for pupils in the early years of their education in the UBS. Classroom observation, interviews and questionnaires were used to elicit information on attitudes and methods of teaching and learning in the school. Experiments were also conducted to find out whether or not the study would work. It has therefore been observed that the time allotted to reading comprehension in basic two gave ample time and opportunity to complete reading and answering questions while using the BRA but was a little too short for the SRA. This is due to the volume of work involved in the use of the SRA in the Reading Comprehension Classroom. Should the SRA be adopted as a method of teaching reading comprehension in the UBS and hopefully in the nation as a whole, this may be taken into consideration. Again since there is no uniformity in the method or approach to teaching reading comprehension in the UBS, this might also be considered as an approach that could be worth implementing. It is hoped that the methodology employed will lead to more studies regarding the use of a uniformed approach from at least the lower primary to the upper primary to help children comprehend what they read.

CHAPTER FOUR

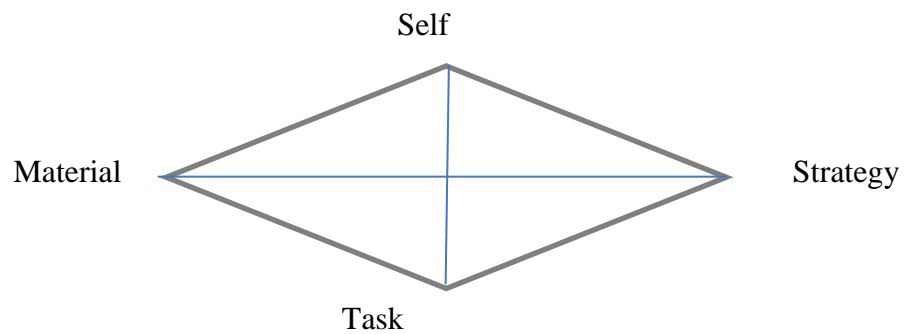
ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

The data collected from the study is analyzed in this chapter. The study as mentioned earlier was carried out for one full year of three terms in the University Basic School to determine how far reading comprehension could be improved among the Basic Two pupils. Questionnaires were used to elicit demographic information from the pupils and their parents. This included the languages spoken at home among all the family members, between parents and among siblings. This was to find out the extent to which their L1 sometimes influenced their learning of reading English and their ability to comprehend what they read. Questionnaires were also designed for teachers to elicit information about their background and the approaches they use in teaching Reading Comprehension. After this, the pupils were asked to write tests before and after an intervention exercise. There was one pre-intervention and one post-intervention tests organized and used for record purposes of data organization.

4.1 Attitude: An Overview

According to Agordjor (2004:66) “attitudes have been identified as one essential prerequisite to success in many of life’s endeavors, no less of which is language learning”. Agordjor then states, citing Caverly (1997), that “regardless of any individual’s philosophical perspective on how students learn, it is generally accepted that four general factors interact to form the reading/learning process. These factors can be depicted as a tetrahedral model of learning shown in figure 3.

Figure 4: Tetrahedral Model of Learning

Source Agordjor (2004:66)

At the apex of this tetrahedron are factors related to “self,” that is, the contribution made by the readers’ background knowledge, attitude, interest and motivation on their ability to understand any piece of text. Unless readers contribute these factors proactively, they may fail to understand whatever they read. Sackeyfio (1999:1) underscores the importance therefore, of attitudes in achieving success in proficiency. Since this project is targeted at the basic level of education which is the foundational and most important stage in the educational career of the child, care was taken to ensure that they are well structured and built for good progress.

The background of children and the environment from which they come helped us understand some causes of their inability to deal with problems associated with learning in general and reading in particular. In the environment where this study is conducted, children are brought up either from within the University community or from outside it. I agree with Agordjor (2004:67) that, “we are unable to provide effective solutions to many of the language problems of our pupils because we do not understand their attitude to the language in general and aspects of the language that are taught in specific terms”. Children are so bombarded with different languages they

become confused as to which they should stick to. Some questionnaires returned denotes that there are homes where as many as four languages are spoken.

4.1.1 Attitude of Teachers: A Review of lesson Observation and Interviews

It was observed that most teachers in UBS treat Reading Comprehension lessons in the classroom more or less like reading novels without taking the time to explain step by step or paragraph by paragraph what the passage is about. Reading is equated to comprehension and therefore some teachers fail to assist pupils in the acquisition of the skills they need to be able to interact with what they read in a passage. Hardly did anyone use the dictionary alongside the reading lessons. Some of the teachers I spoke with were unaware of any special approach to teaching reading comprehension such as the Schema Reading Theory or any approach to teaching English as a second language. Some teachers however, were aware of the Basal Reading Approach in which the “phonic method” is used to teach reading, while others used the “look and say” approach. Little attempt to motivate pupils was detected and in most cases slow readers were not taken through any special exercises to bring them to the level of the class. This, I noticed seemed to dampen the spirit of slow learners.

4.1.2 Profile of Respondents (Teachers)

Teachers interviewed for the purpose of this study, were all qualified and certified with varied professional degrees. Out of the 18 teachers who took part in the programme, 4 teachers, (representing 22%) were Cert. 'A'. (Post-Secondary) holders, 4 had Diploma in various fields of endeavor (representing 22%), 7 (representing 39%)

had first degrees from various institutions and 3 (representing 17%) had Post Graduate Degrees.

Table 7: Qualification of Teachers in UBS

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Second Degree	3	17%
First Degree	7	39%
Diploma	4	22%
Cert. A (Post Sec.)	4	22%
Total	18	100

Table 7 above showing the qualification of teachers in the UBS clearly indicate that teachers in the school are qualified enough to teach at this level. However, looking at the responses some gave for teaching reading comprehension, one cannot help but wonder what was meant by some of them (see details of questionnaires for teachers). It shows that 3 teachers (representing 17%) have second degrees, 7 teachers have degrees (39%), 4 have diploma and 4 hold Cert. A (Post-Secondary). This represented 22% in each group.

The questionnaires administered once more, explored their experience in teaching English Language. It was observed that all the teachers interviewed had taught for more than 10 years. 5 out of the 18 teachers have above 25 years' experience (representing 28%). 4 teachers had between 11-15 years and 16-20 years' experience

(representing 22%) in each category. Those who had taught from 21-25 were (17%) and those who have had from 5-10 years were 2 (representing 11%) as shown in table 8.

Table 8: Years of Teaching Experience

Number of Years Taught	Frequency	Percentage (%)
5-10	2	11
11-15	4	22
16-20	4	22
21-25	3	17
25+	5	28
Total	18	100

Source: Field data 2013

The Ghana Education Service, (2007: ii) has specifications on aspects of the English Language that must be taught in first cycle institutions. These include Reading Comprehension, Writing and Composition and Grammar among others. In accordance with this directive, a question was posed to the respondents and in answer to what aspect of teaching English teachers felt comfortable with or enjoyed teaching, 50% of respondents stated Reading Comprehension with 40% going for Grammar and only 10% being comfortable with Composition. No one stated any other option even though they had the opportunity to do so.

It is surprising that in an institution where 50% of teachers believe that their interest in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) lies in Reading

Comprehension, most of them know very little about the different approaches available to this aspect of teaching reading. This study will therefore, hopefully open up more avenues, approaches and methods to make the teaching of Reading Comprehension more interesting and beneficial to them.

Table 9: Aspect of English Language Taught

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Grammar	7	40
Composition	2	10
Reading/Comprehension	9	50
Other	0	0
Total	18	100

Source: Field Data 2013

4.2 The General Outlook

So far the general outlook of the study and the response received from teachers point out that there is no justification for students to perform poorly in external examinations. Nevertheless it has been noted that students become complacent or over confident in their attitude towards reading as they move to higher classes. When pupils put a stop to vocabulary building it reduces their ability to vary their speech pattern and the use of synonyms in their language to express themselves in writing. This chapter has shown the qualification, experience and capabilities of teachers in UBS and what they are able to impart to the pupils and students they teach.

4.2.1 Pre-Intervention Test

The pre-tests were conducted in both the control and experimental groups. These tests, as reported earlier, were conducted by the various class teachers and me since they were focused on the approaches that have been used from the beginning of the academic year. The experimental groups comprising of classes 2P and 2S and the control groups made up of 2U and 2L answered questions on the same passages they had read earlier. Having been arranged in their competence groups due largely to the fact that the experimental groups performed slightly lower than the control groups during the preliminary tests it was then possible to teach each set according to the approach selected for it. (See tables 10a and 10b).

Table 10a is a representation of scores obtained before and after the interventions from the control groups. It has been pointed out before that there were 70 pupils in this group who fulfilled all the requirements to be included in the study. Their overall results depict a slight lead over their counterparts in the experimental group.

Table 10a: Respondents Raw Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test (Control Group)

Respondent number	Pre-Test score	Post-Test score	Respondent number	Pre-Test score	Post-Test score
1.	80	92	36.	100	100
2.	80	47	37.	100	97
3.	100	80	38.	100	90
4.	80	80	39.	100	100
5.	60	99	40.	100	69
6.	100	83	41.	80	47

7.	80	82	42.	100	79
8.	80	97	43.	80	100
9.	80	67	44.	80	60
10.	100	69	45.	80	87
11.	100	93	46.	100	97
12.	100	97	47.	60	56
13.	40	47	48.	60	88
14.	100	90	49.	100	96
15.	100	100	50.	100	59
16.	100	96	51.	80	61
17.	0	13	52.	80	71
18.	100	92	53.	100	97
19.	100	92	54.	100	59
20.	100	72	55.	20	30
21.	60	76	56.	40	77
22.	100	94	57.	60	27
23.	100	64	58.	80	80
24.	80	94	59.	100	73
25.	80	73	60.	100	97
26.	80	88	61.	100	74
27.	100	44	62.	100	76
28.	100	100	63.	40	79
29.	0	7	64.	100	88
30.	20	30	65.	100	100

31.	60	51	66.	100	77
32.	100	100	67.	100	100
33.	100	30	68.	100	100
34.	80	71	69.	100	65
35.	100	67	70.	80	71

Respondents in the experimental groups were used for the project because it was hoped that they will benefit more and catch up with their counterparts in the course of the experiment as they performed less credibly than they did. Table 10b depicts the scores of the experimental group's pre-test compared with the post-test.

**Table 10b: Respondents Raw Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test
(Experimental Group)**

Respondent Number	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Respondent Number	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score
1.	100	67	37.	100	89
2.	80	77	38.	100	100
3.	100	96	39.	80	94
4.	100	96	40.	80	43
5.	100	100	41.	100	99
6.	80	97	42.	100	83
7.	80	80	43.	1	1
8.	1	4	44.	100	100
9.	100	97	45.	100	80
10.	80	63	46.	100	69

11.	100	80	47.	100	100
12.	80	60	48.	40	36
13.	80	94	49.	1	57
14.	0	16	50.	60	60
15.	100	87	51.	100	60
16.	100	95	52.	60	100
17.	100	100	53.	1	74
18.	100	89	54.	100	80
19.	100	94	55.	60	97
20.	100	94	56.	100	49
21.	100	84	57.	1	47
22.	100	94	58.	80	60
23.	80	77	59.	100	42
24.	100	95	60.	100	100
25.	80	83	61.	40	23
26.	100	95	62.	60	47
27.	0	29	63.	100	100
28.	100	74	64.	80	97
29.	80	80	65.	100	100
30.	100	100	66.	100	14
31.	100	87	67.	100	77
32.	100	95	68.	100	60
33.	100	83	69.	100	50
34.	80	85	70.	1	51

35.	1	37	71.	40	29
36.	80	47	72.	80	56

Source: Field Data 2013

4.2.2 The Respondent's Score before the intervention (Pre-test)

Tables 10 (a & b) show that the scores of the respondents before the introduction of the intervention manifests majority of the respondents (83% in the experimental group and 81% in the control group) scored above average while less than 10% in each group scored average mark and 13% in experimental group against 10% in the control scored low. This categorization of the marks was based on University Basic Schools' Examination Grading System (See appendix13).

Table 11: Respondents Score at Pre-test (Experimental/Control Group)

Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage %)
Above Average (60-100)	56	83	57	81
Average (40-59)	4	4	6	9
Below Average (1-49)	12	13	7	10
Total	72	100	70	100

Source: Field Data 2013

4.3 Characteristics of parents of the Pupils

4.3.1 The Experimental Groups

There were 72 pupils in the experimental groups as indicated earlier. Out of this number only 5 pupils (representing 7%) were wards of senior members of the University of Ghana. All of them were able to score high marks in both the pre/post intervention tests. The wards of senior staff numbered 16, (representing 24%), while the wards of junior staff had a representation of 8 pupils making 12%. The rest of 44 pupils of the respondents (representing 68%) of the total number were children/wards of non-University employees. It is interesting to note that a school which was established solely to cater for the needs of the children/wards of Senior Members of the University community in terms of education and which initially did not admit non-University employees, is virtually now filled with wards/children of non-University employees. This indicates that the inability of this group to do better than the control group in the pre-test is due in part to probably the high representation of pupils (12%) in the junior staff category and (68%) in the non-University employee category.

4.3.2 The Control Groups

There were 70 pupils who took part in both the pre/post intervention exercises as indicated earlier. Out of this number, 7 pupils representing 10% were wards/children of Senior Members of the University of Ghana. These pupils were able to pass their tests with high marks and therefore were in the above average group obtaining between 60%-100% marks. 22 pupils making a total of 31% were wards/children of Senior Staff and 10 pupils, which is 15%, were from the Junior Staff.

Again, as many as 31 pupils were wards/children of non-University employees. This represented 44% of the total respondents. It is assumed that based on the representation of 10% as against 6% in the senior member category, 31% as against 14% were wards of senior staff, 15% as against 12% and more so 44% as against 68% in the experimental group in the junior staff and the non-University employee categories, the control groups had a head-on start in the pre-test.

Table 12: Category of Parents

Category of Staff	Control Group	Experimental Group
Senior Members (SM)	10%	6%
Senior staff (SS)	31%	14%
Junior Staff (JS)	15%	12%
Non-Univ. (OUT)	44%	68%
Percentage (%)	100	100

The indications in table 12 expressly manifests that there were more University employees and less outsiders in the control groups than there were in the experimental groups. This trend could therefore explain why even after the interventions with such improvements as they made, the difference was not so overwhelming.

Whereas all the non-University employees lived outside the University community, 7 pupils were of single parentage making up 10% of the respondents. While 60% of the total respondents indicated that their language of communication at home was English, 30% said they used a combination of English and other Ghanaian

languages with the rest of 10% using only Ghanaian languages as their means of communication at home. These were wards of some junior staff and a few non-University employees. For the breakdown of this scenario see Table 6.

4.4 The Intervention Test

The intervention test was taken at the end of the last term (third term of the academic year 2012/13) of using the Schema Reading Approach to teach the experimental groups. After the class teachers and I had taken turns to teach the pupils using this new approach (after they had been taken through it) they wrote the test. It was envisaged that the pupils in this group would do better at the end of the programme than they did at the beginning of the study through their active participation in the lessons with contributions from all angles.

During the final (end-of-year) examination in Reading Comprehension, the pattern for the Schema Reading Approach was followed as explained in the methodology to teach the experimental group.

Some pupils who did very well scoring high marks in the pre-test performed even better, 74% in both the experimental group and the control group respectively scored above average, whereas 13% of the respondents in the experimental group against 14% in the control group scored average mark. Less than 15% of respondents in both groups scored low marks.

Table 13: Respondent's Scores at Post intervention test

Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Above Average (60-100)	54	74	56	74
Average (40-59)	9	13	8	14
Below Average (0-39)	9	13	6	12
Total	72	100	70	100

Source: Field Data 2013

After the Schema intervention, there were significant increases in the number of respondents that scored average and below average marks. With regards to the experimental groups, there was an increase from 4% at pre-test to 13%, an increase of 9% while there was an increase of 4% for the control group.

4.5 Break Down of Respondents' Scores

Table 14: Break down of respondents scores (High Group)

Score	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High-to-High	54	94	56	98
High-to-Average	1	3	0	0
High-to-Low	1	3	1	2
Total	56	100	57	100

Source: Field Data 2013

Table 14 above shows the breakdown of scores of the respondents. The results suggest that a total of 6% of the respondents in the experimental group who scored high marks at the pre-test dropped to average and below average respectively. This could be attributed to the fact that although the pupils who did not obtain any marks at the pre-test were able this time round to draw, sing or rhyme, they could still not write anything significant as the duration of the study was too short to teach them to put down their thoughts properly. In the control group however, there was only a 2% drop in the number of respondents from high mark to low mark.

Table 15: Break down of respondents scores (Average Group)

Experimental Group			Control Group	
Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Average-to-High	3	75	3	50
Average-to-Average	1	25	1	17
Average-to-Low	0	0	2	33
Total	4	100	6	100

Source: Field data 2013

Regarding the respondents who scored average marks for the pre-test, after being exposed to the intervention, three quarters (75%) of respondents in the experimental group increased their marks to a higher mark while a quarter (25%) maintained their average score. For the control group, 50% of the respondents moved from average to

high mark while 17% maintained their average score and 33% fell from average score to a lower score. This section indicated that there was more progress recorded in the average scores in the experimental than in the control group. For me this shows that pupils who were already able to write a little, improved upon it thereby doing better than they did before. (See table 15).

Table 16: Break down of respondents scores (Low Group)

Experimental Group			Control Group	
Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low-to-High	2	17	2	29
Low-to-Average	2	17	1	14
Low-to-Low	8	66	4	57
Total	12	100	7	100

Source: Field Data 2013

Table 16 above shows how the respondents who initially scored low at pre-test fared after the intervention for both the experimental and control groups. Thirty four (34%) of the respondents in the experimental group moved from low mark to average and above average while 66% of them still maintained the low score after the intervention. For the control group 33% of the respondents improved from low mark to an average and above average mark respectively while 57% still maintained the low mark. The improvement made here is quite significant in that most of the pupils who scored low mark in the pre-test could either not read or write at all or both. To be able therefore to move from the bottom to the top is great achievement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The theory that underpins this research is an interactive process. This approach according to Carrell, Devine and Eskey (1988) emphasizes parallel processing of the print and stresses both what is in a text and what a reader brings to it using the top-down and bottom-up skills, that is viewing reading as the interaction between reader and text.

It is on this basis that the study introduced the experimental group of respondents to the Schema Approach to reading for three months and used the pre-test, post-test approach to verify the impact of this schema on the respondent's reading and comprehension skills. Other studies tested the Schema Theory on matured participants and have confirmed that their reading and comprehension skills had improved tremendously after encountering the Schema Approach. This study used pupils (primary two) whose attention span is very short and therefore had a few challenges with prolonged activities.

The chapter discusses the relevant issues that the study set out to find. First it sought to find the respondents' reading comprehension skills before the intervention of the Schema Approach and then introduced the Schema intervention and found out their reading comprehension skills afterwards using the post-test approach. The chapter therefore related the literature with the findings to draw inferences.

5.1 Respondents' Reading Comprehension Skills (pre-test, post-test)

The findings of the study showed that before the experimental group was introduced to the intervention (Schema Theory), their reading comprehension abilities were comparable with the control group as shown in Table 7. More than 80% of the respondents from both the control and experimental groups scored above average before the intervention. Several implications could be drawn from this. First, either the teacher's approach to reading or comprehension favoured the respondents understanding or it could also be attributed to the way the teachers used the approach, that is, their experience in teaching Reading Comprehension or again probably other factors might have accounted for this. However, on critical observation of Table 7, the study shows that the control group was slightly above the experimental group with regards to their reading comprehension though the difference was just slight. It was on this basis that the class that had slightly lower marks was introduced to the Schema Theory to see its effects on the respondents reading comprehension skills.

After the intervention had been introduced, the results revealed a very interesting trend that is worth noting. Table 9 revealed that 6% of respondents in the experimental group dropped from above average mark they scored before the intervention. This finding comes to support the assertions made by Lapp and Flood, (1976) that "all approaches to teaching reading can work or fail to work, depending on the particular mix of individuals and the environment". Again, Estill, (1983) suggestion that no one method or model is the best for beginning reading, but a combination of the best elements of several programmes or models appear desirable is confirmed here. This is because literature on ways to improve reading recommended the interactive

approach to reading as the top-down or bottom-up approaches had been heavily criticized. Therefore, having introduced the respondents (experimental group) to the Schema intervention which adopts the interactive approach to reading, it was expected that the number of the respondents that scored above average at the pre-test should have increased rather than reducing.

However, a similar situation occurred among the control group as 2% also dropped from above average mark they scored in the pre-test. By this finding one could suggest that the scenario that happened with the experimental group may not necessarily be due to the approach used in teaching the lessons but possible some other factors. For example, in a normal class work, pupils are more relaxed while they become quite tense during examinations. Therefore, the tension associated with examinations may have caused this situation happening. Further, the fear of examination in itself could have affected the respondents' reading comprehension abilities. This suggests that regardless of the approach used to teach Reading Comprehension, some factors such as the circumstances under which respondents are assessed after the introduction of the intervention can affect the impact of such an intervention (especially with very young learners). If respondents are assessed in a more relaxed atmosphere as against an examination atmosphere, the output may not be the same.

The findings also revealed an improvement in the score of the respondents that scored average at the pre-test for both groups (Table 10). In the experimental group, majority (75%) of the respondents in this group scored above average with only 25% of them maintaining an average score after encountering the Schema intervention.

Whereas on the part of the control group 50% improved by scoring above average while 33% went backward with 17% maintaining an average score. Comparing the two groups and the scores, it could be said that the respondents in the experimental group (average score group) benefited from the interactive approach the schema introduced. This cannot be concretized because a similar situation occurred in the control group as well. However, the percentage increase on the part of the respondents in the experimental group respondents is too glaring to ignore. This is because the respondents' parental background characteristics have not changed, and for such improvement under examination conditions could be explained possibly by the confidence and the understanding the respondents had gained from the Schema intervention. This is supported by the findings of Ajideh, (2003) who suggested that after students encountered the Schema intervention, their confidence levels shot up and therefore were not afraid of the unfamiliar text as they used to before they encountered Schema.

There were some improvements in the low scoring respondents in both the experimental and control groups (Table 11) as well. Thirty four percent (34%) of the experimental group respondents against 43% in the control group moved to average and above whereas some of the respondents still maintained a lower score. With this group, it was found that their parent's background characteristics were relatively similar and could have contributed to this situation. The findings revealed that the respondents in this group had parents who had lower levels of education, working at lower levels in their work places and were not helping these children with their school assignments at home. Possibly, these factors might have impacted on the respondents' reading

comprehension even after they had encountered the Schema intervention. This finding also comes to support Lapp and Flood (1976) statement that all approaches to teaching reading can work or fail to work, depending on the particular mix of individuals and the environment. With these respondents it was more of their home environment that impacted heavily on their reading comprehension and not the intervention(s) adopted by the teachers.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding part of this research based on the findings. The chapter further made some recommendations which if adopted could help teachers improve their teaching of Reading Comprehension. It will also be very helpful for schools and the Ghana Education Service (GES) for policy implementation.

6.1 Conclusion

The idea of teaching reading in basic schools has been in existence since colonial times in Ghana. This subject is one of the most important aspects of teaching English and it is included in the syllabus of the GES. Based on the findings, this study concludes that:

1. The interactive approach offered by the Schema Theory can be a helpful tool if adopted by teachers in teaching Reading Comprehension at the basic level. This is because the study found that after respondents had been introduced to the intervention, there was significant improvement in the reading comprehension skills of some of the respondents in the experimental group that had earlier on scored low in reading comprehension before encountering the schema intervention.
2. The schema intervention alone may not necessarily impact pupils reading comprehension skills but other environmental factors such as the environment under which pupils are assessed after they have been introduced to an

intervention, their parental background characteristics and their place of abode need to be taken into consideration.

3. Teachers teaching reading comprehension at the primary levels should use the same approach to teaching. This is because each of the teachers teaching the adopted primary class used different approach for the teaching of Reading Comprehension. Therefore for uniformity, teachers teaching Reading Comprehension must stick to the same approach in order that pupils may derive its full benefits.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that;

- a) Even though the final outcome of the study was not overwhelmingly skewed in favour of the Schema Reading Approach (SRA) as a better option to other teaching methods such as the Basal Reading Approach (BRA) but with the improvement in the reading comprehension of those that were in the average and the low mark range of the experimental group, the SRA could be a better approach that should be used in the teaching of Reading Comprehension than the current approaches being used as it allows for more interaction among the pupils and the text.
- b) Though the University Basic School is a government institution, it has a different set standard for reading Comprehension. It is therefore important for the managers of the school to formulate policy that involve the use of an interactive approach to teaching reading Comprehension using Schema Reading

Approach. This will ensure the standardization of the teaching of reading in the school.

6.2.1 Suggestion for Further Studies

When young learners are made to use their prior knowledge on any subject positively, the result would be better understanding and application of their stored memories and give better ideas on issues as they progress in their chosen fields of endeavor. Therefore, further studies could look at introducing the Schema Reading Approach to different classes in teaching Reading Comprehension in Ghanaian Basic schools.

There should also be studies to test the impact the Schema Theory could have under varying environmental conditions. For instance, after the introduction of the Schema intervention, pupils could be assessed under an examination setting and compared with normal class exercise setting to find out whether these different settings have any impact on the SRA.

Again, the same studies could be conducted in other Basic Schools nationwide to test the validity and authenticity of the Schema Theory because the pupils genuinely enjoyed the sessions with the programme and always looked forward to having Reading Comprehension lessons.

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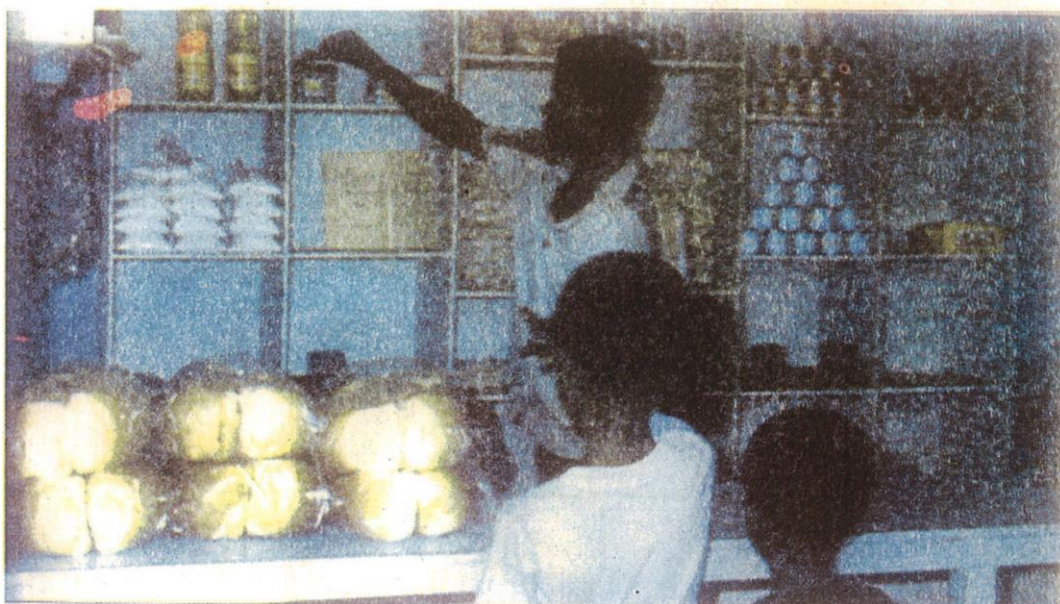
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1A

UNIT 6

MR. BOAMA'S SHOP

Mr. Boama is a shopkeeper. He has a big shop at Sokode. Mr. Boama sells many things in his shop. Some of these things are soap, rice, tins of milk, packets of candles and matches, packets of envelopes and exercise books.



Kuma and his little brother, Sena, live at Sokode. One day, their father sent them to Mr. Boama's shop. Kuma saw Mr. Boama behind the counter. He said, "Good morning, Mr. Boama. Please, we want to buy a tin of milk and a box of matches."

Mr. Boama said, "A tin of milk costs thirty-eight cedis and a box of matches costs two cedis, sixty pesewas."

Mr. Kuma said, "A tin of milk costs thirty-eight cedis and a box of matches costs two cedis, sixty pesewas."

Kuma said, "The tin of milk and the box of matches cost forty cedis, sixty pesewas."

APPENDIX 1B

Mr. Boama said, "That's right."

Kuma gave Mr. Boama forty-one cedis.

Mr. Boama said, "Here is your change. It's forty pesewas."

Mr. Boama gave the change to Kuma.

Kuma said, "Thank you, Sir."

Mr. Boama said, "Not at all. Goodbye."

Kuma and Sena went back home. Their father asked, "How much is the tin of milk?"

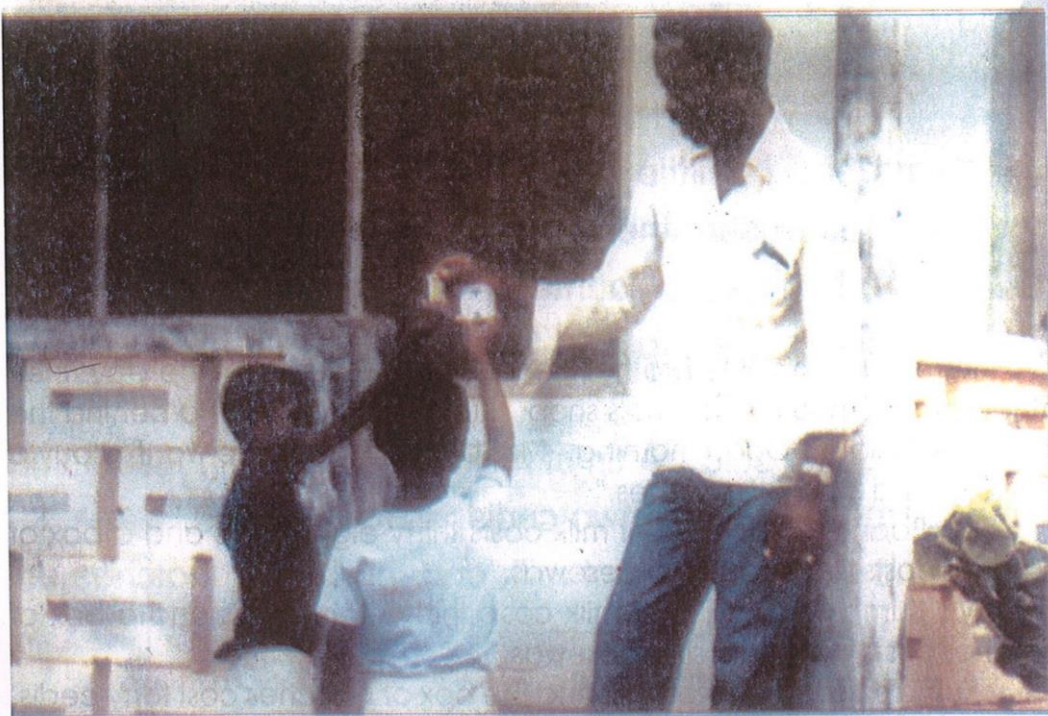
Sena said, "Thirty-eight cedis."

Their father asked again, "And how much is the box of matches?"

Sena said, "Two cedis, sixty pesewas."

Then Kuma said, "The two cost forty cedis, sixty pesewas. Here's the change. It's forty pesewas."

Kuma gave the money to his father. His father took the money and said, "Thank you, my boys."



APPENDIX 1C

EXERCISES

Answer these questions:

1. Where is Mr. Boama's shop?
2. What are some of the things Mr. Boama sells?
3. What did Kuma and his brother buy?
4. How much did the tin of milk cost?
5. How much change did Mr. Boama give the boys?
6. What did their father say when they gave him the things?

Say these:

that	thank	their	father	both
three	third	thirty	thirteen	thirty-three

1. Their father has three brothers.
2. Both of them said, "Thank you, mother."

Spell these:

packet	envelope	change	thirty
brother	behind	counter	candle
matches	shopkeeper		

Make questions from this table and answer them:

How much does	a tin of milk a tin of Milo a box of matches a packet of envelopes	cost?
---------------	---	-------

APPENDIX 3**LETTER OF CONSENT**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The pupils of Basic Two in the University Basic School are going to be involved in a research about Reading Comprehension.

I would therefore be happy if you would allow your ward to participate. Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Utmost confidentiality is assured.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. F.M. Washington- Nortey

Please TICK the appropriate box to indicate your consent

Yes

No

25/09/12

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PUPILS/PARENTS

Please answer these questions truthfully. TICK where applicable and provide answer where necessary. Utmost confidentiality is assured.

1. Name:
2. Age: 6years 7years 8 years and above
3. Class: 2U 2P 2S 2L
4. Where do you live?
5. Do you live with:

both parents one parent grandparents other
6. What is your mother-tongue?
7. What language do you speak at home?

For Parents/Guardian

1. Name of father No of children
2. Occupation
3. Educational background
4. Name of mother No of children
5. Educational background
6. Occupation
7. Language spoken Ga Twi/Fante Ewe Other
8. If other specify
9. Language of communication at home

APPENDIX 5**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS**

Please supply the following information required by TICKING the appropriate box or writing information where applicable. Utmost confidentiality is assured.

A.

1. Name (optional)

2. Qualification

Degree/Diploma Cert. A/ Post Sec. Cert. A/ 4 year Other

.....

3. Number of years taught?

5-10 11-15 16-20 21-25 Above 25

B.

1. Which is your best aspect of English?

Reading Comprehension Grammar Composition

Other

2. What textbook do you use?

.....

3. Are there enough for all pupils? Yes No

4. If yes, does the school provide them? Yes No

5. If no, how do you cater for those who may not have copies?

.....

C.

1. How would you rate the pupil's ability to read the textbook?

Difficult Average Simple

2. How many workshops/in- service training have you attended in the past three years?

3. Which approach (es) to teaching reading do you adopt in teaching your class?

.....

4. Why do you prefer this/these particular approach (es) you choose?

.....

D.

1. What is the rate of your pupil's interest in reading?

Very high High Good

Average Low Very low

2. Do you use Teaching/Learning Materials (TLM) in your reading class?

Yes No

3. How often do you use them and what type(s) do you use?

.....

4. What's the pupil's response to reading tasks when you use TLM?

.....

5. How often do you teach Reading Comprehension?

.....

APPENDIX 6A

UNIT 23

THE ANT AND THE BIRD

One day a little ant was walking around. He was looking for food. He said, "I will keep the food in my hole. Soon the rains will stop and there will be no food. I will keep some food now. Then I'll get food to eat when the rains stop."



A little bird was sitting on a tree. He saw the ant. He wanted to eat the ant. He flew to the ground. He stood near the ant.

"Good morning, my little friend," Bird said.

"Good morning Mr. Bird," Ant said.

"What are you doing?" Bird asked.

"I am looking for food, Sir," Ant said.

Bird went near Ant. He wanted to eat him.

"There is plenty of food on the tree," Bird said.

"Where?" Ant asked.

"On the tree, I play there. Come with me. We can eat and eat. Then we can play," answered Bird.

"No, I don't want to eat the food now. I want to keep it in my hole," said Ant.

"Yes, we will play. Then you can take some of the food away and keep it in your hole," answered Bird.

APPENDIX 6B

“No, thank you. I don't want to play. I want only food,” Ant said.

“Please, come with me. It will be nice on the tree,” Bird said.



Bird talked, and talked. Then Ant said, “I will go with you to the tree.”

“I can't climb quickly,” Ant said.

“Oh, I can carry you in my beak. When I open my beak walk into it. I will carry you into the tree,” Bird answered.

Ant was looking for a hole.

Soon he found a hole and he went very near it.

Then Ant said, “I am ready to go now. Are you ready too?”

Bird answered, “Yes, I am ready.”

“Then shut your eyes and open your beak. I will walk into your beak,” said Ant.

Bird shut his eyes and opened his beak. Ant ran very quickly into the hole. He shouted, “I'm not a fool. You will never see me again!”

When Bird opened his eyes he could not see Ant anywhere.

APPENDIX 6C

EXERCISES

A. Answer these questions:

1. Who stood on the tree?
2. What did Bird want to do?
3. What was Ant looking for?
4. What did Ant tell Bird to do?
5. Where did Ant go?
6. Who said, "I am not a fool"?

B. Say these:

could	stood	good
food	soon	fool
beak	tree	keep
around	ground	found

1. He found the food on the ground.
2. A fool keeps food at school.
3. It's good you could do it.

C. Put in the right word:

hole flew tree keep fool

1. The bird sat on a tall _____.
2. I _____ my clothes in a big box.
3. The bird _____ away when I was going to catch it.
4. Ant said, "I'm not a _____. You will never see me again."
5. The little ant ran into a _____.

APPENDIX 8

UNIT 21

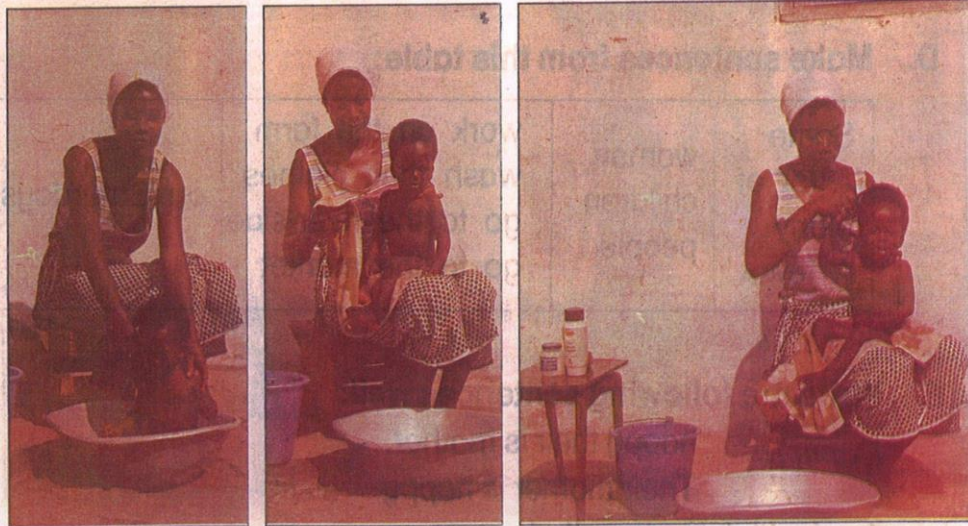
MOTHER WASHES BABY ATO

Baby Ato cannot wash himself. He is only one year old. It is his mother who washes him.

Baby Ato's mother is Mrs. Kuma. When Mrs. Kuma wants to wash Baby Ato, she uses a basin, water, sponge, towel and soap.

In the morning and evening it is cold. Mrs. Kuma uses warm water to wash baby Ato. In the afternoon, it is hot, and she does not use warm water.

Baby Ato plays in the water when his mother washes him. Sometimes he cries when Mrs. Kuma is washing him. He cries when he does not like the water.



When Mrs. Kuma washes her baby, she uses the towel to make him dry. She also combs his hair. Then she puts powder on his body. Now, Ato is very happy.

APPENDIX 8B

Some little boys and girls cannot wash themselves. Their mother, older brothers and sisters wash them. They can use buckets or basins.

Can you wash yourself? How many times a day do you wash? It is so nice to wash yourself when you are tired.

EXERCISES**A. Answer these questions:**

1. Who is Mrs. Kuma's baby?
2. Who washes the baby?
3. How old is Ato?
4. What four things does Mrs. Kuma use to wash Ato?
5. What does Mrs. Kuma use the towel for?

B. Say these:

warm want wash¹ water
powder does some

1. I use a sponge to wash my body.
2. When it is cold we wash ourselves in warm water.
3. I wash myself every evening.
4. We put powder on our bodies.

C. Spell these:

washing himself basin evening finishes
powder towel make skin nice

D. Finish these:

1. Mrs. Kuma is Baby Ato's _____.
2. She washes him in a _____.
3. In the _____ it is hot.

APPENDIX 9

There Was an Old Woman

There was an old woman who lived in a shoe,
She had so many children
She didn't know what to do!
So she gave them some broth
Without any bread,
And she whipped them all soundly,
And sent them to bed!



APPENDIX 10A SAMPLES OF PUPILS' DRAWINGS



APPENDIX 10B



APPENDIX 10C



APPENDIX 11

UNIT 22

A GAME OF LUDO

Dei and Sai are friends. Dei's house is near Sai's house. They are in the same class. They play many games together. Sometimes they play ludo.

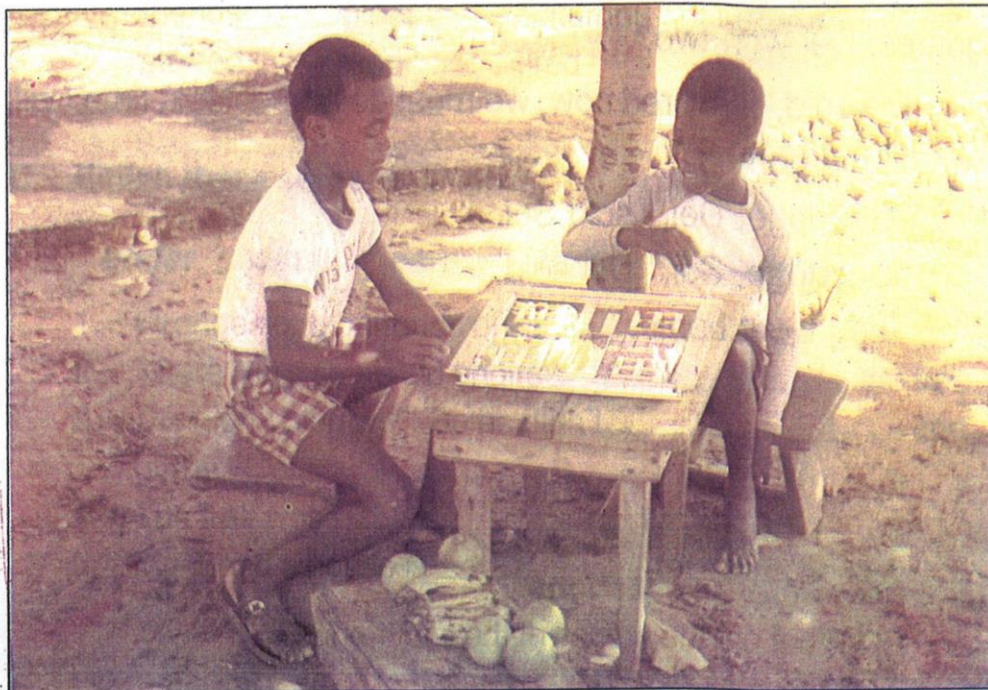
One day Dei said to Sai, "On Saturday I shall not do much work. Shall we play ludo?"

Sai said, "Yes, yes. We could play in the afternoon. My father and mother will go to see my grandfather on Saturday. They will come back in the evening."

Both boys were happy that they could play on Saturday. Sai said, "I'll bring some bananas from my house."

Dei said, "And I will bring some oranges."

On Saturday morning the two friends met under a tree



APPENDIX 11B

between their houses. There were some old chairs there. There was also an old table.

They put their fruits on one of the chairs. Then they started the game of ludo.

Sai played first. "Six, six, six, and four! I am going to win this first game," he said.

"Six ... oh, only two!" Dei said.

"Six ... oh, only three." Sai said.

Dei played and said, "Six, six again! Oh, that's too much. I can't count."

"Do you see that? I say I will win," said Sai.

"Don't be so happy, Sai. We have only just started."

The two boys played three games. Sai won two of the games and Dei won one. They ate the fruits and played again.

They played two more games. Sai won three of the five games. Dei won two.

Dei said, "I'm tired now, we must go home. Next time I will win all the games."

"Goodbye, Dei," said Sai.

"Goodbye, Sai," Dei said.

They went home.

EXERCISES**A. Answer these questions:**

1. What are the names of the two friends?
2. Who said they should play ludo?

APPENDIX 11C

3. Who brought bananas?
4. Who brought oranges?
5. How many games did they play?
6. Who won more games?

B. Say these:

met ate said same
play game name came

1. They met under the tree.
2. They ate some fruits.
3. Sai said he met Dei and ate.
4. The same boys came to play the game today.
5. The name of the game is the same.

C. Spell the words:

friends played Saturday between
started won tired stopped

D. Finish these sentences with:

under win near fruits between

1. Oranges and bananas are _____.
2. There were some old chairs _____ the tree.
3. Dei didn't play well. So he didn't _____ the game.
4. The tree was _____ their houses.
5. My friend's house is _____ my house.

E. Make sentences with these:

grandfather some met win

APPENDIX 12

UNIVERSITY BASIC SCHOOL – LEGONEND OF TRINITY TERM EXAMINATION – JULY 2013**SUBJECT: ENGLISH READING & COMPREHENSION BASIC: 2****TIME: 1HR**

NAME: CLASS: DATE:

.....

SECTION A

Read the following passage carefully.

Mr. Frog and the Birds

Many years ago, a frog lived on an island. Two of them were Mr. Frog's friends. They were sparrows.

Mr. Frog and his friends never went far from their home. They got their food and water from their part of the island. In the evenings, Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow and the other birds met on a tree. The tree was near the place where Mr. Frog lived.

Some of the birds told Mr. Frog stories and he also told the birds stories. He told them how he got his food. He also told the birds how he spent the day when they were away. The friendship between Mr. Frog and the birds grew stronger and stronger.

As time went on things began to change. For a whole year, it did not rain where they lived.

The ponds and rivers near their home dried up. All the plants and small insects which were Mr. Frog's main meal also died. There was neither food nor water for Mr. Frog and his bird friends. As Mr. Frog became very hungry, he hid himself in a hole for a very long time.

The birds were not always hungry as Mr. Frog because they flew to the other parts of the island where they got food.

One evening when the birds returned from their trip, they went to see their friend Mr. Frog and told him that there was plenty of food on the other side of the island so they would like to go with him. Mr. Sparrow said “Frog, we shall take you to the other side of the island. You will get food to eat and water to drink”.

Mr. Frog replied with a giggle and said “How can I come with you? I can’t fly”. Then Mr. Sparrow said “I will hold one end of a stick with my feet. My wife will hold the other side”. Mr. Frog was very quiet for a while and said with excitement, “That’s very good. Shall we try it?”

Soon the three friends were in the air flying. Mr. Frog was very happy that he was flying and also that he was going to get food. It was the first time that he was flying. As they flew in the air, Mr. Frog looked down and saw a farmer in his farm. The farmer also looked up and saw the two birds and the frog. The farmer had never seen a frog flying before. He shouted, “What kind of frog is this. “A flying frog?” Mr. Frog was so happy that he was the first frog to fly. He wanted to tell the farmer he was the frog from the other side of the island. As soon as he opened his mouth to talk, he fell off the stick. Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow never saw their friend.

Answer these questions.

1. Where did Mr. Frog and the Sparrows live?

a) Forest b) Hole c) On an island

2. What was the name of Mr. Sparrow’s wife?

.....

3. Why was Mr. Frog hungry? Because

a) there was space b) there was food c) there was no food

4. Where did the frog hide himself? a) room b) tree c) hole
5. Why was there no food on the island? Because there.....
a) were no plant b) was no rain c) was rain
6. Write down two nouns from the passage.
a)..... b)
7. What time of the day did the birds meet on the tree? They met in the
.....
8. Where was the tree? It was near
.....
9. Where did the birds fly to in search of food? They flew to
10. The friendship between frog and the birds grew and
.....
11. What did the farmer see when he looked up? The farmer saw
.....
12. What did the farmer say when he saw them? He said what kind of
.....
13. Why did Mr. Frog fall off the stick? He fell off because
.....
a) he opened his mouth b) he closed his mouth c) he opened his eyes
14. Were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow happy when their friend fell down? What do you
think? I think they

Complete these sentences

15. Some of the birds told Mr. Frog
.....

16. Mr. Frog became very and hid himself in a
.....
17. The Sparrows never saw their again.
18. You will also hold theof the stick.
19. You will get to eat and to drink.
20. They told him there was of food on the other side of
the
21. Write down four (4) adjectives from the passage.
- a)
 - b)
 - c)
 - d)

APPENDIX 13
EXAMINATION GRADING SYSTEM

90 – 100	EXCELLENT
75 – 89	VERY GOOD
65 – 74	GOOD
55 – 64	QUITE GOOD
50 – 54	AVERAGE
40 – 49	FAIR
30 – 39	BELOW AVERAGE
20 – 29	WEAK
19 - 0	VERY WEAK

APPENDIX 14A

SAMPLES OF PUPILS' TESTE/EXAMINATION PAPERS (Kweku Asare)

<p>4. Where did the frog hide himself? a) room b) tree c) <u>hole</u></p> <p>5. Why was there no food on the island? Because there _____ a) were no plant b) <u>was no rain</u> c) was rain</p> <p>6. Write down two nouns from the passage. a. <u>frog</u> b. <u>Sparrow</u></p> <p>7. What time of the day did the birds meet on the tree? They met in the <u>in the evenings</u> <u>lived.</u></p> <p>8. Where was the tree? It was near <u>Mr frog house</u></p> <p>9. Where did the birds fly to in search of food? They flew to <u>the other side island</u></p> <p>10. The friendship between the frog and the birds grew <u>stronger</u> and <u>stronger</u></p> <p>11. What did the farmer see when he looked up? The farmer saw _____ a) crows and parrots b) <u>two birds and the frog</u> c) an aeroplane</p> <p>12. What did the farmer say when he saw them? He said what kind of <u>frog is this</u> a) frog is this? b) stick is this? c) animals are these?</p>	<p>13. Why did Mr. Frog fall off the stick? He fell off because _____ a) <u>he opened his mouth</u> b) he closed his mouth c) he opened his eyes</p> <p>14. Were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow happy when their friend fell down? What do you think? I think they <u>was not happy.</u> 14</p> <p>Complete these sentences</p> <p>15. Some of the birds told Mr. Frog <u>stories</u></p> <p>16. Mr. Frog became very <u>hungry</u> and hid himself in a <u>hole</u></p> <p>17. The Sparrows never saw their <u>frog</u> again. 52</p> <p>18. You will also hold the <u>millet</u> of the stick.</p> <p>19. You will get <u>food</u> to eat and <u>water</u> to drink</p> <p>20. They told him there was <u>a lot</u> of food on the other side of the <u>island</u></p> <p>21. Write down four (4) adjectives from the passage. a) <u>hungry</u> b) <u>died</u> c) <u>happy</u> d) <u>lived</u> 2</p>
<p>56/70</p>	

APPENDIX 14B

"Do you see that? I say I will win," said Sai.

"Don't be so happy, Sai. We have only just started."

The two boys played three games. Sai won two of the games and Dei won one. They ate the fruits and played again.

They played two more games. Sai won three of the five games. Dei won two.

Dei said, "I'm tired now, we must go home. Next time I will win all the games."

"Goodbye, Dei," said Sai.

"Goodbye, Sai," Dei said.

They went home.

EXERCISES

A. Answer these questions:

1. What are the names of the two friends? *The two friends*
2. Who said they should play ludo?
3. Who brought bananas?
4. Who brought oranges?
5. How many games did they play?
6. Who won more games?

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Kwaku Asare osei Okai

- ① *The names of the two friends are Dei and Sai.*
- ② *Dei said we should play ludo.*
- ③ *Sai said I will brought some bananas.*
- ④ *Dei said I will brought some oranges.*
- ⑤ *Sai won three of the five games.*

(26)

APPENDIX 14C (Charity Gavor)

4. Where did the frog hide himself?
a) room b) tree c) hole
5. Why was there no food on the island? Because there _____
a) were no plant b) was no rain
c) was rain
6. Write down two nouns from the passage.
a. birds
b. island
7. What time of the day did the birds meet on the tree? They met in the evening
8. Where was the tree? It was near where Mr. frog lived
9. Where did the birds fly to in search of food? They flew to the other side of the island
10. The friendship between the frog and the birds grew stronger and stronger.
11. What did the farmer see when he looked up? The farmer saw _____
a) crows and parrots
b) two birds and the frog
c) an aeroplane
12. What did the farmer say when he saw them? He said what kind of animals
a) frog is this? b) stick is this?
c) animals are these?
13. Why did Mr. Frog fall off the stick? He fell off because _____
a) he opened his mouth
b) he closed his mouth
c) he opened his eyes
14. Were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow happy when their friend fell down? What do you think? I think they were sad
- Complete these sentences
15. Some of the birds told Mr. Frog to the other side of the island
16. Mr. Frog became very hungry and hid himself in a hole
17. The Sparrows never saw their friend again.
18. You will also hold the middle of the stick.
19. You will get food to eat and water to drink
20. They told him there was plenty of food on the other side of the island.
21. Write down four (4) adjectives from the passage.
a) hungry
b) middle
c) kind
d) plenty

67/70

APPENDIX 14D

- Charity Se Sinam Gavor, 2p
1. Mrs kuma baby is baby Ato.
 2. Mrs kuma washes the baby.
 3. Ato is one years old.
 4. Mrs kuma uses a basin, water, sponge, towel, s.
 5. She uses the towel to dry Ato.

Charity Se Sinam Gavor, 2p

RS

APPENDIX 14E Fadila Abdul Zakou

4. Where did the frog hide himself?

- a) room b) tree c) hole

5. Why was there no food on the island? Because there _____

- a) were no plant b) was no rain
c) was rain

6. Write down two nouns from the passage.

a. island

b. Mr. Frog

7. What time of the day did the birds meet on the tree? They met in the _____

tree

8. Where was the tree? It was near _____

island

9. Where did the birds fly to in search of food? They flew to _____

the tree

10. The friendship between the frog and the birds grew _____ and _____

stronger

11. What did the farmer see when he looked up? The farmer saw _____

- a) crows and parrots
b) two birds and the frog
c) an aeroplane

12. What did the farmer say when he saw them? He said what kind of _____

- a) frog is this? b) stick is this?
c) animals are these?

13. Why did Mr. Frog fall off the stick?

He fell off because _____

- a) he opened his mouth
b) he closed his mouth
c) he opened his eyes

14. Were Mr. and Mrs. Sparrow happy when their friend fell down? What do you think? I think they _____

No

Complete these sentences

15. Some of the birds told Mr. Frog _____

stories

16. Mr. Frog became very _____ and hid himself in a _____

hole

17. The Sparrows never saw their _____ again.

friend

18. You will also hold the _____ of the stick.

middle

19. You will get _____ to eat and _____ to drink

food water

20. They told him there was _____ of food on the other side of the _____

plenty island

21. Write down four (4) adjectives from the passage.

a) island

b) Mr. Frog

c) the tree

d) birds

56/70

APPENDIX 14F (Fadila Abdul Zakou)

~~14 May 2012~~

Fadila Zu

- ① ~~Ato~~
- ② ~~Mrs. kuma~~
- ③ ~~one year~~
- ④ ~~basin Soap Sponge Water~~
- ⑤ to clean Ato

↑
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