

## **TALKING BOOKS TECHNIQUE: A STRATEGY TO IMPROVE PUPILS' READING AND COMPREHENSION SKILLS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of the study was to find out whether the use of talking books as an intervention should be able to improve pupil's word recognition, identification, fluency and comprehension sample for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 30 pupils for the study. Structured interview guide, tests and observation were the instrument used to collect the data. Findings from the study consolidated the usage of teaching and learning materials such as tape recorders, pictures and word cards to enhance comprehension as pupils were reading improved after the study. The researchers recommended the methodology of the talking books to be used to encourage reading comprehension to reduce much difficulty especially in non-native speaking countries. Finally, the researchers recommended these findings to the Ghana Education Service of the Ministry of Education to help them in modifying English Language syllabus used in various schools.

**Keywords:** Talking books Technique, Reading, Comprehension, Primary School Students, Ghana.

### **INTRODUCTION**

English language is the official language of Ghana. It is used in business, education, medicine and any other areas of human endeavor in Ghana. English Language is studied at all levels of education as compulsory subject and also a second language. A good number of eminent citizens, educationist and institutions have shown great concern for the falling standard of education in Ghana. For instance, the Ministry of Education reports showed that over 20% of children leave school before the completion of the basic cycle, due to factors including the low quality public education (MOESS, 2006). An appreciable amount of this concern is on the inability of pupils to read and their lack of interest for seeking information and knowledge. Sikhwari (2014) have found out that inadequate motivation for students of higher learning among other factors as a disincentives to learning and academic achievement.

Reading is a complex process involving the perceiving of written meanings and the interpretation of meaning to life. It is therefore, an active process that requires individuals to bring ideas and symbols that trigger off meaning according to the pattern of the writing, the intelligence and the experience of the reader. Comprehension is a complex cognitive process that reflects the inner workings of the brain. Comprehension in general usage and more specifically in reference to education and psychology has roughly the same meaning as understanding. After a child has developed some skills in reading comprehension, it becomes a means through which other things are learnt. He or she learns some Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and other school subjects. Ashon-Warner (1963) stipulated that children can learn words after single exposure if words have vital meaning to them. The pupil in primary school are having difficulties in reading and understanding the English Language text books because they are not able to recognize words in the texts. Also they are unable to decode the

text which frustrate their efforts to read. The pupils have developed a negative attitude towards the study of their text and this has affected their study in the English Language and other subject taught in English. Successive governments of Ghana have made several efforts to improve the standards of learning through infrastructural development at the education sector among other policy initiatives (Ankomah et-al 2005) but the standard remains low (MOE 2008). The curriculum has been enriched and expanded in order to ensure quality performance, yet the Ghanaian education system is experiencing low academic performance (Affum-Osei et-al 2014). Therefore, as non-native speakers of the language, there is the need to develop modern techniques to help pupils improve on the reading, speaking and writing of the English language. It is envisaged that, the this research would be of good benefit to the non-native teachers especially those who are given the responsibility of teaching reading comprehension as an aspect of English in Basic Schools. The study will serve as a guide to Ghana Education Service in their development of syllabus for English language.

### **Objective of the Study**

The aim of the research is to help use effective techniques such as talking books technique of teaching, reading comprehension for pupils to cultivate an intrinsic motivational reading habit and also to be able to answer comprehension questions meaningfully.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to the study:

1. How can the use of introduction of talking books technique improve pupils' word recognition and fluent reading?
2. How can the use of teaching learning materials such as pictures improve pupils understanding of the text or passage?
3. How can pre-reading activities such as the use word card improve pupils' comprehension questions?
4. How can individual reading help improve pupils reading skills?
5. How can the use of word cards enhance pupil's word recognition and Identification?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Defining Reading**

Reading has been defined in several ways by different writers and at different periods. Reading is thought of as a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation (Owen 1994). Reading is recognized as an activity which involves the use of mind to translate written symbols into something meaningful. Reading is seen here as a complex activity that does not only limit one to identification of words but the ability to understand, articulate freely and the intrinsic support to pursue reading. Goodman (1976) stipulated that reading is a psycholinguistic guessing game which involves and interaction between thought and language. In his view, efficient reading does not result from precise perception and identification of all elements but from the skills in selecting the fewest, most productive cues necessary to produce guesses. According to Keifa (1986), reading is an active process of creating meaning by taking information at all levels of language (letter, word, syntax, discourse) and checking hypothesis about what the writer might mean. Smith and Meredith (1988), defines reading as the active process of reconstructing meaning from language represented by graphic symbols (letter).

## **Defining Comprehension**

It would be proper to consider some circumstances that surround children's learning to read. The most fundamental 'climate' of learning is the quality of relationship between teacher and children. The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1983), defines comprehension as the act or action of grasping with intellect or the capacity for understanding fully (Merriam Webster). For Anderson and Pearson (1984), comprehension is the process by which the reader constructs meaning by interacting with the text. That is taking the relevant ideas from the text and relating them to the ideas you already have. Tonges et al (2001), talking about metacognition and effective comprehension write: those who are effective readers monitor their own comprehension by making decision at all stages of their reading. They understand the process needed for comprehension in order to reach a particular comprehension goal. Metacognitive readers do not only monitor their own reading but also regulate when necessary and orchestrate needed strategies base on their own specific goals.

Murphy (1998), examines three main skills and ability involved in comprehension. These are translation; which involves understanding of the major ideas in communication and their relationship and the ability to determine the implications, consequences and effects of communication. What this means is that, the reader must be able to extend the communication to situations and problems not included explicitly in the communication.

## **Reading Comprehension**

Ampim (1994), argues that reading comprehension seeks to find out how well a pupil can read and discern information from the materials being read. In this wise, reading comprehension passages are design to find out whether the pupil understand the details of the passage or seek to find whether pupils have fair grasp of the main idea of the passage. He further argues that, understanding a passage is basic to any successful comprehension. Reading comprehension may be seen as the process of interpreting written or printed materials which may be books, magazines, newspapers etc.

One can also explain reading comprehension as the ability to read and understand what is conveyed in a piece of writing. The reader must be able to read coherently and must be able to answer questions arising from the passage read.

Ekporwa (2005) writes reading comprehension is a process of reading, understanding and explaining what is in written passage. For every comprehension exercise, there must be a passage to be read. The purpose of the comprehension is to test student understanding of a given passage. In comprehension, the thought of the writer is presented to the student for reading, understanding and explaining.

Jacob and Tunnel (1996), argue that each class in the basic school requires a library on its own which will provoke pupil's curiosity to read. The above definitions given above reading stipulate that the ultimate purpose of reading is to comprehend, that is, the ability to understand the passage read. According to Bauman & Duffy (1997), good readers are mentally engaged, motivated to read and learn, socially active around reading tasks, strategic in monitoring the interaction process that assist comprehension etc.

## **Pre-Reading Activities Defined**

Graves and Graves (1995), describes pre-reading activities as any activity designed to enlighten pupils to be abreast with what they are to read about. They explain that, during reading activities include things that pupils themselves do when reading and things that teacher does to assist them as they read. This includes silent reading, reading to pupils, guided reading, reading aloud by pupils, vocabulary studies and semantic webbing.

Riley (1995), believes in preparing the minds of the students or readers before the actual reading is done. He sees this as the student first stage which aims at helping the student realize what they already know about the topic thereby triggering the curiosity of the students as to what they are about to read. He asserts that, it is difficult to learn much from the reading scripts if you have not previously given it much thought, pre-structure points and this way allows the reader to associate and categorize and separate the major and minor. Without this initial stage students will read blindly through chapters, remembering little when they are through. Pre-reading strategies bridge the gap between what is known and what is to be learned. The kinds of things teachers do at this pre-reading stage are: motivation, building background of experience, review related concept among others.

## **Word Identification and Fluency**

The ability to identify and understand words is the foundation to the reading process (Stanovich, 1991). Identification is an initial acquaintance with a word. Recognition is a subsequent acquaintance. The child “recognizes” the word form as one that he previously identified and that he knows. Word identification is the ability to learn, to identify a printed word and recognizes it in different context. Fluency is the ability to read in a normal speaking voice with the appropriate intonation and inflection (Samuels, 1994). The major purpose of teaching identification is to provide children with tools that will prevent pupils from forgetting the meaning of what they have read. The three basic word identification skills are phonics, structural analysis and contextual analysis (Heilman, 1981).

Phonics instruction consists of teaching letter sound relationship to aid pronunciation. Structural analysis instruction focuses on visual patterns and meanings that change due to inflectional endings. Contextual analysis is aimed at helping children to figure out meanings of a word by how much it is used in the context of a sentence or a passage.

## **Factors Affecting Reading Comprehension**

To a large extent, reading comprehension is affected by the context which reading takes place. Spiro (1980) is of the view that, it is impossible to separate comprehension from contextual factors that influence it. The individual reader’s characteristics, the specific text and the total situation all exert a strong influence on what is comprehended.

For Anderson (1977) individuals with different characteristics comprehend the same material differently. This characteristic includes pupil’s attitude, interests, expectations, skills and prior knowledge or experience. It is possible that certain characteristics of text may affect reading comprehension. Durkin (1974) states that, a well-organized and coherent text facilitates reading comprehension.

According to Sackyi-Baidoo (2000), the meaning of any word or expression cannot be easily understood unless one relates each new expression to information both before and after it. He says, once a word or expression does not exist alone but joins with others to form a phrase, a sentence or a clause, it loses its individuality to this large structure. Many students do not understand a word in terms of contextual meaning. They thus fail to see metaphor and appraise its real contribution to the discourse or reading as a whole. One word may have different meanings in different context even in ordinary usage. For instance, a word like ‘hand’ has different meanings in usage

- Judith will give me a helping hand.
- The people will hand over the thief to the police.
- The dress was sewn by hand.
- I had a hand in decorating the car for the wedding.
- She will give a free hand.

In brief, it can be deduced that word identification and fluency are the major contributing factors to comprehension in the reading process and this will help the researchers to help the Basic Stage Five pupils of Assin Manso D/A School to overcome the problem in reading comprehension.

### **The Process of Improving Reading Comprehension with the Recorder or Talking Books Method**

The talking books method is a special way of recording books and selected stories in a small sequential portions to improve comprehension. The talking books were originally developed for a group of elementary level poor readers who have severe auditory problems. The use of this recorded book for each student instantly, dramatically improve their oral reading. Carbo (1978) observes that instead of their previous slow hesitant labored reading, they now read with enthusiasm and expression, appropriately altering their voices and pacing to suit the mood of the passage.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The type of research was action research and falls under descriptive design. This is because action research is concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context (Scorpio, 1988)

### **Population**

The target population involved all basic schools in Assin District in the Central Region of Ghana. The accessible population was drawn from basic stage five pupils of Assin Manso D/A Primary School.

### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

The selection of an appropriate sampling method depends upon the aim of the study (Marshal 1996, cited by Affum-Osei et al 2014). The current research employs the purposive sampling technique which is defined as selecting units (e.g. individuals, groups, institutions), based on a specific purpose associated with answering a research / study’s question (Teddlie & Yu

2007 cited by Affum-Osei et al 2014). This method allows the researcher to actively select the most productive sample to answer the research questions (Marshall 1996 cited by Affum-Osei et al 2014). There were fifty five (55) pupils in the class but 30 pupils comprising seventeen (17) boys (57%) and thirteen (13) girls (43%) were used as sample for the study due to time and resources constraints. The main rationale for selecting this school is that, the researchers noticed pupils' inability to read and comprehend text. This motivated the researcher to conduct a study to find out why pupils cannot utilize their reading and comprehension skills. The consent of the people were sought from the District Education office, the Head teacher of the school and the parents of the pupils

## **Intervention**

The intervention used helped to address the problem identified. The activity involves reading, writing and listening. The research is on reading comprehension and so the pupils involved are given simple comprehension passage to read and answer the questions that are asked on them. The researcher did this to enable him obtain a written information from the pupils since it is through reading.

The intervention strategies employed during the intervention sessions are:

1. The talking books.
2. Word recognition and identification.
3. Developing fluency in reading.
4. Practicing fluency in reading.
5. Evaluating fluency.
6. Post-test.

The researcher during their classroom instructional hours at Assin Manso D/A Primary School observed basic five pupils during an English reading comprehension lesson. The researcher observed that pupils cannot identify words or read fluently and comprehend what is read and this made the researcher to intervene so that pupils can read fluently, understand what they read and answer questions correctly.

## **Pre-Test**

Before the intervention began, a pre-test was conducted at school. The objective of this test was to collect baseline data for comparison with the post-test at the end of the project. The part of the test used is "Zakia and the king". It was photocopied and given to pupils with twenty questions comprising fill in the blanks, multiple choice and true or false questions. (See appendix A). After this, the researcher performed a model reading of the story for the pupils to listen. Pupils were given some time to read the story on their own. Pupils were given sheet of papers for answering the twenty questions set on the text. Afterwards, the papers were collected from pupils and marked.

## **Week One –Treated Intervention**

**Objective:** The objective of this intervention is to introduce pupils to the talking book approach of teaching comprehension and fluency.

**Instruction Materials:** A radio cassette player and a recorded tape of the story "Zakia and the king".



**Procedure:** A radio cassette player and recorded tape were placed on the table in front of the class. Pupils were told in brief what talking book is all about. The recorded text was played for pupils to listen so that they could answer questions on it. Pupils were asked questions on the text played on them. A post test was conducted.

### **Week Two-Treated Intervention (2)**

**Objectives:** The objective of the lesson was to help pupils recognize words and identify them.

**Instructional Materials:** A radio cassette player recorded tape, photocopies of the text word cards.

**Procedure:** Pupils were first given photocopies of the passage titled “Zakia and the king” to look on and listen to the recorded tape and follow it. Pupils were called to read words written on the chalkboard and pick it out from word cards spread on the table. They then used them in forming simple sentences. Some of the words in the text were also spelt by pupils eg Zakia and the king etc the researcher conducted a post-test after the intervention. (See appendix B)

### **Week Three-Treated Intervention (3)**

**Objectives:** The objective of the lesson was to help pupils to develop fluency in reading.

**Instructional Materials:** A cassette player, recorded tape of the text ‘Zakia and the king’ and photocopies of the passage.

**Procedure:** The photocopies of the text Zakia and the king were first distributed to pupils. Pupils were instructed to listen to the text and read as it was played and follow the line of print with their eyes. The recorded tape of the text was played many times for pupils to read and follow the line with their eyes. A Post-test was conducted.

### **Week Four: Treated Intervention (4)**

**Objectives:** The objective of this lesson was to offer pupils the opportunity to practice reading fluently.

**Instructional Materials:** A radio cassette player, recorded tape of the text “Zakia and the king” and photocopies of the text.

**Procedure:** Pupils were asked to listen to the text and look on the photocopies of the text as well. The text was re-played for pupils to read along with it many times. In each case, the researcher listened and made the necessary corrections. Whenever, pupils made mistakes, the tape was stopped and the text is repeated so that pupils can read it correctly.

### **Week Five: Treated Intervention (5)**

**Objectives:** The lesson was aimed at evaluating pupil fluent reading.

**Instructional Material:** A radio cassette player, recorded tape of the text “Zakia and the king” and photocopies of the text.

**Procedure:** Pupils were told that they are going to read the text so that they could be assessed. The text is played first to refresh pupils previous knowledge. Pupils were then called in turns to read portions of that text “Zakia and the king” for assessment. Marks were

awarded for fluency in terms of correct pronunciation, good reading and ability to read complete sentences. In all a total of hundred (100) marks were given for the score.

### **Week Six: Intervention Strategy (6)**

Objective: Objective of the lesson was to evaluate pupil's comprehension.

**Instructional Material:** A radio cassette player, recorded tape of the text "Zakia and the king" and photocopies of the text were distributed to pupils. The recorded tape of the text was then played for pupils to listen. Pupils were given some time to read the text on their own. Questions on the text were asked for pupils to answer orally.

### **Week Seven: Treated Intervention (7)**

At the end of the sixth week intervention, pupils were given a post-test to ascertain whether the use of word cards and talking or recorded books strategies had in any way improved pupils word recognition, reading fluency and comprehension.

Prior to the test, a photocopy of a new text of Zakia and the king was distributed to pupils. Answer sheet were given to pupils to write their names on it for the text.

Afterwards, twenty questions which were made up of ten supply questions, five multiple choice questions and five true or false questions were written on the chalkboard. One hour duration was given for pupils to read the text and answer the questions set on the answer sheet given to them. Pupils answer sheet were collected afterwards and marked over 100 marks. This means that, each correct response carried five (5) marks (see appendix A).

### **Instrument Used**

#### **Pre-Intervention, Reading and Comprehension Test**

The first instrument centered on pre-intervention reading and comprehension test. The pupils were made to read a given passage and answer the questions asked on it. This was done to test the language for that matter the comprehension level of pupils at the beginning of the research.

A post-intervention test which also involved a reading passage and questions for answering was also conducted. This was done to find out level of improvement in the pupils as far as reading and answering of comprehension questions were conducted.

### **Direct Interview**

Interviews were another source used to collect information. This enables the researcher to get to the bottom of the problem. The researcher interviewed the pupils to enable them obtain first-hand information on the difficulty in reading and answering of comprehension questions correctly. The interview centered on some of the problems of pupils faced during instructional times which hinder their effort in reading comprehension.

### **Data Collection**

This procedure has been sub-devised into 3 stages namely the pre-intervention stage, the intervention and the post-intervention stage. Before the intervention began, a pre-test was



conducted at school. The objective of this test was to collect baseline data for comparison with the post-tests at the end of the project. The part of the text used is "Zakia and the king". It was photocopied and given to pupils with twenty questions comprising fill in blanks, multiple choice and true or false questions. (See Appendix A). After this, the researcher performed a model reading of the story for pupils to listen. Pupils were given some time to read the story on their own. Pupils were then given sheets of papers for answering the twenty question set on the text. After wards, the sheets of papers were collected from pupils and marked.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Research question 1:** How can the use of introduction of the talking books technique improve pupils' word recognition and fluent reading? The answer to this research question is presented in table 1 together with the pre-test scores.

**Table 1: Pre-Test and Post-Test 1 Scores**

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage of pupils	Frequency	Percentage of pupils
0-9	3	10	1	3.3
10-19	4	13.3	1	3.3
20-29	3	10	2	7
30-39	4	13.3	2	7
40-49	5	17	3	10
50-59	2	7	6	20
60-69	4	13.3	3	10
70-79	3	10	4	13.3
80-89	2	7	3	10
90-99	0	0	2	7
Total	30	100%	30	100%

The data as presented in table 1 indicate that 11 pupils, representing 37 percent, scored above average in the pre-test whilst as many as 19 pupils representing 63 percent performed below average in the pre-test. Nobody scored in the range (90-99) in the pre-test. The scores analyzes in the pre-test imply that the class had the problem of reading comprehension. The case was different with the post-Test 1 scores where only one (3.3%) scored in the ranges (0-9) and (10-19). Three pupils (10%) scored in the ranges (40 - 49) and (60 - 69) and two (7%) pupils scored in the range (90-99), (30-39) and (20-29). The data further shows that four (13.3%) of pupils scores in the range (50-59) and six (20%) in the range (80-89).

Comparing the pre-test and the post-test results, the indication was that pupil's scores in the post-test 1 were quite high as compared to the pre-test. The data point to the fact that whilst nineteen (63%) pupils scored below average in the pre-test, only eleven (37%) pupils performed average in the post-test 1. Again, whilst eleven pupils representing (37%) scored above average, 50 in the pre-test, as many as eighteen pupils representing (60%) performed above average in the post-test 1. This performance of pupils was due to the intervention that followed the pre-test and not by chance. This implies that, the teacher needs to use other strategies such as talking books to teach reading comprehension. This strategy makes reading more meaningful and enjoyable as printing and sound are synchronized to enhance positive achievement and that has improved pupil's word recognition and fluent reading over the pre-test after the intervention. Carbo (1978) observes that instead of their previous slow hesitant

labored reading, they now read with enthusiasm and expression, appropriately altering their voice and pacing to suit the mood of the passage.

**Research questions 2:** How can teaching materials such as pictures improve pupils understanding of the test or passage?

The data in table 2 presents the answer to this research question. The data in table 2 represent the post-test 2 scores of pupils.

**Table 2: Post-Test 2 Scores**

Score interval	Percentage of pupils	frequency
0-9	0	0
10-19	7	2
20-29	3	1
30-39	10	3
40-49	7	2
50—59	13	4
60-69	13	4
70-79	20	6
80-89	17	5
90-99	10	3
Total	100%	30

The data in table 2 above shows that six pupils representing (20% performed below average. Again, ten pupils resenting 33% scored the average mark. As many as fourteen pupils, representing 47% scored between the ranges of (70-79). This was above average. Nobody obtained marks in the range 0-9 in the post-test 2.

In Summary, table 2 also shows that there was some improvement in pupil's performance in the post-test 2 as compared to the post-test 1. Using learning materials such as pictures, a great number of pupils were able to increase their word recognition and identification skills as they were able to pronounce words correctly and use them in the post-test 2 stage. This conforms to the fact that, significant improvement in pupil learning occurred during the intervention. Riley (1995), believes in preparing the minds of students or readers before the actual reading is done. He sees this as the student first stage which aims at helping the student to realize what they already know about the topic thereby triggering the curiosity of the student as to what they are about to read.

**Research question 3:** How can re-reading activities such as word card improve pupils' comprehension skills in answering questions?

Table 3 present the answer to the research question. The data in table 3 presents the post-test 3 scores of pupils.

**Table 3: Post-test Scorers**

Scores interval	Frequency	Percentage of pupils
0-9	0	0
10-19	0	0
20-29	4	13

30-39	2	7
40-49	3	10
50-59	3	10
60-69	5	17
70-79	4	13
80-89	6	20
90-99	3	10
Total	30	100%

From table 3, it can be observed that only six pupils representing 20% obtained below average marks. Again, eleven pupils representing 37% obtained the average marks (the range below 49-69), (43%) pupils obtained above average (70-99) marks. Table 3 which represent the scores of pupils in post-test 3 showed that the pre-reading activities has promoted and enhanced pupils' comprehension skills. Comparing pre-test 2 and post-test 3, the data showed that twenty two (22) representing 73% pupils obtained above average marks in post-test 3, twenty one pupils representing 70% obtained above average. Though the number of pupils who performed above average decreased in post-test 3 by one, four pupils representing 13% obtained marks in the range between (0 – 29) in post-test. Eight (8) pupils representing 27% obtained marks in the range (0-19).

It can therefore be said that, word identification is the ability to learn to identify the printed word and recognize it in different context. Fluency is the ability to read in a normal speaking voice with appropriate intonation and influence (Samuels, 1994). The major purpose of teaching identification skills is to provide with tools that will prevent pupils forgetting the meaning of what they read. The upward trend in pupils' performance in post-test 2 over post-test 3 points to the fact that there had been a change in pupils' performance due to the intervention.

#### **Research Questions 4:** How can individual reading help improve pupils reading?

The answer to this question is presented in table 4. The data in Table 4 presents the scores of post-test 4.

**Table 4: Post-test 4 Scores.**

Scores interval	Frequency	Percentage of pupil
0-9	0	0
10-19	0	0
10-29	2	7
30-39	3	10
40-49	2	7
50-59	4	13
60-69	5	17
70-79	5	17
80-89	6	20
90-99	3	10
Total	30	100%

Table 4 shows that only five pupils representing 17% obtained marks below average range between (0-39), eleven pupils represent 37% obtained average marks in the range (40-49). As

many as fourteen pupils representing 47% obtained above average the marks in the range (70-99). Nobody obtained marks within the range (0-19). This shows that there had been improvement in pupils' performance in the post-test. Comparing the data for the post-test 3 and post-test 4, only seven pupils representing 23% obtained below average in the post-test 4. Again, while only twenty one (21) pupils representing 70% scored above average in the post-test 3 as much as twenty three (23) pupils representing 77% scored above average marks in post-test 4.

This implies that the use of individual reading enforce great impact on pupils' comprehension. Anderson (1977) asserts that, individual with different characteristics comprehend the same material differently. These characteristics include pupil's attitudes, interest, expectations, skills and prior knowledge or experience. It is also possible that certain characteristics of the text may affect reading comprehension. Durkin (1974) states that, a well-organized and coherent text facilitates reading comprehension.

**Research Question 5:** How can the use of word cards enhance pupil's word recognition and identification and answering comprehension question?

Table 5 present data gathered in answer to this research question.

**Table 5: Post-Test 5 Scores**

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage of pupils
0-9	0	0
10-19	0	0
20-29	1	1
30-39	2	7
40-49	2	7
50-59	5	17
60-69	5	17
70-79	6	20
80-89	6	20
90-99	3	10
Total	30	100%

The data in Table 5 indicate that three (3) representing 10% of the pupils obtained below average marks range (0 - 39), twelve (12) pupils representing 40% obtained the average mark range (40-69) and fifteen pupils representing 50% obtained mark above average marks (range between 70-99). Comparing the scores between post-test 4 and post-test 5, seven pupils representing 23% showed below average performance in post-test 4 but only five pupils representing 17% obtained marks below average in post-test 5.

Again, in post-test 4, twenty three (23) pupils representing 77% scored above average marks but in post-test 5 as many as twenty five (25) pupils representing eighty three percent (83%) showed above average performance. This implies that there has been tremendous improvement in pupil's performance over the post-test 4 performance. Therefore, the use of word cards had enhanced pupils' word recognition and identification and comprehension. Stanvich (1991) affirms the fact that, the ability to identify and understand words is the foundation to the reading process. To conclude, as it was indicated by the result of the post-test in tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, pupils performed better in all the post-test than the pre-tests. The

consistent improvement in the post-test cannot be due to chance rather due to the use of intervention strategies.

## **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Summary**

The study is set to help Basic five pupils of Assin Manso Primary to overcome their problems in reading comprehension through the use of talking books technique.

The main objectives set for the study were as follows:

1. To improve pupils word recognition and reading fluency.
2. To introduce the talking books technique to the English teacher so that he or she can continue to use it to improve his or her professional competence.
3. To improve pupils reading comprehension skills in answering comprehension questions.
4. To suggest measures to improve activities

Pupils in primary five constituted the population of the study and action research design was used to conduct the study. There are fifty five (55) pupils in the class but 30 pupils comprising seventeen (17) boys (57%) and thirteen (13) girls (43%) were used as sample for the study due to time and resource constraints. The sampling technique used was purposive and structured interview guide, tests and observation were the instruments that were used to collect the data.

### **MAJOR FINDINGS**

1. The talking books technique as an approach to reading comprehension generated pupils' interest and enables them to relax and practice reading in a meaningful way.
2. Using learning materials such as pictures, a great number of pupils were able to increase their word recognition and identification skills as they were able to pronounce words correctly.
3. A number of pupils sampled for the study were able to increase their word recognition and identification skills as they were able to pronounce words correctly through the usage of word card as a pre-reading activity.
4. The researchers recognized through the study that, pupils' comprehend same texts material differently. These characteristics include pupil's attitudes, interests, expectations, skills and prior knowledge or experience.

Two thirds of the pupils were able to score above average marks in reading as a result of their improvement in identifying words in the text. There has been an improvement in pupils learning: writing, speaking, reading and listening skills with the use of the talking books technique. Pupils now confidently read for meaning and answer comprehension questions correctly. This is an indication of fact that, the research questions were duly answered in affirmative, thus all the six measures of intervention did make positive impact on their performance in reading comprehension. After analyzing the data on the two tests, it came to light that pupils performed better on the post-test item than the pre-test. This is due to the effectiveness of the intervention employed.

## CONCLUSION

1. The use of talking books as a technique for teaching reading helps pupils to read better. It makes pupils active participants of the lesson thereby stimulating their interests.
2. Pupils were able to extract meanings from passage when they were able to associate pictures to the text. This serves as background that foster effective understanding.
3. Pre-reading activity allows the reader to make predictions about text that will be read by eliminating possibilities that are unlikely. They are a way to prepare a reader prior to a reading assignment by asking them to react to a series of statement, questions or words related to the content of the material.
4. Individual reading of text should be encouraged since pupils comprehend same text material differently.
5. Usage of word card in teaching English comprehension stimulates easy identification and recognition of words. Pupils do not become frustrated when they meet such words in other subject areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are from the findings of the study;

- a. From the analysis, it was realize that the approach used by the researcher in teaching reading comprehension was effective and this improved pupils' performance.
- b. The researcher suggests that, this research should be replicated in another school or schools as a way of validating the use of the talking books technique.
- c. The methodological of the talking books should be used to encourage with other strategies in helping pupils to read without much difficulties.
- d. The researcher recommends that, individual reading should be encourage since pupils comprehend differently due to different attitudes, interests, expectations, skills and prior knowledge or experience of the reader.
- e. Finally, the researcher recommends these findings to the Ghana Education Service of the Ministry of Education to help them in modifying English Language syllabus.

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## APPENDIX A

**Read and answer the questions below.**

### ZAKIA AND THE KING

Zakia was furious with her father. He always asked her advice before he makes the decision. He knew she was the cleverest girl in the country. However, at one time, he has not asked for her advice and he was very angry. The king had heard about Zakia's beauty and her intelligent and wanted to marry her so she said to his father. Her father did not ask her but said to the king "yes, my King, my daughter will be very happy to marry you" Zakia was not happy. 'No, father, "she said, I will not marry someone I do not know" But Zakia's father said, "He is a good man and very powerful king". If you don't marry him, he'll be very angry. 'Please marry him" the father said.

Finally, Zakia said, "all right, I'll marry him if he learns to do an ordinary job. One day he might not be king and what will we do then? We will be poor. Go to the king and tell him he must learn to do an ordinary job. Zakia's father went to the king and told him his daughters wish. Then smiled and said, 'your daughter is not only beautiful but very clever too'. Am sure that we will be happy together I'll be glad to learn a skill to do a proper job. The king chose to become a weaver so he wove well and made a beautiful handkerchief. He sent it to

Zakia as a present: "I'm sure if she sees my present, she will marry me". Zakia liked the handkerchief and said, now I see that he has learnt to be a fine weaver" "he must love me. I will marry him" soon they were married. They live happily and well. The king always asks for Zakia's advice before he makes any decision. One day, the king came to his wife. ; I want to know all about my people and what they think of me; he said; how can I learn what they think? How can I learn what they want? Zakia thought for a while and said, 'My king, if a man wishes to know another man well, he must spend time with him. I think you must put on ordinary cloth and meet the people in the street of our city; that's an excellent idea, the king said so the next day he went for a walk around the city with two of his ministers. When they got hungry the king said, "Let's go to a restaurant in a narrow street". They met an ugly old man at the door. He welcomed them warmly. 'This is the first time in my restaurant, gentleman, are you visitors to our city' asked the old man "indeed we are ; replied the king. We are strangers here and we don't know anybody but we hope to make friends in your restaurant." Then come in, sir" said the man. However, as they went into the room, the old man pushed down some stairs and they found themselves in a small, cold and dark prison. They shouted but nobody came to help them.

Suddenly they heard a laugh. Above them they saw the ugly face of the old man. Welcome, gentleman, tomorrow I shall kill you and your cooked bodies will make good meat for restaurant. Everybody comes here for my tasty dish. The old man laughed again and left them alone "let's tell him who we are when he comes back" said one of his ministers. No, said, the king. 'If he knows that he will kill us today. I need to think about this so he sat down by the wall to think. Later in the night, the old man returned. He said, 'Here is some water for you before you die. The king said, 'If we must die, we must. But I know how you could make a lot of money from us 'I love money' said the greedy man. 'Tell me? 'I'm the weaver and Zakia, the king's wife, likes my work very much. If I weave a handkerchief and take it to her, she will give you a lot of money for it. You will get more money for one's handkerchief than for all the dishes in your restaurant, I'm sure.

The old man was excited by this idea. He found a weaving loom and some thread. The king worked through the night. In the morning he has made a beautiful handkerchief. He gave it to the old man who hurried to the palace with it. It was not easy to get to see Zakia but at last the servant let him in. "I have a very beautiful handkerchief said the old man." a fine weaver made it". Will you buy it? Zakia immediately knew that the king had made a deal and that he needed help. 'yes, it is a very beautiful handkerchief' she said. Zakia bought the handkerchief and thanked the old man. Then, she ordered the king's soldiers to follow him

They followed the old man back to his restaurant. Then the king and his two ministers came out from the restaurant. 'My dear Zakia' said the king when he saw her, 'you have saved my life' I love and respect you more than anyone in the world'.

## POST-TEST 1

**Answer the following question.**

1. Why was Zakia her father?
2. What did the king want?
3. Zakia was not happy. Quote what she said to say that.
4. Zakia decided to marry the king on what condition?
5. What did the king choose to become?

6. Why did the king put on ordinary cloth and walked around the street with two of his ministers?
7. What do I in the last sentence of the passage refer to?
8. Why did he send the ugly man with the handkerchief to Zakia his wife?
9. The job that the king learnt saved his life, why?
10. What suitable title can u give to the passage?

## POST-TEST 2

**Say whatever the statement are true or false**

1. The king became a weaver. True \ False
2. Zakai was a clever girl. True\ False
3. The king asked Zakia's opinion before agreeing to the king's proposal of marrying her. True\False
4. The ugly old man succeeded in killing the king. True\False
5. The king wanted to marry another wife that was why he went to the town with two of his ministers. True\false

## POST-TEST 3

**Choose the correct answer from the opinion given**

1. The king choose to become a. carpenter b. Zakia c. Poet
2. The king married a clever girl called .....a. Zenabou b. Zarah c. Zakia
3. I in the 9<sup>th</sup> paragraph refers to ..... a. Zakia b. Zarah c. Zenabou
4. Who said, 'now I see that he has learnt to be a fine weaver, he must love me, I will marry him' a. her father b. the king c. Zakaia
5. We in the 13<sup>th</sup> paragraph refers to a. Zakia and her father b. Zakia and her husband c. the king and his two minister.

## APPENDIX B

**The use of word card for recognition and identification of words**

Furious  
Cleverest  
Smiled  
Intelligent  
Ordinary

Advice  
Restaurant  
Weaver  
Ministers  
Stranger