

EXAMINING ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN LOWER  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

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PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

BY  
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This thesis submitted to the Department of Basic Education of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Basic Education

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## DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

*I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.*

Candidate's Signature ..... Date: .....

Name: Margaret Abla Adjoho

Supervisors' Declaration

*We hereby declare that the preparation and the presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.*

Principal Supervisor's Signature ..... Date .....

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the teaching of Oral English language in the lower primary schools in Cape Coast Metropolis. The study sought to identify the methods teachers use in teaching Oral English and the challenges they encounter. Descriptive survey was adopted to guide the study. Ninety lower primary school teachers and 20 headteachers were sampled for the study. The instruments employed for data collection were questionnaire, interview and observation.

The study revealed teachers use discussion, and question and answer methods in teaching Oral English lessons. They do not engage pupils in meaningful activities. Majority of teachers do not engage pupils in group work though some had pupils sitting in groups in their classrooms.

Some implications derived from the findings are that Oral English should be taught in meaningful situations because children quickly learn their mother tongues and even other languages they are exposed to when used in meaningful and authentic situations. Also there is the need for teachers to integrate the teaching of the language arts. The rationale for the integration is provided by the realization that reading and writing abilities are deeply rooted in the development of oral language knowledge.

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## DEDICATION

To my dear children: Senyo, Selasie, Worlanyo and Yesutor for their love,  
encouragement and support.



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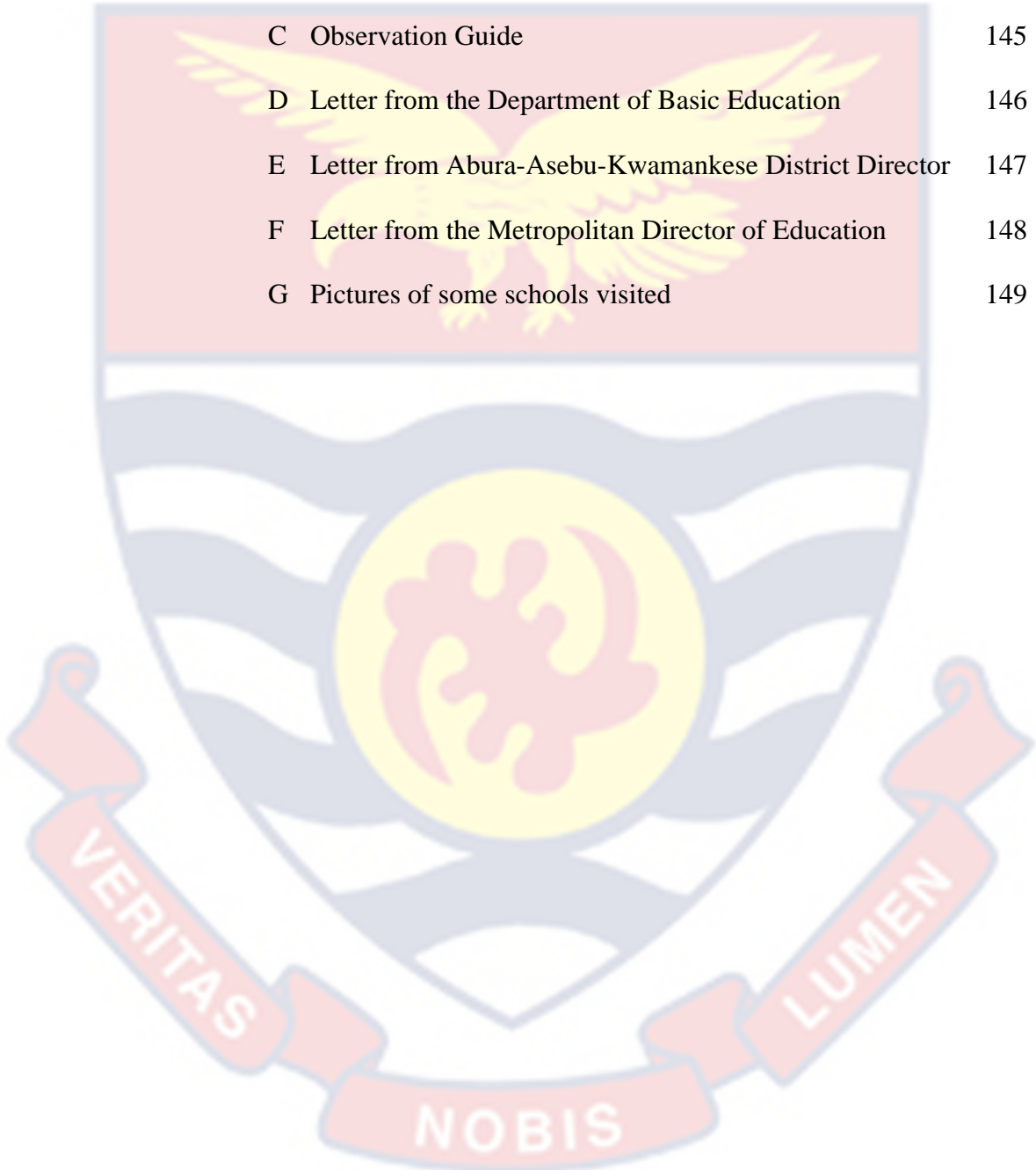
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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

##### Background to the Study

Communication is the activity of conveying meaningful information and requires a message and an intended recipient. The ability to communicate through language is probably the single most important human quality. A variety of verbal and non-verbal means of communication exist. Being able to communicate effectively with others either by speech or writing is key for learning to take place. For primary school level teaching the question of how to increase communicative competence tends to be most crucial (Morozova, 2012). Since language plays a major role in effective communication, the development of language, upon which all learning is built, plays a critical role in students' ability to acquire strong literacy skills, which include listening speaking, reading, writing, viewing and presenting.

As Britton (1983) notes, we are born with the potential to communicate through language, which we do rapidly, mastering most of the conventions of oral language before age five or six. Basically, reading and writing float “on a sea of talk,” and as human beings we are afloat in this sea of talk the moment we are born. All humans begin learning language, learning about language, and learning through language from birth. This shows that language is the most complex form of communication used by humans, which allows the

transmission of culture and permits us to teach others. Although all cultures have oral language, not all have written language (Honig, 2007).

At the most basic level, children communicate with other people mostly through oral language. Thus, the development of oral language provides the foundation for literacy development. Children need to use oral language to develop their powers of reasoning and observation, prediction, sequencing and other skills connected with reading. It is helpful to think of oral language as oral communication and the two components involved are listening and speaking. Oral communication includes discussion, speeches, presentations, interpersonal communication and many other activities which are crucial to a child's literacy development. Oral language is the key indicator of children's reading abilities (Dickinson, Cote & Smith, 1993). According to Wood (1999), the use of talk in the classroom cannot be over emphasized. Children observe oral communication in many contexts – home, preschool, prekindergarten, and begin to develop concepts about its purposes (Dyson, 1983; Martinez, 1983; Halliday, 1994).

Oral language begins to develop at a very young age as children and parents interact with one another in the natural surroundings of the home environment (Teale, 1978; Yaden, 1988). A child's home environment greatly impacts the rate, quality and ability to communicate with others (Martinez, 1983; MacLean, Bryant & Bradley, 1987; National Research Council 1999). Factors related to language growth in the home environment include parental interaction, books being read to children, modeling; hence, language and literacy routines all closely parallel those of the classroom and school. The development of oral language is crucial to a child's literacy development,

including listening, speaking, reading and writing. While the culture of the child influences the patterns of language, the school environment enables him to refine its use. (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005). Through meaningful and playful interactions, pupils can develop the type of everyday communication skills that facilitate learning. Target skill areas such as sequencing, classification and letter sounds oral language skills are all components of early childhood educational programmes (Kelly & Zamar, 1994).

Speaking and listening are key aspects of oral language. Researchers have indicated a strong relationship between oral language and reading, writing and thinking (Menyuk, 1984). Oral language is the basis on which the other language arts develop (Sticht & James, 1984). For this reason, it is important to continuously support students in developing oral language throughout all grades (Pinnell & Jaggar, 1991). Children and young adults develop oral language by using it (Halliday, 1975). There is reason to believe that students acquire written language skills in a similar way (Wells, 1986).

There are five types of listening in the listening processes. The discriminative listening which distinguishes sounds, for instance, in phonemic awareness activities. The aesthetic listening which involves listening for pleasure or enjoyment when we listen to stories and poems, read aloud and watch students perform a play, or reader's theatre reading. Efferent listening makes us understand messages when we listen to informational books read aloud, oral reports, book talks etc. Then, critical listening helps us to evaluate messages when we listen to debates and political speeches and view commercials and other advertisements. Also, the therapeutic listening enables us to listen sympathetically, for instance, when we listen to a friend talk out a

problem. Students need to learn to vary how they listen to fit the purpose for listening, and they need to develop specific strategies to use when listening (Jalongo, 1991; Anderson, 1993).

Just as there are listening processes so also do we have talk processes.

According to Tompkins (1998), conversation is a talk procedure in which a pupil can begin a conversation or expand or extend a classmate's comment, sustain a conversation or end a conversation. He said aesthetic talk involves procedures such as participation in literature conversations, story telling, reader's theatre etc. Efferent talk involves participating in theme cycle conversations, doing shows, presenting oral reports, doing a book talk or a book review, conducting an interview and participating in debates. Dramatic activities also include role-play, puppet shows, story boards, dramatic productions etc. Talk is a useful learning tool, and it is important that activities be adapted so that every student can use talk.

In communication people share and build meaning. Meaning is a social and cultural phenomenon and all construction of meaning is a social process. Language development undergoes three main stages. The Proto-language stage (which is associated with the crawling stage) involves noises and intonation, physical movement, adult/infant interaction – this exchange of attention is the beginning of language. During the Transition stage, which is associated with the developmental stage of walking, there is a transition from child tongue to mother tongue and the “pragmatic” mode develops; a demand for goods and services that seeks a response in the form of an action. During the third, the Language stage, the child moves from talking about shared experience to sharing information with a third person. The child realizes that



reality is beyond his or her own experience; thus he invites confirmation, and enjoys shared experience.

From the ontogenesis of conversation we are able to gain insight into human learning and human understanding. Meaning is created at the intersection of two contradictions; the experiential one, between the material and the conscious modes of experience; and the interpersonal one, between different personal histories of the interaction taking part (Halliday, 1994). Properly developed oral language enables a child to effectively communicate his or her thoughts and view points with others. It is also important for young children to develop listening skills as they begin to experience the power of communication.

Research shows that in our daily lives a normal person spends more times listening at home, in school, in the work place and with friends than he is involved in any other of the language arts modes. Research again shows that human beings spend 53% of their time listening, 16% of their time speaking, 17% of their time reading and 14% of their time writing (Chaney & Burk, 1998). In spite of the dominance of listening activity in our daily lives many people are inefficient listeners, retaining only about 20% of what they hear. Hence, the young and adult alike need training to become efficient listeners in their daily lives.

To improve the ability to retain information, we need to improve or focus on information – intake strategies and other strategies that improve the retention of information in the long-term memory. In the classroom, teachers need to train students in the three elements of the listening process, that is, hearing of the symbols, storing and interpreting them and responding to the

speaker. According to Biggs (1987), the development of oral language skills must be addressed in kindergarten as an integral part of the daily curriculum in order for students to be able to succeed throughout schooling and in today's society (Goodman, 1992): International Reading Association (IRA) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) 1998.

In addition, research shows that through oral language children develop self-identity and shape their experience and knowledge. Literacy acquisition depends on oral language abilities skills. Many opportunities for exploration and play promote emergent literacy (Teale, 1978; Morrow & Rand, 1991), which occurs naturally throughout the school day.

From the child's earliest experience with personal narrative development, oral language acquisition must be continually fostered (IRA & NAEYC, 1998). This becomes the building block for establishing success in all areas of literacy. A successful oral language lesson should exhibit certain characteristics and these are enumerated below:

1. Learners should talk a lot and participation should be even. Classroom discussion should not be dominated by a minority of talkative pupils. All pupils should get a chance to speak and contributions should be fairly and evenly distributed.
2. Motivation should be high; learners should be eager to speak because they are interested in the topic and have something new to say about it or because they want to contribute to achieving a task objective.
3. Language should be of an acceptable level. Learners express themselves in utterances that are relevant, easily comprehensible to each other, and of an acceptable level of language for pupils.

4. Use of small groups. Learners should be allowed to interact with mates in small groups to discuss issues.

5. Teacher should be a facilitator and should avoid dominating the lesson.

(Ur, 1996)

In our schools we can engage our pupils in oral language activities such as market scenes, doctor's consulting room, pick and act, setting a store, etc to make pupils talk and practise school language. Language plays a central role in learning, and a child's success in school depends to very large degree on his or her ability to speak and listen. (Vukelich, Christie, &Enz, 2002).Williams and Robert (2011) contend that students must be active participants in the language learning process. A student cannot learn a language without actively using it.

There are essentially questions to be asked concerning oral language lessons in our schools. Some of these are whether the pupils are given enough opportunity to talk. Are they motivated enough to participate in classroom talk? Is the language used by the teacher simple enough for the pupils? Is the teacher using group work to promote talk? etc. We often do not see these things happening during Oral English lessons in our schools.

It has been observed that in our public schools pupils do not have the confidence to use the English language because they are afraid of making mistakes and being given nicknames or mocked at. This lack of confidence may be due to lack of opportunity to practise the new language (second language) they are learning at school. Teachers prefer using class teaching to group work and some use language above the levels of their pupils which

makes them unable to participate and enjoy the lesson. Pupils are inhibited and feel they have nothing to say.

Low or uneven participation makes a few learners dominate the lessons while others speak very little or not at all. Some pupils at this point begin to use the mother tongue because it is easier and they feel less “exposed” if they speak in their mother tongue. This attitude towards the learning of English, if persistent, tends to affect their performance in the language even at higher levels. There is huge public outcry against students’ inability to comprehend and write good English. Scholars, educationists and chief examiners have been bemoaning the fact that students, cannot read, write and communicate in English very well.

Cape Coast, the capital city of Central Region is noted for being the centre of education in Ghana. There are a number of highly accredited second cycle schools in the metropolis. Parents all over the country want their children to be enrolled in these schools. But, beside a few private Primary and Junior High Schools in the Metropolis, the performance of the vast number of pupils in the public schools in the metropolis, generally, is questionable.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There seems to be low oral communication in the English language among pupils in the public schools. Pupils seem not to be able to engage in meaningful conversation. A typical conversation with a pupil ends after he/she has been able to provide his/her name and names of his/her parents and school. Pupils appear to lack the vocabulary to talk about things around them. They

are not able to express their views, share their thoughts and communicate their feelings.

This poor oral communication seems to affect pupils' performance of the English Language because, as indicated in the work of Britton (1983), oral language is a 'sea' on which reading and writing floats. Sticht and James (1984) also affirmed this view. They opined oral language as the basis on which the other language arts develop. The poor performance in the English Language (being the service subject) affects the performance of other subjects at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) level. (Cape Coast Metropolitan Education, 2010). The report on the BECE further suggests that the number of pupils from the public schools that gain admission into the renowned second cycle schools like Mfantshipim School, Adisadel College, Wesley Girls' High School and others in Cape Coast Metropolis is negligible (Cape Coast Metropolitan Education, 2010).

Moreover, from my experiences in the College of Education as a tutor for 5 years, (1989-1994) I have observed that some students found it difficult organizing Oral English lessons. The fear of pupils not being able to use the English language during their lessons resulting in them scoring low marks always overcame them. Apparently, these are the students who graduate as teachers and come to the classrooms to teach. Obviously, there should be a way of exposing the student-teachers and teachers to the use of right strategies, knowledge about creating right environment and insight into the use of adequate teaching learning materials that would motivate pupils to use the English Language. This could dispel the fears surrounding the teaching of Oral English.

There are a number of research works in reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, spelling, poetry and phonics but little work has been done on Oral English, to the best of my knowledge. These issues enumerated above have necessitated exploring the teaching of Oral English in the lower primary schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana to identify ways in which teachers can help children use a range of diverse language functions in the classroom.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate how teachers teach Oral English and the methods they use in doing so, in lower primary schools in Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided my research work, which focused on the teaching of Oral English at the basic level:

1. How often do teachers at the basic schools in Cape Coast Metropolis teach Oral English?
2. What methods do teachers at the basic level use in teaching listening and speaking?
3. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching Oral English at the basic level?
4. How does Oral English contribute to the acquisition of other language skills?

### Significance of the Study

The study is important because it provides information on how teachers use listening and speaking skills to establish good foundation in literacy development since according to research these two activities (listening and speaking) are what a normal person uses 69% of his or her time doing.

This study brings to the fore the approaches teachers use in teaching Oral English. It further throws more light on why pupils have problems generally in speaking, reading and writing English, especially in the public schools at the basic level, which usually affect their performance at the B.E.C.E level. The findings of this study would go a long way to enhance the integration of the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) currently being used in the basic schools because it would help the teachers understand and appreciate the rationale behind the NALAP strategies in teaching Oral English and be willing to put them to use.

Again, the findings of the study would guide the policy makers of educations to provide a more effective monitoring system through English language coordinators at the Education Offices to monitor the teaching of English at the basic level by placing greater emphasis on the teaching of Oral English. The study is also useful to all institutions including Ghana Education Services (GES) that may need such information in planning curriculum contents and running courses for basic school teachers on the teaching of English and more especially on Oral English instruction.

The study further updates and expands the findings of previous studies on the teaching of Oral English and provides a blue print for future research. Thus, other studies could be conducted to push further the frontiers of teaching Oral English.

### **Delimitation**

There are other aspects of the Language Arts which are Reading and Writing but this study was confined to Oral English. Specifically, the study focused on listening and speaking abilities of the lower primary level pupils in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The scope of the problem was confined to the lower primary level. This is because the researcher believes that a meaningful delivery of Oral English instruction at that formative level could enhance the literacy abilities of pupils giving them a solid foundation that would equip them with skills for further academic pursuit which could bring about a better performance in English Language at the B.E.C.E than what pertains now.

### **Limitation**

Despite all the precautions taken for the smooth conducting of the interviews and the observation lessons some challenges were encountered. In the first place, it was difficult getting a convenient time for the interview to be conducted with the headteachers. Some were attending meetings or workshops and I had to reschedule the interview for about three to four times before it was conducted. Even in some cases it was not possible after several attempts. Secondly, some of these interviewees were just hostile and did not show interest in the exercise.



A few headteachers complained that researchers after conducting their study do not come back to give them any feedback. Anytime I tried to re-book or reschedule an appointment with them, they stated bluntly that they would not be available. Because of this unco-operative attitude I felt the relevant information that was needed could not be received from them. Hence interviews were conducted with 20 headteachers instead of the proposed 30.

During the observations, I went round to familiarize herself with the classes and pupils for the pupils to get used to my presence. As a result of the many rounds, there was a financial challenge which prevented me from observing lessons in 30 schools as original proposed. Again the duration of the language and literacy lessons which was for 90 minutes and the nature of the time table made it impossible for me to observe more than one lesson a day. Besides, in most schools, the language literacy lessons for the three lower primary classes (Bs 1-3) took place at the same time. In all, observation lessons were conducted in 22 schools.

### **Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One is deals with issues like the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations and the organization of the study. The second chapter reviews the related literature on the teaching of Oral English. It deals with the theoretical framework, key concepts and empirical studies. Chapter Three of the study describes the methodology used in the study, sample and sampling technique, research instruments used, data collection procedure and data analysis.

Chapter Four presents the results and discussion of the study while Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the theoretical framework on which this study is based and its implication for classroom interaction. This discussion includes some key concepts such as language development and Oral English instruction. The chapter again reviews the empirical studies on the teaching and learning of English as a second language, challenges in the teaching of Oral English, and also methods and activities in language instruction.

#### Current Demand for Good Communication Skills in English

According to Morozova, (2012), in a short period of time English has displaced other languages and became the leading means of communication worldwide. Its domination continues to extend. The modern world of media, mass communication and internet demands a good knowledge of English, especially of spoken English. Every person wishing to obtain the benefits of modern education, research science, trade, etc., knows that it is impossible without a working knowledge of the English language and good communication skills. A person without oral communication skills will suffer in this era of competition and may find it difficult to achieve a higher position.

Thus, the problem of teaching English to students, especially the problem of oral communication, has not yet been solved and one can find much to explore in this field. Because of the significant role of speaking, many researchers like Bailey (2005) and Goh (2007) have proposed methods to enhance speaking skills by means of syllabus design, teaching principles, types of tasks and materials, and speaking assessment (Morozova, 2012). Again, the view of language learning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century laid emphasis on functional and meaningful learning of language, and not just simply memorizing some grammatical terminologies. Hence it is important to equip our children with the necessary tool that would enable them to do well academically.

### **The Theoretical Framework of Oral English Instruction**

Theories, generally, influence educators and classroom teachers' choices of classroom instructional practices (Reutzel & Cooter, 1996). Research in first and second language acquisition has been carried out from different perspectives. These researchers from the different fields have used different methods to investigate how people learn first and second languages. There are five different theories of psychologists that influence first and second language acquisition and instruction. These are the Environmentalist or Behaviourist theories, Nativist theories, Neurobiological perspectives, Social – interactionist theories, and Constructivism or Cognitive Constructivist perspectives. The social constructivist scholars emphasize the social dimensions of learning; how the individual learner is influenced by his society,

culture and interaction with the people in his environment (Hiebert, 1996; Au, 1998).

The Socio-Cultural theories of Lev Semenovick Vygotsky, a Russian socio-cognitive psychologist, contribute greatly to the Constructivism perspective. He views the role of the society as very critical in children's language development and thinking. This theory emphasizes the interaction between Socio-Cultural factors and the psychological development of a child. It stresses the interpersonal contributions involved in learning in general and especially in language learning. Vygostky's Social Constructivism theory mainly informs this study. The term 'social constructivism', as it is used by Brunner (1983), and others (Newman, Griffin & Cole, 1989), acknowledges the role the social plays in the construction of knowledge. However, the meaning of social in this context is usually restricted to the nature of the interactions between the novice and the expert. The social constructionism extends the meaning of social to, also, include the cultural and historical aspects of the social contexts (Brooks, 2002). Duran and Syzmanski (1995), Bodrova and Leong (1996), and Wink and Putney (2002) link social constructionism with some of the more recent interpretations of Vygotskian theory.

Again to other research scholars, social constructionism can be seen to have its roots in Vygotsky's theories of teaching and learning and to them, social constructionism has provided a new perspective to children's growth and development that is becoming of interest to early childhood educators today (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986, Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989, Berk, 1994; Philips, & Crowell, 1994; Berk & Winster, 1995; Thompson, 1995;

Bodrova & Leong, 1996; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998; Topal & Gandini, 1999;).

Beside the views of social constructionism expressed earlier in this chapter, the following are the explanations advanced in Vygotsky's socio-cultural and historical perspectives of learning and language development (teaching and learning). He believes that the signs and symbols developed by a particular culture and the child's interaction in learning these symbols are essential in developing higher mental functions (Gredler, 1997).

He further asserts that in any learning context the relationships between the social, the cultural and the historical aspects inherent in forms of communication, (these might include symbols, algebraic systems, art, writing and diagrams and language, Vygotsky, 1962) combine to influence not just what is learned but also how it is learned. In the social constructionist learning context, expertise is shared in order to negotiate and construct meaning. The learner brings prior knowledge and combines it with new knowledge through his or her interaction with others.

In addition, Vygotsky was perhaps one of the first psychologists to suggest the mechanisms by which culture becomes part of each person's nature. He stated that the kind of logic we use and the method we use to solve problems are influenced by our social and cultural experiences. He claimed that children acquired the rich body of knowledge accumulated by their culture which in turn, influences their knowledge and thought processes. From a Vygotskian perspective everything about learning and development is social. Hence the name "social constructionism" (Brooks, 2002).

When one compares some views of Vygotsky with those of other leading developmental psychologist such as Piaget, one finds significant differences. For example, to Piaget, the father of constructivism, intellectual development had a universal nature independent of the child's cultural context. He proposed distinct and sequential stages of development with children reaching the highest level, formal operational thinking around the age of 14 (Ginsberg & Opper, 1988).

To Vygotsky, the social and cultural context was of primary concern and it determined the types of cognitive processes that emerged. He placed less emphasis on the characteristic of each stages of development and wrote primarily about the restructuring of the child's mind that takes place in the periods of transition from one stage to another. He stated that a child's development was a series of qualitative changes that could not be viewed merely as an expanding repertoire of skills and ideas.

Again, while Piaget emphasized the child's interactions with physical objects in developing mature forms of thinking, Vygotsky emphasized the child's interactions with people. Concerning learning and development, Vygotsky held a very different position from his peers, like Piaget. While Piaget believed that learning and development were two separate processes and that development had to occur before learning could take place, Vygotsky believed that learning and development were interrelated, reciprocal, and a dynamic process in which learning could often lead development.

In a Vygotskian classroom, four principles always apply and these principles are relevant to this study. These are:

- 1) Learning and development is a social, collaborative activity.

- 2) The Zone of Proximal Development can serve as a guide for curricular and lesson planning. (Language plays a central role in mental development).
- 3) Classroom activity should be reality – based and applicable to the real world.
- 4) Learning extends to the home and other out-of-school environment and activities and all learning situations should be related (Brooks, 2002)

The above four principles of Vygotsky are beneficial to this study in that they identify the key issues on socio-cultural and historical perspective of language development which will help our discussions on Oral English instruction.

Vygotsky's theory affirmed that development cannot be separated from its social context. He proposed that even when we are carrying out a mental action in isolation, we are not really participating in an individual mental process but are rather still operating in a social context because we are using the social and cultural tools of language. He argued that even books are themselves social, cultural and historical artefacts so when we are reading a book we are constructing our interpretation of the text from our own experiential base that is itself determined by the cultural, social and historical context (Wink & Putney, 2002).

Vygotsky proposed that language plays a central role in mental development. He did not believe that there are many logical processes that are universal or culture free. According to him, a child does not just become a thinker or problem solver but rather she becomes a special kind of thinker,



rememberer listener and communicator that is a reflection of the social context. (Bodrova & Leong, 1996).

The views espoused by Bloom, (2002) are in agreement with Vygotsky's perspectives. Bloom claimed that language learning depends on generic potential and social interactions. He further stated that despite our innate propensity at birth to be able to learn any language, the loving care givers who socialize babies and young children are crucial for ensuring the power to use language as a rich symbol system that permits humans to share meaning with one another and to advance learning.

### **The Classroom Implications of Vygotsky's Theories**

First, the constructivist theory/notion gave birth to a new approach of teaching that is referred to as scaffolded instruction in which the teacher provides a support to the student at the initial stage of learning where the task the student is learning or performing is beyond his or her level of competency. At this initial stage, the teacher is to link his/her instruction to the child's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Lerner, 2003) and the teacher is likened to a scaffold. This means to help a student perform a task that is beyond him, the teacher must first ascertain what the student can do on his own. The teacher withdraws gradually when the student is able to perform the task independently, and then finally after enough practice.

Secondly, Vygotsky recognized that children are able to solve problems that were beyond their actual developmental level when a more capable peer or adult assisted or guided them. The implication of this greatly changes and broadens the scope of what we have traditionally believed to be,

“developmentally appropriate” because teachers can consider not only the child’s current level of development but also take into consideration emerging processes and skills. Indeed, what a child can do in co-operation today he can do alone tomorrow. (Vygotsky, 1986).

Thirdly, Vygotsky’s cultural constructivism notion brings in a wider context to learning including customs, religion, context language, physiology, tools available. He believes that the classroom teacher should provide a variety of learning materials and experiences including electronic tools such as computer and books.

Fourth, his social theories added a social aspect to learning. He emphasizes that learning takes place through the individual’s interactions with other students, teachers and the world at large. Vygotsky’s point of view was that acquisition and participation were synergistic strategies in learning situations. This recent perspective views the role of the society as very critical in children’s language development and thinking. The social theories advocate that language learning is promoted where human relationship helps the child to become an active processor of language. (Lerner, 2003).

Furthermore, Vygotsky believes that language plays a central role in mental development. He said when teachers encourage several real – life problem solving as part of the curriculum, it will encourage high level and critical thinking in students. The use of inquiry projects will cause students to think, create and invent new ideas.

Again, Vygotsky’s theory explains how co-operative or collaborative learning contribute to the cognitive development of the learner. As Vygotsky (1978) explained, children develop, acquire or learn higher mental processes

as they interact with other adults of the community. This kind of learning goes on naturally and unawares in various communities. Therefore teachers in the classroom should encourage collaborative learning where pupils talk and share ideas with other peers. Collaborative groups promote problem solving as well as foster the kind of learning that cannot be done when students work as individuals. So children are to perform their tasks first in groups and work with experts and then later individually/alone. Also, as the research literature shows second language educators need to encourage positive interaction patterns and collaboration between students and between students and teachers (Cazden, 1986; Moll, 1988).

To Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs within the context of discussion because the interaction process results in individuals reorganizing and reconstructing their own thinking and understanding. Through group discussion members reason together by listening to different and better informed view points. This, he says, enables individual members to recognize gaps in their own perspectives, unlearn misconception and construct more elaborate conceptualizations (Fawcett & Garton, 2005).

In addition, Vygotsky's theory proposes that instruction should be given in meaningful social context. Children should be encouraged to use language for real and purposeful activities and not just abstract lessons on grammar and skills.

Finally, in Vygotsky's classroom the teacher is to act as a facilitator and a mediator in language learning. They support children and be role models who are loving and caring but firm.

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theories are very relevant to this study because they are founded on the premise that all learning is an active interpersonal process. In particular, this notion would help teachers to make Oral English lessons learner - centred. Pupils would be guided to become active processors of language while teachers act only as mediators, guides, facilitators, etc. The literature also suggests that children's oral language development is a social process. This means as children interact with people around them, they acquire language which begins in the oral form. Vygotsky's (1978) belief in learning being a collaborative activity is in line with oral language perspective. The reason being, when teachers create a friendly and interactive classroom environment pupils are able to interact freely with their teachers and in small groups in order to learn.

The social constructivist idea on scaffold instruction is of great benefit to Oral English instruction because it would guide teachers to provide the relevant linguistic inputs needed during Oral English lessons for pupils to practise as second language learners. Vygotsky's view about the role of culture in language development would encourage the Oral English instructor to provide a variety of teaching learning materials for his lessons and deliver them in meaningful social context. However, cultural elements such as electronic tools like computers, books, etc could be modified to suit the facilities that are available in our schools.

## Language development

Piper (2006) sees language as the foundation to thinking about learning mathematics, or science, or social studies and in this respect it is unique. He said language plays a central role in children's learning because it is a partner to those central mental processes of perception comprehension, attention, memory and that somewhat amorphous, activity we call 'thinking'.

Honig (2007) defines language as a rule-governed, meaningful communication system. It is a symbol system, where a word or phrase stands for or represents something else that can be touched, thought, about, seen, heard, felt, done, imagined, longed for, rejoiced or anguished about. Language can be used for many different goals, among others: to teach, to scold, to encourage, to express affection, to pray; or to deceive, to insult, to explain, to clarify, to declaim poetically, to ask for more information;

Language is rich, fluid and evolving. It is used in a variety of ways for a variety of purposes by all speakers. Language is a means of communication. Language learning is not just limited to the classroom, knowing the letters and the corresponding sounds or becoming competent users of grammar, as Genishi (1987) puts it. Language helps us plan, communicate our feelings, understand what happens to us and form pure ideas. Language shapes our identities and social lives. The key that our children need to unlock academic work is to be able to communicate meaningfully in the first and second language. All teachers need to have a common goal to help our children attain some level of competence, or proficiency and fluency in L1 as well as the new target language.

Proficiency in language affects children's educational opportunities and the occupational choices available to them in their future lives. Halliday (1978) emphasized that children use language for functional and social reasons. Language learning in the classroom should be meaningful and functional to enable our children survive in this age.

Chaney & Burk (1998) define oral communication as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal (spoken) and non-verbal (unspoken) symbols in a variety of contexts. At the most basic level, oral language means communicating with other people. Holbrook (1983) sets out three criteria for oral language competence. According to him, fluency, clarity and sensitivity are the major issues to consider for oral language competency. Brunner (1983) also agrees that proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital tool for thought. He said without fluent and structured oral language, children will find it very difficult to think. Other researchers like Roskos, Tabors, & Lenhart, (2005) too contend that children's speaking and listening skills lead the way for their reading and writing skills, and together these language skills are the primary tools of the mind for all future learning.

Maria (2000) contends that oral language is an integral part of all learning experiences, hence it is not taught as a separate component of a literacy program but it is an embedded component in all content areas. She asserts that Oral English could be taught in various contexts like numeracy, social interaction, literacy, sensory motor group activities, developmental play centres, show and share, inquiry based activities, and language experiences.

Language is the foundation to thinking (Piper, 2006). The ability to speak and the ability to conceptualize are very closely linked. And the ability of children to handle concepts is related to their language development. In general terms, man's rationality goes hand in hand with his use of language.

This study examined Oral English instruction at the lower primary level. The knowledge of Oral English prepares the ground for language development that enhances pupils' thinking abilities. How teachers prepare pupils through Oral English to develop the English Language in the Cape Coast Metropolis was a significant basis of this thesis.

### **The Influence of the Home and School on Oral English Development**

Honig's (2007) study purposely looked at oral language development. The study not only assessed how language develops but also investigated other key issues that influence oral language development such as early communication patterns, learning complex oral language rules and socio-economic influences in language learning. Some important views expressed in his work show that caregivers and teachers are crucial supporters for oral language flowering (Honig, 2001). He contends that since the social context is so critical for rich oral language acquisition, parents and teachers need to become aware of their own understandings about how language is organized and what the different aspects of language are.

He said metalinguistic skills permit talk about all rules, aspects and stages of language development. He believes that caregivers in families and in schools need well – honed skills for tuning into the level of linguistic complexity in each child's oral language. An adult then is more ingeniously

and creatively able to ‘scaffold’ oral language activities to ensure each child’s chances not only for school learning success, but to enhance the ability to flourish in negotiations, in peer play, friendship patterns, multicultural understandings and team activities. This agrees with Otto (2002), who says that interactive play is much richer from preschool years onwards.

Jalongo (2003) also suggests that the integrated approaches to acquiring these oral language skills work best. The study again revealed that social class differences have implications for differential development of the child’s language power (Hart & Risley, 1995). He concluded that a wide variety of developmental atypicalities is associated with language delays and difficulties (Greenspan, 2001). When teachers are aware of the many factors that impede oral language learning, they can more sensitively respond to behaviours that are baffling.

The Oral English instructor has to emulate the love and support that parents, siblings and caregivers give to children in acquiring language. Children are helped to acquire the mother tongue in an environment devoid of insults, threats, tension and intimidation in the home and community. People around the child are excited when he uses language and promptly give a positive feedback to encourage him to learn language naturally and subconsciously. This study observed the extent to which conducive environment was created by teachers for pupils to learn Oral English at the lower primary level in Cape Coast Metropolis.



### Oral English Instruction

It is helpful to think of Oral English as oral communication. As Chaney & Burk (1998) put it, oral communication is defined as the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal (spoken) and non-verbal (unspoken) symbols in a variety of contexts. The key components involved are listening and speaking. Speaker and listener build meaning when they interpret messages, using their previous knowledge background or experiences. Although the integration of these major skills is commended, it will be beneficial that teachers' lessons are focused on training children to become good listeners.

According to Wood (1999), listening is not simply a synonym for hearing. She asserts that listening is the foundational language mode in that it provides the basis for learning to speak, read, and write because children construct their knowledge and use oral language by listening to the speech of those around them. She compares listening to the other language modes in a man's life by saying both school children and adults spend more time in listening than in reading, writing and talking combined, (p. 61). Hansen (1987) agrees with Wood by saying, "a writing/reading program begins with listening, and listening holds the program together" (p. 69). Listening is a complex process in which the mind converts spoken language to meaning. This process is in three parts; receiving, attending and assigning meaning (Wolvin, & Coakley, 1979).

Closely following the listening phase; in the Natural Approach (Listening Speaking, Reading and Writing) is the speaking stage. This stage is marked by various phases and speaking, as it is used here, is relative. It does

not mean that the children begin to speak as adults do. It is a gradual process covering: the cooing and babbling, the holophrastic, the two-word stage and the telegraphic stages. It is important to note that listening and speaking go together and teachers should create classroom atmosphere that will encourage speaking and listening.

Wood (1999) states that talk is the most frequently used expressive language mode. She explains that most children are fluent users of oral language by the time they start school. Since children have already acquired considerable competences in using oral language, teachers often assume that talk does not need to be emphasized in elementary classrooms. She points out that teachers spend considerable effort preventing children from talking and controlling their talk. She further explains by saying research has shown us that students benefit greatly from participation in both informal and formal talk activities. She agrees with Vygotsky's (1978) widely accepted notion that social interaction plays a major role in cognitive development.

There are various methods of enhancing oral communication competence. The study of Eisenhart (2006) has outlined six broad components of effective oral language instruction which he believes can enhance oral language development in the primary grades. The first instructional routine he talked about was creating a language centered learning environment such as physical, social, emotional and cognitive environments for pupils to help them learn oral language.

Developing listening skills was the second component that was identified for enhancing oral language competency. Teachers are encouraged here to explicitly teach children how to be good listeners; model good

listening skills (genuinely listen to your students); promote active listening to solve conflicts; schedule quiet, listening times as part of the school day; and provide interesting ‘nooks’ in the classroom that encourage conversation and attentive listening. Other games and activities that promote good listening skills identified by Eisenhart include: listening walk, recognizing familiar sounds (Prepare tape); matching sounds (Soundcans) echo activities; repeat clapping patterns; and games such as “guess who is speaking” “Simon says”; and “whisper down the line”

The third component has to do with teaching conversational skills such as school talk (extended discourse and decontextualized language); conversational reciprocity (turn taking); eye contact when speaking and listening; awareness of non-verbal communication; sustaining conversations; targeting students most in need; modeling conversational skills and providing guided practice at circle time; conducting interactive read aloud; and using role – play to teach and reinforce good conversational skills.

The fourth component talks about building auditory memory in which teachers are encouraged to teach children to remember important concepts, skills and strategies; playing memory games; using strategies like visual cues, mnemonics, sound bites, rhythm, rhyme and song; teaching poems, songs and finger plays. The fifth and sixth components talk about expanding conceptual knowledge, which include providing a learning environment that encourages curiosity and imagination; building vocabulary, planning authentic experiences like visits to the zoo, fire house, farm, museum.

To sum up, Eisenhart's study outlines these instructional routines that teachers can follow to enhance the teaching of Oral English which are; creating a language-centered learning environment; developing listening skills; teaching conversational skills; promoting auditory meaning; expanding conceptual knowledge and vocabulary; and encouraging word consciousness.

Williams & Roberts' (2011) work examined the need for strategic oral language instruction in English learner's classroom. The research revealed that during the past fifty years, the popularity of oral language instruction in the English Language Development (ELD) classroom has varied widely in response to the theoretical pendulum swings. Past methodologies, such as the Audio – lingual method and the Direct Approach in the seventies, the Natural Approach and the Total Physical Response in eighties and nineties strongly advocated listening and speaking. However, when the focus of instruction has been on explicit grammar structure, oral language has either shared the stage at the beginning of instruction with reading and writing or has taken a back seat in its role of importance.

William & Roberts (2011) further stated in their study that a recent research published by the California Department of Education brings to the forefront the need for a systematic and explicit ELD instruction (Snow & Katz, 2010). They said although research in the field is inconclusive, a growing body of data points towards the need for increased oral language rehearsal during ELD. However, the extent to which practitioners are implementing explicit oral language practice in the ELD environment varies. Some factors affecting the time dedicated to the teaching of oral language are

student variables, teacher training background, and the schools or the district's priorities and emphasis.

William & Roberts (2011) also quoted a recent publication entitled, "Improving Education for English learners: Research Based Approach," as supporting the notion that providing English learners with a daily dose of ELD instruction in a specific block of time is far superior to not doing ELD at all. It also indicates that the instruction must be interactive and the focus must be on listening and speaking. Their finding also gives evidence from subject matter classrooms that teachers do the majority of the talking.

They recommended that in the ELD and English as second Language (ESL) environment, this situation must be reversed. The teacher must make the effort to increase the opportunities for students to use, practise, and reinforce the language. The teacher models the language but the students must practise speaking and using it to interact with each other and with the language to convey meaning, exchange thoughts and ideas and solve problems on an oral level first, and then on a written level.

Kirkland & Patterson (2005) in their work on how teachers can make oral language development a primary focus for instruction and thereby meet the needs of the children, confirmed that teachers can facilitate this language development process through several venues. These include providing a carefully planned environment that will promote thoughtful and authentic opportunities to engage conversations; connecting children to literature by providing appropriate and engaging books that offer opportunities for rich discussion in the classrooms. To them, the amount of oral language that children have is an indicator of their success or struggle in school. This study

observed how listening and speaking skills were taught during the Oral English lessons by teachers in the lower primary classrooms in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Assessing Students' Talk**

Tompkins (1998) said it is important to assess students' talk because students and parents value what can be assessed. For example, in small-group conversation teachers can simply note whether or not students are contributing members of their groups. Teachers can observe students' behavior and assess how students contribute to their groups. Teachers can "listen in" on students' conversations to learn about their language competencies and their abilities to work in small groups.

According to Tompkins, teachers in primary grades might assess whether students contribute to the conversation, share ideas and feelings, are courteous, listen carefully to classmates' comments, call group members by name and look at classmates when talking to them. In addition to the six behaviours listed above, teachers of older students might assess whether students volunteer to begin the conversation, perform their assigned jobs in the group, extend and expand classmates' comments, ask questions and seek clarifications, stay on task, take turns, deal with conflict within the group, help to end the conversation and assume a leadership role in the group. Teachers can use these items to create a self-assessment checklist so that students can assess their own contributions to small-group conversations.

According to (WUSC (n.d) assessment is not only for students. Teachers can also have a diagnostic assessment to reflect on the lesson taught. Teacher's reflection might be on how engaged pupils were in the different learning activities, which part of the activity pupils enjoyed most and why they have enjoyed that activity most. Teachers can also reflect on how well pupils were able to work in pairs or small groups, how well pupils were able to meet the objectives of the lesson, the aspect of the teachers teaching that went well and how they can build on it for future teaching. However, the aspect of the teaching that did not go well can be changed in the teaching next time. This study observed how assessment was conducted during Oral English lessons by teachers in the lower primary classrooms in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Promoting the Learning of English as a Second Language Using Oral Language**

The work of Asher (1977) and Krashen (1982) establish the research base for the common-sense notion that second language learners need ample opportunity to listen to and develop understanding of their new language. The language that they hear and understand becomes the linguistic input necessary for the process of language acquisition. Second language learners can better understand the language that they hear when contextual clues, such as actions, gestures, visuals, props, settings, and predictable routines, help make the meaning comprehensible (Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2004).

Teachers are advised to promote students' language development by simplifying and modifying their new language in order to facilitate comprehension. Skillful teachers vary their speech modifications according to students' comprehension levels and prior knowledge. Researchers suggest that teachers should simplify less and less as students improve their understanding (Kliefgen, 1985; Snow, 1995; Yedlin, 2003, 2004).

Typically, comprehension develops in advance of the ability to produce language. Therefore, students can understand more complex language than what they can produce (Asher, 1977). A message that is largely comprehensible but contains some challenging words or structures is generally considered optimal input for language acquisition.

Many second language learners pass through a "silent period" during which they focus on comprehending and speak very little (Krashen, 1982). To monitor and advance students' comprehension during the period, teachers elicit and observe physical responses to instructions such as "Take out your crayons" or "Show me the lines of latitude on the map" (Asher, 1977; Krashen & Terrel, 1983). As teachers observe students' appropriate responses, they can slowly begin to increase the complexity of their instructions and invite students to produce one-word answers, sentence completions, and short phrases.

Listening to stories, poems, and talk familiarizes English Language Learners (ELLs) with the sound system of English, preparing the way for accurate pronunciation and phonemic awareness (Verhoeven, 1999). Listening to interesting and comprehensible stories, poems, and instructional talk can also supply students with vocabulary (Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn,



2004) and with understanding of literary discourse conventions such as "Once upon a time" and "The End" (Elley, 1989; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Read-alouds and other opportunities to listen to interesting and understandable oral language and texts are of critical importance to ELLs, as are opportunities to interact with peers and teachers about texts. Instructional conversations (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1998) provide models of how listening to others builds academic discourse and comprehension skills.

Beginning ELLs who are not confident speaking in a group can benefit from listening to the language of their peers and experiencing academic conversation. Listening to their classmates' questions and comments in English and/or in a shared primary language can support ELLs' efforts to comprehend difficult texts. ELLs benefit from participating in and listening to conversations where explicit connections are made both between texts and the readers'; experiences and among texts (Au, 1979). Instructional conversations (Saunders & Goldenberg, 1998; Tharp & Gallimore, 1991), reciprocal teaching (Palinscar & Brown, 1984, 1987) and literature circles (Ruby, 2003) are among the approaches to conversation designed to help literacy learners make such connections.

Oral language is the foundation upon which literacy skills develop (Snow, 1983; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001). Unlike students who come to school already proficient in English, English language learners (ELLs) depend greatly upon school for interactions that support the development of Oral English skills, including academic talk

(Heath, 1982, 1985, Reyes, 1992; Delpit, 1995; Gutiérrez, 1995, Bartolomé, 1998,).

Many ELLs go through a "silent" or pre-production period during which they listen and observe more than they speak (Krashen, 1982). They may speak fluently when using greetings and other basic phrases in routine interpersonal situations, but speak haltingly when constructing English sentences to express more complex ideas (Tabors, 1997; Cummins, 2001) or in settings where they feel self-conscious and insecure (Krashen & Terrel, 1983). Small-group work, work with a partner, and one-on-one conferences or conversations with the teacher (Yedlin, 2003) may help ELLs feel more at ease speaking. While ELLs acquire the language of socialization and daily life from social interaction with other students and adults (Tabors, 1997), they also require explicit instruction and modeling of the more formal language used in academic settings to talk about reading and writing (Bartolomé, 1998), as well as explicit instruction and feedback on language forms and usage (Fillmore & Snow, 2000).

Skillful second language teachers create verbal scaffolds and participation structures that support and extend language performance beyond what ELLs are able to produce independently (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1994; Yedlin 2003, 2004). Goldenberg (1993) and Ellis (1994) suggest that participation in such collaborative discourse extends and develops second language learners' communication skills. Culturally relevant texts, multicultural literature, and acknowledgement of culturally diverse experiences all promote increased comprehension and engagement (Barrera,

1992; Au, 1993; 1998, Harris, 1994; Gonzalez, Huerta-Macias, & Tinajero, 1998; Conant et al., 2001).

Skillful teachers ask ELLs clarifying questions to elicit more complex language from them (Yedlin, 2003, 2004). Researchers have also noticed that the speech patterns of effective second language teachers contain a high frequency of utterances that serve to extend, expand, and or paraphrase learner utterances (Chaudron, 1988; Ellis, 1994). Such utterances provide students with good language models for more effectively expressing their ideas.

During daily sharing time and class discussions, ELLs' contributions may be influenced by the narrative and conversational styles of their home communities as well as by their limited English proficiency (McCabe & Bliss, 2003). Researchers caution teachers not to confuse cross-cultural differences in style with cognitive deficit (Michaels, 1981; Delpit, 1995; Cazden, 2001). Teachers are advised to use print media, multicultural literature, and recordings to draw students' attention to diverse organizational patterns and to analyze the ways in which these differ (Adger, 1997). Activities such as situational role-playing can raise issues such as how to speak effectively in different roles and settings (e.g., talking with cousins at home or a college admissions interview) (Gutiérrez, 1999; Cazden, 2001).

Research shows that ELLs benefit from explicit instruction and modeling on how to participate in text-based discussions. Instructional conversations (IC) (Tharp & Gallimore, 1991; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1998) constitute one approach to structuring topic-centered and book-centered interactions. Through professional development, teachers learn how to promote discussion in which students explicitly build upon each other's

contributions, ask for and provide clarifications, use complex language to express themselves, and provide text-based evidence for their opinions.

To help students meet the expectations for academic talk, Bartolomé (1998) advocates assignments such as oral reports and formal presentations that have specific guidelines for academic talk; this sets these assignments apart from daily informal conversations. Literature circles are another discussion format with specified participant roles such as summarizer, questioner, and connector. Ruby (2003) and Heyden (2003) report on how ELL students can learn academic participation norms and develop oral language skills through the carefully scaffolded participation in literature circles.

Harris-Wright (1999) describes "bi-dialectical" programs where young speakers of African American vernacular English are taught strategies for helping make their oral and written narratives more understandable to listeners and readers from outside their communities. Such strategies include considering and supplying background information that their listeners may lack and organizing their accounts of events chronologically.

### **Methods and Activities in Language Instruction**

Quiet classrooms have been considered the most conducive to learning, but research now suggests that talk is a necessary ingredient for learning. Shuy (1987) says talk is often thwarted in elementary classrooms because of large class size and the mistaken assumption that silence facilitates learning. Teachers are to make extra effort to provide opportunities for socialization and

talk. However, teachers are not sure of the methods or strategies to use (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005).

Methods are general names given to certain procedures that the teacher can use to deliver his/her lessons, while activities are specific tasks or strategies that the teacher wants pupils to perform or skills that the teacher wants his pupils to learn. For instance conversation method can include activities such as dialogue, role play, telephone tasks, shopping lists, circle time, picture differences, describing pictures, sentences starters, pair work activities, etc. The teacher can use one or two of these activities in a conversation lesson and they could be the specific tasks that the teacher wants the class to perform. On the other hand the teacher may teach some conversational skills or behaviours such as; the use of appropriate volume and tone of voice, taking turns when speaking, paying attention when another person is speaking, the use of eye contact when speaking and listening, and sustaining conversations. (Rog, 2001).

Other methods like discussion, dramatisation, story telling, questions and answers, brainstorming may have specific tasks or activities which teachers can engage pupils in. In discussion method, the teacher can engage pupils in activities such as oral reports, group presentations, debates, book talk, interviews, talks show, group discussions, etc. So also, in dramatisation the teacher can use activities or strategies such as role play, puppet show, story telling and retelling, plays, miming, story maps simulation, pick and act. These activities are effective because everybody has the opportunity to do one thing or the other in the target language. Whatever the aim is, the teachers are to

always encourage the students to ask questions, paraphrase ideas, express support, check for clarification and so on.

According to Morozova (2012), in English language teaching every teacher chooses a definite set of methods that can enhance student's speaking skills. Nowadays it is possible to use traditional and modern technologies either separately or in integration. Internet communication tools have begun to be used in education, especially in English language teaching. New technologies are supplementing traditional English teaching methods and helping students to learn faster and easier. She suggests some activities which she said are crucial in building vital language skills. These activities include; reading aloud, listening to classmate's thoughts and responding appropriately, oral diary/oral weekly reports, group presentations on a completed project, oral book reports, picture description, story telling, chained story telling, creating riddles, role play, debates, dramatic monologues, radio drama and jazz charts. She said it is possible to use any of these methods because they all help to develop speaking skills.

However, the words methods or activity are used interchangeably in some books to indicate strategies that teachers can use in teaching English speaking skills. This study observed what methods teachers used in Oral English delivery and the activities they engaged pupils in during the lessons in lower primary classrooms in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### Challenges in the Teaching of Oral English

The teaching of Oral English is very important to the development of the language and learning in general. Cazden (1986) contends that Oral Language is an essential ingredient of learning. Kirkland and Patterson (2005) argue that the amount of Oral Language that children have is an indication of their success or struggle in school. They assert that the cost of deleting oral language development from our classrooms is high. To meet the needs (academic success) of these children, teachers can make oral language development a primary focus for instruction. Besides, while the culture of the child influences the patterns of language, the school environment enables children to refine its use (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005).

However, research shows that the teaching of Oral English has challenges. First, people have negative attitude towards the teaching of Oral (language) English. According to Honig (2007), most people do not believe you have to teach Oral English. They feel that after all children entering kindergarten have approximately 14,000 words in their repertoire. This supposition by Honig, agrees with what Wood (1999) says about the views of teachers concerning the teaching of Oral English. She said teachers think that since children have already acquired considerable competence in Oral English, talk does not need to be emphasized in elementary classrooms. So, teachers generally make considerable effort preventing children from talking and controlling their talk.

The study of Kirkland & Patterson (2005) also reveals that as children enter school, they bring diverse levels of language acquisition to the learning process. This makes teachers face a challenge of meeting the individual needs

of each language learner as well as discerning which methods work most effectively in enhancing language development. In addition, the diversity of cultures in our schools presents additional challenges for teachers as they become perplexed in meeting the need for appropriate oral language activities for English Language Learners (ELL) and children whose primary language is English.

Secondly, the development of oral (language) English which ultimately has an impact on all aspects of the curriculum, has been relegated to a more incidental by-product of many classrooms, in order to allow time to drill children on test items. Again, it has been found that as schools become more pressured to cover test content, the opportunity for oral language in classrooms diminishes. Conflicting messages regarding methodology in oral language development have resulted in a heavy reliance on programmes and quick fixes which inhibit the use of authentic, contextualized language experiences in classrooms (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005).

Morozova (2012) identifies some general problems in her study with English students at the elementary level in Russia which I find useful to this study. She said students feel shy speaking English because they are afraid of making mistakes. It is usually seen at the initial level as they are afraid of being criticized by teachers or other students. Again, when working in pairs (or groups), students often begin to use their native language. Often, students don't have enough information on the topics discussed even in their native language and they feel a lack of linguistic and verbal resources for solving the given task. She concluded that problem of poor speaking ability is a crucial one in many countries with Russia being no exception.



Other challenges in teaching Oral English pointed out by MacIntyre (2007) in her study show that student learners are unwilling to voluntarily speak the language when the opportunity arises. Despite the emphasis on communication in modern language pedagogy and the well-accepted view that learners require practice in speaking in order to learn (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément & Donovan, 2003). In addition, some researchers observe that not enough time is given to various exercises and opportunities for improvement of speaking ability (Morozova, 2012). Often, students complain of scolding, and discouraging by their teachers for not speaking correctly. Although both teachers and students are responsible for the poor speaking ability of the latter, the teachers, who have the professional knowledge and skills bear a greater responsibility (Morozova, 2012). Also, students who study English as a second language usually have limited opportunities to speak English outside the classroom (Zhang, 2009).

Thakur (2013) outlines the challenges that the English language teachers face in India which are found vital to this study. Though the study looked at the teaching of English Language as a whole, we cannot deny the fact that since Oral English forms the foundation of the language development, the improper handling of or ignoring the oral aspect can affect language learning as a whole. Some important views expressed by Thakur (2013) about the challenges of teaching English in India include lack of competent teachers. He said some teachers were trained in old methods of teaching and have never cared to look for something better in new techniques and there are others who have received the new insight/training but never apply their knowledge to the actual teaching work.

Faulty method of teaching is another point raised by Thakur. He said in most of the schools, the Translation method is the sole favourite of the teachers. They pick the reader, translate the paragraph, write the meanings of difficult words on the blackboard and assign some homework. Non-availability of good text-books and inadequate provision of teaching aids are other points identified by the study. He said the text-books of English used in the schools are of sub-standard. The books are edited or written by those who are not practicing teachers and most teaching is done without the help of any aid. In addition, marking of pupils' exercises is not properly attended to by teachers. English is taught basically as an examination subject, as a result the content does not focus on raising the level of communicative competence of the students but it is confined to the narrow confines of the examination paper. Again, parental interference in the work of teachers has also been a challenge, in that parents measure the progress of their children in the subject by the number of pages of the reader covered, translation exercises done and grammar lessons given (Thakur, 2013).

Research further shows that poor Oral English development affects the reading and writing of children. Oral (language) English is crucial to literacy development. It is a key indicator of children's reading abilities (Dickinson, Cote, & Smith, 1993). Piper (2006) agrees with Dickinson et al, by saying children's reading and writing are in a very real sense, extensions of their oral language. They bring their life experiences, shaped first by oral language, to the task of learning to read and write so that learning is cognitively driven.

In Ghana, reading and writing of the English language has not been the best in most rural schools. Kraft's (2003) reports on a study that was done in the primary schools in Ghana confirms that there still remain serious problems in the educational system, especially related to the teaching and learning of reading in the public schools. He explains further that it appears the techniques of teaching reading comprehension and the poor comprehension ability of students are contributory factors to the low performance of Ghanaian students in their gateway examination, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), (Kraft, 2003). It is possible to trace the poor comprehension ability of students to their lack of adequate Oral English development.

Lack of motivation on the part of the teacher and his focus on correcting the grammar of his students can also create problems in the teaching of Oral English. Students are motivated when teachers create learning environments that arouse the desire of the learners to learn. If that is not done pupils lose interest and do not participate. It is also evident that focusing on correct grammar can inhibit fluency in both speaking and writing. Children whose oral language is corrected by their teachers do not learn correct constructions; they do learn to be quiet.

However, practicing Oral English language does not mean returning to the days when second language learners memorized phrases and sentences that carried little or no meaning. Rather, it is by putting language-building activities and experiences into the regular curriculum and the daily routine of the classroom, so that teachers can meet the needs of all children related to language development (Kirkland & Pallerson, 2005). It is also an opportunity for English language learners (ELL) to experience language in a meaningful

context, with the teacher modeling and guiding them to use language creatively purposefully and productively. This explicit rehearsal of language will help the ELLs attain grammatical accuracy in oral and written discourse, and enable them to develop the kinds of language needed for social, academic, and content specific purposes. In view of this, this study investigated the challenges that teachers encountered in teaching of Oral English in lower primary classrooms in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

### Summary

In this chapter, related literature on teaching of Oral English was reviewed dealing with the theories, key concepts and empirical studies. It was significant to learn that a child's oral language development provides the foundation for all other language and literacy skills (Firestone, 2011). Again, Vygotsky's (1978) views on language learning through his socio-cultural theories are clear that the role of society is very critical in children's language development and thinking. The chapter also looked at the effectiveness of Oral English language in the learning of English as a second language, the influence of the home and school on Oral English development, and methods and activities in Oral English instruction. Other issues discussed included the importance of assessing students' talk and challenges in the teaching of Oral English.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

This chapter discusses the procedures used in conducting the study. The areas covered include the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, pilot study, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

#### Research Design

The descriptive survey design was used for the study. The descriptive survey design, according to Gay (1992), involves the collection of data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current states of the subject of the study. According to Babbie (2007) surveys are useful in describing a large population with accurate representative sample. Surveys are also flexible where many variables and questions can be asked on a topic making analysis also flexible. Also, Babbie believes that surveys make measurement of opinions, beliefs and attitudes standardized. Thus, surveys require that the same questions be given to each respondent and the same responses also analyzed. According to Hackett and Betz (1981), the descriptive survey can be used to gather data on client needs and attitudes to aid programmes decision and the provision of counseling services the survey is also relatively easy to conduct.

It should, however, be noted that the descriptive survey is not devoid of limitations. The limitations include the difficulty in obtaining a truly randomly sampled population and the problem of low response rates that plague all surveys (Hackett, & Betz, 1981). Although surveys are flexible, they prevent observation of any new variable that might emerge in the course of the study. Surveys may be superficial in their coverage of complex topics because of the intent to have general standard questions for all the participants. They are also subject to artificiality where the opinions, beliefs and attitudes expressed by the participants may not be the true representation of their thoughts or feelings. Rather, they might be responding to the survey items only. It is also difficult in using survey to study issues of social life concerns (Babbie, 2007).

### **Population**

Polit & Hungler (1996) defined population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. Again population, according to Charles & Martler (2002), contains all the individuals within certain descriptive parameters such as their areas of location, age, or sex. This study was designed to involve basic school teachers as the target population in the Cape Coast Metropolis, but it is limited to lower primary level.

The cost of working with the entire population is prohibitive in terms of time, money and resources. Therefore from a total of 480 primary school teachers (Cape Coast Metropolitan Education, 2012) 90 were randomly selected, using the lottery method. Ninety teachers sampled from the lower primary accessible populations are representative of the large population of

primary school teachers in Cape Coast Metropolis. The schools that were selected for the study were of different backgrounds and settings, such as the urban, semi-urban and rural and also included single-sex and unisex (co-educational) schools. From the rural setting schools such as Mpeasem AME Zion, Efutu M.A, Nyinasin M.A, St Cyprian's Anglican and Dehia English Arabic were selected.

Again semi-urban schools such as Abakam CRAN, Archishop Amissah Catholic, Amamoma Presby, Imam Khomeini, Kwaprow M.A., Esuekyir M.A, Kakomdo M.A, Mensah Sarbah 'A', and Ghana National were included. Other schools of urban setting such as St. Monica's Girls 'A' & 'B', Aboom Zion, 'B' Aboom Zion 'C', Philip Quaque Boys, Jacob Wilson Sey, Pedu M.A. 'B', Wesley Girls, Abura St Lawrence 'B' and OLA Presby were part of the schools selected.

### **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

In this study, the sample is made up of lower primary school teachers who teach English language as one of the subjects in the curriculum. They are also trained teachers who have taught between three to ten or more years in the basic schools. Their educational levels are (Cert. 'A', Post Primary and Post-Secondary, a diploma or a first degree). Five schools were randomly selected by the lottery method from each of the six circuits. (OLA, Abura-Pedu, Aboom, Cape Coast, Efutu and Bakaano) for the study, making a total of 30 schools.

From the 30 selected schools, three lower primary school teachers were purposively taken in each of the schools, making a total of 90 teachers to represent the sample for the study. This purposive sampling technique was used to select the teachers who were actually teaching the subject (English Language). In addition, headteachers in the 30 selected schools were purposively selected for the interview. This is because the headteachers are directly responsible for the marking of the teacher's lesson notes and the general supervision of their teaching. Again, 30 teachers were randomly selected, through the lottery method, one from each of the 30 selected schools, for the observation lessons.

### **Research Instruments**

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were adopted for data collection. The questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data. According to Keringer (1973), the questionnaire is widely used for collecting data in educational research because it is an effective instrument for securing information about practices and conditions of what the respondents are presumed to have knowledge and for enquiring into the opinions and attitudes of the subjects. Cohen (1984), for instance, in considering the advantages of the questionnaire a survey instruments says that it tends to be more reliable while anonymity encourages a greater degree of honesty over the interview.

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher on the strength of the review of related literature. This self designed questionnaire was used for the study. The main questions contained background information in the areas mentioned with the responses in dichotomy where participants were asked to



choose either 'yes' or 'no'. as answers to the questions. Sub-questions examined the extent to which the main questions applied in those situations. There were six sections. Section 'A' covered issues on the demographic information (employment status, gender, educational background, working experience) of the respondents. Section 'B' had questions on the teaching of the Oral English in schools. Section 'C' covered issues on the method that teachers use in teaching listening and speaking. Section 'D' covered issues on the challenges that teachers encounter in teaching, Oral English Finally, Section 'E' covered issues on the contributions of Oral English to the acquisition of other language skills. (Please find the questionnaire in the appendix A)

Interviews and observations were used for the qualitative data. A one-on-one semi-structured 10 – 15 minute interview guide was designed. This was based on the research questions, to help collect information from the headteachers in the various schools. Interview is a prompting process used to elicit and probe responses from participants or informants (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The interview guide had 10 main items and the use of the interview helped me to interact with the headteachers and to establish human to human relationship (Trochim, 2001). According to Amedahe (2002), the interviewers must possess certain skills and qualities to be able to conduct a successful interview.

Some of these skills and qualities that guided the researcher in her work included not taking everything that was said at face value but questioning critically to test the reliability and validity of what the interviewees said. She also tried to make her questions clear, simple and

straight forward she was able to structure the interview, giving a good introduction to capture the attention of the interviewees, so also was the process and the closing. Her knowledge of the topic helped her to pursue relevant issues. The responses from the interviewees were written down and later analyzed.

Observation which was also used in this study was one of the oldest methods of data collection. It relies on the researcher seeing, hearing and recording. It depends on the direct evidence of the eye witness (Trochim, 2001) and it is also the most viable means of answering research questions (Berg, 2002). In this study I conducted participant observation, thus, I was part of the group being observed (Nueman, 2003). A semi-structured 60 – 90 minute observation guide was designed based on the key characteristics of a successful Oral English lesson. The behaviours to be observed were put in 6 broad sections under the following headings as indicated in the background of the study: Learners' participation, motivation, acceptable level of language and teacher support, use of small groups, teacher as a facilitator and assessment. The observation guide gave me the opportunity to find out how teachers conduct their Oral English lessons and the behaviours that were actually being exhibited. During the observation, field notes were taken which were later analyzed. (Please find the observation guide in the appendix C)

### **Validity and Reliability**

Validity is very important in research data. It has to do with whether the data is in fact what it is believed or purported to be and whether the instruments measure what they are intended to measure, based on the focus of

the research (Charles & Mertler, 2002). The instruments were given to some of my friends who teach at the lower primary level to go through and check if it relates to what goes on in their classrooms. Again, two of my lecturers who are experts in the field of education and my two supervisors were contacted for their advice and suggestions with regards to the instruments. I was advised that instead of making all the questions close-ended, the main questions could have sub-questions that could be open and solicit a greater depth of response. There were, in all 25 close ended questions and 18 of these had open- ended sub-questions. Thus, most questions in the questionnaire have both open and close-ended type items.

The responses received on the instrument questionnaire from my colleagues and friends who teach at the lower level of the primary schools were similar. Based on the consistency in the responses to the questions in the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview guide, the instruments were considered reliable.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted at Abura-Asebu Kwamankese Education District with a sample size of four primary schools. The schools included Abakrampa Methodist and Catholic Primary Schools, Abura Dunkwa Catholic Primary School and Biaden Walker Primary School. After the pilot study some questions were made simpler to make room for easy understating. This helped to determine the clarity of the instrument, the problems to be encountered in the main administration, and the reliability of the instrument. According to Neuman, (2003), testing the instrument helped improve its

reliability and made sure that the respondents understood the questions. The researcher was given a letter of introduction from the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District Education Office which she used to seek permission from the head teachers in the schools she visited. Thus, questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide used for the study were pre-tested in the schools mentioned above. (Please find the letter of introduction in appendix E)

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The collection of data took place in July, 2012, after the pilot study. Letters of introduction were obtained from the Department of Basic Education at University of Cape Coast and the Metropolitan Office of the Ghana Education Service (Please See Appendix D and F for the letters of introduction). These letters were to enable me to have maximum co-operation from the headteachers and teachers during the data collection and based on these letters permission was given me to carry out the study in the schools.

According to Berg, (2002), triangulation is the use of multiple data gathering techniques to investigate the same phenomenon. Hence, in this study, the questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide were triangulated in order to refine, broaden and strengthen the conceptual linkages in the data. The administration of the questionnaire was done during break either in a classroom or at the headteacher's office. The lower primary teachers of each of the selected schools were brought together and briefed on the purpose of the exercise. The questionnaires were given out to them to send home for completion and I went back to the schools the following day to

collect them. Those who misplaced theirs were given new ones for completion and the return rate was 100%.

### **Interview with the Headteachers**

After the administration of the questionnaire to the teachers in each school, I conducted interviews with the headteachers, using the semi-structured interview guide, for about 15 minutes. If a particular headteacher was either busy or not available, I booked an appointment with him or her for a more convenient time. During the interview, I wrote down the responses given by the headteachers. I was very cautious not to take too much time of the headteachers and made the interviews very brief as stated earlier. I then informed the headteachers about the follow-up observation lessons in Oral English that would be conducted in their schools.

### **Observation Lessons**

I conducted this exercise as a participant observer (Charles & Mertler, 2002). Observation provides first hand information without relying on the reports of others. It also approaches reality in its natural states and studies events as they evolve (Amedahe, 2010). I visited the class to be observed the previous day and took part in some activities such as the distribution of text books or exercise books, and pencils. I sat among pupils and often went round the class from table to table or group to group, to see what they were doing and encouraged them. This was to familiarize myself with the class and minimize my identity as a researcher to prevent pupils being frightened by my presence which could make them put up strange and unnatural behaviours.

During the 90 minutes observation lessons I paid particular attention to key issues such as pupils' participation, motivation of pupils, teacher support, use of small groups, teacher's role as a facilitator and assessment. I took field notes during and after the observation lessons. Each lesson lasted for 90 minutes. The observation was done for five weeks, from 29<sup>th</sup> October to 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2012. The schools were given pseudonyms, eg. Marvelous, Fortune, Olive, Crystal, Sunshine, etc. A Nikon complex camera was used by the researcher to take photographs of some of the classes observed.

### **Data Analysis**

All responses on the questionnaire were recorded on a broadsheet before they were input into the computer data analysis programme. This procedure was used for quantitative analysis for research questions 1 – 4. The main statistical tool that was used for analyzing the data was simple percentages and frequencies.

The responses gathered from the interviews and field notes taken on the observation lessons were read through several times to identify emerging patterns that ran through. These patterns were developed into themes and the themes were developed into broader domains and simple percentages according to the themes that emerged were identified. These themes and patterns were used for the qualitative analysis. A thematic analysis was conducted by using both top-down and bottom-up approaches. The research questions and the literature served as the basis for top-down analysis and the themes that emerged from the data content served as the bottom-up or grounding of the analysis. The information from three data points, that is, the

questionnaire, semi-structured interview guide and the semi-structured observation guide were collaborated for a much more vivid description of Oral English teaching in lower primary levels of Cape Coast Metropolis.

### **Analysis of Research Questions**

Research question one was stated as: How often do teachers at the basic schools in Cape Coast Metropolis teach Oral English? To answer this research question, questions 7-12 on the questionnaire sought to elicit response to this question. Question 1-3, 9 and 10 on the interview guide were also used for this research question. The results of data gathered from the questionnaire, interview and observation were put together to answer research question one. Research question two was stated as: What methods do teachers at the basic level use in teaching listening and speaking? To answer this research question, data from questionnaire, interviews and observations were brought together to answer this research question. Responses were elicited from respondents from item 13 and 14 on the questionnaire and questions 4 and 5 on the interview guide in data collection.

Research question three was stated as: What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching Oral English at the basic level? To seek answers to this research question: items 15-20 on the questionnaire and questions 6 and 7 on the interview guide were used to elicit responses from the respondents. Data from the above stated items on the questionnaire and interview guide were added to the results of the observation to answer research question three. And, finally, research question four was stated as: How does Oral English contribute to the acquisition of other language skills. To answer the question,

questionnaire, interview and observation were used. Questions 21-25 on the questionnaire and question 8 on the interview guide were used to elicit responses needed in answering the research question. Data from the questionnaire, interview and the observation were put together to answer research question four.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching of Oral English in lower primary classes in schools in Cape Coast Metropolis. This chapter deals with the presentation and discussion of the results of the questionnaire, interviews and the observation conducted. The results of the study based on the research questions posed in chapter one are presented. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in analysing the research questions.

#### Demography

Tables 1a – f show the demographic data of the respondents. These include their classes, educational background, professional rank, teaching experience, gender and age.

**Table 1a: Classes taught by Respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Class 1	32	35.6
Class 2	33	36.6
Class 3	25	27.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The class distribution of respondents in Table 1a, indicated that 32 (35.6%) were in class one, 33(36.6%) were teaching class two, while 25(27.7%) were in class three. The figures show a good representation of the three lower primary classes but the majority of the respondents were in classes one and two.

**Table 1b: Educational Background**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
University (BA, BSC, Bed)	49	54.4
Diploma/Specialist	28	31.1
Certificate 'A' (Post-Sec)	2	2.2
Certificate 'A' (4 years)	2	2.2
Others (Please specify)	4	4.4
No response	5	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1b presents the given responses on the educational background of the respondents. It can be seen from the table that 54.4% were first degree holders, while 31% were diplomats/specialists. Beside the 5 (5.5%) of the respondents who could not disclose their educational background, only 4 (4.4%) were untrained teachers, meaning 89.9% of the respondents were trained teachers. This implies that they might have received training in teaching English language at one level or the other in their education and could

competently handle English language and other subjects on the time table as expected of the primary school teacher.

**Table 1c: Professional Rank**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Teacher	8	8.8
Assistant superintendent	1	1.1
Superintendent	2	2.2
Senior superintendent 1	6	6.6
Senior superintendent 2	29	32.2
Principal Superintendent	35	38.8
No response	5	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The responses on professional ranks given by respondents in Table 1c reveal that 38.8% were in a very high professional rank of principal superintendent, closely followed by 32.2% who were in senior superintendent 2, bringing the percentage of respondents in these very high ranks to 71%. This implies that these highly professional and experienced teachers were made to take up the lower primary classes because of its sensitive nature so that they can handle the pupils professionally.

**Table 1d: Teaching Experience**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1-5	20	22.2
6-10	35	38.8
11-15	12	13.3
16-20	4	4.4
21-25	7	7.7
26-30	7	7.7
No response	5	5.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

In Table 1d, the demographics of teaching were given. The distribution on teaching experience of respondents indicates that 71.9% have been teaching for more than 6 years and 15.4% of the above percentage have taught for over 20 years. The remaining 22.2% of the respondents have 1-5 years teaching experience. It is believed that majority of the respondents having over 6 years teaching experience might have acquired enough experience in teaching all the subjects on the time table including all the aspects of English language especially Oral English which this research work is concerned with.

Again, it is believed that they might have acquired knowledge about teaching English language by the use of current trends introduced through the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) which is adopted by the Ghana Education Service (GES) and is being used in all public schools in the country. Basically, the programme is to equip the majority of children leaving

the basic school system with skills of literacy that would improve their learning abilities and serve as a springboard for further academic pursuit (MOE, 2008).

**Table 1e: Gender**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	18	19.9
Female	72	80.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1e, also presents the gender distribution of respondents. The table shows that majority (80.1%) of the respondents are female. The data reveals a female dominance of the population of teachers at the lower primary level in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This might be because female teachers are known to give the motherly care that the young pupils need at that level. Most male teachers, especially the young ones, may not have patience and care for these pupils more especially for the fact that some of the pupils at this level even soil themselves in the classroom and it is the class teachers that normally attend to them.

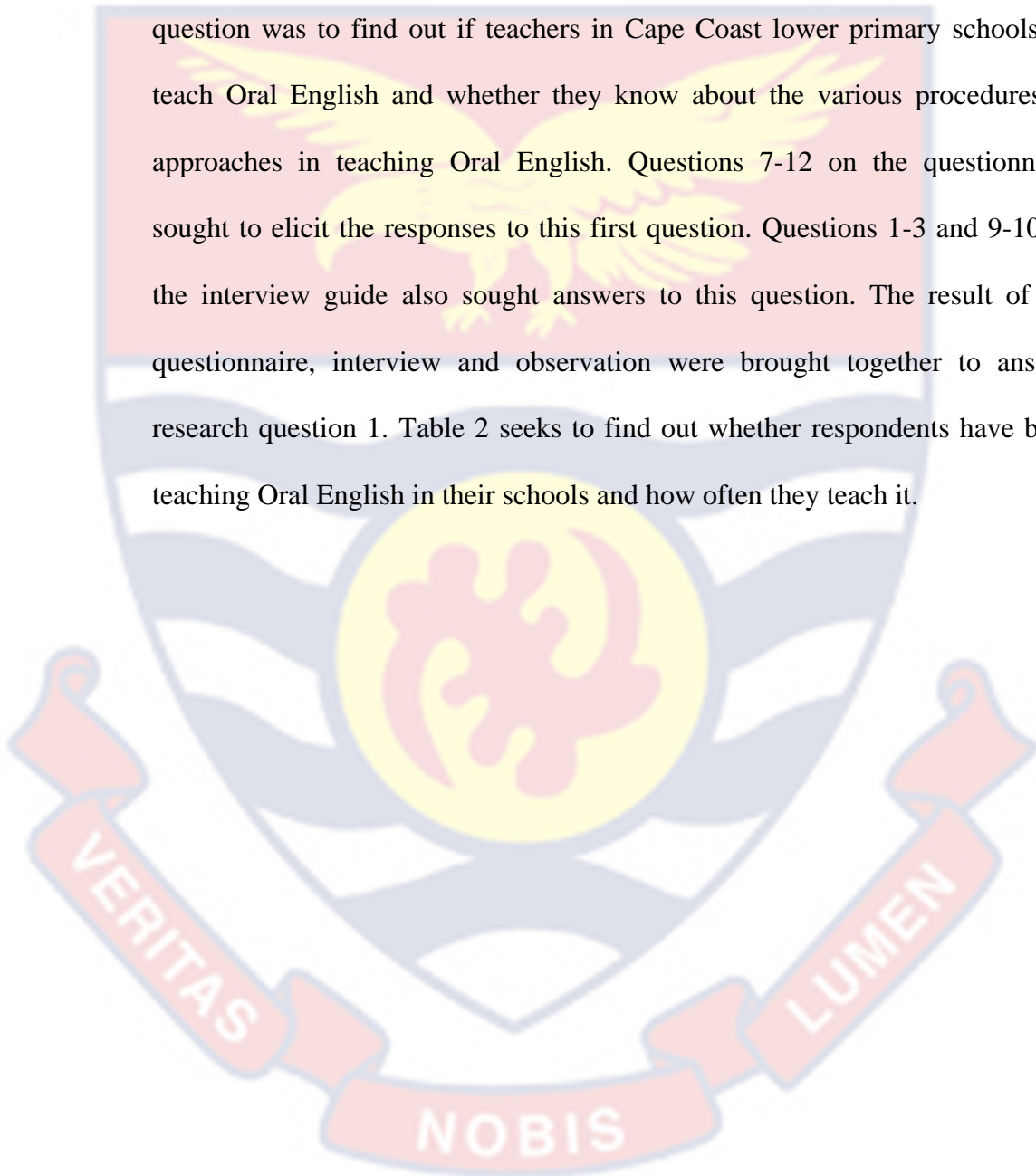
**Table 1f: Age**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20 and below	1	1.1
21-30	28	31.1
31-40	32	35.5
41-50	11	12.2
51-60	14	15.5
No response	4	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Lastly, in Table 1f, the age distribution of respondents has been presented. The table shows that the majority of teachers at the basic schools in the Cape Coast Metropolis are relatively young. Sixty teachers, representing 67% of the respondents are within 21-40 years. It is expected that these young and energetic teachers would approach their duty with zeal and vigour to make the classroom lively for pupils to enjoy the lessons. It is also expected that these young teachers would use the current trends of teaching English language which they have been exposed to in their institutions or teacher training colleges. However, according to the data represented in the table 15.5% of the respondents are quite old and they fall within 51-60 years. It is believed that these teachers have benefited from refresher courses and the NALAP training programmes organized for primary school teachers in the Cape Coast Metropolis to be abreast with the current trends of teaching the English language and more especially Oral English.

### Research Question 1

Research question one was stated as: “How often do teachers teach Oral English in schools at the lower primary level?” In answering this question, questionnaire, interviews and observations were used. The rationale for this question was to find out if teachers in Cape Coast lower primary schools do teach Oral English and whether they know about the various procedures or approaches in teaching Oral English. Questions 7-12 on the questionnaire sought to elicit the responses to this first question. Questions 1-3 and 9-10 on the interview guide also sought answers to this question. The result of the questionnaire, interview and observation were brought together to answer research question 1. Table 2 seeks to find out whether respondents have been teaching Oral English in their schools and how often they teach it.



**Table 2: Frequency of Oral English Teaching.**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>How often teachers teach Oral English</b>		
Everyday	23	27.7
Once a week	32	38.5
Twice a week	11	13.2
Three times a week	8	9.6
Four times a week	9	10.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>92.3</b>
<b>Number of lesson note prepared per week</b>		
One lesson per week	32	43.2
Two lessons per week	11	14.8
Three lessons per week	3	4.0
Four lessons per week	8	10.8
Five lessons per week	20	27.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>82.2</b>

Table 2 gives a summary of data collected on the teaching of Oral English by respondents. These include whether teachers teach oral English, whether they prepare lesson notes and the number of notes prepared per week. From the responses, 92.3% of the respondents teach Oral English while 7.7% do not. Concerning the preparation of notes, 82.2% of the respondents prepare lesson notes for Oral English while 17.7% do not. Preparation of lesson notes



is a must at the primary school level for all teachers. Head teachers mark or endorse these notes for teaching every week. And teachers at this level are expected to teach all subjects on the time table. So it is likely that those teachers who had not been teaching, have taken advantage of the weak supervision of their headteachers to ignore the teaching of that aspect of the English language. This number might include the few (4.4%) untrained teachers who are handling the lower primary classes. It is possible those teachers might not be conversant with the teaching of this aspect of the English language since they are untrained but the head teachers of their schools could have taken them through some in-service training which would have been of much help to them.

Table 2 presents responses given by respondents on how often they teach Oral English and the number of lesson notes they prepare in the week. The table reveals that a little over half of the respondents (51.7%) stated that they teach Oral English once or twice a week, while the remaining 48.1% are made up of those who claimed they teach Oral English 3-5 times a week. The responses clearly portray the inconsistency in how teachers handle this aspect of the English Language. This means they are not sure how often it must be taught in a week.

If it is true that these teachers teach Oral English four or five times a week then what periods do they use to teach the other aspects of the language such as reading skills, writing skills, library etc? Does it mean they have been ignoring the teaching of those aspects? Apparently, there is need for integration and because of that Oral English remains part of the other aspects of the English language instruction. For instance, in a reading lesson, the

introduction may include picture identification, discussion of the title of the passage, prediction of what may happen in the text etc but that introduction does not turn the lesson into an Oral English lesson. The above responses of those teachers imply that they cannot tell what an Oral English lesson is let alone teach it effectively.

The frequency of Oral English teaching also indicated the number of lesson notes teachers prepared per week. Again the same inconsistencies emerged. Thirty-two respondents representing (43.2%) said they prepared one lesson note per week while 20 (27%) stated that they prepared five lesson notes per week for Oral English. Eleven (14.8%) said they prepared two lesson notes per week, 3(4%) prepared three lessons per week, and 8(10.8%) prepared four lessons per week for Oral English. If indeed, these teachers prepared four to five lesson notes for Oral English per week, then how many would be prepared for the remaining aspects.

However, during the observation lessons, the lessons that were observed did not have three four five lesson notes for Oral English. It might be that these respondents misunderstood the question to mean the number of English language lesson notes prepared per week.

Furthermore, the reason given by some of the 16 respondents for not preparing lesson notes was that they used lesson notes prepared in the NALAP books. A few also said they were not preparing separate lesson note for Oral English because it was part of the everyday subject taught. Others claimed they did not have materials for note preparation and one was surprisingly bold to respond that he was using the time to teach creative arts more often. From the above responses, it was quite clear that a number of teachers have not been

following the school timetable as they should, but have been doing what pleases them. They select the subjects they want to teach and leave those they do not feel like teaching.

Also the use of the NALAP books direct in the classroom as indicated by some respondents might not be helpful. This is because the NALAP books are prepared to guide teachers to plan their own lessons depending on the ability of the class they are teaching. The books contain a number of activities and the individual teacher is to select those activities that can be used in a particular lesson considering the availability of time, materials, suitability of the topic for the class etc. Therefore for a teacher to have a successful Oral English lesson he/she needs to consider carefully what to teach and plan towards it.

One other area that was considered was whether teachers conduct assessment for Oral English. Table 3 seeks to find out if teachers assess their pupils during Oral English lessons.

**Table 3: Assessment of Oral English lessons**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	87	96.7
No	3	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 presents the responses given by respondents on whether they assess pupils during Oral English lessons. In Table 3, the responses reveal that 96.7% of respondents assess their pupils during Oral English lessons while

3.3% do not. The reason given by two out of the three respondents who said they were not assessing their pupils was that they usually give questions for pupils to respond to. This answer implies that these teachers are not aware that giving questions for pupils to respond to is also a form of assessment.

However, the responses from the table indicate that most teachers assess their pupils. A respondent also indicated that he was not writing lesson notes, which means since he was not writing notes he might not be teaching the subject. He could be one of the two respondents who stated earlier that they were not given materials for writing lesson notes.

The study again investigated the form of assessment that teachers conduct in their lessons. Table 4 seeks to find out the kind of assessment teachers were conducting during Oral English lessons.

**Table 4: Kinds of Assessment Given**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Questions (oral)	56	62.3
Demonstration / individual practice	4	4.5
Drawing	2	2.2
Role play	2	2.2
Both oral and written	23	25.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>96.6</b>

Table 4 presents the responses given by respondents on the kind of assessment given to pupils during Oral English lesson. According to the table, out of the 87 respondents who stated that they assess their pupil, 56 teachers representing 62.3% of the respondents use oral questions to assess their pupils

while 25.4% use both oral and written forms of assessment. Four teachers (4.5%) use demonstration and individual practice to assess their pupils, 2.2% use drawing and 2.2% use role-play forms of assessment. From the table, it can be seen that majority of teachers use oral form of assessment during Oral English lessons.

Adequate TLM is a must in a successful Oral English lesson. Table 5 seeks to find out if teachers have adequate TLMs for Oral English lessons.

**Table 5: Adequate TLMs for Oral English Lessons**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	59	65.5
No	27	30.0
No response	4	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The results show, from the table, that a greater number of the respondents (65.5%) had enough teaching learning materials, while 30% did not. As majority of respondents claimed to have adequate teaching and learning materials, learning would be lively and interesting because according to WUSC (n.d), the use of appropriate TLMs makes lessons clear to students. It makes them attentive and their achievement improves. The teacher does less talking. On the other hand, if there are inadequate TLMs, lesson relies on teacher's lectures. Lesson becomes dry and boring. Sometimes too, teachers do not know how to prepare the TLMs and also how to use them. The reasons given by some of the 30% who claimed not to have adequate TLMs was that

they were not supplied and others said they were preparing their own TLMs, hence, it was not enough.

Pupils' enjoyment of Oral English was one of the areas considered. A teacher should be able to tell whether his class is enjoying a particular lesson or not. Table 6 seeks to find out about pupils enjoyment of Oral English lessons.

**Table 6: Pupil's Enjoyment of Oral English**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	76	84.4
No	5	5.5
No response	9	9.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

According to the responses 76 (84.5%) teachers indicated that their pupils do enjoy Oral English lessons while 5(5.5%) teachers said their pupils do not for various reasons. Three respondents out of the five mentioned that their pupils were not enjoying Oral English lesson because they could not communicate with friends in English. The remaining two also said their pupils were not enjoying Oral English lessons because they could not pronounce the English words. Nine teachers forming 9.9% of the respondents could not respond to this item which implies that they did not know whether their pupils enjoy Oral English lessons or not. It could also be that they have not been teaching Oral English.

Pupils portray certain behaviours to indicate their enjoyment of a particular lesson. Table 7 summarizes how pupils show their enjoyment of Oral English lessons.

**Table 7: How Pupils Show Their Enjoyment**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
By answering teachers questions eagerly and promptly	35	46.0
By doing the assessment correctly	20	26.3
By contributing to the lesson e.g. asking questions	6	7.8
By repeating the sentences several times on their own	3	3.9
By showing excitement eg. applauding and wanting to have a turn	2	2.6
By listening attentively to the lesson	2	2.6
By engaging in the activities indicated by the teacher	8	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100</b>

In Table 7, various responses were given by respondents on how pupils show their enjoyment by answering teachers questions eagerly and promptly and by taking part in assessment given and by the teacher. It is normal or usual

for pupils to show maximum co-operation in a lesson they are enjoying. Pupils who are not enjoying a particular lesson may feel reluctant to take part in the activities the teacher may request them to perform.

The assessment may also be affected when pupils do not enjoy a lesson. Six (7.8%) respondents stated that pupils show their enjoyment of Oral English lesson by contributing to class discussions or asking questions on what was taught while 2.6% noted that pupils pay particular attention to the lesson when they are enjoying it. Also 2.6% of the teachers indicated that pupils show their enjoyment through excitement such as applauding and wanting to have their turn of the activity being performed. It is obvious that pupils are motivated by activity-based lessons. Again a few (3.9%) of the respondents indicated that pupils show their enjoyment of the lesson by repeating words, structures and sentences several times to themselves or to their friend.

One other key issue in a successful Oral English lesson is how the teacher involves pupils in the lesson making it interactive. In Table 8, the distribution of the responses on how teachers involve their pupils during Oral English lessons has been presented



**Table 8: Teacher involvement of pupils in Oral English lessons**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Through questions and answers	38	42.2
Through activities eg look and say, repeat after me and demonstrations	19	21.1
Through story telling	7	7.7
Through role play	7	7.7
Through singing and recitals	6	6.6
Through picture identification	4	4.4
Through dramatisation	3	3.3
Through conversation	2	2.2
Through group activities	2	2.2
Through dictation exercises	2	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution reveals that 38 (42.2%) teachers involve the pupils through questions and answers, 19 (21.1%) teachers stated that they involve their pupils through activities such as look and say, repeat after me, and demonstrations. These activities may help involve pupils because; all or quite a number may be engaged at a time in doing the activity. Table 8 again reveals that 17 (18.7%) teachers said they involve their pupils through story telling, role play and dramatisation while 12 teachers representing 13.2% said they involve their pupils through singing and recitals, picture identification and conversation. Only 2(2.2%) respondents indicated that they engage their pupils in group activities but could not indicate the type of activities they

engaged their pupils in. Two (2.2%) respondents indicated that they engage their pupils in dictation exercises.

### **Discussion of Findings of Research Question One**

The results from research question I revealed that most of the respondents were trained teachers and qualified to teach the English language. A few untrained teachers were holding West African Secondary School Examination (WASSE) certificate. The reason for these untrained teachers teaching the lower primary classes might be for lack of staff but some headteachers complained during the interview that some teachers were not professionally trained and so lacked the pedagogical knowledge of teaching Oral English.

These teachers could have received some in-service training from their headteachers but the results of the study showed that most headteachers have not been organising in-service training for their teachers. They rather depended on the District Education Office to hold such programmes for the teachers. Nevertheless, the results revealed that a good number of highly experienced teachers were made to take up the lower primary classes for them to handle the pupils professionally.

Concerning the teaching of Oral English, majority of respondents claimed they teach it in their schools. There was an inconsistency about how often teachers teach Oral English. While some said they teach it once or twice in a week, others claimed they teach it four or five times in week. It was realized that these teachers who said they teach it 3-5 times a week could not differentiate between an Oral English lesson and other aspects like reading or

grammar. Some of the teachers indicated that Oral English is part of the everyday subject taught. This means they integrate the Oral English into the everyday English language teaching. This notion is healthy and agrees with William and Roberts' (2011) idea that English learners should be provided with a daily dose of English language development and the focus must be on listening and speaking. Maria (2000) also contends that oral language is an integral part of all learning experiences and could be taught in various contexts like numeracy, literacy, social interactions, sensory motor group activities.

The preparation of lesson notes also exposed similar inconsistency stated above. It further revealed that a number of teachers in the system have not been preparing their lesson notes for Oral English lessons. Some have also been avoiding the teaching. Lessons need to follow steps or a planned procedure without which teaching may lack effectiveness. But a well planned lesson note helps teaching and improves pupils' academic performance (WUSC n.d).

Most teachers stated in the questionnaire that they assess their pupils during Oral English lessons, however, a few (3.3%) could not tell whether question and answer is a form of assessment. Majority of teachers mentioned that they assess pupils mostly by oral questions while others said they use both written and oral assessment. Assessment of talk (Oral English) is very important because students and parents value what can be assessed (Tompkins, 1998). However, what to assess during Oral English lessons and how to assess them as recommended by Tompkins was lacking in our Oral English language classroom.

Assessment was another area observed during the observation lessons. It took various forms, for instance, pupils copied sentences or words from the board into their exercise books, they drew and labelled some things or pictures relating to the topics discussed, and they answered oral questions asked by the teachers. The results of the questionnaire confirmed what was observed on the field in that, most teachers used questioning in assessing pupils. The type of questions asked were 'yes' or 'no' questions which encouraged guessing, impulsive thinking and right answer orientation and did not encourage conceptual thinking or problem solving. Teachers after 'yes' or 'no' questions could have asked pupils to explain ideas or show relationships. Some teachers were tempted to answer their own questions instead of turning it to another pupil or to the class. Teachers were also tempted to exploit bright pupils or volunteers.

Concerning participation or involvement of pupils in Oral English lessons, the results from the questionnaire showed that teachers involved their pupils through activities such as look and say, repeat after me, dramatisation, demonstrations, questions and answers, role play, story telling, conversation, group activities, etc. It could be seen that most of the responses did not state the specific activity that pupils performed. Only a few respondents (2.2%) indicated that they use group work to involve pupils in activities.

Observation of pupils' involvement or participation revealed that pupils who put up their hands regularly monopolized the lessons. These were the pupils who had the opportunity to talk or take part in the lessons. It was clear that teachers picked those they knew could answer the questions, leaving those they thought could not. When the researcher wanted to find out why they did

that, one teacher complained that some of the pupils were slow and could waste time in answering the questions.

Also, in some lessons observed, pupils could not participate at all. In a particular lesson in one of the schools known as “Favour”, in primary two, the teacher taught a lesson on the ‘weather’ and used words such as ‘sunny’ ‘windy’ ‘wet’, ‘rainy’ without the use of the appropriate TLM to aid pupils’ understanding of the lesson. Apparently, pupils’ participation was poor because they could not picture what the teacher meant by ‘sunny’, ‘windy’ etc.

However, in 5 classrooms out of the 22 observed, pupils’ participation was encouraging. Teachers reached out to as many pupils as possible. Participation was in the form of activities that pupils performed and questions that they answered. The activities included role play, picture description, rhyme/poem recital, and in a few cases pair work and group discussion. Pupils’ participation in language lessons is crucial. As second language learners, (SLL) they need to practise the items learnt. This agrees with Vygotsky’s notion that the child should become an active processor of language (Lerner, 2003). Teachers also expected pupils to speak like adults and were worried and disappointed when pupils made mistakes. But research shows that pupils may speak fluently when using greetings and other basic phrases but speak haltingly when constructing sentences to express more complex ideas (Tabors, 1997; Cummins, 2001).

Moreover, small-group work, partner talk and one-on-one conferences or conversations with the teacher (Yedlin, 2003) may help ELLs feel at ease when speaking. Unfortunately group work, partner talk and dramatic activities were missing in the Oral English classrooms. Therefore, much opportunity

should be created for pupils to practise the English language at school because as second language learners they have limited opportunity or chance to speak English outside the classroom (Zhang, 2009).

In the questionnaire, majority of teachers claimed to have adequate TMLs but during the observations most of the lessons were taught without relevant TMLs. Some teachers did not prepare their TMLs well and others could not use them appropriately in their lessons. Some headteachers, equally, complained about inadequate TMLs for their teachers during the interview. Inadequate provision of TMLs is a challenge in most ELL classrooms (Thakur, 2013).

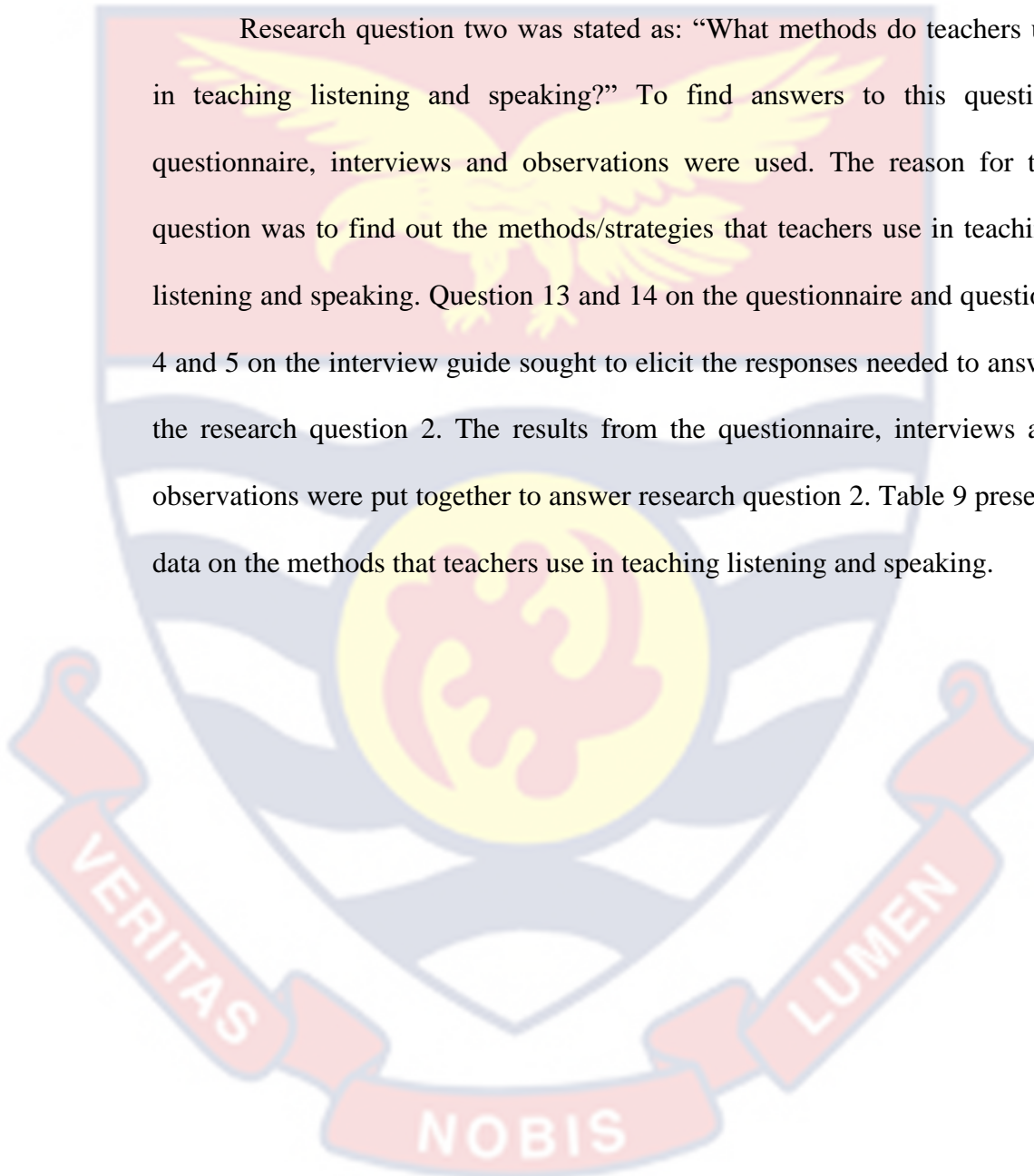
From the results of the questionnaire most teachers indicated that their pupils do enjoy Oral English lessons and they show their enjoyment by answering teacher's questions eagerly and promptly, also by taking part in the activities and assessment given by the teacher. Responses from the interviews with some headteachers further revealed that pupils like Oral English because it is practical and includes activities such as poems/rhymes, action songs, tongue twisters etc. By this, pupils practise the English language and are equipped with an essential ingredient to learning in general (Cazden 1986).

A few of the respondents were of the opinion that their pupils were not enjoying the Oral English lessons because they could not communicate in the English language. The observation also confirmed this notion of some teachers who were not happy when their pupils failed to speak the English language. However, Asher, (1977) and Krashen, (1982) are of the opinion that learners need ample opportunity to listen to and develop understanding of their new

language which means many second language learners pass through a “silent period” during which they focus on comprehending and speak very little.

### Research Question 2

Research question two was stated as: “What methods do teachers use in teaching listening and speaking?” To find answers to this question, questionnaire, interviews and observations were used. The reason for this question was to find out the methods/strategies that teachers use in teaching, listening and speaking. Question 13 and 14 on the questionnaire and questions 4 and 5 on the interview guide sought to elicit the responses needed to answer the research question 2. The results from the questionnaire, interviews and observations were put together to answer research question 2. Table 9 presents data on the methods that teachers use in teaching listening and speaking.



**Table 9: Methods / Strategies used in Teaching Listening and Speaking**

Response	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Questions and answers	80	88.8	10	11.1	90	100
Dramatisation	78	86.6	12	13.3	90	100
Discussion	53	58.8	37	41.1	90	100
Word whisper games	45	50	45	50	90	100
Group discussion	34	37.7	56	62.2	90	100
Role-play	34	37.7	56	62.2	90	100
Brainstorming	34	37.7	56	62.2	90	100
Participatory teaching	32	35.5	58	64.4	90	100
Conversation	23	25.5	67	74.4	90	100

The results from the Table 9, show that majority of the respondents (86-89%) noted that they use questions and answers and dramatisation as strategies in teaching listening and speaking. This indicates that most teachers do not know other strategies for teaching listening and speaking apart from the two stated above. Again, only a few mentioned conversation skills, brainstorming, group discussions etc. which are relevant strategies for teaching listening and speaking.

Activities are specific tasks that teachers want their pupils to perform or skills that they want them to learn. Each method has activities embedded in it. Table 10 seeks to find out the kind of activities that teachers engage pupils in during Oral English lessons.



**Table 10: Activities Pupils Engages In during Oral English Lessons**

Response	Yes		No		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Questions and answers	82	91.1	8	8.8	90	100
Role-play	76	84.4	14	15.5	90	100
Story telling/retelling	66	73.3	24	26.6	90	100
Conversation	54	60	36	40	90	100
Group activities	49	54.4	41	45.5	90	100
Dramatisation	49	54.4	41	45.5	90	100
Poems/rhymes	39	43.3	57	63.3	90	100
Picture discussion	60	66.6	30	33.3	90	100
Demonstration	32	35.5	58	64.4	90	100

In response to the question about the activities that teachers engage pupils in during Oral English lessons, the table shows that a greater majority of the respondents (91.1%) used questions and answers. Other activities mentioned by a great number of respondents (60-85%) were story –telling and retelling, role-lay; picture discussion and conversation. Other respondents (40-60%) further indicated that they engaged pupils in activities such as dramatisation. A few (30-40%) also said they used demonstrations and poems and rhymes. From the table, the activities that the majority of respondents used were story telling role-play and questions and answers.

However, the use of words such as ‘dramatisation’, ‘conversation’, ‘demonstration’, ‘discussion’ and ‘questions’ and ‘answers’ show that most teachers cannot describe or identify the specific tasks that they engage their

pupils in because these words are too general to clearly state the kind of activity that pupils are to perform.

### **Discussion of Findings of Research Question Two**

The results of questionnaire filled by teachers indicated that the majority of them use questioning, dramatisation, group discussions, role play, language experience approach, participatory teaching, word whisper games, brainstorming and conversation. However, most teachers were not seen using these strategies during the observation lessons. What they mostly used was questions and answers. This made the lessons too monotonous and uninteresting. Pupils became passive partakers in the lessons.

As trained teachers the respondents have been taught in their institutions and colleges how to teach listening and speaking using various methods/strategies. But it was realised that most of the teachers were not interested in practicing what they learnt or taking interest in learning new things to improve upon their knowledge. Hence, their knowledge about teaching listening and speaking skills was limited.

Apparently, in the classroom, teachers are to encourage pupils to be good listeners by use of activities that could promote listening skills. (Eisenhart, 2006). Moreover, research has shown that people use more than half of their time listening, therefore children could have benefited more if teachers had trained them constantly in the listening processes such as, discriminative, aesthetic, critical etc to make them become good listeners (Jalongo, 1991, Brent & Anderson, 1993). Good listening creates room for good speaking because oral language (English) helps pupils to build and share

meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal means (Chaney & Burk, 1998).

Also, the results from the interviews with headteacher indicated that some teachers use activity methods, pupils centered methods and group work. Other methods indicated by headteachers were demonstration, discussions, role play and questions and answers. According to them most teachers do not know which methods to use in teaching Oral English language. Some also found it difficult to use some of the methods. This supports the assertion by Kirkland & Patterson (2005) that some teachers are not sure of the methods or strategies to use in teaching Oral English. But the headteachers in their responses could not explain or give examples of the activity methods or what they meant by pupils centered approach.

The observation lessons revealed that teachers have challenges in using the strategies in the NALAP books. This could be because they do not understand the strategies or have not learnt how to use them well. Hence, teachers still use mostly questioning and class discussions for all Oral English language lessons instead of NALAP strategies such as community circle time, think-pair-share, draw and talk, language experience approach, inside/outside circle, read aloud etc. These strategies could help all pupils to participate fully and even the shy ones who do not contribute to class discussions would be able to talk. Pupils will get to know each other better and learn to accept each other.

The observations further revealed that teachers could not play their roles as facilitators. The use of class teaching and discussion all the time inhibited their role as facilitators. They ended up asking all the questions and doing all the talking. It would have been easier for teachers if they had used

more collaborative learning (Krashen, 1982) so that while the teacher attends to one group directly, others would have been working on their own.

During the observation lessons was teachers role as facilitators was carefully noted. It was revealed that the discussions and questioning methods used by most teachers inhibit their roles as facilitators, because they ended up asking all the questions and doing all the talking. This practice does not follow Vygotsky's (1978) idea that teachers are facilitators, mediators and role models in language learning classrooms. The result of the questionnaire for teachers revealed that majority of the teachers use questioning, role-play, demonstration, group activities, poem and rhymes, picture discussion, conversation, story telling, story retelling and dramatisation as activities in their classrooms.

Also, the results from the interviews conducted with the headteachers indicated that teachers use conversation, poems/rhymes, questions and answers demonstration, discussions, story telling, role-play, picture reading and dialogue eg. market scenes, look and say, pick and act. The responses given by the majority of teachers and headteachers revealed that they do not know what can be named as an activity in the above context. Responses such as 'conversation,' dramatisation' 'discussion' 'question and answer' etc were too general/broad to be classified under activity. They could be taken as methods which can have specific activities for them. For example, in a conversation lesson a teacher can choose from activities such as dialogue, role play, circle time, partner talk, shopping list, doctor's consulting room, market science, etc for pupils to perform in their small groups or in pairs. The response given for this item in the questionnaire indicated that teachers were not able to see activities as specific tasks they want pupils to perform or skills that pupils can

acquire. And most of these activities are discussed with examples in the NALAP books that are currently in use in the schools.

A response such as ‘demonstration’ again exposes the respondents’ ignorance about an activity. Demonstration in this context is showing someone how to do something so a teacher can demonstrate an activity for pupils to perform but no activity is called demonstration. It is proper for a teacher to demonstrate an activity for pupils to perform because it agrees with Vygotsky’s (1986) scaffolded instruction in which a teacher provides a support to the student at the initial stage of a task. Through activities teachers create opportunity for pupils to use, practise and reinforce language (William & Roberts, 2011).

During the observation lessons conducted by the researcher, teachers’ use of group work was observed to find out how teachers were using this strategy to promote language development. The pattern that emerged showed that most teachers have not been engaging pupils in group work or small group activities. In 7 out of the 22 classes observed, teachers did not put their pupils in groups let alone engaged them in group work. In other classrooms (10 out of 22) pupils sat in groups but there was no interaction among them during the Oral English lessons.

There were a few exceptions, in 5 classrooms out of 22, however, teachers engaged pupils to do pair work and group activities. A teacher from a school named ‘Victory’ in primary 3 asked pupils to work in pairs to write about the environment. Another teacher from a school named “Patience” in primary 2, led pupils to ask and answer questions in pairs. Two other teachers from schools with pseudonym “Virtue” and “Peak” in primary two and one

respectively, really engaged pupils in relevant group work. But the rest of the teachers engaged in class teaching throughout the lessons. They did not vary their strategies. According to Vygotsky (1978) collaborative learning or group work/activity is very important in language learning classrooms. Hence teachers should encourage pupil-pupil interaction as well as teacher-pupil interaction in the classrooms.

When teachers always use general class teaching and make pupils learn in isolation, their teaching is contrary to the social theory of Vygotsky, which states that learning takes place better through the individual's interaction with other students, care givers, teachers and the world at large. He strongly believes that in the classroom pupils learn better by listening to different and better informed view points through interaction and collaborative activities. This enables them to recognize gaps in their own thinking and helps them to construct more elaborate ideas (Fawcett & Garton, 2005).

### **Research Question 3**

Research question 3 was stated as, "What challenges do teachers encounter in the teaching of Oral English at the basic level? The rationale for this question was to find out the challenges that teachers encounter during Oral English lessons. Answers were sought for this question through questionnaire, interviews and observation. Questions 15-20 of the questionnaire and questions 6 and 7 of the interview guide were used to elicit answers to the research question. The results of the questionnaire, interviews and observations were put together to answer research question 3. Table 11

summarizes pupils' understanding of the level of language that teachers use during Oral English lessons.

**Table 11: Pupils' understanding of Teacher's level of Language**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	87	96.6
No	3	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

In response to the questions whether pupils understand the teacher's level of language, the data in Table 11 reveals that 87 teachers constituting 96.6% of the respondents agreed that pupils understood their level of language. Only 3(3.3%) respondents mentioned that their pupils did not understand their level of language. If this claim of the respondents is true then it means teachers know the ability level of their pupils and had been using language to their level of understanding. It implies also that they summarized or rephrased the information and used words that were familiar and clear to their pupils. The few teachers who said their pupils did not understand their level of language mentioned that their pupils could not speak the English language and were too young.

The support given to pupils by teachers was another area considered in this study. Table 12 presents the responses of respondents concerning the kind of support they give to pupils during and Oral English lessons.

**Table 12: Teachers' Support Given to Pupils**

Response	Freq.	%
By using relevant teaching learning materials.	21	23.3
By correcting wrong pronunciation	16	17.7
By correcting wrong usage of grammar	15	16.6
By applauding correct usage of grammar	10	11.1
By writing words and sentences on the board	11	12.2
By doing the action or reminding them of a song	7	7.7
By encouraging and motivating them	5	5.5
By pronouncing words or breaking them in syllables	2	2.2
By code switching (speaking the Ghanaian language)	2	2.2
By using leading questions	1	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

The data reveals that almost half (45.4%) of the respondents gave support in the form of correcting wrong pronunciation and use of grammar or applauding correct use of grammar. Twenty-one (23.3%) teachers stated that they gave support through the use of relevant teaching learning materials. Others gave support in writing words and sentences on the board for pupils and also breaking words into syllables for pupils to pronounce. Furthermore, some respondents stated that they gave support to pupils during Oral English lessons through leading questions, actions and songs while a few also mentioned that they encouraged and motivated pupils without explaining the kind of encouragement or motivation given. Code-switching (speaking the



Ghanaian language) which is very supportive at this level is mentioned by only 2.2% of the respondents.

One other issue considered in this study was whether teachers were able to control their classes during Oral English lessons. Table 13 presents data on class control during Oral English lessons and the kind of challenges that teachers encounter.



**Table 13: Distribution of Class Control Challenges**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentages (%)
<b>Challenges in controlling pupils</b>		
Everyone wants to contribute or draw teacher's attention	15	27.3
Pupils make fun of demonstrations	7	12.7
Pupils laugh at those who make mistakes	10	18.2
Pupils are interrupted when speaking	6	10.9
The class becomes noisy as pupils practice what to say	10	18.2
Pupils become over excited and make noise	7	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Class control is not a challenge</b>		
Pupils cannot express themselves during Oral English lessons	16	45.7
I use songs, demonstration and other activities to teach	6	17.1
Pupils wait for their turns to answer questions	4	11.4
The class is interesting during Oral English lessons	4	11.4
Pupils pay attention to the lesson	3	8.6
Pupils work in groups	2	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution on the table shows that over half (61.1%) of the respondents encounter challenges during Oral English lessons, while 38.9% do not. The responses of the 55 teachers forming 61.1% of the respondents who claimed to have challenges with class control revealed that 43.6% of this group of respondents have challenges connected to noise making as a result of pupils making fun of demonstrations, laughing at class mates who made mistakes and becoming over excited. This situation demands that noise in class should be appropriate to the lesson being presented or work being done but pupils who make noise disturb the teacher and the class.

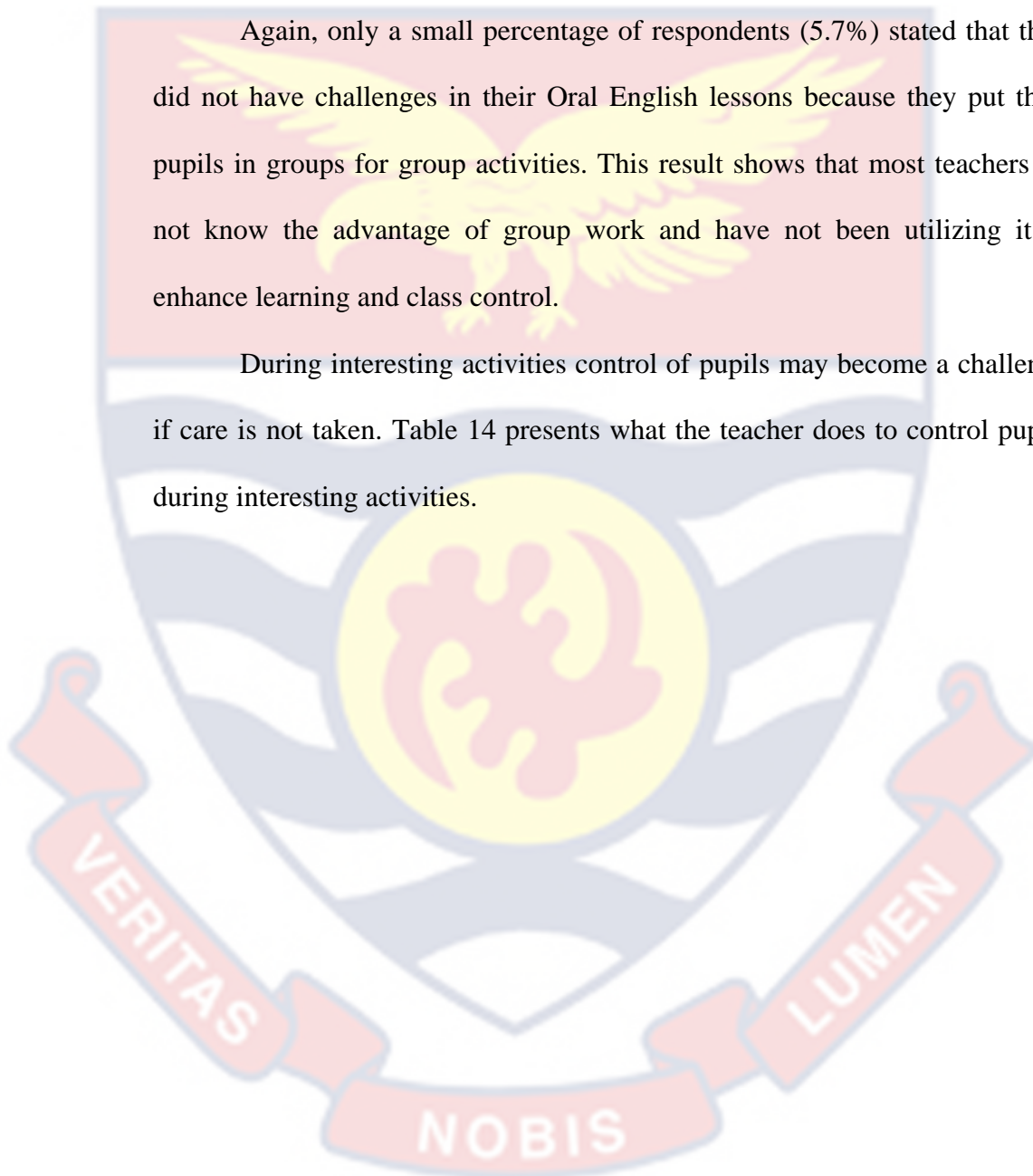
Some of the respondents (27.3%) said there was a challenge in class control when every pupil wanted to contribute or draw teacher's attention. Other responses given by this group revealed that pupils did not know how to speak in turns while one tried to speak another interrupted him and there was disturbance when pupils practised what to say in class. In fact, practicing what to say would definitely attract some measure of noise but the teacher should ensure that all pupils know what noise level is acceptable and what is not.

The Table again shows that 35 respondents said class control was not a challenge. Almost one half (45.1%) of the above respondents said they did not have challenge with class control during Oral English lessons because pupils could not express themselves in the English language. This implies that since pupils could not express themselves in the language their participation in the lesson would be minimal and that may not be the best situation in an Oral English classroom. Some respondents (18.5%) in this category indicated their lessons were interesting because they used songs, demonstration and other activities to teach pupils. Others (20%) said their pupils paid attention to

lessons and waited for their turns to answer questions. This situation, if it is true, is ideal and very desirable in every Oral English classroom but may be contrary to what other teachers experienced as expressed by the earlier respondents in this table.

Again, only a small percentage of respondents (5.7%) stated that they did not have challenges in their Oral English lessons because they put their pupils in groups for group activities. This result shows that most teachers do not know the advantage of group work and have not been utilizing it to enhance learning and class control.

During interesting activities control of pupils may become a challenge if care is not taken. Table 14 presents what the teacher does to control pupils during interesting activities.



**Table 14: Teachers' Control of Pupils During Interesting Activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
By performing group activities	28	31.1
By employing rules and subtracting marks from pupils who misbehave	22	24.4
By withdrawing certain privileges in class	8	8.9
By introducing icebreakers such as songs, poems/rhymes	8	8.9
By encouraging them to do things in turns	5	5.6
By shouting ,”quiet”/”hello”	5	5.6
By asking them questions	4	4.4
By giving them exercises	3	3.3
By giving awards such as toffees or marks	2	2.2
By clapping my hands	2	2.2
By hitting a stick on the table	1	1.1
By using a lot of TLMs	2	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

In response to the question that further sought to find out what the teacher does to control pupils during interesting activities, the distributions on Table 14 reveals that various measures were taken by teachers to curtail challenging situations during Oral English lessons. The first group of respondents identified controlled pupils by employing rules, awarding marks to pupils who behave well and subtracting marks from pupils who misbehave, withdrawing certain privileges and giving some incentives like toffees. This

shows that these teachers use rules and incentives to control their pupils during interesting activities.

Some respondents (31.1%) noted that they used group activities to control pupils. This statement agrees with the response given by some teachers in Table 13, who said they did not have class control challenges because they made their pupils to work in groups. Others (8.9%) however, indicated that they controlled pupils by shouting, “quiet”/ “hello!”, clapping their hands or hitting a stick on the table. But this situation can involve the teacher in more noise making if care is not taken. Again other responses given by respondents (13.1%) in Table 14 shows that teachers controlled pupils by giving exercises, asking questions and encouraging them to do things in turns. A few (8.9%) further stated that they introduced ice breakers such as songs, poems or rhymes, while 2.2% of the respondents mention that they controlled their pupils during interesting lessons by using a lot of TLMs.

In a successful Oral English lesson, there is the need for pupils to know how to speak in turns. Table 15 seeks to find out whether pupils speak in turns during Oral English lessons.

**Table 15: Pupils and Turn-Taking When Speaking**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	86	95.6
No	4	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The data reveals that almost all respondents (95.6%) claimed their pupils took turns when speaking and only 4 teachers representing 4.4% said no. This data implies that almost all respondents had no challenge controlling pupils and there was order in every classroom. But this result contradicts what respondents had earlier stated in Table 13. In that table, 38.2% of those who agreed that they had challenges controlling pupils during Oral English lesson mentioned that they had the situation where every pupil wanted to contribute or tried to draw teacher's attention and also some pupils were interrupted by others as they tried to speak in turns.

Only 4 respondents (4.4%) indicated that their pupils did not take turns while speaking but the reason given for this question was very surprising. For them to say that pupils were not taking turns because they worked in groups connotes that these teachers thought pupils could speak out of turn when working in groups. It could also mean that they themselves did not understand what speaking in turns implies.

The study also investigated what teachers do to maintain pupils' interest in their lessons. Table 16 summarizes data on how respondents maintain pupils' interest in the Oral English lessons.

**Table 16: Maintaining Pupils' interest in the Lesson**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
By making them sing songs related to the topic	24	26.7
By allowing pupils to participate in the lesson	20	22.2
By always involving them in activities	8	8.9
By motivating them	7	7.8
By calling members from groups to repeat words, sentences or dramatize	13	14.4
By praising/rewarding them	6	6.7
By using appropriate teaching/learning materials	5	5.6
By asking pupils to read in pairs	3	3.3
By making the lesson interactive and child-centred	2	2.2
By varying teaching method	2	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

As can be seen in Table 16, 33.3% of the respondents maintained pupils' interest by allowing them to participate in the lesson, by involving them in activities and by making the lesson interactive and child-centred. This means teachers encouraged pupils through participation in the selected activities to keep their interest in the lesson. Twenty-four (26.7%) teachers of the respondents also said they made pupils sing songs related to the topic, while 14.5% claimed that they motivated or rewarded pupils to maintain their interest but did not say how. Other respondents (17.7%) said they encouraged pupils to dramatize, or repeat words or sentences after the teacher and also through reading in pairs.



### Discussion of Findings of Research Question Three

The results of the questionnaire filled by teachers revealed that pupils understand teachers level of language and a few teachers whose language pupils did not understand said their pupils could not speak the language because they were too young. The support teachers gave to their pupils included the use of relevant teaching leaning materials, applauding corrects answers, use of code switching, writing words and sentences on the board, leading questions and correcting pupils wrong usage of grammar, pronunciation and answers.

Majority of teachers affirmed that they have a challenge with class control during Oral English lessons. They controlled pupils during interesting activities by assigning duties to them, helping them perform group activities, introducing ice breakers such as poems or rhymes, and awarding marks to members who were quiet. Other responses given were clapping of hands and hitting a stick on the table. Teachers said pupils did take turns when speaking but a few of them said their pupils did not take turns because they worked in groups. This shows that those teachers thought pupils should not take turns to talk when having group works/activities.

Teachers agreed that pupils discussed issues outside the topic when those issues were related to the topics being discussed in class. They also maintained pupils' interest in Oral English lessons by allowing them to participate in the lesson, motivating them, rewarding them, calling them to repeat or dramatise something or doing pairs work. Teachers did not explain how they motivated pupils or made them to participate in the lesson.

The results from the interviews conducted with the headteachers indicated that some teachers complained that the pupils could not express themselves in the English Language. They said teachers did not have enough teaching learning materials, (eg. pictures). The headteachers claimed the number of pupils were too many for Oral English classes and did not have enough text books, for example, two pupils shared one text book.

They also indicated that some of the teachers are not professionally trained and so lacked the necessary pedagogical knowledge. The head teachers also stated that some of the teachers find it difficult to use some of the methods. The pupils were also afraid of their teachers and of making mistakes because their friends made fun of them. This confirms what Morozova (2012) identified as some general problems with English students at the elementary level. She observed that some students feel shy to speak English because they were afraid of making mistakes and being criticized by the teachers and other students.

The headteachers again claimed that class control was not a problem for some teachers because they used a lot of activities and the class was interesting during such lessons. Class control was a problem for some others when every pupil wanted to be heard during the lesson which caused a lot of noise. Again, when the lessons became interesting pupils made noise, over clapped and screamed. They talked a lot and made fun of demonstrations and other pupils' wrong answers.

In addition, majority of the head teachers said the teachers have not had any in - service training in Oral English language while a few said their teachers have gone for in - service training. However, they all said

they have not organized in - service training in Oral English for their teachers. Again, the headteachers observed that Oral English periods were not enough. They said pupils were not involved much during Oral English lessons and some of the teachers could not teach the Oral English well enough.

During the observation lessons, some of the challenges observed included teachers' use of language and literacy periods. Often the Ghanaian language period ate into the Oral English period which already was not enough compared to the Ghanaian language period. Secondly, there were some text books for the Ghanaian language though not enough but the English text books were not available. It was observed that teachers in controlling their classes wanted their pupils to remain quiet all the time instead of guiding them to talk in turns. This agrees with what Shuy (1987) says that talk is thwarted in elementary classrooms because of large class sizes and mistaken assumption that silence facilitates learning. Wood (1999) confirms this by contending that teachers generally spend considerable effort preventing children from talking and controlling their talk.

Teachers' support and acceptable level of language was another area observed during the observation lessons and it was revealed that most teachers tried to give support to pupils. They wrote words, phrases and sentences on the board which normally were the key words from the passages or pictures used. Some of the words were based on the letter or sound of the week. However, in most cases these words were taught without adequate teaching learning materials (TLMs). This confirmed what the head teachers said about inadequate TLM, though majority of the teachers themselves claimed they have enough TLM.

#### Research Question 4

Research question was stated as: “How does Oral English contribute to the acquisition of other language skills?” The rationale for this question was to find out how Oral English contributes to the acquisition of other language skills. Answers were sought for this question through questionnaire interviews and observations. Questions 21-25 of the questionnaire and question 8 on the interview guide were used to elicit answers to the research question. The results of the questionnaire, interviews and observations were put together to answer the research questions 4. Table 17 presents data on whether Oral English helps the second language learner to acquire other language skills.

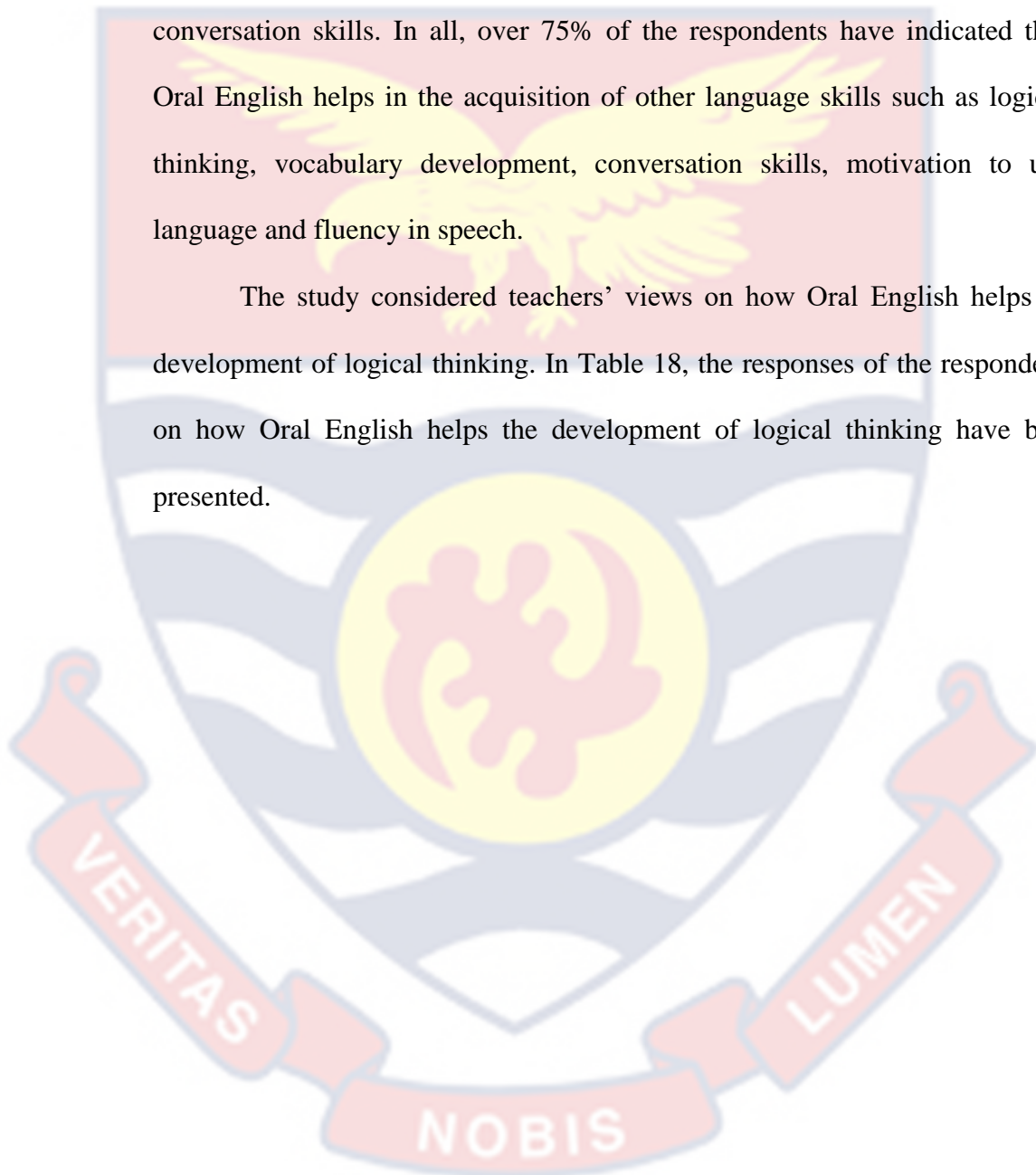
**Table 17: Acquisition of other Language skills through Oral English**

Response	Yes		No		No Response		Total
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Logical thinking	78	86.7	6	6.7	6	6.7	90
Vocabulary development	72	80	4	4.4	14	15.6	90
Conversation skills	68	75.6	4	4.4	18	20	90
Fluency in speech	77	85.6	2	2.2	11	12.2	90
Motivated to use the language	70	77.8	5	5.6	15	16.7	90

In responses to the question whether Oral English helps the second language learner to acquire other language skills, the distribution in Table 17 reveals that 86.7% of the respondents indicated that Oral English fosters logical thinking, 85.6% of the respondents stated that Oral English helps

fluency, while 80% of the respondents confirmed that Oral English aids the development of vocabulary. Again 77.8% of the respondents affirmed that Oral English enables pupils to be encouraged or motivated to use the English language and 75.6% also agreed that Oral English helps pupils to develop conversation skills. In all, over 75% of the respondents have indicated that Oral English helps in the acquisition of other language skills such as logical thinking, vocabulary development, conversation skills, motivation to use language and fluency in speech.

The study considered teachers' views on how Oral English helps the development of logical thinking. In Table 18, the responses of the respondents on how Oral English helps the development of logical thinking have been presented.



**Table 18: Logical Thinking is Developed through Oral English**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Because pupils think before they talk or answer questions	27	34.6
Pupils sequence events heard through stories or role play	20	25.6
It builds pupils' argumentative skills since they need language to engage in argument	14	17.9
It helps pupils to follow step by step delivery of a story	10	12.8
It helps pupils to tell the moral lessons in a given stories	7	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>100</b>

The table shows that some teachers (38.4% of the respondents) stated that Oral English helps pupils sequence events heard in stories or by role play and enables pupils to follow step by step delivery of a story. This means when a pupil is made to tell or retell a story, he/she uses the mental faculties to arrange the story in a sequence or is able to describe the order in which the events occurred and through this process the pupil logical thinking. Also, 34.6% of the respondents stated that pupils think before they talk or answer questions. This implies that pupils do some amount of thinking or reasoning about an issue they want to talk about but whether that reasoning is logical or not depends on the information that is given by them. Some other respondents (17.9%) said through Oral English pupils build argumentative skills because

as they argue their points they use language and without adequate knowledge of language the pupils may not be able to explain their points well. Again, a smaller percentage (9%) mentioned that Oral English enables pupils to tell moral lesson in stories. This statement implies that pupils make some kind of quick assessment of the story through logical thinking to enable them do this.

Teachers' views were sought on how Oral English helps in the development of vocabulary. Table 19 summarizes data on how Oral English helps vocabulary development.

**Table 19: Vocabulary is Developed Through Oral English**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Pupils learn to pronounce key words in picture discussions and keep them in memory	46	63.9
Pupils learn to pronounce related words to key words easily	9	12.5
Pupils learn vocabulary when appreciating songs, rhymes, poems and other literary materials	7	9.7
Words learnt in stories heard improve their vocabulary	5	6.9
Pupils acquire vocabulary during conversation, dramatisation and role-play	5	6.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 19 presents the responses of the respondents on how Oral English helps in the development of vocabulary. The table shows the data collected from the 72 teachers representing 80% of the respondents who agreed that Oral

English instruction helps vocabulary development. Fifty-five teachers forming 80% of this group of respondents said as pupils take part in picture description or discussion they learn key words and other related words. Again, other respondents indicated that pupils acquire vocabulary through conversation, dramatisation, role-play and words learnt in stories heard. Furthermore, the table shows that vocabulary is acquired when pupils appreciate songs, rhymes and poems.

Teachers' views were sought on how Oral English helps pupils to develop conversation skills. Table 20 presents the responses given on how Oral English helps in the developing of conversation skills.

**Table 20: Conversation skill is developed through Oral English**

Response	Frequency	%
Pupils develop conversation skills as they engage		
in role-play or in small group activities	18	26.5
As they learn to take turns in speaking	23	33.8
As they contribute in class during lessons	13	19.1
As they engage in partner talk	12	17.6
As they engage in discussion	2	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution shows the data collected from the 68 teachers who agreed that Oral English aids in the development of conversation skills. The responses of 32 teachers constituting 57.0% of the respondents revealed that



Oral English helps pupils to develop conversation skills through role play or small group activities, partner talk and group discussions.

Other respondents (33.8%) said pupils develop conversation skills when they learn to take turns in speaking, while 13 (19.1%) stated that pupils develop conversational skills as they contribute in class during lessons. The information from the table portrays that pupils develop conversation skills through activities involving small groups and discussions.

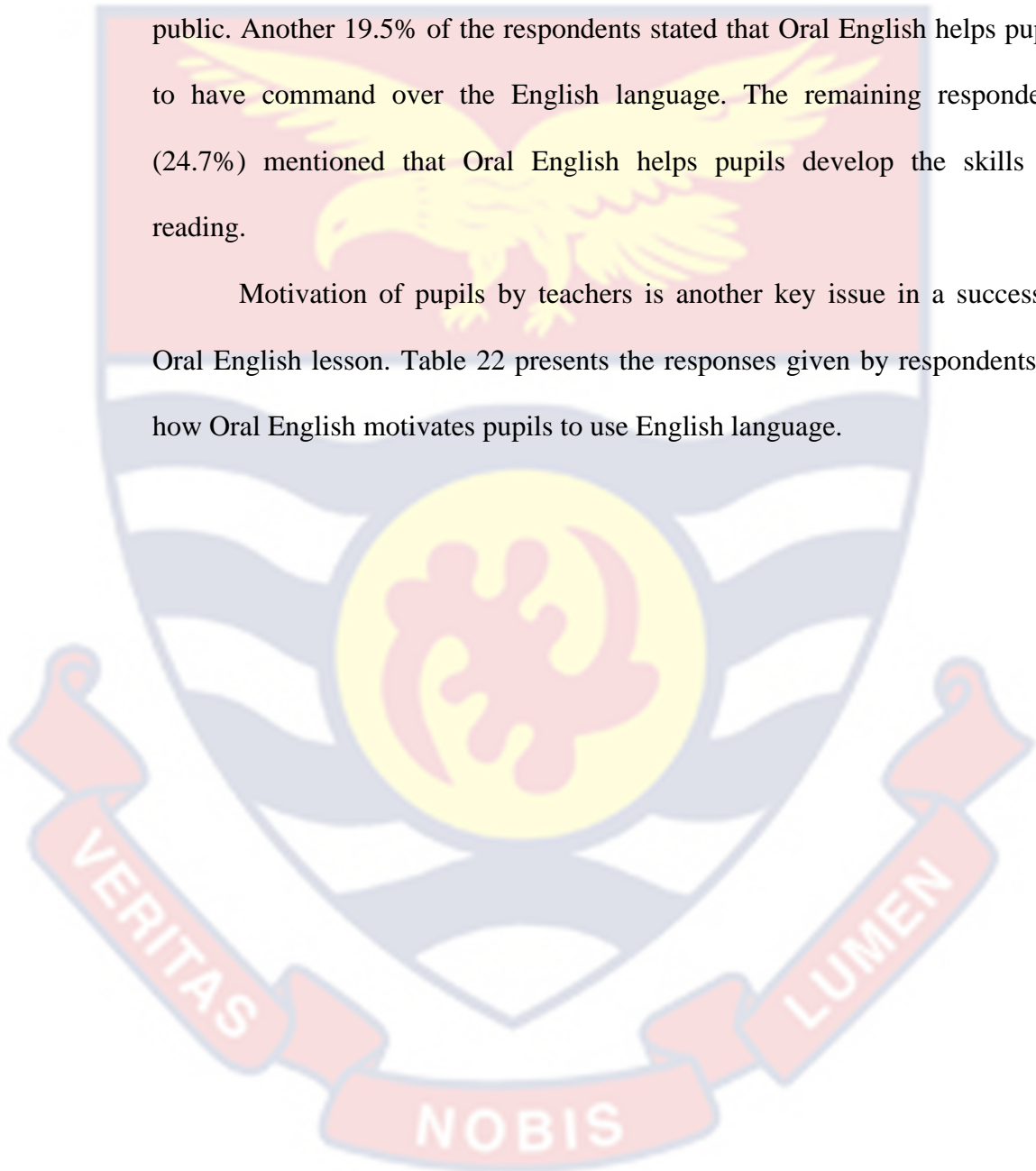
The study sought teachers' views on how Oral English helps pupils to develop fluency in speech. In Table 21, the responses given by the respondents on how Oral English aids the development of fluency in speech are presented.

**Table 21: Fluency in Speech Is Developed Through Oral English**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Oral English helps pupils to speak in public	18	23.4
It increases their ability to express themselves orally	19	24.7
It helps pupils develop the skill for reading	19	24.7
It helps pupils to become self-confident	6	7.8
It helps pupils to have command over the English language	6	7.8
As pupils use the language often they are able to flow and become fluent	9	11.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>100</b>

The data shows the responses of the 77 teachers who agreed that Oral English helps the development of fluency in speech. Forty-three (55.9%) of the teachers indicated that Oral English increases pupils' ability to express themselves orally and as such enables them to become confident to speak in public. Another 19.5% of the respondents stated that Oral English helps pupils to have command over the English language. The remaining respondents (24.7%) mentioned that Oral English helps pupils develop the skills for reading.

Motivation of pupils by teachers is another key issue in a successful Oral English lesson. Table 22 presents the responses given by respondents on how Oral English motivates pupils to use English language.



**Table 22: Motivation to use the language through Oral English**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Pupils are motivated to speak the English language during break time to their friends	6	8.6
Because they are motivated they are able to recall what they have learnt	37	52.9
Pupils use language and become conversant with words and tenses	9	12.9
Pupils are motivated to speak the language often	5	7.1
Pupils' use of the language builds their confidence	5	7.1
Pupils are able to contribute to class discussions	4	5.7
Pupils speak without intimidation or fear of making mistakes	4	5.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution shows the data collected from the 70 teachers who agreed that Oral English motivates pupils to use the English language. The responses of a greater number of teachers forming (65.8%) of the respondents was that because pupils are motivated to use language through Oral English, they are able to recall what they have learnt and become conversant with words and tenses. Table 22 again stated the views of 8.6% of the respondents who claimed that pupils are motivated to speak the language very often, for

instance, to friends during break. This information implies that pupils are likely to speak not only to friends but also to siblings and parents after school. Other responses given by the respondents (18.5%) were that through Oral English pupils are motivated to contribute to class discussions and they speak with confidence without intimidation or fear of making mistakes.

#### **Discussion of findings of Research Question Four**

From the results of teachers' questionnaire, the majority of them affirmed that regular and meaningful delivery of Oral English helps pupils to acquire logical thinking because Oral English enables pupils to follow step-by-step delivery of story, and helps them to tell the moral lessons in given stories. It means as a pupil narrates a story from the beginning to the end and relates the events chronologically he/she does some amount of logical reasoning. Teachers, again, maintained that pupils are able to tell moral lessons in stories because of a kind of a quick assessment they have done in their minds about the story. They said through role play pupils develop creative minds. This agrees with Brunner's (1983) assertion that proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital tool for thought. Because without fluent and structured oral language, children will find it very difficult to think.

However, teachers could not identify group work (cooperative or collaborative) learning in their responses as being a major tool that contributes to cognitive development of the learner (Vygotsky, 1986). Other responses indicated that pupils through Oral English are able to build argumentative skills and sequence events heard through stories and role play. Also, there is transfer of thinking ability through the rhymes and poems

they learn. This affirms Vygotsky's (1978) beliefs that language plays central role in mental development, and problem solving and also encourages high level critical thinking in students.

Again, most teachers affirmed that Oral English helps in vocabulary development because it helps pupils to learn to pronounce words related to the topics treated easily. They learn the meanings of words and vocabulary when appreciating stories, songs, rhymes and other literacy materials and children keep these words that they have learnt in their memory. Hickman et al (2004) are of the view that listening to interesting and comprehensible stories, poems and instructional talk can supply students with vocabulary. This also agrees with Verhoeven, (1999) who maintains that listening to stories, poems, and talk familiarises English language learners with the sound system of English, preparing the way for accurate pronunciation and phonemic awareness.

Concerning the development of conversational skills, majority of the teachers agree that Oral English helps pupils to converse meaningfully. They said pupils acquire the skills through discussions, storytelling, conversation lessons, pair/partner talk and class contributions which help them build confidence. Most of the teachers again, affirmed that pupils' Oral English helps in developing fluency of speech in them. They said pupils learn how to speak in public through the speaking skill that they acquire during Oral English lessons. They also develop communication skills. They are able to express themselves and have command over the language and develop reading skills. The findings confirms Roskos, Tabors & Lenharts' (2005) view that children's speaking and listening skills lead the way for their

reading and writing skills, and together these language skills are the primary tools of the mind for all future learning.

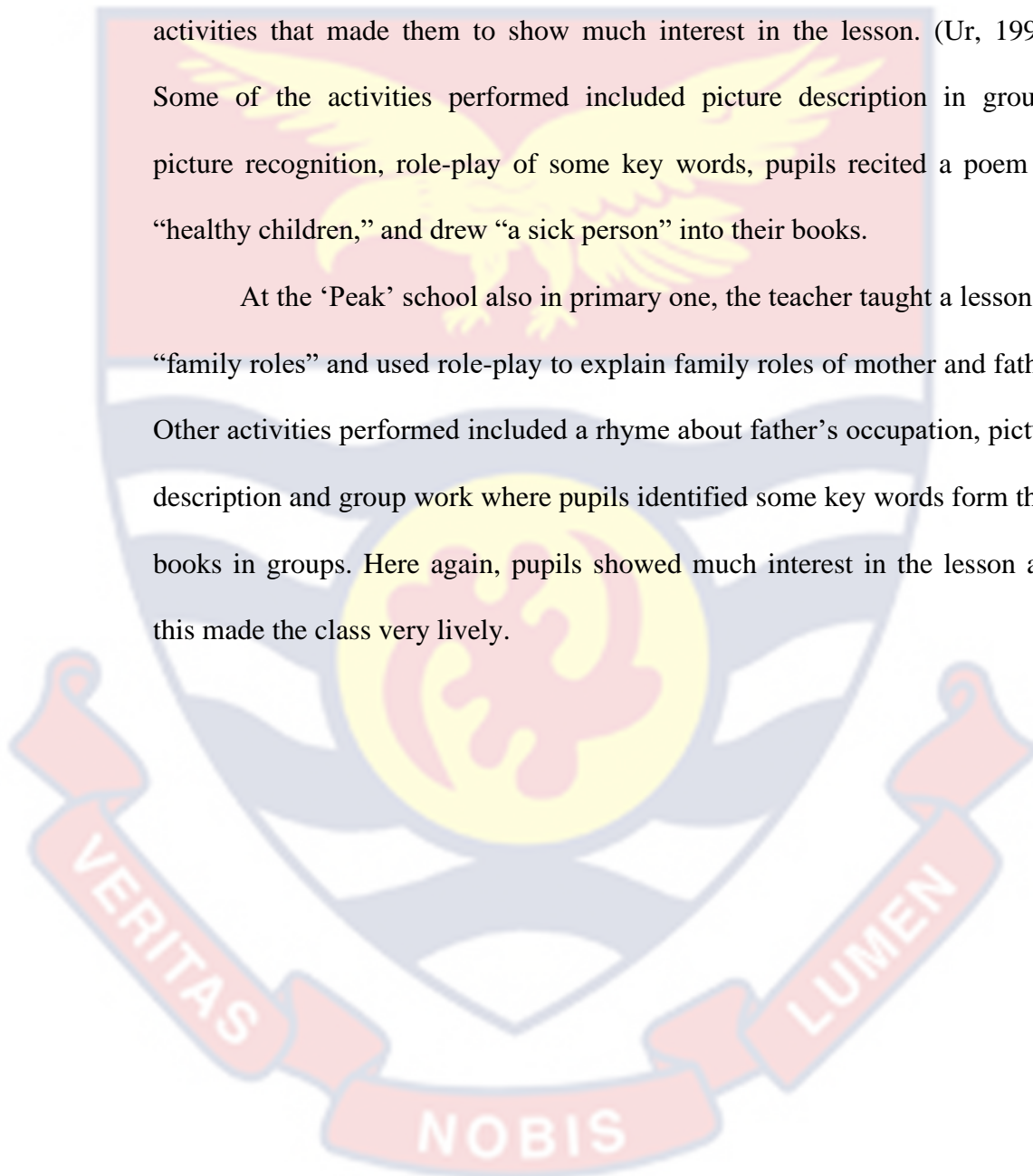
Furthermore, most of the teachers stated that pupils are motivated to use English language by speaking to their friends during break time. They become conversant with words and tenses and speak without intimidation or fear during group work. And because they are motivated they are able to recall what they have learnt and use the language often.

The results from the interviews conducted with the headteachers revealed their belief that Oral English helps pupils to develop speaking skills, construct good sentences, and increase their vocabulary. It also helps them to contribute to class discussions, enables them converse with their friends and classmates, and during story telling, pupils think about the story well before they narrate.

During the observation lessons, motivation of pupils by teachers was keenly observed to find out whether pupils are well motivated during their Oral English lessons. It was observed that the motivation of pupils by teachers in the greater number of lessons observed was lacking. Pupils did not show keen interest in the lessons either because the teachers were doing most of the talking and did not involve them much or did not use enough TLM to help their understanding. Whereas teachers are to provide a carefully planned environment that will promote thoughtful and authentic opportunities to engage pupils in conversations and other forms of discussions (Kirkland & Patterson, 2005).

However, a few teachers did their best to motivate their pupils especially teachers from schools with the pseudonym “Virtue and Peak”. In ‘Virtue’ school P2, the teacher had a lesson on “healthy living” and took pupils through various steps in the lesson and pupils performed relevant activities that made them to show much interest in the lesson. (Ur, 1996). Some of the activities performed included picture description in groups, picture recognition, role-play of some key words, pupils recited a poem on “healthy children,” and drew “a sick person” into their books.

At the ‘Peak’ school also in primary one, the teacher taught a lesson on “family roles” and used role-play to explain family roles of mother and father. Other activities performed included a rhyme about father’s occupation, picture description and group work where pupils identified some key words from their books in groups. Here again, pupils showed much interest in the lesson and this made the class very lively.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the teaching of Oral English in lower primary classes in schools in Cape Coast Metropolis. This chapter presents the summary of the entire work, looks at the results of the research, the conclusions, offers recommendations and gives suggestions for further research

#### Summary

Chapter one of the work constitutes the introduction. It offers an overview of the dominant concepts of the research. This chapter also gives the background to the work. States the research problem and poses the research questions which guided the study as well as the general significance of the work. The study, therefore, examined the teaching of Oral English in the lower primary schools in Cape Coast Metropolis and the study sought answers to the following questions:

1. How often do teachers at the basic schools in Cape Coast Metropolis teach Oral English?
2. What methods do teachers at the basic level use in teaching listening and speaking?
3. What challenges do teachers encounter in teaching Oral English at the basic level?



4. How does Oral English contribute to the acquisition of other language skills?

The theoretical framework on which this study is based and its classroom implications is presented. The existing literature on the empirical studies on the teaching and learning of English as a second language using oral language, Oral English instruction, method and activities in language instruction and the challenges in the teaching of Oral English were reviewed. Also, some key concepts such as language development and the influence of the home and school on Oral English development.

The methodology described the research design, the target population of the study, the method of sampling, the research instruments used for data collection and the research procedure. A pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the research tools and to solve methodological problems that might be encountered in the field work. Data were gathered from the target population with the help of the observation method questionnaire and interview instruments.

The criteria of reliability and validity were catered for through techniques such as multiple sources of data collection, pilot testing of the research instruments, ensuring that the tools measured what they were to measure. Responses on the questionnaire were coded and analysed on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results were put into tabular forms made up of frequencies and percentages. The interview and observation tools were used to help elicit more information and their results were written out in a descriptive way and put together with the results of the questionnaire in the discussion of the findings of the research.

## Key Findings

The summary of key findings was presented taking into account the research questions. Almost all the respondents are trained teachers and the majority have taught for over 6 years. More female and highly experienced teachers are made to handle the lower primary classes. These experienced teachers are expected to have gained enough knowledge on teaching all subjects on the time table, including Oral English but this study has revealed that most of these teachers do not have knowledge on the current trends of teaching Oral English which have been introduced through the NALAP programme to equip the majority of children in the basic school with skills for language and literacy.

The findings of the study revealed that teachers teach Oral English once or twice a week and write lesson notes for the lessons. Teachers assess pupils mostly through oral questions. Teachers do not have adequate TLMs. This was observed during Oral English lessons and was confirmed by headteachers during the interviews whereas teachers themselves claimed to have adequate TLMs. These findings of the study revealed that teachers are active participants in the Oral English language class while pupils are passive participants. Teachers expected pupils to speak the English language as adults and were worried or disappointed when pupils made mistakes.

The findings of the study showed that most teachers have limited knowledge about the methods to use in teaching listening and speaking apart from questioning and discussions. Those who have some knowledge about other methods felt reluctant to use them. Most teachers do not know the advantages of group work and have not been utilizing it to enhance language

learning and class control. Pupils in classrooms where children sat in groups were not able to interact with mates for collaborative learning.

The study again revealed that most teachers do not know the difference between an activity and method in the language learning context. They have limited knowledge on the activities that they need to engage pupils in during Oral English lessons. This is confirmed during the interview by some headteachers who said teachers did not engage pupils in meaningful activities during Oral English lessons.

The majority of teachers have challenges in controlling large classes during Oral English lesson because pupils do not know how to speak in turns. Pupils enjoy Oral English lessons when teachers engage them in meaningful activities. Most teachers use rules and incentives to control their classes during interesting lesson.

Again, the findings revealed most teachers agreeing that regular and meaningful delivery of Oral English helps in the acquisition of other language skills. They affirmed that without adequate knowledge of Oral English pupils cannot engage in story telling or retelling, role play and argumentative skills which all involve logical and creative thinking. Other language skills acquired through Oral English as shown by the study were vocabulary, conversation skills and fluency of speech.

## Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, this investigation has the following conclusions. Teachers should create a rich classroom environment and a low anxiety atmosphere that is favourable for pupils to develop language. The kind of atmosphere that will enhance speaking and listening situations.

Collaborative learning is very important in language learning classroom; therefore teachers should create friendly and interactive classroom environment that will enable pupils to learn better. Oral English should be thought in meaningful situations as recommended in Krashen's (1982) natural order because children quickly learn their mother tongues and even other languages they are exposed to when it is used in meaningful and authentic situations.

Teachers must learn to integrate the teaching of the language arts. The rationale for the integration is provided by the realization that reading and writing abilities are deeply rooted in the development of oral language knowledge.

Teachers should not concentrate too much on correcting pupils' wrong answers, pronunciation and grammar since this can inhibit language development because children are not proficient speakers (Krashen) and should not be corrected. Rather teachers must help pupils to become good listeners and speakers by training them more in all listening and speaking processes.

Short courses must be organized for lower primary teachers on the teaching of Oral English by Ghana Education Service (GES) to enable teachers learn more about the new trends of teaching Oral English. English

Language course at the Teacher Training Institutions must include the current trends of teaching various listening and speaking processes because Oral English plays a critical role in the child's ability to acquire strong literacy skills giving him a good foundation for academic success.

Circuit supervisors must endeavour to regularly visit the schools under their jurisdiction and supervise teachers' work. This can give them the opportunity to identify teachers' challenges and help them solve their problems. The headteachers should also liaise with their circuit supervisors and District Education Directors to equip teachers with the necessary teaching learning material to enable them prepare adequately for lessons.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

Teachers at the lower primary levels should spend more time on Oral English teaching and give meaningful activities to pupils to enable them practise the language. This will enable pupils to acquire the language skills that they need for successful academic work.

Teachers should allow pupils to use the language freely. They should not threaten or intimidate pupils. They should allow pupils at this basic level to code switch in speech when necessary. Teachers should allow pupils to work in groups for collaborative learning. They should create conducive environments that will encourage pupils to talk.

The teaching of Oral English should be greatly improved in the schools to give room for the development of pupils' reading and writing abilities.

Heads of Basic School must provide avenues for constant In-service training to their teachers in critical areas such as the teaching of Oral English, in particular and English Language, in general.

Headteachers should pay frequent visits to the classrooms and give feedback to teachers on their performance. This would prevent some teachers from taking advantage of them. They should also allow teamwork and encourage teachers to consult colleagues on issues they are not familiar with.

The Performance Monitoring Unit of the GES must train teachers to handle the teaching of Oral English. Teachers must attend short courses during breaks to upgrade their knowledge on current trends of teaching Oral English.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

There are other areas related to this study that could not be adequately investigated and discussed. These issues are recommended as areas for further research.

In this study the sample that was used consisted of lower primary pupils in only the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana, it would not be possible to generalize the result in terms of teaching of Oral English in other regions. It would be helpful if it were done in other regions in Ghana to give a general picture of how Oral English is being taught in the lower Primary schools in Ghana.

This study was conducted at the lower primary level where pupils are within the ages of 6-9 years. But a similar study could also be done at the Kindergarten level where pupils are within 4-6 years to find out how the Oral English instruction is being done at that level. Another study could also be

conducted solely on the methods /strategies that teachers can use in Oral English instruction.



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APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

## QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of the questionnaire is to conduct a study on how Oral English is taught at the lower primary level in Cape Coast Metropolis. Since it is for a research purpose it would be very much appreciated if you could answer the questions as objectively as you can. You would be contributing immensely to the development of effective teaching of Oral English.

No attempt will be made to associate your name with the completed instruction. Information provided will be treated as confidential.

Tick [] where alternatives/options have been provided. Supply your own answers where space has been provided.

## SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Your class (es) .....
2. Your highest academic qualification
  - a. University First Degree (BA, BAC, BED) [  ]
  - b. Diploma/Specialist [  ]
  - c. Certificate A (Post-Sec) [  ]
  - d. Certificate A 4yr [  ]
  - e. Others (please specify) .....
3. Your current professional status
  - a. Teacher [  ]
  - b. Assistant superintendent [  ]
  - c. Superintendent [  ]
  - d. Senior superintendent I [  ]

- e. Senior superintendent II [     ]
- f. Principal superintendent [     ]
- g. Others (please specify) .....

4. How many years of teaching experience do you have?  
 ..... year(s)

5. Gender:  
 Male [     ]     Female [     ]

6. Age .....years

**SECTION B: TEACHING OF ORAL ENGLISH IN SCHOOLS**

7. Do you teach Oral English in your schools?  
 Yes [     ]     No [     ]  
 If Yes, how often .....

8. Do you prepare lesson notes on Oral English in your schools?  
 Yes [     ]     No [     ]  
 If Yes, how many lessons per week? .....  
 If no, give reasons .....

9. Do you assess the pupils after the lesson?  
 Yes [     ]     No [     ]  
 If Yes, what kind of assessment? .....  
 If No, give reasons .....

10. Do you have teaching learning materials for the Oral English lessons in your school?  
 Yes [     ]     No [     ]  
 If No, give reasons .....



11. Do pupils enjoy the lesson?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No. give reasons .....

If Yes, how do they show it? .....

12. How do you involve your pupils in the Oral English lesson?

Please state .....

.....

**SECTION C**

**METHODS USED IN TEACHING ORAL ENGLISH**

This section attempts of find out the methods that teachers use in teaching listening and speaking.

13. What methods do you use in teaching Oral English in your school?

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

v) .....

**ACTIVITIES PUPILS ENGAGE IN DURING ORAL ENGLISH LESSONS**

This section attempts to find out what related activities pupils perform during Oral English lessons in each method.

14. What activities do you engage pupils in during Oral English Lessons?

i) .....

ii) .....

iii) .....

iv) .....

v) .....

**SECTION D**

**DIFFICULTIES/CHALLENGES IN TEACHING ORAL ENGLISH**

15. Do pupils understand your level of language?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No, give reasons .....

16. What support do you give to your pupils?

Please state .....

.....

17. Is classroom control a challenge during Oral English lesson?

Please comment.....

.....

18. How do you control pupils when doing interesting activities?

Please comment.....

.....

19. Do pupils take turns when speaking?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If No, give reasons .....

20. How do you maintain pupils' interest in the lesson

Please comment.....

.....

SECTION E

CONTRIBUTION OF ORAL ENGLISH TO THE ACQUISITION OF OTHER LANGUAGE SKILLS

21. Do you think Oral English helps in logical thinking?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, please state how.....  
.....

22. Do you think Oral English helps in vocabulary development?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, please state how.....  
.....

23. Do you think Oral English helps in developing conversation skills?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, please state how.....  
.....

24. Do you think Oral English helps in developing fluency in speech?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, please state how.....  
.....

25. Do you think Oral English helps in motivating pupils to use the English language?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If Yes, please state how.....  
.....

## APPENDIX B

EXAMINING ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN  
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS

## Interview Guide for Headteachers

CIRCUIT:

SCHOOL:

DATE:

START TIME OF INTERVIEW:

END TIME OF INTERVIEW:

1. Is Oral English taught in your school?
2. As a headteacher, tell us how your teachers are going about the teaching of Oral English.
3. What are some of your observations about the teaching of Oral English?
4. What methods/strategies do they use in teaching listening and speaking?
5. What activities do your teachers include in their lesson plan?
6. What are the challenges faced by your teachers in teaching Oral English?
7. What are the major complaints from your teachers about the teaching of Oral English?
8. How does Oral English promote the acquisition of other language skills?
9. Have your teachers attended any in-service training based on the teaching of Oral English?
10. Have you organized any in-service training for your teachers in Oral English?

## APPENDIX C

**EXAMINING ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN  
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPE COAST METROPOLIS***Observation guide for Oral English lesson*

CIRCUIT:

SCHOOL:

SCHOOL'S: ID/CODE

DATE:

START TIME OF OBSERVATION:

END TIME OF OBSERVATION:

1. Learners should talk a lot and participation should be even.
2. Motivation should be high. Learners should be eager to speak because they are interested in the topic.
3. a. Language should be of an acceptable level.  
b. What support does the teacher give to the pupils? (Does the teacher write sentences or words on the board for pupils?)
4. Use of small groups. Learners should be allowed to interact with mates in small groups to discuss issues.
5. Teacher should be a facilitator and should avoid dominating the lesson
6. Assessment (what kind).

**APPENDIX D**

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION**

Telephone No: 0332133379

Cables: PED, University, Cape Coast  
E-mail: [dbeucc@yahoo.com](mailto:dbeucc@yahoo.com)



University of Cape Coast  
UCC Post Office  
Cape Coast

Our Ref: BED/49.1B/Vol. 1/59

29<sup>th</sup> February, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

The bearer of this letter Ms Margaret Adjoho is a Postgraduate student at the Department of Basic Education, University of Cape Coast.

She is undertaking a study as part of her thesis on “Teaching Oral English at the Lower Primary Level, a case study of Cape Coast Metropolis.” In connection with this, she needs to conduct a pilot study and later collect data.

The project is academic in purpose and data collected will be treated as confidential.

We should, therefore, be grateful if you could give Ms Margaret Adjoho the necessary assistance to enable her carry out her thesis.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Fiifi Mensah'.

Dr. Fiifi Mensah  
(Head)

APPENDIX E

**GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE**

*In case of reply the number and date of this letter should be quoted.*



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE  
ABURA-ASEBU-KWAMANKESE  
P. O. BOX 93  
ABURA DUNKWA.

My Ref. No. GES/AAK/27/VOL. 1/153

16<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2012

INTRODUCTORY LETTER  
MS. MARGARET ADJOHO

The bearer of the letter is a postgraduate student with the Department of Basic Education - U. C. C.  
She is currently conducting a pilot study in the teaching of oral English at the lower Primary schools.  
Please help her in any way you can.

DANIEL K. THOMPSON (HRM)  
(ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)  
For: DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

HEADTEACHER:  
ABAKRAMPA METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ABAKRAMPA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ABURA DUNKWA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
BAIDEN WALKER PRIMARY SCHOOL

**APPENDIX F**

**GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE**

*In case of reply the  
Number and date of this  
Letter should be quoted*



METROPOLITAN EDUCATION DIRECTORATE  
P. O. BOX 164  
CAPE COAST

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

*Tel. 03321-32514/32676  
Fax 03321-32676  
Email: capecoastmeo@yahoo.com  
My Ref. No GES/MD/EPI/VOL.3/95  
Your Ref.No.*

*23<sup>rd</sup> July, 2012*

PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS CONCERNED

**LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**  
**MS. MARGARET ADJOHO**

The bearer of this letter as named above is a post-graduate student of University of Cape Coast, Department of Basic Education. She is undertaking a research as part of her dissertation on the topic: 'Teaching Oral English at the Lower Primary Level'.

The project is intended for academic purpose and will require the cooperation and assistance of selected basic school heads in the collection of the data.

The Metro Directorate has granted the bearer the permission to undertake the study in your school and wish to advise that you grant her all the support and courtesies she deserves whiles ensuring that the exercise does not unduly interfere with contact hours.

Thank you.

  
VIVIAN ETROO  
METRO DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION  
CAPE COAST

**cc:**

✓ The Head of Department  
Department of Basic Education  
University of Cape Coast  
Cape Coast



APPENDIX G



This is Bs 1 class at “Peak School”



This is Bs 3 class at “Peace School”



This is Bs 2 class at “Victory School”



This is Bs 1 class at "Peak School"



This is Bs 1 class at “Mavelous School”



This is Bs 2 class at “Virtue School”