



# **ASSISTING BASIC 7 PUPILS OF PUSIGA GIRLS' MODEL JHS TO IMPROVE UPON THE MASTERY OF VOCABULARY IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE USING WORD GAMES**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study was designed to assist Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS to improve upon their poor mastery of vocabulary. The objectives of the study were to find out the causes of poor vocabulary among students and to ascertain whether Word Games can help in the improvement of poor mastery of vocabulary. The researcher also sourced information on the causes of the problem from existing literature written by previous researchers. The researcher used different data collection instruments like observation, test, and interview to gather information on the problem. The researcher intervened with a vocabulary game known as the Ball Game. Finally, the researcher summarized the whole work and concluded it. She also made recommendations to help teachers, policymakers, and Ghana Education Service to curtail the problem.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Overview

This serves as the beginning of the study; it consists of the background, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the study, Objectives, Research Question, Significance of the Study, Delimitation, Limitation, and Organization of the Study.

### Background of the Study

In Ghana, the English language was a colonial legacy; we inherited it from our colonial masters and it has now been adopted as a national language (Adika, 2012). It is used in Academia as a medium of instruction. It is used among the Judiciary as the language of the law, and it is used for business transactions in the international world. It is taught as a subject at the lower Primary and used as a medium of instruction in the Upper Primary. It is also one of the Core subjects in Basic and Secondary schools that a student must pass for progression from Junior High to Senior High and then to university. Vocabulary acquisition is a significant part of language learning and the more a person has vocabulary at his disposal the more a person would be able to read and write and understand whatever he reads. Limited vocabulary affects pupils' comprehension, writing, etc. (Gellert et al., 2021).

Vocabulary is one of the core elements of language aptitude and reflects how well learners listen, speak, read, and write. The language ability of learners of English as a second language can be improved by teachers in the classroom using many and varied approaches such as playing games, reading books and newspapers, and watching foreign cartoons or films with subtitles. The classroom is the major environment where teaching and learning take place as far as the school is concerned. Poor to no English language at all is what greets anyone in many basic schools in the country especially government schools due to a lack of vocabulary mastery in the language thereby affecting pupils' fluency skills. Speaking is the ability to speak a language clearly in a way that would be understood by listeners. This is an oral communication skill that learners should practice to perfection but this perfection cannot be achieved if one lacks vocabulary. Language consists of four key components namely reading, listening, writing, and speaking (Rivers, 1981). Our ability to speak, listen, and understand people's speech are skills that we mold by observing and practicing what we see. Some skills and languages are taught through education so we can fit in the era of globalization (Ahmad, 2016), Moreover, nowadays most companies demand the knowledge of English. Being proficient in English gives a chance to stand out in the competitive world (Villano, 1996)

Vocabulary is realized as the main aspect of learning because it adds meaning to language. A person can use a language well if he or she has more provision of vocabulary (Nathan, 2018). English is a foreign language in Ghana, and students in Ghana are still unfamiliar with the English vocabulary, however in reality there are still many in the JHS who have high expectations of being masters in speaking. It is not a simple issue for learners because learning English is not as simple as learning their mother tongue. (Swarniti, 2020).

Notwithstanding the significance of good vocabulary skills to the learner and the use of the English language, many JHS students exhibit lower and poorer vocabulary skills. This is common among the public schools in Ghana of which Pusiga Girls Model JHS where the researcher did her internship is not an exception. Many of the students are unable to write well and express themselves because of limited vocabulary. Since the English language is seen as a language across the curriculum that the student needs to understand in all areas at different levels of education, the Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS ought to be assisted in acquiring vocabulary. It's against this background that the researcher intends to conduct this research to help them improve their vocabulary mastery using word games.

## Statement of the Problem

Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS have limited vocabulary. This came to light during the researcher's teaching practice when students were unable to express themselves through writing. The research therefore was conducted to assist the learners to improve their vocabulary acquisition.

Several studies have been done on the best approaches to teaching students vocabulary skills.

For instance, Wang, Shang, and Broidy (2011) conducted research in an attempt to find out whether using games has an impact on teaching English. They concluded that using games may promote children's motivation and reduce their anxiety from peer pressure.

Again, Alemi (2010) also did a study on vocabulary retention and concluded that using word games has positive effects on the vocabulary development of students

In this study, the researcher sought to assist Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS with vocabulary mastery using Word Games.

## Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to assist Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS in the mastery of vocabulary in the English Language using word games.

## Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- 1.To find out the causes of poor vocabulary skills among Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS.
- 2.To employ word games to improve upon the vocabulary skills of Pusiga Girls Model JHS.

## Research Questions

1. What are the causes of poor vocabulary among Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS?
2. Will the use of games improve the vocabulary skills of Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS?

## Significance of the Study

**This study will help Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls' Model JHS to improve upon their vocabulary skills using word games.**

Furthermore, It will also help me as a beginning researcher to identify innovative ways of teaching my learners how to improve upon their mastery of vocabulary.

Lastly, it will help other teachers in my school identify the word games that improve the vocabulary mastery of students.

## **Delimitation**

The work covered vocabulary acquisition and not any other aspects. The study was carried out among the Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS.

## **Limitation**

There were a lot of activities like preparation of lesson notes, filling of SRJ, and marking of students' homework and exercises alongside the research work which was quite demanding.

Absenteeism of some students created a lot of inconveniences which nearly affected the results of the researcher

There was no funding and the researcher had to pay for the data cost of the research herself.

## **Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter one comprises the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations, and the organization of the study. Chapter two deals with the review of related literature, which looks at what other authors have said or written on the topic. Chapter three tackles the methodology used in the study. It is made up of the research design, population and sample selection, research instruments, data collection procedures, interventions, and data analysis. Chapter four consists of a presentation of the analysis of the data collected. Chapter Five looked at the Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation.





## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the most important language elements that support the skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. McCarthy (1990) indicates that no matter how well the students learn grammar, no matter how successfully the sounds of L2 are mastered, without words to express a wider range of meanings, communication in L2 cannot just happen in any meaningful way. Additionally, Richard and Renandya (2002) stated that vocabulary is the core of language proficiency and the basics of listening, speaking, writing, and reading. Furthermore, Santoso and Andriyadi (2019) pointed out that vocabulary is one of the language system components essential to being learned. Supporting Richard and Renandya (2019) and Santoso and Andriyadi (2019), it can be concluded that vocabulary is an essential part of learning a language because how you speak is how you are being understood, and so lack of vocabulary mastery affects comprehension.

In addition, Nunan (2015) opines that vocabulary can be used as a reference tool in learning a foreign language. It is the element that links the four skills of language learning, for example, speaking, reading, and writing altogether. To communicate well in a foreign language, students should acquire an adequate number of words and should know how to use them accurately.

#### Types of vocabulary

Types of vocabulary take different models. We may have different vocabularies to draw on depending on whether we are speaking, listening, reading, or writing (Sms, 1929).

Talking about speaking vocabulary mostly consists of the words we can pronounce aloud. Contains about 5000 to 10,000 words which these words are used for communicating and giving instruction (Agustin&Ayu,2021). Our listening vocabulary is the words we can understand by hearing them when said aloud. Similar to speaking vocabulary, we use these words to listen to what others are communicating to us and what they might be instructing us to do. Your listening vocabulary starts before you are even born. On reading, our reading vocabulary is how many words we can understand when reading. Reading is also the main way to build and grow vocabulary - as you read, you encounter new words you may not have seen or heard before. Writing vocabulary is determined by the words we can spell and use correctly in context. People's writing vocabulary is typically smaller than their speaking or listening vocabulary, which is why it is essential to work on it and keep learning new words (Yudha & Mandasari, 2021).

#### Vocabulary teaching

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. As Steven Stahl (2005) puts it, vocabulary knowledge is knowledge, the knowledge of a word not only implies a definition but also implies how that word fits into the world. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered, it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Vocabulary instruction involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired incidentally through indirect exposure to words and intentionally through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies.

There are components of an effective vocabulary program and that are word consciousness and wordplay activities to motivate and enhance learning, instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and extensive independent reading to expand word knowledge. (Michael Graves,2000).

### **Vocabulary Learning Skills**

Vocabulary learning skills are maybe the most useful ones that are empowered by the individual learning strategy. Vocabulary learning strategies are the actions, sets of techniques, or language behaviors that learners take to help themselves discover the meaning of new words to retain them in long-term memory (Cameroon, 2001; Intrapest, 2004 Hamza et al.,2009).

There are so many techniques that can be employed by learners in the learning of vocabulary. One of such techniques is the use of games. Kalaycioglu (2011) argues that more vocabulary games should be devised for every young learner by experts for classroom use, and the number of books about educational vocabulary games should be increased. Schwienhost (2002) has noted that games provide a realistic sociocultural context for language learning. Supporting this, Kalaycioglu and Schwienhost mean that students should be introduced to more games to enhance a lively learning environment when it comes to teaching vocabulary.

Tuan (2012) suggests that teachers should recognize that games are also a form of learning. He also added that exercise in the workbook could help young learners recollect vocabulary to some extent, but it will be more effective if teachers add more games in class to motivate young learners in class to learn vocabulary. Wang et al. (2011) suggest that using games may promote children's motivation and reduce their anxiety from pressure. From Tuan and Wang et al., using games culminates in effective learning. There is an old and prevalent perception that learning occurs well only in a restrained, tense, and oppressive environment. Many teachers believe that learning a language should take place in a formal environment, and if one is having fun and there is hilarity and laughter, then it is not teaching (Le, 1995). With this, it can be deduced that most people across the continent think using games in teaching means no learning has taken place. Contrary to that belief, we can apply some teaching strategies like games to reduce stress levels among students. Games create an active atmosphere.

### **Vocabulary Building Skills**

Vocabulary-building skills are what children need to develop their growing vocabulary. Teachers typically encourage children to read widely and research. That is what building a vocabulary is - seeing a new word, researching what it means, and tucking it away to use later(Al Rashidi, 2021).

#### **Synonyms**

A building skill like synonyms that use words. This is a solid way for children to expand beyond their basic vocabulary and add more to their high-frequency vocabulary (Abduramanova, 2020). This Is to say that looking at words they already know and finding ones that mean the same or have similar meanings, is a simple and easy way to expand a child's vocabulary.

#### **Dictionary and Thesaurus Skills**

Dictionaries and thesauruses are great tools to use when helping children to develop their vocabulary. Children should develop the habit of researching a new word in the dictionary whenever they come across one. This way, they can learn its definition. They should also be encouraged to write down the word and its meaning to refer back to later(Qizi & Qizi, 2021).

## Reading

Never underestimate the power of reading. Reading is one of the best and most effective ways for children to grow their vocabulary. While they read, they will consolidate their understanding of familiar words while encountering new ones (Feng & Webb, 2020). They can use their knowledge of other words to estimate new meanings, and then use their dictionary skills to learn the meanings of unfamiliar words.

## Repetition

Redoing something over a while produces an element of familiarity. It is unlikely that anyone will remember a new word's spelling, pronunciation, and meaning after seeing it just once. That's why it's important to repeat a new word so that it sticks. Write it down in a sentence, draw it in a fancy way, use word cards with it to play a game, or simply write it down multiple times (Uchihara et al., 2019). These activities will help a new word to stay in a child's growing vocabulary.

## Word Games

Word games (also called word game puzzles or word search games) are spoken, board, or video games often designed to test ability with language or to explore its properties.

Word games are generally used as a source of entertainment, but can additionally serve an educational purpose. Young children can enjoy playing games such as Hangman, while naturally developing important language skills like spelling. Researchers have found that adults who regularly solved crossword puzzles, which require familiarity with a larger vocabulary, had better brain function later in life (Shah & Saleem, 2021).

## Types of Word Games

There are a lot of word games like crossword puzzles, ball games, Scrabble, Pictionary, etc., but the researcher would limit herself to Ball games and Crossword Puzzles.

## Crossword Puzzles

A crossword is a word puzzle that usually takes the form of a square or a rectangular grid of white- and black-shaded squares. The goal is to fill the white squares with letters, forming words or phrases that cross each other by solving clues that lead to the answers. In languages that are written left-to-right, the answer words and phrases are placed in the grid from left to right ("across") and from top to bottom ("down"). The shaded squares are used to separate the words or phrases (Melasari et al., 2019; Moe & Alimuddin, 2022).

## Ball game

The simplest use of a ball is for students to throw and catch it while drilling something like months of the year or pairs of infinitive and irregular past forms of verbs (Moe & Alimuddin, 2022).

Name a category or theme, such as things found in a kitchen, food, professions, and so on. Begin by tossing the ball to a student. That student will shout a word related to the theme and throw the ball at another student. As each person catches the ball, they need to come up with another word that fits the theme.

## Scrabble

Scrabble is one of the most popular word games for adults or children. Players must use letter tiles to assemble words on the game board(Sari et al., 2023).

To play:

1. Each player draws seven letter tiles.
2. During turns, players can play tiles or exchange them for new letters.
3. Players build words on the board, with each new word connecting to an existing word.
4. Tiles have a point value assigned depending on the challenge of the letter. When a player makes a word, tally the letter and add the score to the point board.

## Vocabulary Pyramid

Pyramid challenges players to guess words from context clues. The pyramid is a collection of six words, arranged with three on the bottom, two in the middle, and one at the top. To win, teams must guess all words within the pyramid in the allotted time(FAHRI, 2022).

To play:

1. Divide the group into teams.
2. Give one player on each team the pyramid.
3. The pyramid holder must give hints to teammates describing each word without using the actual name of the item.
4. When players guess correctly, the pyramid master can move to the next word. Or, players can say “pass” and return to the word later.
5. Teams receive a point for every correct guess.

When determining the time limit, consider the age of your players and the difficulty of the words. In general, 30 seconds per word, or three minutes total, is a good place to start, but add or take away time to increase or decrease the challenge.

## Invisible Bridge

Invisible Bridge is similar to Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon. In both games, you must figure out a way to connect two seemingly distant concepts. Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon uses actors, while Invisible Bridge uses words(Rasinski & Padak, 2020).

To play:

1. A player suggests two unrelated words.
2. Player One gives several planks. This is how many steps other players must use to relate the two words.
3. The other players think up words that share similar traits, synonyms, or connector words to move from one term to another.



## **Synonym Memory**

The rules of Memory are easy: flip over two cards at a time and look for matching pictures or words. Should the players find pairs, they take the cards from the board. With this, the player with the most pairs of cards at the end of the game is the victor (Brewer, 1975).

Synonym Memory puts a challenging spin on the simple game. Instead of hunting for exact matches, players pair up words with synonyms. Listed are some sample matches like; enticing/tempting, assume/suppose, patience/restraint, and revoke/rescind

This game encourages players to devise different ways, as participants, you will need to remember the location of the cards as well as consider the meanings of words.

## **Importance of Word Games**

### **Enhancement of Vocabulary**

Word Games are crucial for personal and professional development. Using high-quality and complex words can take your career to new heights. English word games are a great way to improve your vocabulary in a fun way. You get exposed to new and unique words every day (Alavi & Gilakjani, 2019). Children are often encouraged to play such games for this reason. They get to learn high-level vocabulary and sharpen their skills. Playing English word games regularly will improve your linguistic skills while boosting your career.

### **Word Games Enhance Concentration**

English games require you to solve puzzles, crack clues, and correctly identify brain teasers. The process is intense, challenging, and stimulating (Syafii et al., 2020). It improves your concentration and increases your attention span. The more you play, the better you will be able to focus. As the difficulty level of your word games rises, so will its effect on your concentration. That is a skill you need in your life. Just play a couple of games every week, and you will be good to go.

### **Word Games Reduce Stress**

The use of word games can reduce stress and tension. Playing word games or solving word-related puzzles is a great way to unwind and relax. It will relieve all the pressures of your daily life and help you rejuvenate. You can lose yourself in the game and forget all the pressures and complications of your daily life. (Tangriyev, 2019).

### **Word Games Improve Cognitive Ability**

Puzzle-related games are well-known for having positive effects on one's cognitive skills. Playing English language games will help you identify and solve problems better. (Qizi, 2021). They enhance your ability to boost your creativity. You will see positive results soon afterward.

## **Causes of Poor Vocabulary**

### **Influence of Research Participants L1 during Interactions**

The mother tongue or first language is a language learned before other languages by people when they were children. According to Khati(2011), first language, mother tongue, and native tongue are common terms for the language that a person acquires first in his childhood because it is spoken in the family

and is the language of the country where he is living.

This means that a first language (L1) is the language that is learned naturally by the children from their environment before they learn the other languages. In teaching and learning English, it is often found that the first language (L1) is used by both the teachers and the students.

It is a contentious subject that raises two contrasting views about whether or not L1 should be employed in English classrooms. On the flip side of the coin, there is a school of thought that using L1 in an English classroom is beneficial, for it has several advantages that can support language (English language) learning. On the other side, L1 is considered not to be used at all in English classrooms, because it can interfere with the process of mastering the target language. Nonetheless, students' first language usually influences their second language acquisition (SLA). Some experts believe that using a first language has some disadvantages that can affect students' English mastery.

In addition, Khati (2011) assumes that people learning foreign languages follow the same route as they acquire their mother tongue, hence the use of the other tongue in the learning process should be minimized. In line with this, Ellis (2015) argues that the L1 gets in the way or interferes with the learning of the L2, such that features of the L1 are transferred into the L2.

It means that most students' first language usually affects their way of thinking in learning English, as they often transfer the features of their first language to the target language. Thus, they tend to use, for instance, the grammatical features in their first language in the target language. This may cause misconceptions about some principles or ideas in the language. Furthermore, the excessive use of the first language can reduce the exposure to the target language. Ellis (2015) states that too much L1 use could deprive the learners of valuable input in the L2. Besides, (Hammer et al. 2009) also argue that it restricts the students' exposure to English. Thus, the teachers should be aware of monitoring the appropriate use of the first language in English classrooms, so that it can optimize the target language learning.

### **Short Period for English on the Timetable.**

Most schools around the globe practice subject discrimination to enhance the performance of students in a particular subject and also because a particular subject is deemed more important than the other. English, is a victim of this long-standing stereotyping. As a result, many academic administrators are tempted to dwarf the lesson hours for English to extend the seemingly important others on the weekly timetable. The result is as expected. With little meeting time to continuously build on the vocabulary, there is a high tendency of a dramatic collapse to the carefully built vocabulary enhancing model (Tang, 2022).

### **Lack of Personal Extensive Reading at Home Due to Household Chores.**

Household chores have become a nemesis to personal academic growth for students at the basic level. After the exhaustion of school, they are greeted with a mountain of chores. In our African setting, culture has it that children are the command chain and that means all errands and trivial tasks will be handled by the child. This in itself is not a vice; however, the challenge is when these do not have ample time to go over the day's work for better comprehension and familiarity (Naafan 2018). In the case of vocabulary, enhancing it, just like any other thing you would love to enhance takes constant practice and concentration. A luxury most students cannot afford now and might still not be able to in the future.

### **Lack of Motivation**

Motivation is key to stirring up the determination of people or animals of all ages and abilities. In context, students are more likely to excel in vocabulary acquisition and enhancement with the appropriate motivation like compliments before his or her peers, awards, and providing an enabling library stocked up to the teeth with quality state books (Oppong-Sekyere, Akpalu 2013). Motivation is also discriminatorily geared towards supposedly more

important subjects for which labs, fields parks, and incentives will be apportioned. The extent of motivational deficit in the English language creates a delusional mental picture that poisons students to trivialize the language and any attempt to enhance it(McCoy, Wolf, and Godfrey 2014).

### **Non-availability of reading and listening materials**

A basic requirement for vocabulary enhancement is reading and listening materials. Unfortunately, in our hemisphere, we are abjectly malnourished in these materials for several reasons(Mohammed and Amponsah 2018). In Ghana, we have adopted a culture of sharing learning (reading and listening) materials over the years. The problem with sharing is wear and tear. Another prominent problem is the age of these materials which could easily be deciphered from the tattered covers with each competing with the other over the most worn out(Naafan 2018). Few schools can even think of listening materials not to even think of having them(Mohammed and Amponsah 2018).

This kills motivation and creates a sense of apathy towards the study of the language and correspondingly, a nose dive in their vocabulary acquisition journey(Ameyaw and Anto 2018).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Overview**

This part of the study covers the research design, population size, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure, pre-test, intervention, and post-test.

#### **Research Design**

Research design refers to the overall strategy or blueprint that guides the process of conducting research. It is a systematic plan that outlines how a researcher will collect analyze and interpret data to address research questions or test hypotheses(Mills, 2009). The study design is action research which took a period of 4 months. Action Research equips the modern teacher with the understanding of the various methods or approaches that best suit the children he/she teaches (Burns, 2009).

#### **Population**

The population for the study is Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS and the total number of students is 41. They are all girls and the sample population is 10.

#### **Sample and Sampling Technique**

In this study, 10 pupils were carefully selected through Purposive Sampling based on an exercise conducted to find out pupils' difficulty in vocabulary mastery as far as English Language speaking and spelling is concerned. The 10 pupils selected exhibited challenges in reading and spelling in vocabulary. This was done to get a deeper understanding of the reasons why pupils have difficulties in vocabulary mastery.

#### **Research instruments**

In this work, observation, interview, and test were used as instruments for collecting data.

## Pre-Intervention

### Observation

The researcher used observation as a data collection tool. The observation as a data collection instrument was used to collect data regarding the causes of poor vocabulary skills among the learners in basic 7 of Pusiga Girls Model JHS. The researcher observed the research participants in their natural activities to collect data from them. The following themes were a guide to conducting the observation; The influence of the learners speaking L1 which is Kusaal during school hours because they could not express themselves well in the English language and the short periods allocated for English on the school timetable.

It was again observed that the time allocated on the timetable for reading comprehension as directed by the curriculum is once a week (50 minutes) which was very insufficient to cater to all the stages of reading.

### Interview

The researcher used interviews to probe further to ascertain the research participants' thoughts, experiences, and feelings about the causes of poor vocabulary skills. The researcher used the semi-structured form of interview. This is where she asked a pre-determined set of questions that allowed the research participants to respond in detail. The following themes were used as a guide in conducting the interview; the availability of reading materials, extensive reading during leisure, and motivation. To get detailed responses from the interviewees, the researcher allowed them to express themselves in their L1 which is Kusaal because they could not express themselves well in the English language. However, she did that through an interpreter (Mentor) because the researcher could not speak Kusaal, the local language of the research participants. Their responses were recorded. The researcher used five days to interview the research participants. Four (4) were interviewed a day at different times throughout the day. Each interview session lasted for 10-15 minutes.

### Pre-Test

The researcher conducted a test to ascertain students' mastery of vocabulary. Test items were in the form of questions based on what was taught and what pupils were supposed to know. This was conducted to provide clear evidence of poor vocabulary mastery after the researcher treated a story in the cock crow (Debbie, Sandy, and Pepe). Keywords were well treated and explained.

The researcher gave 10 words out of 15 keywords treated as a test that was strictly supervised. Participants were assigned to form sentences with words mentioned by the researcher, the researcher further explained to participants that each question attracted 2 marks, that is 1 mark for the correct spelling of words and 1 mark for the correct formation of sentences with words all summing up to 20.

## Intervention

### Week 1

The researcher saw to it that the seating arrangement of the class was orderly before administering the intervention. Five(5) participants sat in each column with six(6) in the last column. The researcher presented the rules of the game as she boldly wrote the keywords on the board. The researcher explains that the ball determines whose turn it is in this game, the student who catches the ball is to mention and spell a vocabulary and another participant who



catches the ball forms a sentence with the vocabulary in ascending order as seen on the board. This was a game that needed readiness since 2 columns were in battle, column 1 throws to any member at column 3, and the same goes for columns 2 and 4. 10 keywords were used to play the game and it lasted for 60 minutes.

## Week 2

The researcher met the research participants for the second time. She begins with a song as a starter for the day's activity, The researcher wrote the 10 vocabularies for the day on the board. The researcher came along with toffees as a reward for participants who spelled correctly as well as those who formed sentences correctly by the end of the game. 10 new words were rotated throughout. The game was then played following the rules established already in Week 1. Participants who catch the ball are expected to mention and spell the vocabulary as seen on the board and quickly throw the ball to another, much attention was given to participants on the correct spellings and pronunciation due to the reward.

## Week 3

**This was a continuation and the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the ball game. The last set of words were listed on the board. It was expected that learners acquire 10 words which lasted for 50 minutes. Learners were enlightened on the rules of the game as established in weeks 1 and 2. This was very competitive because 3 marks were scored for correct spelling or pronunciation and 1 mark was deducted from a participant's score if correctly spelled. This strategy made the day's activity very competitive since each participant wanted to emerge as a winner.**

## Week 4

This week was an accumulation of all the 30 keywords done within the previous weeks. There was a slight change here this time because keywords weren't found on the board but participants tended to listen to the vocabulary from the researcher. The researcher mentions the vocabulary from a list of words on a sheet of paper. Rules from week 3 were established as participants earned and received scores according to their inputs.

## Post-Test

The researcher conducted a post-test to measure the success of the intervention. The test was made up of 10 vocabularies selected out of the 30 vocabularies used as the intervention in the previous weeks. Participants were assigned to listen attentively to words mentioned by correctly spelling and forming sentences with them. The work was strictly supervised for accurate data collection. Samples are found in the appendix.

## Ethical Consideration

There was approval from the college to conduct this action research. This paved the way for the school to welcome and give their approval to conduct any research technique in any class.

Lastly, the students' concerns were sought for approval before giving them the questionnaire. They were instructed not to write names on the questionnaire, for they were confidential.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Introduction

This chapter presents the Results, Data Analysis, and Interpretation of data collected by the researcher using the selected research instruments.

### Results

**Table 1** Results of pre-test

Marks	Frequency	Percentage
0	2	20%
2	3	30%
4	2	20%
6	2	20%
8	1	10%
10	0	0
12	0	0
14	0	0
16	0	0
18	0	0
20	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researcher's Field Work (2023)**

From Table 1, it can be seen that 2 of the research participants representing 20% scored 0 out of 10 which was not an encouraging score, 3 of the participants had 2 representing 30% which was equally a discouraging performance, 2 of them representing 20% scored 4 out of 10 which is another discouraging performance, 2 of them representing 20% scored 6 and 1 of them representing 10% scored 8. All the scores from the research participants are below the average mark.

**Table 2: Results of the Interview**

Theme	Agree	Disagree	Percentage
Availability of reading materials	2 (20%)	8 (80%)	10( 100%)
Extensive reading during leisure	1 (10%)	9 (90%)	10( 100%)
Lack of motivation	7 (70%)	3(30%)	10(100%)

**Source: Researchers Field Work**

Table 2 shows the results of the interview conducted to find out the possible causes of Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS's poor vocabulary skills. It can be deduced that 8 of the participants responded to the unavailability of reading materials both in school and at home due to financial instability at home. Parents are unable to afford reading materials for them, hence the difficulty in vocabulary mastery.

Again, 9 of them do not get the chance to read extensively during leisure due to loaded household chores like selling after school. The Researcher can testify to that because she often sees students hawking after school. Due to that research participants are mostly exhausted in the evening and hardly find time to read their books.

Lastly, 7 participants agreed to the fact that there is a lack of motivation from friends who always wait for mistakes to fall whilst speaking to make a mockery and sometimes the discouraging words that come from people (illiterates) that there is no need to prioritize a foreign language over the local language.

**Table 3: Results of the Post-Test**

Marks	frequency	Percentage
0	0	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
6	0	0
8	0	0
10	0	0
12	0	0
14	1	10%
16	2	20%
18	4	40%
20	3	30 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Researchers Field Work**

It can be seen from Table 3 that 1 of the participants representing 10% scored 14 which was an encouraging performance, also 2 of the participants representing 20% scored 16. Again, 4 of the participants representing 40% scored 18 and 3 of the participants representing 30% scored 20. It can therefore be concluded from the scores that the general performance of the research participants was outstanding performances.

## Discussion of Findings

### Research Question 1

It has been found by the researcher that, indeed, the Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS have poor mastery of vocabulary. The causes of the learner's poor vocabulary slacks as indicated by the results of the interview and observation are the following:

In the first place, the influence of learners L1 during interaction is one of the causes of poor vocabulary mastery. From the results collected, it was identified that students subconsciously use the L1 most often during conversations due to the limited vocabulary of the target language. They usually speak the L1 with both teachers and colleagues because they know they can explain a simple sentence in less than 7 seconds rather than stress themselves to explain that same sentence in 5 minutes due to limited vocabulary. Students' inability to master vocabulary had its root in their frequent interaction in their L1. Ellis (2015) argues that the L1 gets in the way or interferes with the learning of L2, such that features of the L1 are transferred into the L2. This means that the L1 of most students L1 usually affects their way of thinking in learning the English language, as they often transfer the features of their first language to their target language.

Furthermore, the short periods allocated on the timetable during contact hours were another factor. The researcher observed that the nature of the timetable prevented smooth achievement due to limited time. Teachers of English are unable to undertake all the stages of reading from modeling reading to reading aloud due to limited time. Vocabulary learning and vocabulary acquisition are mostly not properly achieved by students. The researcher experienced this problem during her internship at Pusiga Girls Model JHS. According to Tang (2022), most of the schools in Ghana practice subject discrimination, and due to that many academic administrators are tempted to dwarf the lesson hours.

Also, the non-availability of reading materials for personal studies both in school and at home is another factor that causes learners' poor mastery of vocabulary. This was brought to light when the researcher had an interview with students. During comprehension reading in class, students had to relocate from their permanent seats and arrange themselves in a triumvirate due to insufficient reading materials. This sometimes creates difficulty during reading because students have to crane their necks before they can properly have a clear look at the available books. Only 2 of the research participants responded they have books given to them by older siblings of which they hardly had time to read. Mohammed and Amponsah (2018) conclude that a basic requirement for vocabulary enhancement is the availability of reading and listening materials but unfortunately, we are objectively malnourished

Again, the researcher recognized that 90% of the research participants do not read widely resulting in limited vocabulary. Most of them lamented about the loaded household chores that await them after school. This results in tiredness during the evening so they only take in their books for their assignments in the morning or copy from friends. Due to this, research participants occasionally read resulting in limited vocabulary. Naaflan (2018) states that all means of errands and trivial tasks would be handled by the child as demanded by culture. This becomes a challenge when these kids do not get ample time to go over the day's work for familiarity.

Lastly, the researcher found from the results of the interview that 70% of the researchers are not motivated to speak English. They mostly receive mockery from colleagues at the least mistake made when speaking, research participants, unfortunately, find themselves with people who have the notion that their L1 being their native language shouldn't be looked upon by prioritizing a foreign language. They further explain that L1 is used to build



confidence and helps in developing learning skills. Students are more likely to excel in vocabulary acquisition and enhancement with the appropriate motivation like compliments. (Oppong Sekyere and Akpalu,2013).

## Research Question 2

From the results collected from the post-test, it was found that the performance of the research participants improved enormously after the intervention was done. This was because the word games (ball games) employed impelled them to master vocabulary leading to improvement in both written and speaking skills. Word games are a great way to improve your vocabulary in a fun way. Children are been exposed to new and unique words every day. (Alavi & Gilakjani, 2019).

Overall, based on the comparison of the results of the pre-test and post-test by the researcher, the researcher concludes that the use of Word Games (Ball Game) is effective for improving vocabulary mastery among students.

## Conclusion

This chapter presented the analysis of data gathered to answer research question 1 and found the factors that result in the causes of poor vocabulary mastery among Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS and whether the intervention chosen was a success in the improvement of vocabulary among basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS.

Again, from the results gathered from the post-intervention, it was concluded that the performance of the research participants had enormously improved after the intervention was carried out. This was because the Word Games (Ball Game) impelled them to master vocabulary leading to an improvement in vocabulary mastery.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### Summary

The purpose of this research was to help Basic 7 pupils of Pusiga Girls Model JHS overcome the difficulty in vocabulary mastery. Learners are unable to master the vocabulary taught because they forget to speak and practice the target language. The researcher organized a pre-test before the implementation of the intervention and the result showed the poor performance of the pupils. The result was analyzed using percentages as seen in Table 1.

The researcher made use of two research questions to improve the learners' performance. The first research question was to find out the causes of poor vocabulary among learners and the second was to ascertain if the word game chosen can help improve the vocabulary mastery of learners. The researcher used Word Game (Ball Game) to find out the impact of these intervention strategies on pupils' performance. The data was analyzed and the result indicated that there was a tremendous improvement in pupils' performance as shown in Table 3 as compared to the pre-test. It proved that the intervention chosen was appropriate for the problem identified.

#### Conclusion

The study shows that students' inability to master vocabulary was a result of the influence of learners' L1 during interactions. Learners' difficulty in vocabulary mastery could be traced from their frequent communication in the L1 hence neglecting the target language. Again, the short periods allocated on the timetable because every subject

is treated equally. This prevents the successful completion of the day's activity. Moreover, it was found out that, due to loaded household chores that await learners after school, students hardly get time to read their books. Furthermore, the researcher found that students are not been motivated to speak the target language, they are been discouraged from speaking the target language. Lastly, it was found by the researcher that there was no availability of reading materials so learners who are willing to read face a crisis due to financial instability. It has been established that the use of Word Games (Ball Games) helped to improve pupils' vocabulary mastery hence pupils' performance in the English Language in general.

From the collected and analyzed data, one can infer that the intervention strategies were effective. It therefore means that such intervention was effective. It solves similar problems in the future. This implies that facilitators of the English Language should use this method in future to facilitate the learning of English language vocabulary.

## Recommendations

The following are the recommendations made by the researcher to help policymakers, curriculum planners and developers, teachers, Ghana Education Service (GES), further researchers, parents, Educational bodies, and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are interested in promoting English language Education.

Teachers should adopt the use of activities with teaching and learning materials in English lessons and motivate learners on the importance of the target language during learning. Teachers should also limit their frequent interaction in the L1 at school and always try to motivate learners to speak the target language.

Parents should also try to encourage their wards to learn at home after school and give them the necessary support. The number and kind of heavy tasks parents assign to their wards at home should also be looked at.

Curriculum planners developers and policy makers should try as much as they can to extend the contact hours of English Language in their curriculum planning.

Ghana Education Service (GES), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Educational bodies, and other school authorities should organize workshops and seminars for teachers to upgrade their skills in their modes of teaching. They should provide high incentives and enumerations to teachers and assist them in providing teaching and learning materials (TLMs).

The researcher seems to have achieved his objectives since the performance of the researcher participants selected improved tremendously and hopes that, further researchers will modify the procedures used in obtaining information and the intervention period for the research to cater to more research participants.

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