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IMPACT OF EXTENSIVE READING ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE: A CASE STUDY OF JUKWAA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract: The study sought to assess the impact of extensive reading on English language competence. The study focused on Jukwaa Senior High School. The primary objective of this study is to assess the impact of extensive reading on English language competence in Jukwaa Senior High. A descriptive design was employed for this study and a quantitative methodology was used. Data collection tools employed in this study was questionnaire. Data was sorted and analyzed using IBM SPSS version 23.0. Descriptive statistics like percentages and frequency were used to develop tables and graphs to explain the findings. Correlation and Regression Analysis were used to study the strength of a relationship between the extensive reading and then the English language competence. The study revealed a strong significant and positive relationship between extensive reading and English language competence. The study also shows that extensive reading predicts 79.3% variance in explaining English language competence. Finally, the study also revealed a linear relationship between age, extensive reading and English language competence. The study recommends that extensive reading should be a compulsory reading activity at all levels of Senior High schools in Ghana in order to improve their vocabulary knowledge. This should be done by providing students with texts on African and non-African fictions and making it compulsory for student to read at least one text in a week. Secondly, Students' reading progress should be monitored by keeping reading diaries indicating varieties of registers or vocabularies encountered and summaries of books read. They should also be reinforced by awarding them stars for books read.

I. INTRODUCTION

The digital world of information and technology has made reading a crucial building block for social, academic and industrial success (Feiler Andrews, Greenhough, Hughes, Johnson, Scanlan and Yee; 2007, Gee; 2007, McCarty, 2005). Reading is defined by Dr. Kimberly (2004) as a dynamic process in which information from the text and knowledge possessed by the reader enable him/her to

construct meaning before or during and after reading. According to Holstron and Glengening (2004) reading develops students' writing by making them better writers since they may face different rules of grammar which will help them later in developing a sense of structures of the language, grammar and increase their vocabularies. Extensive Reading (ER) is generally seen as reading for pleasure or reading to while away time (Louisa, Evelyn, Ayensu and Stella; 2011).

Ghana is an English-speaking country where her main medium of communication is English language. In view of this, the government in collaboration with other stakeholders (GES) have made the English language a core subject to be learnt in all basic and second cycle institution and a basic necessity for entry into any tertiary institution in Ghana with the aim of equipping the students with the requisite skills to make them fluent and more proficient in the use of the English language. In most cases in Ghana, classrooms are the only key sites for inculcating the habit of reading, however, these reading lessons are mainly to treat texts as a vehicle for presentation, practice, development and consolidation of language of points rather than for the encouragement of reading. This means that most schools have failed to inculcate the habit of reading among students as the main focus is on reading for assessment without incorporating reading for pleasure. However, many researchers have found that learners acquire language proficiency when they understand what they hear and what they read (Krashen, 1982) and because of this reading input should be comprehensive in order for language acquisition to take place. This indicates that readers ought to have a large amount of vocabulary knowledge to comprehend and improve their writing and speaking skills. This could only be achieved through reading which is based on the well-established premises that learners should be exposed to free voluntary and pleasure- driven reading which will have an absolute effect on learner's proficiency in text of reading comprehension, vocabulary, oral language, grammar, listening comprehension and writing (Elley 1991). Macalister, 2008 and Mc Quilan 1994 also noted that, comprehensive, simplified, pleasure-driven, high interest reading materials can be used for the development of

language proficiency, which they explain that students who engage in free reading progress faster in language and literacy development. A number of studies also show that learners writing ability can be improved by reading extensively (Janopoulos 1986, Hafiz and Tudor 1990, Tsang 1996, Mason and Krashen, 1997).

According to Krashen (1995), extensive reading has facilitative effects on diverse abilities including comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar, spelling and writing skills.

It has been observed that for learners to be fluent and proficient in the use of any language, a good knowledge of the vocabulary of that language is required. It has been noted that ability of a student to involve in wide reading of different materials in English enable students to express themselves both in spoken and written English (Olarode, 1997, Azikwe, 2004 and Oreber 2013).

II. CONCEPT OF EXTENSIVE READING

There is a great deal of evidence found that extensive reading has a powerful impact on language learning. The definition of Extensive Reading (ER) has been presented in many ways over the past years. According to Day & Bamford, (2004) Extensive reading (ER) is an approach to language teaching in which learners read a lot of easy material in the new language. They also stated that the students can choose their own reading materials based on their interest which will give them individual reading

pleasure. This also means that they can stop reading any material which is not appealing to their interest.

2.1 Language Learning Theory

Richards & Rodgers (2007) point out that language learning theory may be provided by the theory of the language; structural view, functional view, and interactional view while learning occurs as a result of experience. The experience may be based on one's prior experience or the experience of others. It may be structured or unstructured, formal or informal, inside or outside of a classroom. A general theory of second language acquisition needs language acquisition by learners. The acquisition is in a variety of characteristics in contexts (Lightbown & Spada, 2011). Language learning theory relating to this context is second language acquisition (SLA). Krashen (1982) argues that language acquisition is very similar to the process children use in acquiring first and second languages. Ellis (2003) defines that second language acquisition (SLA) is as the way in which people learn a language other than their mother tongue, inside or outside of the classroom. Hence, Ellis (2012) claims that SLA is the product of many factors pertaining to the learner and the learning situation. Since learning of second language takes place sometime later than the acquisition of the first language, learners should be exposed to the language used.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

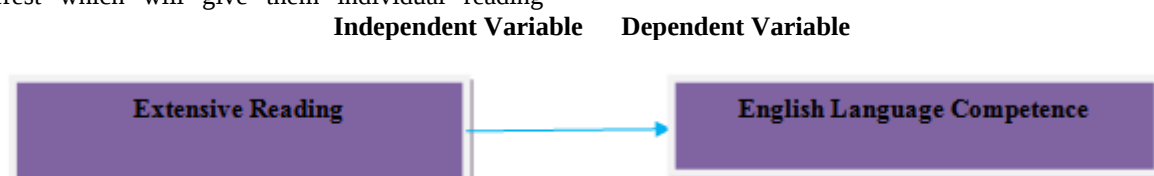


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

Source: Research fieldwork (2019)

From figure 2.1, the Independent Variable will be Extensive reading. The independent variable will directly have an impact on the dependent variable which is English Language Competence. The dependent variable will be English Language Competence and will be affected by Extensive reading. The literature review has clearly shown that Extensive reading in Language acquisition plays a major role in improving the English Language Competence.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Regarding research design, Fraenkel and Wallen (2009) say, "It is a fundamental responsibility of every researcher to do all in his or her power to ensure that participants in a research study are protected from physical or psychological harm, discomfort, or danger that may arise due to research procedures". According to Cheek (2008) "It encompasses decisions about how the research is conceptualized, the

conduct of the research and the type of contribution the research is intended to make to the development of knowledge in a particular field of study in developing a research design, theoretical, methodological and ethical considerations relevant to the study are taken".

The researcher in designing this research, will look at the approach and strategy of the design that will make this project viable and complete. The researcher will use the Quantitative Research method in gathering all related data collectively.

3.3 Data Analysis and Presentation

From Wikipedia (2018) Data analysis "is a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making." Since the data collection instrument will be questionnaire, responses



from the sampled respondents will be used in analyzing the collected data. Categorization and interpretation of the collected data will be accordingly done in relation to collectivity of subject matter and themes. Data analysis methods of Correlation Analysis and Hierarchical Regression will be used to draw the statistical results of the collected data.

IV. AGE DISTRIBUTION

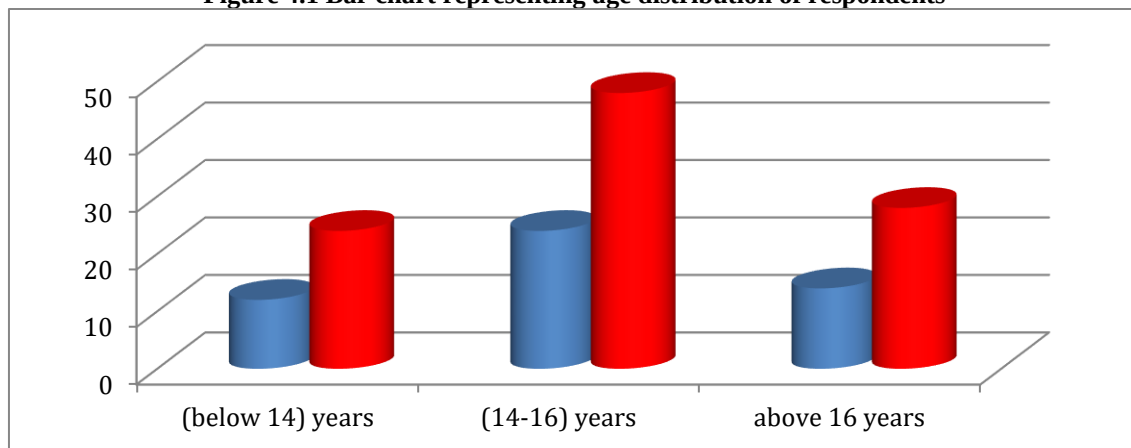
This study was interested in the age group distribution of the respondent in Jukwaa senior high, in order to assess the differences of age perception on extensive reading and English language competence. The finding from table 4.1 revealed that 24% of them were within the age group of below 14 years, 48% fall within the age bracket of (14-16 years) and 28 % of the respondent fall within the age of above 16 years. This is an indication that the study made use of different ages of the respondents of Jukwaa senior high school.

Table.4.1 Age Distribution of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
(Below 14) years	12	24.0
(14-16) years	24	48.0
above 16 years	14	28.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: field survey (2021)

Figure 4.1 Bar chart representing age distribution of respondents



Source: field survey (2021)

4.1.2 Gender of respondents

The respondents were asked to indicate their gender. The purpose was to find out the number of males and females who actually participated in the study, It will also help the study to discover which of the sex; male/female dominates the study and to assess the differences in gender perception on the impact of extensive reading and English language

competence. Table 4.2 shows that out of (50) respondents who participated in the study, majority of the respondents (30) representing 60% were females; while the remaining (20) respondents representing 40 % were males. This information is an indication of female dominated participants in the study.

Table 4.2 Gender of the respondents

	Frequency	Percent
female	30	60.0
Male	20	40.0

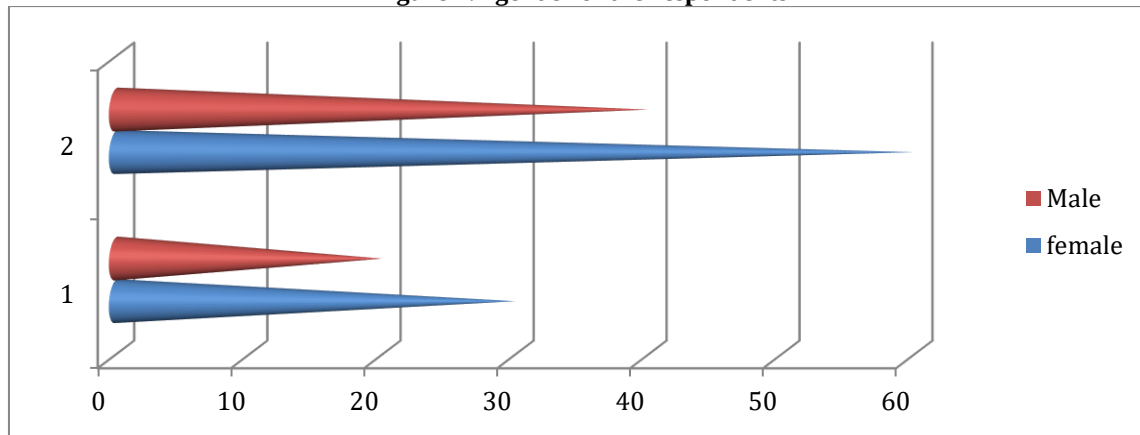
Total

50

100.0

Source: field survey (2021)

Figure 4.2 gender of the respondents



Source: field survey (2021)

4.2 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

The mean, standard deviations, and reliabilities of all the variables from responses of 50 among respondents in the institution have been reported in table 4.3. The respondents agreed that extensive reading influence their English language competence with the Mean of 2.02 and Standard deviation of 0.889.

The Cronbach's alpha analyses of the variables employed in the study revealed that they were reliable since they were

found to be above 0.6 thresholds prescribed by Sekeran (2005). From the table 3 extensive reading recorded Cronbach alpha of 0.917, and 0.880 was also recorded by English language competence. This means that all the variables were internally consistent and were appropriate for the study. Skewness and Kurtosis shown in the Table 4.3 revealed that our variables are normal as its fall within the range of (+2 and -2).

Table 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach (α)
Reading	2.02	.889	1.380	1.988	0.917
Competence	1.98	.760	1.337	2.631	0.880

Source: field survey (2021)

4.4.1 Model summary

The coefficient of determination also known as model summary was carried out to measure how well the statistical

model was likely to predict future outcomes. The coefficient of determination, R^2 is the square of the sample correlation coefficient between outcomes and predicted values.

Table: 4.6. Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.893 ^a	.797	.793	.346



a. Predictors: (Constant), Extensive Reading

In Table 4.6, the model had a coefficient of determination (R^2) = 0.793, indicating that 79.3% of the variation in English language competence was explained by the variables in the model leaving 20.7% of the variations in financial performance to be explained by variables not in the model. Adjusted R^2 indicates the true behavior of R^2 that varies in accordance with the changes in independent variables.

4.4.2 Coefficient of correlation

An interpretation of the coefficients in Table 4.7 below shows that extensive reading has a significant positive relationship with English language competence having p-value to be equal to 0.00 which makes a unique contribution of Beta value ($\beta = .764$).

Table 4.7. Coefficient of correlation.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	.436	.123		3.556	.001
	Reading	.764	.056	.893	13.736	.000

a. Dependent Variable: English Language Competence

4.5 Discussion of findings

The objective of the study was to establish the impact of extensive reading on English language competence at Jukwaa senior High. The findings of the study were in line with the literature review and the results have established a relationship between external reading and English reading competence. The hypothesis formulated had been subjected to statistical test using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to measure the strength of association between variables. The level of significance of 0.01 and 0.05 degree of freedom was used.

The respective decision rules guide the interpretation of the result, the null (H_0) and the alternative (H_1) hypothesis were stated for easy referencing. The study revealed a strong and positive significant relationship between extensive reading and English language competence. This result indicated that there is a linear relationship between extensive reading and English language competence which means that, the more learners do extensive reading the higher their competence and proficiency level will be. All in all, this study revealed that extensive reading is an effective way to improve global target language skills. The study rejected the null

hypothesis that "there will be no positive significant relationship between extensive reading and English language competence. Therefore, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis which state that "there is strong positive significant relationship between extensive reading and English language competence. This finding means that the more the student read, the more they acquire the language, and the more they acquire the language, the more they develop their language competency.

V. CONCLUSION

The most vital element in everyone's life is reading, it emancipates man from the shackles of ignorance. It is an effective means to assimilate and comprehend knowledge for personal growth and advancement. Imbibing extensive reading will prepare students to a more responsible and independent life. Therefore, to be highly focus, versatile and knowledgeable in the course of life; students need to cultivate the habit of reading extensively. As extensive reading has been highly acknowledged by different authors



as an influencing factor for language acquisition, vocabulary, proficiency and competency.

5.1 Recommendations

Considering the importance of reading and vocabulary to the life of students at all levels of our educational system, the following recommendations were made based on the findings of the present study.

1. The study recommends extensive reading should be a compulsory reading activity at all levels of Senior High schools in Ghana in order to improve their vocabulary knowledge. This should be done by providing students with texts on African and non-African fictions and making it compulsory for student to read at least one text in a week.
2. Students' reading progress should be monitored by keeping reading diaries indicating varieties of registers or vocabularies encountered and summaries of books read. They should also be reinforced by awarding them stars for books read.

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