

The Impact of Basic Schools on Students' Performance in English Language in the Second Cycle Institutions: A Case Study of the University Practice Senior High School, Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out if students from public and private basic schools exhibit remarkable difference in performance in English language in Second Cycle Institutions (SCI). It also sought to find out, if any, some of the possible causes of the disparity and means of minimizing such differences in performance. The study targeted a population comprising students and teachers in the University Practice Senior High School (UPSHS) and English teachers in both Amamoma Presby Model School and University Junior High School all in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The sampling technique adopted was simple random sampling covering General Arts, Visual Arts and Home Economics classes out of the form one (1) classes in UPSHS adding up to one hundred and twenty (120) students. Also, a representative sample of three (3) English language teachers were selected from the basic schools. An English Language teacher from the senior high school was also interviewed. It was also necessary to use questionnaire, interview guide and observation guide as reliable instruments for data collection. Questionnaires were distributed to SHS Form one (1) students and JHS English teachers. Also, 2 instructional sessions were observed; one for the private basic school and the other for the public basic school. The data collected were edited by researcher. It was coded and analysed manually. The interview held was described in connection with research questions 1. Questionnaires and observation answered research questions 2 and 3. It was concluded that there is indeed a problem of disparity in performance between public and private basic schools and that the performance of students in second cycle institutions come to equilibrium somewhere in the second year of their Second Cycle Institutions.

KEY WORDS: public, private, performance, basic, disparity.

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I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, England became the world super power. As a result of this, England joined the voyages of exploration. This soon gave way to colonization. So, during the early modern English period, the English language started being exported to different parts of the world such as Asia, Africa and Australia. In the course of these explorations and colonisation, the British landed in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Britain then colonized the people of the Gold Coast by imposing the English Language on them since there was no mutually intelligible language between the colonial masters and the colonized. This event led to the teaching and learning of the English language. (Baugh 1956 pp 176- 178).

The teaching and learning of the English language became the business of the day at time. As a result of this practice, the English Language started spreading among the people of the Gold Coast across the various ethnic boundaries. This meant that people from different ethnic groups could now use the English language to communicate with each other. Once this happened, it became necessary for the Gold Coasters to accept the English Language as the official language which should be used in all government institutions such as schools, law court and parliament. The learning of English language takes place in schools. Due to this the English language has become the medium of instruction in the classroom. That is, the English language is used to teach every subject, except Ghanaian language. Over the years, standard of performance in both spoken and written English has been known to be falling. This poor performance in English is felt when these basic school students enter second cycle institutions.

The observations made have shown that students from private basic schools perform better than their colleagues from the public basic schools. Considering the performance of students in English Language in the first year, first semester of their second cycle education, it could be observed that quite a number of students

tend to do better than others; that is, students who had come from private basic school perform better as compared to those from the public basic schools. Therefore, this study aims at ascertaining the authenticity of this claim that private basic school students perform better in English Language than those from the public basic schools during the early part of their senior high education. The causes of this disparity in students' performance in English language are also explored. The purpose of this study is to find out: If students from the selected private basic school perform better in English Language than those from the public basic during the first year, first term of their second cycle education. The factors that lead to the disparity in performance in English language of both groups of students. Means of minimizing this disparity.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

FACTORS THAT LEAD TO THE DISPARITY IN PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE (PRIVATE AND PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS).

INADEQUATE TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

According to research report by the Ministry of Education (October 2010), it was found out that supply of textbooks is inadequate. In some schools, there were no textbooks at all in subject areas as English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. The Ghanaian Times in 2012 also published that a school report submitted by more than 40 JHS headmasters in the Cape Coast Metropolis between September and October 2013, attributed the decline in the performance of pupils in the 2012 B.E.C.E in the area to a number of factors including inadequate textbooks supply.

SUPERVISION

The then Minister of Education, stated at a press conference indicated that '... even with less investment, private basic schools are achieving better results because they place premium on supervision.' This statement on supervision presupposes that the emphasis placed on supervision by private school administration accounts for the better performance of their students in English Language. Therefore, supervision on the part of the public basic school administration reflects on their poor performance in English Language in SHS. Also, in a study conducted by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) into academic achievement and variables such as supervision revealed some reasons for the disparity in several factors. It notes that head teachers in private schools tended to engage in more frequent supervision of teachers' work than in the public schools. Further, Addae-Mensah (1973) came out with lack of supervision a one of the reasons why public schools do not perform well in examination in all the studies he conducted.

MOTIVATION

Elliot, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook and Travers (2000) define motivation as '...internal state that arouses us to action, pushes us in particular directions and keeps us engaged in certain activities'.

Adjei (1992) in his article 'Falling Standard in Education, Whose Fault?' asserts that '...the junior secondary schools (both public and private) are flooded with half-hearted teachers'. This is suggestive of the fact that teachers lack the flair to put in their best in the instructional process. It is by virtue of this assertion that private basic schools embark on motivational strategies to encourage teachers to put in their best. This could be seen to be a missing factor in public basic schools as teachers do not get adequate motivation to embark on effective teaching.

LACK OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Most teachers do not teach subjects they are well versed in. (Gbadamasi, In "Daily Graphic, December 14, 2005"). This could be in connection with the fact that GES usually embarks on mass posting of teachers annually especially when the services of teachers in English language are most needed. This makes teachers teach the English language even when they are not trained in its teaching. This notwithstanding, it is presumed that since English language is the main medium of instruction for all subjects, it could, therefore, be handled by any subject teacher. But this leads to poor handling of the subject thus reflecting in the performance of students.

USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

The USAID funded study (2003) revealed that more teachers in the public schools could not complete the English language and Mathematics syllabi and were either absent from or late to school. Teachers are not able to complete syllabi or use instructional time properly because they tend to use these periods to their personal advantage or for personal gains. In most public basic schools, some teachers who engage in petty trading tend to use these instructional periods to exhibit their wares to their colleagues and students as well. This is at the expense of the students. Nonetheless, in private basic school, authorities go to the extent of sacking teachers who try to sell items in school, not to talk of engaging students in the trade.

BAD TEACHING METHODS

According to Sackeyfio (1996) in *Let's Teach English*, some teachers do not use appropriate teaching methods to teach the English Language. This is as a result of the fact that some teachers are not fully equipped with the appropriate teaching methods and skills. Appropriate methods for specific class sizes are looked down upon by some of these teachers. Teaching aids are also not properly used for specific aspects of the English Language. For instance, literature is effectively taught by the use of audio-visual aids but some teachers do not make use of them, rather they leave the learning activities in students' own hands.

PARENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS WARD'S EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Sackeyfio noted in 2008 that parents were morally obliged to give their children the right type of reading materials to enable them to cultivate reading habit. Significantly, more parents and guardians of pupils in basic schools provide textbooks and stationery, school bags and dresses in addition to homework assistance.

MEANS OF MINIMIZING THE DISPARITY

PROVISION OF ADEQUATE TEACHING MATERIALS

Erikson and Curl (1972) recounts the significant contribution of audio-visual technology in helping to expand students' horizons of experience. Using a variety of teaching and learning materials improve social sensitivity mostly where elaborate discussions and analysis follow the use of aids. Audio-visual aids help provide meaningful information to students (Berry 1957 p 135). They are also vital to language teachers for the provision of plentiful practice in listening to speech and to enable students to listen and record their own efforts. Also, a research by the Ministry of Education in October (1997) revealed that textbooks are woefully inadequate and that measures are to be put in place to ensure adequate supply of textbooks in schools.

Gatenby (1951) in *The Use of Wall- Pictures in Language Teaching* echoes the faith in the utility value of visual aids: "Varied though the surroundings of home may be, they do not provide that full experience which is necessary for the development of a language as a distinct from mastery of its structure; and the average child has not much opportunity to travel and learn by contact".

ADEQUATE SUPERVISION

As put by Hanushek (1992), the overall picture is that quality of the physical plant is positively related to students' performance. An implication of the statement is that improved structures and facilities are systematically beneficial to students' learning. The teaching provided is supervised by the head of the institution and external administrative bodies. Lesson notes prepared by teachers are to be vetted and approved by the head teacher before the lesson is taught in class. This shows that supervision is very important if an administration should function well.

TRAINING OF MORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Sackeyfio (1996) asserts that most basic school classrooms are flooded with ill-equipped teachers especially in the public schools. Teachers must go through some training to be equipped with the content of the course, the methods of teaching the course and the skills to make them competent. Furthermore, King (1970) asserts in his book, *The Education of Teachers*, that teachers need to be educated and not just trained and that learning to be a teacher and *on- the-job- experience* are inseparable aspects of theory and practice. Tamakloe et al (1996) also asserts that competencies are isolated for training of student teachers. In other words, one could be trained but not be competent because he lacks the requisite skills.

PROPER USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

Farrant (1964) explains that a good teacher must be able to get his students ready before a lesson starts without wasting instructional time. Hence, teachers must develop skills requisite enough to handle a class through an instructional session without wastage. Sackeyfio (ibid) also opines that teaching will be more effective if class sizes are reduced to a minimum of about thirty-five (35) so as to inculcate proper teaching management in a class.

APPROPRIATE TEACHING METHODS FOR ALL SCHOOLS

Sackeyfio (1996) recommends that teachers must take note of the errors that emanates from one aspects of English study which may as a result lead to ripping effect getting manifested in totally different sections of the learner's performance. A variety of methods must be used by teachers for different aspects of the English language.

POSITIVE PARENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS WARD'S EDUCATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

The educational background of parents mostly has a considerable effect their children's education. According to Freeburg and Plague (1967), there is an undeniable relationship between parents' intellectual

expectation and their participation with the children in intellectual activities. This shows that educated parents tend to have greater participation in their children's intellectual achievement than the less educated parents. This makes a child with better educated parents reach a higher level in school work. (Fraser, 1968).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Gay (1992) notes that the research design indicates the basic structure of a study, the nature of the hypothesis and the variables involved in the study. The descriptive method which involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or answer research questions concerning the current status of the subject of the study (Gay 1992), was used. Under the descriptive design, the survey approach was used since it involves collection of data from particular members. Using this approach, the researcher collected relevant data through questionnaire, observation and interviews concerning the students from both private and public schools and teachers on the students' performance in English language. This design helped the researcher to interpret the relationship among the variables, describe their relationships and also develop possible generalizations. The research site for the study was the Cape Coast Metropolis. This is because the researcher was of the strong conviction that Cape Coast is the seat of education in Ghana and with the fall in English standard over the past few years, there would be the need to address such pertinent issue from the root. The senior high school selected was University Practice Senior High School, which is a mixed school. The selection of a mixed school would help break gender issues and obtain varied ideas. The basic schools selected were Amamoma Presby Model School, which is a public basic school and University Junior High School, which is a private basic school. Also, the researcher was only concerned with the impact of students' basic schools on their English performance. The study has no interest in looking at the other subject areas in SHS nor the falling standards of education in general.

POPULATION

Polit and Hungler (1996) defined a population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. The population for this study comprised students and English language teachers in the University Practice Senior High School and Amamoma Presby Model School and the University Junior High School respectively, all in the Cape Coast Metropolis.

SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In an attempt to obtain a representative sample for the study, and to ensure valid generalization, a simple random technique was used to select the General Arts, Visual Arts, and Home Economics classes out of the Form one (1) classes in UPSHS. For the purpose of the study, a representative sample of two (2) English Language teachers were selected from basic schools. Two English teachers from the senior high school was also interviewed. The sample consists of a carefully selected subset of a unit that comprises the population. For the purpose of the study, the sample size used is tabulated below:

Senior High School

Number of English language teachers interviewed -2

CLASS	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
GENERAL ARTS	26	34	60
VISUAL ARTS	21	13	34
HOME ECONOMICS	0	26	26
TOTAL	47	74	120

Junior High School

SCHOOL	NUMBER C ENGLISH TEACHERS	NUMBER INSTRUCTIONAL PERIOD OBSERVED
AMAMOMA MOD JHS	1	1
UNIVERSITY JHS	1	1
TOTAL	2	2

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The research made use of Questionnaire, Interview and Observation to collect the relevant data.

Questionnaire

Questionnaire is an appraisal instrument in written form that is use to collect data for surveys. The questionnaire for SHS students comprised nineteen (19) items which were used to measure the variables being tested. It had a list of statement with alternative responses to enable respondents choose from. The questionnaire had sections under the following areas: background data of students, availability of resources and material, parents' attitude toward wards' education in English Language and teachers' attitude to teaching. The questionnaire for the teachers contained thirty-five (35) items under these areas: background data of respondents, methods and strategies for teaching, teacher qualification, adequacy of resources and materials, teachers' ability to teach all topics and teacher experience with students.

Interview

Two English teachers from UPSHS were interviewed to obtain the necessary data on students' performance in English Language (current state). The interviews were unstructured because researchers formed questions on the spot, probed into relevant issues and in some cases questions were asked based on information given by interviewees.

Observation

The researcher observed two (2) instructional sessions in the basic schools; one (1) for Amamoma Presby Model School and one (1) for University Junior High School. It was a participant observation because the researcher was a member of the group she was studying and also observed from inside the group. This enabled researchers to get first-hand information on the needed activity to observe.

Administration of the Instruments

Permission was sought from the headmaster of UPSHS who directed researcher to the head of the English department. The questionnaires were administered to the students after a clear explanation of the purpose of the study. Questionnaires were collected on the same day after which an interview of an English teacher was conducted. The interview lasted 30 minutes each. The observation took place during the first two periods of each school session. Notes were taken during the observation on classroom management, classroom interaction, methodology and use of teaching/learning aids.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In order to obtain accurate, efficient and appropriate responses, the data were edited, coded, and analysed manually. The basis for measuring the direction of the responses were frequencies and percentages. The interview with the English Language tutor from UPSHS was audiotaped and transcribed. With the observation, the notes taken were studied and the relevant information needed for the study was discussed.

PRELIMINARY DATA

The responses of the respondents have been presented in table forms and subsequently discussed. The data were collected from three (3) SHS one (1) classes in UPSHS which consisted of one hundred and twenty (120) students. Thirty (30) out of the 120 students are from public basic schools, with the remaining ninety (90) from private basic schools.

Basic School Attended

BASIC SCHOOL	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
PUBLIC	30	25
PRIVATE	90	75
TOTAL	120	100

From above, 25% of the sample is from public basic schools while 75% are from private basic schools. It can be deducted that majority of the basic school students who gain admission into the SHS are from private basic schools.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF MAIN DATA

This section summarizes the responses of both teachers and pupils from the public and private basic schools in accordance with the main objective which is to find out if there is a disparity in performance in

English Language of students from the private and public basic schools as well as possible causes of and solutions to this disparity.

DISPARITY IN PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Response of SHS teachers contacted regarding the level of disparity in performance in English language of students from private and public basic schools in the Second Cycle Institutions.

An interview with Mr. Duah, an English Language tutor at UPSHS revealed that there is a remarkable difference in performance of students from public and private basic schools. According to him, 'there is a difference in performance from the onset. Because of rote learning, private basic school students are instrumental and they are academic conscious.' However, in his view, public basic schools give much attention to extra curricular activities which tend to be a hindrance to the better performance of students in such schools. Mr Agyemang Duah also said that

'Private basic schools students take the lead and the public basic school students come to par with them; there is equilibrium and sometimes the public basic school students overpass their colleagues from the private basic school somewhere in the second year because of motivation from the private basic school students since they perform better thus creating a sense of awareness in the public basic school students.'

From the interview, with Mr. Duah, it could be deduced that public basic school students tend to bridge the gap even though they start slowly. They later mostly overcome the private basic school students and even do better. The findings show that there are good students in the senior high schools who are from the public basic schools as well as weak ones from both schools. But at times one can see clearly which students are from public basic schools and which ones are from the private basic schools especially during the first term of their first year.

CAUSES OF DISPARITY IN PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Inadequate teaching and learning materials

VARIABLE	PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOL		PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOL	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	19	65.5	66	73.3
NO	10	34.5	24	26.7

Adequacy of Textbooks

YES	16	53.3	61	69.8
NO	14	46.7	29	32.2

The data above indicates that 19 (65.5%) of students who attended public basic school had their teachers using teaching and learning materials in teaching while the remaining 10 (34.5%) students who attended public basic schools answered 'no' to the question of whether their teachers used teaching and learning materials or not. Also, 66 (73.3%) students who attended private basic schools had their teachers using teaching and learning materials and 24 (26.7%) students did not have their teachers using teaching and learning materials to teach. Thus, majority of the students who attended private basic schools had their teachers using teaching and learning materials in teaching.

Also, the response to the question of whether students have enough textbooks shows that 16 (53.3%) out of the 30 public school students answered 'yes' while 14 (46.7%) answered 'no'. we again gather from the above data that 61 (67.8%) students who attended private basic schools answered 'yes' with 29 (32.2%) answering 'no' to the question. This shows that majority of the respondents from the public and private basic schools have adequate textbooks. The findings indicate that though some private basic schools do not have adequate textbooks and teachers do not use teaching and learning materials, it is not as great and horrifying as those from the public basic schools where the number of those whose teachers use teaching and learning materials and also have enough textbooks is just a little above those who do not have enough textbooks and their teachers do not use teaching and learning materials.

From the data presented, it was found out that inadequacy in supply of teaching and learning materials and inefficient use of the available teaching and learning materials could be a possible cause of the disparity between the two sets of schools under study. The findings are also in line with Gatenby's (1951) solution to good performance which 'lies in the teacher supplanting his lesson with visual aids galore'.

Parents' Educational Background

Variable	PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOL STUDENTS				PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOL STUDENTS			
	MOTHER		FATHER		MOTHER		FATHER	
	FREQ	PERC%	FREQ	PERC%	FREQ	PERC%	FREQ	PERC%
JHS LEAVER	11	36.7	6	20	28	31.1	12	13.3
SHS LEAVER	6	20	7	23.3	27	3.0	17	18.9
POST SEC.	2	6.7	2	6.7	7	7.8	9	10
DIPLOMA	2	6.7	7	23.3	5	5.6	17	18.9
A-LEVEL	6	20	2	6.7	9	10	19	21.1
1ST DEGREE	1	3.3	4	13.3	13	14.4	16	17.8
NOT EDUCATED	2	6.7	2	6.7	1	1.1	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	30	100	30	100	90	100	90	100

From table 5, 11 students (36.7%) from the public basic schools have their mothers being JSS leavers, 6 (20%) students have their mothers SSS leavers while 2 (6.7%) have their mother having post-secondary certificate. Also, 2 (6.7%) students have their mothers being diploma holders, 6 (20%) students have their mother being A-level certificate holders and only 1 (3.3%) student has his or her mother being a first-degree holder. The remaining 2 (6.7%) students have mothers who are not educated. This table also shows that 28 (31.1%) students from private basic schools have mothers who are JSS leavers, 27 (30%) students' mothers are SSS leavers while 7 (7.8%) students' mothers are post-secondary certificate holders. Mothers of 5 (5.6%) students have diploma certificates while 9 students have mothers as A-level certificate holders. Also, mothers of 13 (14.4%) students are first degree holders with 1 (1.1%) mother being uneducated. This shows that majority of the students from both public and private basic schools have their mothers as JSS leavers.

This table also indicates that 6 (20%) from the public basic schools have their fathers being JSS leavers, 7 students representing 23.3% have their fathers being SSS leavers, 2 (6.7%) have their fathers having post-secondary certificate while 7 students which is 23.3% have their fathers as diploma holders. Fathers of 2 students (6.7%) are A-level holders; fathers of 4 students (13.3%) are first degree holders whereas fathers of 2 students (6.7%) are not educated. This shows that majority of the students have their fathers falling under 'SSS leaver' and 'diploma'. Also, 12 (13.3%) students have their fathers as JSS leavers, 17 (18.9%) students have their fathers as SSS leavers while 9 (19%) fathers are post-secondary certificate holders. Fathers of 17 (18.9%) students are diploma certificate holders with 19 (21.2%) students have their fathers as A-level certificate holders and the remaining 16 (17.8%) students have their fathers as first-degree holders. From the analysis of data collected, majority of the students from public basic schools have their fathers under the variables 'SSS leaver' and 'Diploma' and majority of students from private basic schools have A-level certificate.

The findings show that the standard of parents' education can be related to students' school progress. The students whose parents are educated are more likely to reach a higher standard in the use of English Language than those who come from parents with low or no educational background. This is in support of Bank's (1968) observation that the more educated parents are, the more likely they are to serve as positive role models to students. Such parents influence their wards' wish for advancing in their academic fields. The findings also complement Freeburg and Pague's claim that there is an undeniable relationship between parents' intellectual expectation and their participation with their children in intellectual activities.

Parents Attitude Towards Wards' Education

VARIABLES	PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS		PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOL	
	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Assistance at Home in doing Assignment			Assistance at Home in doing Assignment	
YES	12	40	57	63.3
NO	18	60	33	36.7
TOTAL	30	100	90	100

Provision of Necessary Items for Studies			Provision of Necessary Items for Studies	
YES	20	66.7	74	82.2
NO	10	33.3	16	17.7
TOTAL	30	100	90	100

From table 6, 12 (40%) students from public schools get assistance at home in doing their homework or assignment while the remaining 18 (60%) students do not get assistance from parents or guardians in doing their homework. This table also indicates that 57 (63.3%) students from private basic schools get assistance at home in doing their assignment and 33 (36.7%) students do not get assistance in doing their homework. Based on the interpretation of the findings, majority of public basic school students do not get assistance at home in doing their assignment while majority of private basic school students get assistance at home in doing their homework or assignment.

Also, from table 6, 20 (66.7%) students from public basic schools confirmed that they were provided with necessary items for their study of the English Language while the remaining 10 (33.3%) students answered 'no'. also, 74 (82.2%) students from private basic schools had their parents providing them with the necessary items they needed for their studies in English language while 16 (17.7%) students did not have the necessary items needed for their English language studies. Thus, the majority of the students from both public and private basic schools were provided with the necessary items they needed for their English language class. The findings, as tabulated confirm Sackeyfio's (2004) observation that more parents and guardians of students in private basic schools provide textbooks and stationery, school bags and dresses to students to facilitate their learning in addition to homework assistance.

Teachers' Attitude Towards Teaching of English Language

VARIABLE	PUBLIC BASIC SCHOOLS		PRIVATE BASIC SCHOOLS	
FREQUENCY		PERCENTAGE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Punctuality of Teachers to Class			Punctuality of Teachers to Class	
YES	27	90	79	87.8
NO	3	10	11	12.2
TOTAL	30	100	90	100
Students' Activities in Teachers' absence			Students' Activities in Teachers' absence	
YES	22	73.3	67	74.4
NO	8	26.7	23	25.6
TOTAL	30	100	90	100
Prompt Marking of Exercises			Prompt Marking of Exercises	
YES	21	70	49	54.4
NO	2	6.7	15	16.7
SOMETIMES	7	23.3	26	28.9
Assistance in doing Corrections			Assistance in doing Corrections	
ALWAYS	7	23.3	41	45.6
NOT ALWAYS	20	66.7	44	48.9

NOT AT ALL	3	10	5	5.5
Prompt Marking of Corrections		Prompt Marking of Corrections		
YES	8	26.7	26	28.9
NO	6	20	8	8.9
SOMETIMES	16	53.3	56	62.2

The representation shows that 27 (90%) students who are from the public basic schools had their teachers coming to class constantly with 3 (10%) students not having their teachers coming to class constantly. 79 (87.8%) students from the private basic school answered 'yes' in support of the fact that their teachers were punctual to class while 11 (12.2%) students answered 'no'. From the interpretation of this table, majority of the students confirmed that their teachers were punctual to class. It could be realized from table 7 that 22 (73.3%) students from public basic schools are of the view that they were given a task to do when their teacher was absent while (36.7%) students were not given any task when their teacher was absent. However, 67 (74.4%) students from private basic schools answered 'yes' in support of the fact that they were given a task to do in the absence of their teacher, while 23 (25.6%) students answered in the negative. Teachers of majority of the students from both public and private basic school were punctual in class which reflects Farrant's (1964) explanation of a good teacher that he or she must be able to get his or her students ready before lesson starts without wasting instructional time. Since most teachers are punctual, instructional time is fully and well utilized. But the findings refute the USAID funded study (2003) which revealed that more teachers in the public basic schools could not complete the English Language and mathematics syllabi and were either absent from or late to school. This is because only 3 students (10%) said their teachers were not punctual in class. Also, from tables 17 and 18, majority of the students were given tasks to accomplish when their teacher was absent, thus justifying Farrant's (1964) assertion that teachers must develop skills requisite enough to handle a class through an instructional session without wastage. Because students are engaged when teacher is absent, instructional time is used beneficially without the presence of a teacher. Thus, both teacher and students have nothing to lose.

Also, from above, 21 (70%) students from public basic schools agree that their exercises were marked on time, 2 (6.7%) students answered 'no' and 7 (23.3%) students claim that their exercises were sometimes marked on time. The picture in private basic schools shows that 49 (54.4%) students responded 'yes' indicating that their exercises were marked on time, 15 (16.7%) students answered 'no' depicting their exercises were never marked on time and 26 (28.9%) students claim that their exercises were sometimes marked on time. Thus, majority of the students from both the public and private basic schools had their exercises marked on time. The table again shows that 7 (23.3%) students from public basic schools claim they were always assisted, while 20 (66.7%) students and 3 (10%) students informed that they are not always assisted and not assisted at all in doing their corrections respectively. It is also observed that 41 (45.6%) students from private basic schools always get assistance in doing their corrections, 44 (48.9%) students and 5 (5.5%) students were not always assisted and not assisted at all in doing their corrections respectively. Majority of students from both private and public basic schools were not always assisted in doing their corrections after their exercises have been marked.

Also, 8 (26.7%) students had their corrections marked on time, 6 (20%) students never had their corrections marked on time while 16 (53.3%) students sometimes had their corrections marked on time. This table shows that 26 (28.9%) students from private basic schools had their corrections marked on time, 8 (8.9%) students never had their corrections marked on time and 56 (62.2%) students sometimes had their corrections marked on time. Therefore, most students in the public and private basic schools did not always get their correction marked on time and this is a possible hindrance to the learning of the students. It again affirms Sackeyfio's (2008) claim that teachers do not do much to help their students to learn and use the English language, saying 'the English language is a foreign language that can only be learnt with deliberate effort'. Therefore when corrections are not always marked on time and students gain no assistance in doing their corrections, they would not know if what they are doing is right or not, thus, the deviant structured they have acquired fossilize.

Teacher Qualification

Teachers from both private and public basic schools contacted were all qualified English language teachers. Whereas the English teacher from the public basic school is a diploma certificate holder, the private basic school teacher is a first-degree holder. It can be deduced that the private basic school teacher is a more qualified teacher than the teacher from the public basic school. The qualification of teachers affects the

performance of students. The findings dispute Sackeyfio's (1996) assertion to some extent that most basic school classrooms are flooded with ill-equipped teachers especially in the public basic schools. Though a teacher may be qualified than the other, competency is what matters. Thus, the findings affirm Tamakloe et al's (1996) assertion that competencies are isolated for training of teachers. In other words, one could be trained but not competent because he lacks the requisite skills.

Methods and Strategies for Teaching

It was gathered from the respondent from the public basic school visited that not more than one method is used in the teaching of English Language. It was also gathered that teaching and learning materials were in limited supply. No library is also provided for the school, thus contributing to the poor performance in English Language. Respondent described the methods, equipment and strategies for teaching as averagely equipped. The situation in the private basic school was quite different as respondent informed us that usually varied teaching methods are used to cater for different aspects of English language and teaching and learning materials are in adequate supply. Yet still, respondent described equipment as averagely equipped.

These finding affirm Sackeyfio's (1996) statement that some teachers do not use appropriate teaching methods to teach the English language. This is because some teachers are not fully equipped with the appropriate teaching methods and skills. The findings further reflect Sackeyfio's (1996) attribution of poor students' performance to bad teaching methods. To her, a teacher who has gone through the mechanics of her full professional course in a reputable training college or university may, sometimes dole out an awful lesson without realizing how bad it is. It could be summed up that, though teachers claimed to have gained formal education, not all of them qualify as professional teachers. This might contribute to poor students' performance.

Motivation of Teachers

Respondent from the public school admitted that he is not motivated enough and this does not help in teacher giving out his best to students. He does not care whether students fail or pass and so there is a general lack of commitment to the teaching.

However, the respondent from the private basic school informed researcher that though not enough, motivation in a form of praise reinforcement and occasional increment are enough to yield better commitment in her teaching of English Language. Both teachers think that generally they have a conducive atmosphere for teaching English Language. The findings reflect that most teachers are not motivated due to insignificant incentives and since motivation is the process of arousing movement in the organization (Chauchan, 1995), there must be enough consideration given to it. Also, the findings are in support of Dzobo et al (1973) that to attract qualified teachers in teaching, it is compatible to those in the profession.

IV. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The study has sought to examine the impact of basic schools on students' performance in English Language in second cycle institution. It has been realized that certain factors traceable to students' basic schools account for their performance in English language in their second cycle institutions. Questionnaires were administered to students of second cycle institutions and teachers in both public and private basic schools. Also, an interview was conducted with a qualified SHS English tutor to ascertain the authenticity of the hypotheses. Other books were also contacted to throw more light on the methods and practices of teaching English Language in basic schools. The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using frequencies and percentages whereas the data collected through the interview was transcribed and analyzed.

V. CONCLUSION

The study was conducted by researcher to test the hypotheses that there is difference in the performance in English Language between students from private basic schools and those from the public basic schools in the early stages of their second cycle education. Thus, students' basic schools attended has an impact on their performance in general and English language in particular. The findings of the research attested to some of the factors outlined by researcher while others worked against the hypotheses. The following were thus found out to be useful or true as far as the research is concerned and the problem of disparity between the two groups still exist in most second cycle institutions (SCIs). Finding in support of hypothesis (a): The Senior High Students from Private Basic Schools tend to perform better than those from Public Basic Schools during the early part of their Secondary Education. The first assertion is that students from private basic schools perform better than those from public basic schools when they enter the SCI.

This, we found, is because private basic schools tend to focus on rote type of learning, ignoring all other extra-curricular activities. These students are therefore academically inclined so their academic performance is always higher than those in the public basic school whose curriculum is structured in such a way that they pay attention to both academic work and other activities. This rests on the supposition that the school is

supposed to cater for all aspects of human development: cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Findings in support of hypothesis (b and c): unfavourable teaching and learning conditions constitute a major cause of this disparity in performance. It was also found out that in this research that there are some factors which contribute to the said disparity and these include inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor parental attitudes towards wards' education, bad teaching techniques, teacher qualification, lack of motivation and teachers' attitude.

It was also found out that due to lack of adequate motivation on the part of public basic schools, teachers are not committed to work and don't give out their best in teaching the students. Also, though some private basic schools do not have enough textbooks, there is adequate and beneficial use of the available ones. Furthermore, the study revealed that the qualification of teachers to some extent, does not affect the delivery of her lesson but rather his or her competence in the field and dedication to work help him or her to excel in the teaching field.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the research, the following suggestions are made in order to curb the problem of disparity in performance in English Language between students in SHS who come from public basic schools and those from the private basic schools. First, it was observed that teaching/ learning materials are useful for effective teaching and as far as English language is concerned, materials as well as well-stocked language laboratories in all government basic schools should be provided. Second, GES should institute adequate measures to monitor personnel in the school administration with respect to public basic schools.

Moreover, it would be of immense help to both parents and students if parents of wards in SHS ensure that their wards take their studies seriously. This will be possible if parents encourage their wards and help them in doing their homework or assignment when necessary. Parents must also provide their ward in both private and public schools with adequate learning materials like textbooks, pens, and other items such as school bags, footwear and uniforms. Finally, it is recommended that only the best qualified English language teachers are employed to teach English language as this ensures that competency and efficiency is realized in the learning. Also, English teachers must be adequate to handle the different aspects of the English language subject so that teachers can give out their best. Teacher motivation must be seen as a matter of necessity by school administration.

VII. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The use of interviews as an instrument affected the findings of the study as some interviewees did not open up because they were afraid they would be asked to defend their stands. Also, some of the respondents seemed to have a busy schedule, so they did not give this assignment the needed attention. Financial constraint was also a major issue since the estimated amount of two thousand Ghana Cedis did not cover the exercise.

Special Contributors

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