

# The Implementation of the Basic School English Curriculum: The Case of the Cape Coast Metropolis in Ghana

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## Abstract

The English language curriculum for primary schools in Ghana spells out the various aspects, topics and sub topics that teachers must teach the child within a specified time. The syllabus again specifies the various topics and sub topics that should be taught in an integrated manner so as to enhance meaningful learning. For this meaningful learning to take place, the teacher should be knowledgeable in the subject with regards to approaches, techniques and skills that will help the learner achieve a great deal in the learning of the subject. This study focused on how English language is implemented in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana. The population for the study was all the 477 basic school teachers within the metropolis. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 8 schools from each of the 6 circuits in the metropolis. In each selected school, all primary 1 to 6 teachers were automatically selected for the study. In all, 288 teachers formed the sample for the study. 12 teachers were again randomly selected to have their lessons observed after which they were interviewed based on their teaching. The study found out that teachers within the metropolis encounter so many pedagogical challenges and so are not able to implement the curriculum well.

**Keywords:** NALAP, integration, thematic teaching

## 1. Introduction

The term curriculum refers to the lessons and academic content taught in a school or in a specific course or program. Curriculum also refers to the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn, which include learning standards or learning objectives they are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the assignments and projects given to students; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings used in a course; and the tests, assessments, and other methods used to evaluate student learning (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). According to the University of Zimbabwe's (1995) definition of curriculum, it is the way content is designed and developed. The curriculum is a crucial component of any educational process. It addresses questions such as what students should learn and be able to do, why, how, and how well. Every curriculum after its design, is implemented. Thus putting into practice the officially prescribed courses of study, syllabuses and subjects (Badugela, 2012), is what curriculum implementation entails. It is a "network of varying activities involved in translating curriculum designs into classroom activities and changing people's attitudes to accept and participate in these activities" (Okello & Kagorie, 1996:124). Curriculum implementation is often done by teachers. They have to translate what is in the curriculum into a step by step classroom activities so that the learners can learn it and as a result, bring about a change in the learners' behaviour. In Ghana, the curriculum, after its design is sent to the Curriculum Research and Development Division for it to be translated into the various syllabuses. Each syllabus contains the topics of study, the objectives, teaching and learning activities with suggested teaching materials and then evaluation. On the initial pages of each syllabus, are the rationale, the profile dimension for the subject to help teachers know what the subject is about and the aim(s) for that subject (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2012).

The national syllabus for English language (MOE, 2012), spells out in its rationale for teaching English, that the status of English language and the role it plays in national life are well known. This reason is that, English is the official language of Ghana and as such a language of instruction at the upper primary levels in Ghana's schools. English also enjoys the prestige of being a subject of study which is almost compulsory at all levels of Ghana's educational structure. In Ghana, a good knowledge in English is so important to the extent that one ought to have a good pass in it in order to graduate to the next level in the academic pursuit. This means 'the success in education at all levels depends, to a very large extent on the individual's proficiency in the language (MOE, 2012 pg ii). It is for this reason and others that English is a major subject of study at all levels in Ghanaian schools.

Ghanaians are nonnative speakers of English and English which involves a lot of irregularities and rules are quite different from the indigenous Ghanaian languages. There is therefore the need to handle its teaching well, especially for the nonnative teacher of English. As second language speakers of English, one is bound to encounter difficulties such as syntax, semantic, phonetics and punctuations in using this second language. It is therefore imperative that the teacher of English be well versed in the correct forms and usage so as to implement the English language curriculum well. Apart from the teacher receiving training in the teaching of English, other facilities must be put in place in order to handle the subject better. In a study conducted by Torto (2014), on the approaches adopted by basic school teachers in their teaching of writing, it was found out that, the

majority of basic school teachers have not received the proper training in the teaching of the English language subject. The chief examiner's report on Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) English paper continues to lament on students' poor performance in the paper, advising teachers to teach the basics of the subject (Chief Examiner's report, 2016). If teachers have not received training in the teaching of English and if the Chief Examiner for English continues to lament the poor performance of candidates, then what sort of teaching is being done in our basic school English classrooms? Surely, teachers are experiencing some challenges with the teaching of the subject. It therefore becomes imperative to investigate what challenges teachers encounter in implementing the English curriculum and what really goes on in the English classrooms. There is therefore the need to conduct this study so as to know what actually is going on in the classrooms to draw the attention of major stakeholders of education to such issues so that they find solutions to them.

This study focused on the difficulties encountered by basic school teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis, in their teaching of English. The study was directed by two research questions.

1. What difficulties do teachers in the metropolis encounter in their implementation of the basic school English language curriculum?
2. How do teachers in the metropolis implement the English curriculum?

### **Conceptual Framework and Review of related literature.**

#### **Conceptual Framework**

English, according to the syllabus (2012), should be taught integrating all four language skills- listening, speaking, reading and writing, in teaching all the five aspects of the English language subject- Grammar, Comprehension, Conversation or Listening and Speaking, Composition and Library. Just like every syllabus in Ghana, the English syllabus also has the topics to be taught in addition to suggested objectives of each lesson, the teaching and learning activities, teaching and learning materials and how the lessons should be evaluated both formatively and summatively, stated in it. Teachers need to spend time thinking about and analyzing the curriculum, and to have a specialist's expertise in curriculum development—i.e., know how to structure, organize, and deliver courses in ways that facilitate or accelerate student learning (Hidden Curriculum, 2014), in order to be of value to the learner. This means that the teacher needs to be trained during pre- service, in-service or both pre-service and in-service, to be able to handle the teaching of the subject better. In the Ghana Education Service (G.E.S), a teacher teaching a primary class in a public school, teaches all primary subjects including all the aspects of the English language. Again, the theme of the English subject matter should be linked with the same theme across other subjects so as to enhance pupils understanding of the topic being taught and to foster easy transfer of learning from one subject to another. The English syllabus therefore recommends thematic teaching.

Furthermore, the use of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) in the language classroom is important to the learning of English. English is a second language in Ghana and its teaching demands that real objects or improvised objects be used in teaching to ensure a better understanding of concepts. Teaching and learning materials are aids used by the teacher to teach effectively (UNESCO, 2000) and to ensure that the lesson has been well understood by the learners. As second language learners, we might not have enough vocabulary to explain concepts, apart from this, when an object is shown instead of words describing the object, understanding takes place faster. There is therefore a need to incorporate TLMs in English language teaching. These materials could be in the form of textbooks, other printed materials, audio materials, audio visuals, authentic materials and others. The TLMs make lessons easy and interesting and learners are able to grasp concepts better. The national English syllabus for Ghanaian basic schools expresses the need for teachers to use TLMs. Under the column for Teacher Learner Activities throughout the syllabus, suggestions are made for the incorporation of TLMs in teaching. It is therefore of great importance that teachers incorporate TLMs in their teaching to help their learners grasp concepts better. A resourceful teacher will use TLMs whether real objects, pictures or even improvised ones to make lessons meaningful to learners.

The language of instruction is also an important tool in the delivery of a lesson. At present, the language policy in Ghana's basic education stands at using a bilingual medium of instruction where both the mother tongue and the English language are both used in the lesson from kindergarten 1 to primary 3. From primary 4 upwards, the language of instruction changes to English (GOG, 2002). To help teachers to understand and use the bilingual medium better, the MOE and the GES introduced the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) a bilingual literacy programme, which focuses on improving literacy learning first through mother tongue instruction then in English at the kindergarten through to basic stage three with an early transition to English (EQUALL, 2010). NALAP is a 90 minutes block programme where teaching of concepts is done in the dominant mother tongue of pupils and after sometime within the same lesson, the concepts are again taught in the second language, English. For instance, in primary 1, the teacher will teach a lesson in Ghanaian language for 60 minutes and then switch to teach the same lesson in English for 30 minutes.

With the introduction of NALAP also came with it materials such as teacher guides, pupils' books,

flash cards, big books, posters and many other materials, to aid teachers in teaching the literacy lessons. Early childhood teachers were also trained in the teaching of literacy and the use of the NALAP materials.

Thus for a teacher to teach English in a second language environment well, that teacher is to use the appropriate language, incorporate appropriate TLMs and to follow the syllabus so that these second language learners would be able to learn.

### **Methods and approaches of teaching English language.**

Jawarska & Porte 2007, mention that the history of English language teaching can be separated into five decades. These decades are the early period, the 1960s, the 1970s, the 1980s-the 1990s, and the new millennium. The early period of English teaching was seen as the grammar translation period where instruction was taught accordingly largely based on translation. A vocabulary was selected from the text and it was taught in the abstract or out of context and by memorization. (Richards & Rodgers, 1990 p4.). Under this method, pupils were also supposed to learn the rules of the language and apply them correctly. (Howatt, 1984).

In the 1960s, there was a shift to the audio lingual method. This method according to Brown (1994) saw to it that pupils learned concepts of linguistic patterns till it became a habit. There was the extensive use of repetition and a variety of elaborate drills with the view of projecting the linguistic patterns of the language into the minds of the learner (Brown, 1994: 57). Another method that was developed by James Asher was the Total Physical response in 1979. This method combined information and skills through the use of the Kinetics sensory system. The combination of skills according to Asher allows the learner to assimilate information and skills at a rapid rate. This method according to O'Grady et al (1993), connects physical activities with meaningful language use as a way of instilling concepts in the learner. All the methods were largely seen under the Product Approach to teaching where teachers focused on the correctness of the vocabulary, pronunciation, tenses and so on. Then came the Process Approach which was largely used in writing. This approach focused on helping learners to be creative writers, where learners went through the process of planning, drafting, revision, editing and publishing stages (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hedge, 1988) to reach a good composition. The teacher of the other aspects of English language also adopted this approach in their teaching.

### **Integrated approach**

Currently, English language is taught as an integrated approach where all the four language skills are at play. (McDonough & Shaw, 1998). This approach is to help learners to comprehend how communication takes place in real life by motivating them with meaningful tasks and activities (Yanik, 2007:39) in all aspects of the subject. Here, all the four language arts must be at play so as to help pupils achieve a great deal. For instance, in a conversation lesson, though much speaking should be done by learners, certain new words should be written on the board for learners to learn and go further by using these new words in forming good sentences. This will bring out the meaning of the word better. And as the teacher mentions the word, pupils grasp the pronunciation, including intonation of the word.

(McDonough & Shaw, 1998). Humphreys, Post, & Ellis (1981) define integration as a form of study in which children broadly explore knowledge in various subjects related to certain aspects of their environment" (p. 11). To them, there is a linkage among the various skills and subjects that pupils learn in school. Shoemaker (1989) also defines integration as education that is organized in such a way that it cuts across subjects, "bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association to focus upon broad areas of study" ( p. 5). This approach is to help learners to comprehend how communication takes place in real life by motivating them with meaningful tasks and activities (Yanik, 2007:39) in all aspects of the subject. Here, all the four language arts must be at play so as to help pupils achieve a great deal. For instance, in a conversation lesson, though much speaking should be done by learners, certain new words should be written on the board for learners to learn and go further by using these new words in forming good sentences. This will bring out the meaning of the word better. And as the teacher mentions the word, pupils grasp the pronunciation, including intonation as well as seeing the word written on the board. In Ghana's basic school English syllabus, this integration of the language arts is clearly stated (MOE,2012. p xv). The same syllabus again states that human values should be integrated in lessons so that as pupils learn language, they also develop good and acceptable human values. Another aspect of integration is where the thematic approach is used. Under the thematic approach, themes that cut across subjects are taught so that pupils get to learn how to transfer learning from one subject to another and to learn to place learning in the real world. Again in the English syllabus, this form of integration is expressed in the nature of topics that ought to be treated (MOE, 2012 p.xvi). A teacher who has been trained to teach English, will be introduced to the nature of the syllabus so will understand what the syllabus requires. Again a teacher though has not received training in English but has been posted to teach English and decides to read the syllabus will come across this and will take cognizance of it. On the other hand, a teacher who has not read through the syllabus will not know this fact so will teach the subject anyhow.

### **Challenges in teaching English as a subject in nonnative contexts**

Teaching English as a second language is the context in which English is taught and used as a medium of instruction to nonnative pupils. Pupils have not been born into the language so they are bound to have many setbacks in learning the language especially where the teacher is also a second speaker of the language. In the situation where English is the second language, lots of challenges as already mentioned may be present. It therefore demands that a teacher who has received adequate training in this subject should handle pupils in order not to put the future of the pupils in jeopardy. Such a teacher is in a better position to be conversant with current approaches and methods and also learn from other research reports of researchers who have conducted studies in the area.

In the Ghana Education Service, a teacher teaching a primary class in a public school, teaches all primary subjects including all the aspects of the English language. English language enjoys four double periods within the week on the time table of all public schools (MOE, 2012 p vii). If the teacher has not been well trained in the teaching of the content of the subject, such a teacher is going to either shelve the teaching of the subject or teach aspects of the subjects that he or she can conveniently handle. The correctness of the information to be disseminated will be another issue. In a study conducted by Salahuddin, Khan & Rahman (2013) on the challenges of implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools of Bangladesh, it was found out that most teachers had no training in the teaching of English (pg.47). This is a major problem in Ghanaian basic schools. English teaching mostly depends on training (Salma 2001 as cited by Salahuddin et al, 2013) but in the situation where these teachers do not have the training, their teaching of English becomes problematic since they might not have the professional skill to enrich their knowledge about the teaching methodology, using teaching materials, accurate evaluation system, management etc. (Salahuddin et al, 2013:47). For these reasons, most primary school teachers do not know how to teach English effectively.

The availability and proper use of suitable teaching materials such as the teacher guides, good text books and work books are essential for effective teaching. However when these materials are missing in the teaching, the teaching becomes more imaginative than practical (Reddy, 2012). Teachers find it difficult to follow proper teaching methods and conduct classroom activities perfectly as desired. This lack of teaching learning materials also pose a problem to the implementation of the subject. It was also found out by Salahuddin et al (2013), that due to the non-availability or non-usage of teacher guides by teachers, they are not able to conduct English language classes effectively which is also an issue in the implementation of the English curriculum. Bangladesh being an EFL country is not much different from Ghana being an ESL country. So far as English is not our first language as Ghanaians, we are bound to experience problems in implementation if certain logistics are not put in place to foster a smooth implementation.

For the primary English curriculum in an ESL country to be well implemented, the implementor's knowledge about the aims and objectives of English curriculum is of the essence (Rahman 2003). In the research by Salahuddin et al (2013), they again found out that since the majority of the primary school teachers were not aware of the objectives and aims of the English curriculum, they found it difficult implementing the curriculum. In Ghana, these aims and objectives of the English curriculum are found in the syllabus but whether teachers read these is another issue. Lesson plan is the initial teaching and learning material that is prepared to facilitate the teaching and the learning situation effectively. For a teacher to implement the English curriculum, his or her preparation for the lesson is very crucial. (Sadek, 2002). If the teacher does not prepare their lesson notes, their teaching becomes stalled since the lesson preparation is a systematic guide as to how the teacher's lesson should unfold. In the same research by Salahuddin et al (2013), it was found out that since the teachers did not prepare their lesson plans due to too much school work, they encountered challenges in their implementation of the curriculum.

The lack of teaching aids is another challenge when it comes to implementation. When a teacher uses teaching aids such as posters, charts, maps, signs, real objects etc. in teaching, it creates a stimulating atmosphere for language teaching (salahuddin et al 2013). Teaching aids and instructional materials are very important to motivate students towards learning and to capture the English content knowledge easily (Salahuddin et al, 2013). According to Rahman (2003), the use of teaching aids and instructional materials are indispensable if students are to be liberated from the fear of English language learning. Teaching aids explain concepts better than words would do. However, the lack of teaching aids in lessons make the subject less attractive to learners and this lack of attraction leads to an implementation challenge.

Continuous assessment which is a means of measuring what the learner knows and has learned as well as gives feedback to the learner, is very essential in English learning. Sadek (2002) mentions that continuous assessment system and giving of feedback is essential to judge students achievement, weakness and emancipation of weakness in any subject. Therefore lack of continuous assessment is a serious issue for successful implementation. When there is no continuous assessment and feedback, learners may not be able to judge their proficiency level of English language and may not be able to find out their weak points in English language. This lack of feedback usually occurs in the composition writing aspect where teachers, either do not

mark learners' compositions due to their number, or the teacher just scores the compositions without giving the right feedback (Torto, 2014). English should be taught in the English language so learners could grasp the vocabulary and in their right usage for their discourse. In a situation where English is taught using the vernacular, it leaves learners with no standard versions to pick and store for their usage. The teacher is seen as the standard model that learners copy, but if the teacher is using the wrong forms, then the learners have no choice but to pick those wrong forms.

This research seeks to contribute to existing literature on the challenges of the implementation of the English curriculum in an E.S.L country and also to fill in that gap on how teachers in the basic school in the Cape Coast Metropolis implement the English curriculum.

### Methodology

This study falls under the anti-positivist paradigm but uses predominantly mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis. The study is a descriptive research to investigate how teachers at the basic schools implement the English curriculum. The researcher's questions were

1. How do basic school teachers implement the English curriculum?
2. What problems do teachers encounter during the implementation of the English curriculum?

Population and sample.

The actual population for this study was all 477 primary school teachers in Cape Coast. The sample for the study is 288 primary school teachers within the metropolis.

**Table 1: The Educational Circuits in the Cape Coast Metropolis as at September, 2016**

Circuit	No. of Schools	No. of Teachers
Cape Coast	11	73
Aboom	12	96
Bakaano	12	83
OLA	9	52
Pedu/Abura	14	93
Efutu	13	80
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>477</b>

### Sampling procedure.

Using the simple random sampling technique, 8 schools were selected from each of the 6 circuits in the metropolis. In each of the selected schools, all primary one to six teachers were used for the study. The sample was therefore 288 teachers who answered the questionnaire. Out of this number, 12 teachers were randomly selected for their English lessons to be observed after which they were interviewed based on the outcome of the lesson. Thus the number of teachers whose lessons were observed were 12.

### Research instruments.

Questionnaires, unstructured interviews and observations were used to gather data on the implementation of the English curriculum at the basic school.

All the teachers (288) were administered the questionnaire and each of it was returned to the researcher. The English lessons of 12 teachers were also observed in their classrooms. The researcher conducted the observations carving for herself the role of a teacher trainee on observation. The observations were first conducted and when the lesson were over, the researcher conducted the interviews based on what was observed during the teaching. After the interview, the researcher then administered the questionnaires to the teachers in the school. The questionnaires were collected the next day after they had been administered.

### Results and discussion

Demographics of respondents.

The demographics looked at the age, sex, highest educational qualification, number of years in service and whether respondents had been trained to teach English. Table 2 sought to find out the age distribution of the respondents.

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	No of respondents	Percentage %
Below 25	0	0
26-30	78	27.08
31-35	66	22.91
36-40	54	18.75
41-45	42	14.58
Above 45	48	16.67
Total	288	100

Table 2 reveals a youthful population of teachers within the Cape Coast Metropolis. This revelation could mean that these teachers who are relatively young and vibrant would be abreast with current issues concerning the teaching of English and may teach the subject better.

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents' highest academic qualification.

Table 3: Highest Academic Qualification

Qualification	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Cert A	36	12.5
Diploma	98	34.03
First degree	145	50.35
Masters	6	2.08
PhD	0	0
Other (Service Persons)	3	1.04
Total	288	100

The presentation on the academic qualification of teachers reveals that, the majority of teachers in the metropolis have either a diploma or a first degree. This result shows teachers have upgraded their knowledge in teaching. Thus with their upgraded knowledge, they will be able to handle the teaching and learning enterprise better. The table also reveals that in some classrooms in the metropolis, National Service Persons have been engaged with the full responsibility of teaching and learning in the classroom.

Table 4 presents the responses of teachers on the training they have been given to teach.

Table 4: Trained to teach English

Yes	No	Total
36(12.5%)	252(87.5%)	288(100%)

Table 4 sought to find from teachers if they had been trained to teach English. A whopping 87.5% of teachers responded that they had not studied English as their main teaching subject neither have they received in service training in the teaching of English. This result shows that these teachers who have not studied English as a main subject might use strategies and methods that are not consistent with current times. These teachers might also find it difficult teaching certain concepts that are technical. However, out of 36 teachers who responded that they had received training in English, 7 of them said they had received the NALAP training. In cases where in service training is given, teachers might still have some inadequacies because in service training is done only for short periods and also done once in a while.

### Results and Discussion of Research Question 1.

Data on Research question 1 which sought to find out how teachers implement the English curriculum was collected using observations. Each class' observation was done twice within a week. The researcher based the observations solely on the teaching and learning, looking out for how the lesson was delivered, the teaching and learning materials that were used, the language of instruction, pupils' activities as well as traces of integration in the lesson. The researcher also had a look at the teacher's lesson notes to find out how the lessons were planned. In almost all classes observed, the use of teaching learning materials was nonexistent. Even at the lower primary where teachers were supposed to use the NALAP method in teaching, teaching was almost done in abstract. The researcher tried to find out from the teachers why they taught without any teaching and learning material. The lower primary teachers told the researcher that they did not receive any of the NALAP conversational posters and that was why they taught without TLMs. The upper primary teachers also told the researcher that there were materials available for them to use. An upper primary teacher asked "how do I use a TLM in teaching letter writing?" probing further to find out from teachers why they do not use TLMs, another teacher said "I don't have to use my money to buy materials for teaching. The head teacher receives some allowance for SPIP so she

*has to provide the materials*". If teachers are not using TLMs in their teaching, then explaining concepts to pupils will be difficult. This shows that the teachers are not doing their work properly and it could affect learning. The researcher again observed that some teachers only relied on the pictures in their text books as the teaching material which sometimes needed to be supplemented with verbal explanation

Concerning the language of instruction, teachers who were teaching at the lower primary were to go by the NALAP method where both the mother tongue and the English were used in the lesson. The observations revealed that out of the 8 lower primary teachers whose lessons were observed, only 1 teacher taught using the bilingual medium of instruction. The rest taught English in the mother tongue. When teachers were asked why they taught English using only the mother tongue, teachers stated that the children could not understand the concepts so they used the local language in order for the pupils to understand the concept better. Asked why they were not going by the NALAP method, a teacher retorted, *"I was not trained to use NALAP. When the training was going on, I was then teaching at the upper primary so I did not attend the training."* Another teacher also stated, *"We received only the Fante NALAP books so I teach only in Fante. Sometimes I try to use the NALAP method but the pupils do not respond to my questions asked in English"*. It is clear that these teachers do not know about NALAP and how to teach using the NALAP method and so they decide to teach the way they are used to. The teachers who taught at the upper primary level taught in both the English language and in the Fante language, using the bilingual medium. Teachers told the researcher in an interview that the pupils do not understand concepts well in the English language so they try to use both languages to help them understand the concepts better. It is obvious that these teachers were not adhering to the language policy which states that the medium of instruction for the upper primary should be the target language. However if pupils have not grasped enough English vocabulary to understand concepts in the target language, then it is expedient for them to understand the concepts in their local language but then since they need to grasp some English vocabulary, the teachers must teach in English and explain some concepts in the local language. These teachers must revert to English so pupils grasp the concept in English too. By so doing, pupils will build their English vocabulary. The researcher also observed that pupils usually answered the teacher's questions only when the question was asked in Fante. Sometimes pupils raised their hands to answer questions but they could not utter a word in English but as soon as the teacher gave them the permission to answer in Fante, the pupils answered the question. This shows that the English medium of instruction was not a desired one for the pupils.

The observations further revealed that, in the majority of classrooms, the integration of the four language skills was missing. Teachers always relegated the writing skill to the end of the lesson where pupils will be required to answer the teacher's evaluation questions. Thus writing was reserved for summative evaluation. There was also no integration of other subject areas to enable pupils to transfer their learning of a particular concept in a subject to another. At the end of the lesson when the teachers were asked why there was no integration, quite a number of them wanted to know what integration was all about. A teacher asked, *"this integration when did it come?"* Another teacher in the same school mentioned that *"I have not heard about this integration. Is it a new way of teaching English?"* Other teachers from other schools seemed not to know how to integrate the language skills as well as using the thematic approach. This clearly proves that these teachers are not really going by what the syllabus has stipulated. It again shows that the teachers do not know how to integrate concepts and the language skills so pupils develop the language holistically. If these teachers had been prepared to teach English, they would have been introduced to the concept. Therefore Yanik's, (2007) position that the integration approach helps learners to comprehend how communication takes place in real life by motivating them with meaningful tasks and activities is not being achieved. This situation also proves that the implementation of the curriculum is not being done well.

Some of head teachers of the various schools where observations were carried out assisted the researcher to inspect teachers' lesson notes. The researcher inspected the notes considering the topic, sub topic, lesson objectives, relevant previous knowledge, introduction, teacher-learner activities, evaluation and traces of integration in the lesson notes preparation. The inspection was done during the observation of the lesson. A few teachers however did not have their lesson note books with them. They reported that their books were with the head teachers who were not present when the study was being carried out. It was observed that the majority of teachers prepared their notes without focusing on the lesson objectives as well as the teacher-learner activities. Teacher's lesson notes were not detailed enough and so taught the lesson in like manner. A teacher taught proper nouns within 23 minutes instead of 60 minutes. The teacher obviously got stuck during lesson delivery and she had to evaluate the lesson. Her only explanation was that *"English is not my subject area. My area is Home Economics"*. If lesson notes are not well prepared, obviously the lesson will not be taught well since the notes helps the teacher to plan the lesson with the time frame in mind and the notes directs the teacher as to the activities she will take the pupils through. It is true then that a teacher's lesson preparation is very crucial as Sadek (2002) puts forward. This finding is similar to the finding by Salahuddin et al (2013), where they found out that the teachers non preparation of lesson plans led to challenges in their implementation of the curriculum.

One issue that came out during the observation was that though teachers distributed questions well, the

majority did not reward correct answers. Teachers who did not reward correct answers were mostly teachers who taught at the upper primary level. Their reason was that, the children were grown and that rewards were for kindergarten children.

### Results and discussion of Research question two

The second Research question sought to find out the problems teachers encounter in the teaching of English. On this question, the researcher decided to find out from respondents through questionnaire if they had any knowledge of the integrated approach, which is the current approach in the teaching of English and also found out from teachers what their challenges were in teaching English to their pupils. The results to this question was put into tables. Table 5 presents the data on respondents responses based on their knowledge and the use of the integrated approach.

**Table 5: Knowledge and Usage of Integrated Approach**

Do you use the integrated approach in your teaching?

Yes	No	Total
30(10.4%)	258(89.6%)	288(100%)

Table 5 sought to find out from respondents if they knew about the integrated approach and also if they used it in their teaching. It was realized that the majority of respondents did not know and use the approach. This meant that teachers were still using the old methods and approaches in their teaching. Teachers still considered the aspects of English and the language skills as distinct and so taught the subject in like manner. Table 6 presents teachers responses as to the problems they encounter as they teach English to their primary school pupils. These problems are put under major headings or themes

**Table 6: Problems Teachers Encounter in Teaching English.**

Problem	number of respondent	percentage (%)
Inadequacy of text books and other teaching and learning materials	60	20.8
Low participation of pupils	163	56.25
Non provision of stationery by guardians	60	20.8
Loaded curriculum	6	2.08
Total	288	100

Table 6 shows the presentation of problems teachers encounter in their teaching of English. The majority of teachers lamented the low participation of pupils in lessons. Others also stated the inadequacy of teaching and learning materials as the problems they face. Only a small percentage reported that the curriculum was loaded and so posed a challenge in their teaching. This distribution shows that teachers expect their pupils to participate in class but they do not. This problem could be as a result of the pupils' low store of vocabulary or the teachers' method of teaching. Whatever the teacher is supposed to teach has been stated in the syllabus but if the teacher has no knowledge about the subject, teaching it will definitely become a problem. Lack of textbooks and other learning materials are also problems confronting teachers. However, a teacher who has a mastery over the subject knows how to improvise materials to teach her pupils. Table 7 reveals the aspect of the English teachers liked to teach often.

**Table 7: What Aspect of the English Subject Do You Teach the Most?**

Aspect	number of respondent	percentage(%)
Reading /Grammar	48	16.67
Grammar only	30	10.4
Reading	156	54.16
Reading/conversation	36	12.5
Reading/writing	18	6.25
Total	288	100

Table 7 displays the various aspects that teachers like to teach and so taught them most of the time. The table shows that a greater majority liked to teach reading. Their reasons being that they felt comfortable teaching it and it also helped pupils to read. Whilst some teachers liked to teach both reading and writing, others liked to teach both reading and conversation lessons. Quite a number however liked to teach grammar and reading. This distribution reflects teachers' level of competence in handling the English subject. The distribution also meant that, teachers did not teach other aspects of the subject and this problem could lead to inadequate knowledge in English for pupils. A teacher who is well trained to teach English, should be able to teach all the



aspects of the subject well.

### **Findings of the study**

This research has brought to the fore the fact that, teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis encounter a lot of problems in their teaching of English, the common problem being non participation of pupils during lessons. This is not surprising because even though the majority of teachers at the basic schools within the metropolis though have been trained as teachers, they have not received pre-service training to handle the teaching of English as well. These teachers do not have any idea about the various current methods and approaches of teaching the subject. Perhaps the methods and approaches they use are those that they themselves were instructed in when they were students. As a result of their lack of adequate knowledge in handling the teaching of the subject, these teachers tend to teach certain aspects of the subjects which they feel comfortable to handle and they do this in fragments, not integrating the language skills and teaching across subjects. If teachers had been trained to handle the subject, they would be able to use the various methods and techniques available to help their pupils enjoy the lesson and also participate in it and then instill in their pupils the fact that language is whole and not fragmented in order for these pupils to use language well in the real world (Yanik, 2007). Teachers who have also been trained will have an idea about current approaches and will be able to use these current approaches for the benefit of her pupils. Just as teachers teaching at primary schools in Bangladesh have not received any training in the teaching of English (Salahuddin, et al 2013), it is the same problem with the Cape Coast metropolis in Ghana.

Again, teachers encounter the challenge of lack of teaching learning materials. This goes to support Salahuddin et al (2013), assertion that lack of teaching and learning materials such as posters, charts, maps, signs, real objects etc. in teaching creates a stifling atmosphere for language teaching since teaching aids and instructional materials are very important to motivate students towards learning and to capture the English content knowledge easily (Salahuddin, 2013). Therefore if according to Rahman (2013), the use of teaching aids and instructional materials are indispensable if students are to be liberated from the fear of English language, then the absence of it will definitely imprison students in the fear of the subject. Teachers who have been trained to handle the teaching of English have been introduced to the improvisation of teaching materials but because these teachers have not been trained, they do not know how to improvise the teaching materials to be used for their teaching. Teachers who have received training in NALAP though have the materials to teach with, they do not really know how to handle these materials. They also do not really understand how NALAP works. Their teaching therefore becomes more imaginative than practical (Reddy,2012).

The teachers furthermore complained that the pupils do not participate in the lessons. The observations revealed that in most classrooms, the teachers did not use the language the pupils could understand, as the NALAP approach recommends. They rather spoke English throughout the lessons. When asked why they chose to speak English only, some of them retorted that they were not Akan speakers so could not speak Akan. This was especially in the lower primary classes. In the upper primary classes used for the study, most of the teachers mentioned that the pupils could not express themselves well in English and that was why they were not participating in the lesson.

Then also, teachers taught without preparing for the lessons. If a teacher is well prepared for the lesson, the delivery of the lesson is done smoothly since all that the teacher needs to teach with are ready and close by. A well prepared teacher will not get stuck in the middle of the lesson because he knows how to manoeuvre to get through the lesson.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is realised that teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis do not implement the English curriculum well. The reasons being that, they have not been trained to teach English, neither have they also been given in-service training in the subject area. This makes the teaching of English difficult for them, and for them to overcome or manage this difficulty, they teach aspects and topics of the subject they can conveniently handle. These teachers therefore experience challenges such as non-participation of pupils in the lessons, lack of suitable teaching and learning materials, and teacher inadequacies, as they implement the English curriculum.

The GES and the MOE should give teachers regular in service training in the subject in other to help manage this challenge so that the English curriculum will be well implemented.

### **Areas for further research**

It is important that a purely qualitative research be conducted to investigate how the English curriculum is implemented in a particular school within the Cape Coast metropolis so as to realise the peculiar challenges confronting individual schools.

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