Reading Skills of Kindergarten Students: Supports and Facilities in English-Medium Schools

By

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A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at Brac

University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except

where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other

degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

As a researcher, I maintained interviewees' confidentiality. There are various steps I had to take in order to ensure secrecy, which involves using fictitious names for the interviewees, password encrypting the recordings of the interviews in device. I did not disclose the names of anyone involved in the research and the school I had conducted my research in.

Abstract

Kindergarten is the foundational place for children to attain basic language and communication. It aims to enhance children's listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. These are dependent on each other, when it comes to maintaining the effectiveness of learning and retaining information. Data and information for this research has been collected through three interviews with English teachers and three kindergarten's English class observations. In kindergarten, teachers rely on certain tools and technology to conduct engaging teaching sessions. E-learning provides more creative and visual understanding, which potentially makes it easier for students to grasp. Teachers also use flash cards and story books to maintain the effectiveness of their teaching. When English teachers maintain their lesson plan with proper teaching-learning technique, it helps to improve students' learning. At home parents' effective support is a mandatory part for reading development. It is immensely important that parents assist their children in their learning progress, allowing for more fruitful outcomes in reading progression. The required variables of reading abilities, importance of parental support in learners' life and appropriate supervision are needed for both teachers and students.

Dedication

I would like to show my gratitude to my husband Farid Uddin Kamal and my son Dipra Kamal, for their loving support and encouragement. Without their support this thesis wouldn't have been possible.

I would like to give thanks to my mentor Farzana Zarin Saki, with whom I have spent hours discussing my research ideas and she encouraged me to complete this thesis. I want to thank her for her support and encouragement.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

The English language in primary level is mainly broken down into four fundamental aspects, which are reading, writing, speaking and listening. Reading opens the door to the child's early academic success, imparts a love of learning and leads to higher grades in every subject. Studies have shown that early readers continue to get higher grades than their peers through grade school. When children learn to read at an early age, they have greater general knowledge, expand their vocabulary and become more fluent readers (Wall, 2004).

Kindergarten is the foundational level for children to enter the world of formal education. It aims to support them in attaining basic language and communication skill. Moreover, it aims to ensure that children grow with proper visual awareness and listening ability. The skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing are very close to each other, and are dependent on each other for communication and fruitful learning. Difficulty in any of the component may hinder a child's growth. I have conducted this research in order to gain knowledge on the underlying problems kindergarten students suffer from, when it comes to reading, and how to find effective solutions to these problems.

1.2 Research Topic

Reading is an essential aspect in the language learning process. Reading can enhance vocabulary, express one's own thoughts and emotion, and enhance writing ability. In the initial stages, children often find reading quite complex and unsatisfactory, which results in him/her spending less time practicing English reading. This usually leads to a gradual decline in children's reading growth, along with hindering his/her spelling and writing capability, and comprehensive skill. ("Read 'Early Childhood Development and Learning: New Knowledge for Policy' at NAP.edu," n.d.). In reference to this statement one of the researchers mentioned "Effective instruction can stop and repair the learning gap and can impart the skills an older reader missed in the earlier grades. It is possible for a student to catch up completely in one or two years" (Tromp, 2009, as cited in Yaseen, 2013). Based on these references, I was able to identify some of the most common problems kindergarteners face in English reading classes. Through this research, I have found out that English Medium schools, in general, are finding out more effective methods that provide increased efficiency in students' reading abilities.

Research Topic: <u>Reading skills of kindergarten students</u>: <u>Supports and facilities in</u> English medium schools

1.3 Statement of the Problem

There are many areas of difficulty in decoding, which students usually face, for instance: reading without expression, confusion between letters and the sounds they represent, slow oral reading rate (reading word-by-word), ignoring punctuation while reading and trouble sounding out words and recognizing words out of context (Klinger, 2011, as cited in Yaseen, 2013). Based on this issue I have found that the kindergarten students who have English as their second language

are the ones to usually suffer in English reading. These students cannot attain reading fluency, and suffer in many areas of reading, such as coding, decoding, comprehensive ability and phonological awareness.

"The study found six instructional strategies particularly effective for high student growth in English learners' reading skills: explicit teaching, instruction geared toward low performers, sheltered English techniques, interactive teaching, vocabulary development, and phonemic awareness and decoding." (Gersten & Geva, 2003). This in turn, can also affect teachers' mentality, and decrease motivation in teaching. This may deteriorate students' performance even more. Teachers would have to change lesson plans due to lack of synchronized learning flow, which can be immensely tiring, and can burn time.

"3 Common reading problems for students" (2018), mentioned that developing strong reading skills in students is one of the key goals of every early education program. If a student is having problems with literacy skills, it can affect their performance across the school curriculum and have a negative impact on motivation to learn and self-esteem.

This research shows that the reading difficulties resists students' growth in all subjects. It results in them being highly dependent on their peers, teachers and parents. If students do not improve in reading, they will undoubtedly suffer in writing. This will become a barrier for further learning. If we can remedy these problems, it can enhance students' learning process highly, and prepare them for further education.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to fulfill the methodology of the research, it was vital to set up some fundamental questions that set up the purpose for the research work. Through answering of these research questions, I will be able to obtain necessary information for my research work.

For those quarries my questions were:

- 1. What are the available supports and facilities for reading skills of Kindergarten students in English-medium schools?
- 2. To what extent the available supports and facilities are in-lined to improve the reading skill?
- 3. What are the problems kindergarteners face in English reading?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This research aim is to find out the major problems kindergarteners face in reading, and how schools can provide support in order to remedy these shortcomings in students. This will result in a much smoother learning process for students, and help them get motivation in learning to read more fluently.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Reading is essential in the scheme of basic learning. This research is formed in order to maintain smooth teaching-learning progress in schools. This focuses on identifying problems that arise in the reading environment.

Kindergarten students mostly suffer from comprehension difficulties, coding and decoding. Problems like these need to be handled with immense support. Identifying the solutions to these issues, and proper execution of these solutions is what this research aims for.

This will be beneficial for teachers, due to them having a stronger visual clarity in terms of effective teaching and lesson planning. This can also lead to more effective use of tools to assist in teaching. New teachers will also have sense of direction in the beginning stages of teaching.

Chapter 2

Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

"3 Common reading problems for students" (n.d.), mentioned that developing strong reading skills in students is one of the key goals of every early education program. If a student is having problems with literacy skills, it can affect their performance across the school curriculum and have a negative impact on motivation to learn and self-esteem. This chapter emphasizes the major problems Kindergarten students usually face in English reading. This also sheds light on the similarities of the problems Kindergarteners face from local and global backgrounds. The in-depth understanding of these problems have led to discovery of procedures to remedy them. The scenarios have been envisioned from local and global environments. The problems have been divided into three factors: phonological awareness, lack of motivation in reading, and teacher-student methodology.

2.1 Phonological awareness:

Many educationalists and researchers have found a link between reading difficulty in children and lack of phonological awareness. For example, one of the researcher stated that it does not matter if the student has a conscious knowledge of the speech sounds in words since a spoken language does not require this. A child only requires paying attention to speech sounds and patterns to understand spoken language (Förster et al., 2018).

Phonological awareness is the ability of a child to recognize and reflect on the sounds in English spoken language. Whereas Savage et al., (2008), noted that English is known to be forward unpredictable and in reverse sporadic for both perusing and spelling. In this way, phonological interpreting abilities stay as a huge prevention for reading and spelling in

English language. No matter how professional the child is in alphabet letter understanding and phonological recognition, she or he nonetheless wishes a strong information of both the principles about books and approximately print, and a strong basis in oral language. Oral language talent (receptive and expressive), which includes vocabulary information, is a 3rd robust predictor of future literacy success that lasts well into high school ("Literacy learning in preschool and kindergarten," n.d.).

Reading difficulties nearly occur on a continuum, meaning that there is a great number of students who experience reading difficulties. There are those students who are diagnosed with a learning difficulty. Also, there is an even larger group of students, who do not have diagnoses, but who need good reading assistance. Many students make effort and struggle with reading. A study estimated that about 10 million students have difficulties in reading. The good news is that 90 to 95 percent of reading impaired student can overcome their difficulties if they receive good and suitable remediation at early ages (Kibby & Hynd, 2001, as cited in Yaseen, 2013).

Puolakanaho et al. (2008), mentioned that Studies conducted in orthographically regular languages, such as Italian, Greek and Finnish have portrayed that students can transmit their decoding accuracy towards decoding fluency, with basic reading sense throughout their first and second years in school.

"Results of influential reports on early literacy have drawn attention to the need for early childhood educators to take up a more explicit, teacher-directed approach to beginning reading. Positive classroom results however are in part dependent upon teacher knowledge" (Hammond, 2015).

Reading difficulty has many characteristics such as: difficulties in single word reading, initial difficulties decoding or sounding out words, difficulties reading sight words, insufficient phonological processing; the understanding that sentences are comprised of words, words are made up of syllables and syllables are made up of individual sounds or phonemes, expressive or

receptive language difficulties and difficulties with comprehension. The processing difficulties may also be revealed in spelling and writing (Yaseen, 2013).

"Reading with Rhyme, Reading with Phoneme, Reading with Rhyme and Phoneme, or to a taught control condition (Reading). In each condition the Reading element contained a strong phonic component" (Hatcher et al., 2004).

Although the instructional methods used will depend on students' capabilities, the text being read, the purposes for reading, and the context in which reading occurs, teachers can provide effective direct explicit instruction in the critical areas of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension by concentrating their efforts in the following ways. Direct explicit instruction is active, reflective teaching in which the teacher recognizes that reading is an interactive process and that students can be effectively taught to become strategic in their comprehension of text (Rupley et al., 2009).

According to Rupley et al., (2009), reading skills include the various decoding methods used in phonics, structural analysis, and context analysis; specific comprehension skills such as recognizing sequential development, fact versus opinion, and a stated main idea; and reading study skills such as using an index or interpreting a bar graph.

According to the journal of American Psychological Association, the study evaluated the effectiveness of code-oriented supplemental instruction for kindergarten students at risk for reading difficulties. At posttest, treatment students significantly outperformed controls on measures of reading accuracy, reading efficiency, oral reading fluency, and developmental spelling (Vadasy et al., 2006).

There are three potential stumbling blocks that are known to throw children off course on the journey to skilled reading. The first obstacle, which arises at the outset of reading acquisition, is difficulty understanding and using the alphabetic principle—the idea that written spellings systematically represent spoken words. It is hard to comprehend connected text if word recognition is inaccurate or laborious. The second obstacle is a failure to transfer the comprehension skills of spoken language to reading and to acquire new strategies that may be specifically needed for reading. The third obstacle to reading will magnify the first two: the absence or loss of an initial motivation to read or failure to develop a mature appreciation of the rewards of reading (Council et al., 1998, p. 4).

2.2 Lack of motivation to participate in reading:

"Qualified teachers can play vital role in improving learners' quality, therefore appropriate training should be provided to teachers. Policy makers should emphasize more on communicative language at pre-primary and primary level to ensure strong basic knowledge of learners" (Sultana & Ahsan, 2013).

"Attitude and motivation towards reading activities reported to be increasing, and in the later stages Extensive reading turns greatly assist the process acquiring a second language" (Muchtar, 2020).

"The knowledge hypothesis states that words are part of larger knowledge structures and that it is these knowledge structures, not the words per se, that impact a person's comprehension" (Elleman et al., 2009).

"It revealed that many studies on assessment and instruction indicated that there are significant predictors of later reading achievement such as phonemic awareness, oral reading fluency and alphabet knowledge" (Paris, 2005, as cited in Yaseen, 2013).

Preventing reading difficulties as early as possible is critical because children who are poor readers early in their schooling are likely to continue to struggle with reading throughout their lives (Good et al., 1998).

In accordance with Vadasy & Sanders research that they have found out from a synthesis of 27 intervention studies that examined the effects of school-based reading interventions for kindergarten students at-risk for reading difficulties are reported. Results indicated that reading interventions were effective for improving reading outcomes for kindergarten students with decoding and those at-risk for reading difficulties, i.e., low phonological awareness, or low letter naming ability, etc. (Vadasy et al., 2006.).

A study must include students at risk for reading difficulties. Students were considered to be at-risk for reading difficulties if they had low phonemic awareness, low letter identification ability few preschool or home literacy experiences, low socio-economic status or were attending a school with historically low reading achievement. When a study included average achieving students as well as those at-risk for reading difficulties at least 50% of the sample was at-risk for reading difficulties or the reading out- come findings were disaggregated for at-risk kindergarten students (Cavanaugh et al., 2004).

There are numerous academic factors that precipitated studying problem, which can also and frequently do make contributions as components for intricate causing factors. They usually portray declining in advancement of studying capability, related in some cases with low financial notoriety, passionate instability, real lacks and social weights at residential or at college in expansion to diverse variables. There are rarely may be a single calculate that reasons analyzing issue, in any case one thing can be exceedingly more imperative than others. (Pigada & Schmitt, 2006).

The most essential reasons for studying problem amongst students are the vulnerable foundation from the first levels of faculty, the lack of interest via mother and father to increase

the reading talent for his or her kids, the shortage of cooperation between the parents and the school (Al-Ageel, 2006, as cited in Yaseen. 2013).

According to research, knowing letter names is important because they contain a sound typically represented by the letter. The second one great predictor of analyzing achievement is the kid's capacity to discriminate among phonemes (individual letter sounds). Irrespective of how skilled the child is in alphabet letter understanding and phonological recognition, he or she nonetheless needs a strong expertise of both the principles approximately books and about print, and a sturdy foundation in oral language. Oral language proficiency (receptive and expressive), which includes vocabulary knowledge, is a 3rd sturdy predictor of future literacy achievement that lasts nicely into high college ("Literacy learning in preschool and kindergarten," n.d.).

Evaluation of errors in spelling in languages with specific orthographic depths in contexts in which children are getting to know two languages also can offer perception into transfer and into how orthographic understanding or knowledge approximately spelling in a single language is probably utilized in some other language. This sort of evaluation can be used in a context of studying the simultaneous improvement of spelling abilities in two languages (JOY, 2011).

Throughout the early grades, schools should promote independent reading outside school by such means as daily at-home reading assignments and expectations, summer reading lists, encouraging parent involvement, and by working with community groups, including public librarians, who share this goal (Council et al., 1998, p. 8).

"We found that teacher training for English subject is required. This training will train teachers in updated methods and other potential strategies. New technology is identified as an instrumental for learners" (*US-China Education Review A*, n.d.).

2.3 Students' and teachers' involvement in reading:

"If a child surely does conflict with studying, the first-class element that parents could do is to help them as they try to enhance. Assisting children to improve their comprehension, literacy, language, and spelling talents will set them up for destiny success" (Journey, 2017).

Instruction in an area of reading comprehension can begin as a series of connected lessons that move from students understanding what they are to learn (modeling that learning), to applying the learning in text with teacher support (scaffolding), to applying the learning in a familiar text (supervised practice), and finally to applying the learning independently (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 133).

Most kindergartners can read some words and simple books. By the end of kindergarten, many children can read simple books containing short, common words and books that follow a predictable pattern. Not all children can read books independently at the end of kindergarten, but all can share reading with an adult. Having your kindergartner read street signs, look over your shopping list, follow a simple recipe with you, and read a menu with you are all ways that you can extend reading beyond books (Fairbanks, 2012).

In accordance with book A Child Becomes a Reader PROVEN IDEAS FROM RESEARCH FOR PARENTS, writers discussed about how family involve in reading development at the early stage of life. When does a child examine according to read? Learning after examine yet write can begin at home, lengthy earlier than kids walk after school. They begin in imitation of apprehend written language so those hear adults study testimonies to them or confer adults analyzing newspapers, magazines, then books for themselves. These early experiences including spoken or written language embark the tribune for children to become successful readers then writers (Armbruster et al., 2006, p. 1.).

Reading aloud to children has been called the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for success in reading. Reading aloud, with children participating actively, helps children learn new words, learn more about the world, learn about written language, and see the connection between words that are spoken and words that are written ((Armbruster et al., 2006, p. 4).

It is important that different types of children need different types of techniques and strategy. Families and schools are giving lots of supports to enhance their reading skills. On the contrary I found an article named Effective Reading Instruction for Struggling Readers: The Role of Direct/Explicit Teaching, where authors were focused on some useful and selected materials. Providing students with opportunities to apply their reading skills and techniques in important and varied styles of text is extraordinarily important; but, academics should make sure to use materials that students will handle. As an example, informational texts usually gift unknown content that's targeted on complicated concepts and relationships pictured by text structures that a lot of students' area unit unprepared to browse and perceive (Rupley et al., 2009).

David K. Dickinson from Vanderbilt University, stated that language ability is widely recognized as central to reading comprehension. High-quality preschool experiences are known to foster language and early reading, and early reading skill heavily determines children's later success (Dickinson & Porche, 2011).

"In teaching for any cognitive strategy, the teacher serves more as a facilitator in guiding and directing students to interact critically with text than one who explains the strategy in step-by-step detail" (Rupley et al., 2009, p. 126).

Research has proven that phonemic attention is the best predictor of early analyzing capabilities. Kids who remember the fact that spoken language is made from discrete sounds – phonemes and syllables – find it less complicated to discover ways to study. Easy sports

including frequent readings of familiar and preferred stories, poems, and rhymes can help kids expand phonemic cognizance. A baby may use the that means of a preceding word or word, observe a familiar prefix or suffix, or recall how to pronounce a letter combination that appeared in another word (*How Most Children Learn to Read*, 2013).

Kindergartners' "sight words" regularly include their own names, the names of classmates, and phrases they use often of their writing, consisting of "mom," "love," and "the." they also study phrases they see around them, such as "stop" and "go out." Many can study "households" of phrases consisting of "cat," "bat," and "mat." with the aid of the stop of the year, many kindergartners are able to "examine" acquainted books through spotting some phrases, remembering what the tale says, and searching at the image ("Kindergartner Reading Milestones", 2012).

Teachers in Bengali medium and English versions were graduated in English literature, but were not up-to-date with modern English language teaching methods and techniques. Nearly half of the teachers of Bengali medium reported that they did not participate any special training in English language teaching and perceived that lack of training in terms of quality, content, trainer, duration, mode of training provided, or the syllabus partial or as a whole might affect their teaching properly (Sultana & Ahsan, 2013).

A study sought to determine if, by providing parents with a workshop on the use of dialogic reading techniques during the storybook reading event in the home, Pre-Kindergarten children's attitude and interest in reading would improve. Through the investigation of the comments given on the study, parents shown an advancement in state of mind toward reading and intrigued in storybook reading inside the domestic when dialogic reading strategies were actualized (LaCour et al., 2013).

Letter names are confused in casual and formal literacy coaching with younger youngsters in the US, while letters sounds are careworn in England. The English youngsters' performance

on a letter expertise mission turned into influenced with the aid of the truth that they're regularly taught letter sounds with regards to lowercase letters and letter names on the subject of uppercase letters, and their spellings showed a few results of this practice. Effects advise that this emphasis on letter sounds contributes to the massive gain in spelling accuracy than English children. English children show for phrases with short vowels, such as bag, over phrases with long vowels, along with tame (Treiman et al., 2012).

The study demonstrated that "the study suggests that a short intervention programme, using stories and embedded activities, can enhance language and print concepts in kindergarten children; and that motivation to read is equally important in the development of their language and literacy abilities" (Nevo & Nusbaum, 2017).

Upon evaluating the literature, the researcher attempted to conclude that reading difficulty may arise from multiple factors. It is quite rare for reading difficulty to arise from solely one cause. Usually the conditions are quite relative and may directly or indirectly impact the child's learning growth. Adequate research has been conducted on reading skills in many countries however, less attention is given to this topic in Bangladesh in particular in the kindergartens of Bangladesh. Therefore, this study seeks to understand the difficulties kindergarteners face in readings in English-medium schools of Bangladesh.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

Qualitative research allowed me to understand the process of teaching and learning a lot more, which further helped me to gather data in a very authentic manner. Since qualitative research requires a lot of observation in the field, almost all the aspects of teaching were brought up. The response of the students to each of the aspects of teaching were highly focused on. This results in rooting for several outcomes that arise from the conclusion. The information collecting prepare in qualitative research is individual, field-based, and intuitively or circular. These information designs can lead an analyst to seek after diverse questions or concepts, in a way comparable to rolling a snowball downhill ("Using Qualitative Data to Capture Voice of the Customer", 2017). As a kindergarten teacher I have seen that young learners of Kindergarten section in English medium schools normally start reading with three or four letters words in the beginning of the session, and at the end with being able to read simple sentences.

Unfortunately, a lot of kindergarteners usually face difficulties in reading. So the purpose of my research is to find out the reason for difficulties in reading for kindergartener in English medium schools.

3.2 Research Site

For the research work I have collected some data, within which some of the important information on reading difficulties directed me to get the findings of the questions. On the basis of the research questions, I had personally collected the data on reading skills development through

some English teachers' interviews and had done some observations on English reading classes in Kindergarten section at the school "X".

This research was conducted in an English medium school in Uttara, Dhaka. This school was established in 1996. At present the school has 3 other branches in different parts of Bangladesh. The selected research site was at the main branch of that particular school. The school had two separate buildings, one is for preschool and primary sections' students (Toddler to Grade - 5) and the other building is for senior section (Grade 6-12). Both the buildings were six storied. The number of students are around two thousand, along with approximately three hundred teaching staffs. The school management has arranged two blocked teachers in each class of preschool sections. The class size depends on students' age, like: Toddler to Nursery sections had not more than 15 students per class, within which Kindergarten sections had maximum 24 students.

3.3 Research Participants

The participants of my research work were three female Kindergarten English teachers. One of the participants was 29 and working at that school for 5 years as an English teacher. She completed her Masters in English Language Teaching. The second participant was working in the same school for 6 years as Kindergarten English teacher, has a Bachelor's degree and is 30 years old. The third participant is 32 years old, has M.A. with 10 years of experience in Kindergarten section as an English teacher.

During the class observations I found students aged between 6-7 years. 20 to 24 kindergarten students were accommodating in one class room. I also observed students' reading style, relationship with the peers and teachers, class activities and cooperation of teachers.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

This research has been conducted under purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is carried out to flesh out in-depth information about scenarios and places. Kindergarten teachers are one of the main sources of data collection in the research work. The interviews helped me gather more in-depth information and include them in writings. I selected teachers, based on their years of teaching experience, field of graduation, and their age to get data on the wider scale.

In order to find answers for the research questions, I decided to conduct interviews and class observations, to gather data and analyze them. Qualitative research uses interviews, perception, archive examination and audio-visual materials in information collection (Creswell, 2015). From that particular school, some important information were selected through English teachers' interviews and observed English reading classes of kindergarten section. The teachers were interviewed separately. Through the observation, students' performance and the overall atmosphere were evaluated.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

With the help of qualitative research data collection method, all of my data were obtained through interviews and class observation. The data collection method highly contributed to my research, due to the information I got. To gather more detail for this research work, I arranged interview sessions individually with Kindergarten's English teachers and observed reading classes in kindergarten. I followed qualitative data collection method to collect the data on how kindergarten students are able to develop their English reading skills.

3.5.1 Interview:

Through the interview I wanted to know about Kindergarten's English teachers' opinions regarding their expectation of students' quality, class setup, students understanding, types of reading problems, the common problems students used to face and how teachers are dealing them, what the actions teachers are taking to overcome these issues. I had to take certain measures before taking the interviews. Firstly, I asked the English teachers for their consent in participating in the interview. I handed out them consent letter, which they signed. I recorded the interview sessions with their permission. Each of the sessions were thirty minutes each, with the teachers being handed out the same questionnaires. I patiently listened to them, along with going over the audio logs, noting down the points carefully. From teachers' interviews, I found almost all the data I required for my research work.

The data found from the interview were kept under four thematic areas. Firstly, the information on reading benefits, students' abilities, reading performances and the importance of reading developments are kept under the point of reading benefit and optimizing reading skills. Secondly, the support students get from schools and teachers are kept under the point of assistive tools to improve reading skills. Thirdly, the problems which teachers face and the solutions they take to overcome their problems during students' reading progress, is under the point of challenges teachers face in classroom in improving reading skills. Finally, the benefits of homework and parental support is under the point of kindergarten homework and parental responsibility in improving reading skills.

3.5.2 Observation:

After getting the information through Kindergarten's English teachers' interviews, I wanted to observe the English classes to find out the learning environment, the tools for English

reading classes, the teaching learning methods, facilities and support students and teachers are getting from the school and classroom. According to the research, I decided to observe three kindergarten English classes which has given me the thoughts of my data collection process. In order to observe the classes I had to take the participants' consent and hand them out a consent letter, to which they agreed and signed and allowed me to observe their respective classes. I carried checklist of three class observations. During these observation periods I found that teachers used different types of methods and materials, different types of tools, group discussion, etc. I carefully observed the classes, listened to them and record those in the checklist.

As of the observation classes I conducted, I focused primarily on the scenarios that reflected on the thematic areas. I observed on how the students were responding in the class with assistive tools, homework, group activities and other segments that lie on the thematic areas.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

As a researcher, I have spent time identifying the overall atmosphere in English medium schools through my research. Even though I have had 15 years of experience teaching in kindergarten, I have decided to refrain from any unbiased or self-opinionated statement in my research. I took the time to gather data from the interviews and observations I have conducted. During my interview sessions, I always prepared myself to take notes of every details, making myself calm and motivated to listen to the interviewees carefully.

Each of the sessions with English teachers were taken for thirty minutes. I did not try to motivate them with my thoughts. As a researcher, I aimed to be non-bias towards their opinions. They were given full freedom to present their ideas. For class observation, I prepared a semi structured class observation record form. With the help of collected data, I understood most of the points I was looking for. Each of the class observation was held for forty minutes. During class

observation, I remained focused and attentive in order to gain authenticity and more value out of my research.

3.7 Data Analysis

This consider strategy includes the use of a self-administrated questionnaire planned to accumulate particular information by means of a self-reporting system. During the collection of data, I carried hard copy of my questionnaire, which I arranged specially for those interviews and a recorder to record all the data specifically with interviewees' concern. I asked questions and wrote those answers in detail, which I got from their conversation according the questionnaire. I waited till the interviewees' answered each question, where I noted down points from it. I interviewed the English teachers one by one, when they ended up their classes. After completing the interview session I to entered all the data in the computer. Furthermore, I prepared semi-structured observation form for class observation. I tried to include each and every details in the form, so that, these data might come to be helpful for the research work.

Initially, when these interviews and class observations have been conducted, I was able to gain points that reflected on the thematic areas. These points have contributed to the answers for the research questions.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

Ethical issues are very important in research. Before conducting Kindergarten's English class observations I took permission with a consent letter from the Head of Section of Preschool and Primary section. According to the requirement the Head of Section arranged three observation classes. Later, with proper consent of Kindergarten's three English teachers I took the interviews and all the information were kept confidential from others. I didn't share any of those data with

interviewees, not even their names. I maintained the privacy of the information from others. The questionnaire I prepared before the interviews and was based on the research questions. Throughout the interview session I did not put any thought of mine to motivate them. They answered all my questions by themselves. I used the tape recorder with permission of the interviewees before started the interview. Furthermore, the contributors were well informed that their evidence will be used for my research purposes.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

The main point is that the researcher's creativity and ability in use of proper method to improve final quality of study are of great importance; a research will be authentic in which the phenomenon under study had been defined as occurred and without bias, prejudgment and judgment by the researcher (Ghafouri & Ofoghi, 2016).

In this part of my writing, I have described the overall procedure I followed to get my information for research work. As a researcher, I have tried to refrain from any biased judgement in order to maintain authenticity of my research.

I was able to understand the methods of conducting research during my time under the M. Ed course. I finalized my research topic in relation with my field of work, and seeking help from my supervisor. I conducted piloting, when it came to selecting the research site, and finding the major points of the research.

"The flexible nature of qualitative research should be embraced, strategies to ensure rigor must be in place" (Houghton, 2013). After knowing the research methodology, my point of views were shared with my supervisor for finding out the research topic, along with examining the research problems. To verify those problems, I selected my research site and sampling participants. I focused on the participants' thoughts and practices to get the necessary information.

With the proper guidance of my supervisor I came to know about the specific problems of my research work. The research questions, along with research tools, research site, participants and data collection methods were finalized. The consent letters were given to the teachers and school authority to get the official permission of observing classes and the interviews.

English teachers' interview and Kindergarten classes' observations were part of the data collection method. I prepared the consent letter and questionnaires beforehand. It helped me to become a fair and non-judgmental researcher. There was no biasness towards any interviewee's opinion. The interviewees' privacy were maintained. All three interviewees happily participated in the interview session.

3.10 Limitations of the study

This overall chapter "Methodology" displayed the procedure of collecting data, to collect participants and how to use the data collection methods. I tried to follow the same. As I selected one English medium school for my research site, three interviews and three class observations. Within this I managed myself to arrange the data for my research work.

However, if I could arrange 2 more schools for my research site, then my observation data could be more informative. I wanted to arrange one FGD with kindergarteners' patents. Due to shortage of time I could not make it.

Moreover, very limited amount of data made my research little weak. If I arrange some more participants for my interview session then I might add more data for my research.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have decided to solely focus on the difficulties kindergarteners face during reading classes. Clarifying these issues would lead to working on those problems, and find effective measures to overcome language/reading inefficiency. For this reason, I have conducted interviews and class observations, so that I can carry out in-depth analysis on the issues. I have interviewed three kindergarten English teachers, and had questionnaires prepared beforehand. From the interviews, the fundamental aspects of teaching and learning were touched upon. This has had significant impact on the research findings.

4.2 Findings from the interview:

In this chapter, three experienced kindergarten English teachers have been interviewed, in order to obtain information from various perspectives. This allows for further understanding of the various concepts of teaching and learning methods, and the approaches that are taken to conduct effective learning sessions. The various ways of tackling issues and conducting teaching sessions under various factors, as presented by the teachers, helped me provide answers for the research questions.

Under qualitative approach the result of this research has been categorized into four thematic key points. The four main aspects of the results are:

A. Role of reading classes in improving reading skills:

B. Assistive tools for improving reading skills:

- C. Challenges teachers face in the classroom in improving reading skills:
- D. Homework and parental responsibility in improving reading skills:

A. Role of reading classes in improving reading skills:

From the interview, the study indicates that reading helps a child become more confident. It is important to understand that students' reading development cannot be fixed in a time span.

Three of the interviewees expressed that the students are expected to be able to define phonic sounds, construct simple structured words (three-four letter words) from the beginning of the semester. Within the course of the journey, they should be able to fluently read and narrate simple sentences confidently.

First interviewee expressed that "During reading class teachers' focus on fluency of reading, accuracy of the student, pronunciation, proper use of punctuation marks and intonation or dramatization. So, when students are attending reading classes they can improve their overall reading skills" (Inerview-1, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus). On the other hand second interviewee mentioned that "Reading classes will allow students to gain confidence in being able to read fluently, also gaining vocabulary. This allows proficiency in writing too" (Inerview-2, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus). And third interviewee said "Their knowledge on vocabulary will be broaden when they can read a book, they will be able to create images of the characters and background on their mind. This way their thinking abilities will be enriched" (Inerview-3, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

First interviewee expressed "The time required for a student to attain fluency is variable. Reading development is quite progressive, but within 6 months, most children are expected to gain maturity in reading basic sentences. Weak learners might require up to 7-8 months" (Inerview-1, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus). On the other hand the other two interviewees expressed that there is no any specific time slots for the learners but regular practice can help them to achieve success to read fluently.

B. Assistive tools for improving reading skills:

All three of the interviewees mentioned that mostly they rely on textbooks, flash cards, sight words, e-learning, story books, gameplay presentations, etc. to conduct interactive classes.

They also added that school is managing trained teachers, modern equipment and methods to allow for stable and efficient learning experience.

From the second interview, I have found out many tools of reading development and schools' support. She mentioned that, "E-learning is very beneficial to take reading classes and their school provides full time internet system, which helps them to take smooth classes" (Inerview-2, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

According to the third interviewee, "The school has a big library with lots of books, where students are getting help to lend books and read those in the weekend" (Inerview-3, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

C. Challenges teachers face in the classroom in improving reading skills:

Third interviewee mentioned that "The most common hindrance in the learning progress is students' lack of inspiration, shyness of stating the problems and not being exposed to daily

interactions in English outside of school. Parental support prevents children to overcome these shortcomings" (Inerview-3, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

The second interviewee said that "Decoding is when children are able to put sounds to letters in arrange to sound out composed dialects, lack of phonetic knowledge and proper practice at home, results poor performances" (Inerview-2, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

Third interviewee expressed that "students are not getting enough support from home which result weak readers. During school hour if students are not showing enough interest then they faces lack of confidence and sometimes teachers plan shows limitations which results demotivated students" (Inerview-3, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

First interviewee mentioned that "Direct communication between students and teachers allow for more engaging and effective learning sessions. Peer to peer communication aims to do the same" (Inerview-1, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

The second interviewee said that "If teachers motivating parents to provide parental support, is one of the effective way for the reading progress. Story book suggestions help students enhance their reading skill outside of school" (Inerview-2, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

D. Homework and parental responsibility in improving reading skills:

First interviewee said "Reading home works are effective ways to improve reading habit, because students usually do not have interest in studying. Home works allow students to practice reading at home" (Inerview-1, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

Second interviewee mentioned "Students are able to attain fluency in reading with more practice time. This is why home works are given to students, so that they can spend more time practicing" (Inerview-2, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

Third interviewee stated "Home works allow students to participate in class confidently, due to remaining updated with class work" (Inerview-3, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

First interviewee stated, "Parents usually have the strongest influence in the child's overall reading, and learning process. Weak learners must highly rely on parental support, and well-nurtured upbringing for fruitful learning" (Inerview-1, English teacher, # Date: 03.12.20 19, at school campus).

At this point three of the interviewees mentioned that Parents should be communicative with teachers, to understand their child's situation. It is important for them to look after their child's reading habit, become aware of his/her strengths and weaknesses. Parents are also expected to provide an atmosphere for the child, so that he/she can get motivated to learn. They also added that Kindergarten students do not usually perceive the importance of reading habit and the learning experience. Thus, the whole motivation and curiosity comes from the atmosphere that teachers and parents create for them.

4.3 Findings from the observation:

As I planned on observing English classes, I kept growing a better understanding of how teachers' are taking reading classes, the materials that are needed to take classes, how students are performing and the support teachers are provide to make them fluent in reading. I observed 3 English classes on 1st December 2019 to 3rd December 2019 in different periods (first period, third

period and fifth period). Each class's duration was for forty minutes. During my observation, I found the classes to be well decorated with study material, for example: flash cards, sight words, and chart-papers. The class rooms were well equipped with electronic supports such as air conditioner, six ceiling fans, sixteen lights, one computer with proper internet connection and a projector. The class rooms were big enough for thirty students. On the first day I observed the English class at 9:50 am and I found twenty students to be present out of twenty three students. The Teacher started the class with a group activity as a warm up session with background music. Groups were formed with mixed type of students. Each of the kindergarten section had two block teachers. When the English teacher started her class, the other teacher kept roaming around, helping the students make their group. It took around six to seven minutes for them to finish the task. After the activity, students were kept in same group. The students sat on their particular places, and the English teacher introduced them the topic. On the next day, that specific class started a new story. The students were shown some sight words for five minutes from the wall and students were repeated after teacher. Four of the students were not showing any interest, but the assistant teacher tried to involve them to utter those words. Class teacher turned on the projector and computer for a PPT. Students enjoyed those slides, which included a story with a few characters. All the students read the story together, from the PPT slides with the help of the teacher. After that, students were asked to read lines from the board. When all the groups were done, the teacher switched off the projector and asked them to open their books. This time, I found some students without books. Both the teacher went to each of the students to find out the particular page and marked those lines to practice at home. When teachers were done marking, the bell rang for tiffin time.

The next day I observed another English literature class in Kindergarten, on 2nd December 2019 at 8:20 am in the 1st period. This particular class had the same arrangements, such as: a well decorated room, lights, fans, computer with proper internet connection, projector and wide open space for students. The class had two block teachers and twenty-four students in total, but two of them were absent on that day. On this particular day, I found the class starting with a roll call. After that, the English teacher started with some basic greeting practices. It was an interactive session, where students played different roles like: teacher, students, acquaintances, shopkeeper, buyer etc. After the warm up session, the teacher asked them to open their books and the particular page which they read in the last class. Later on, students were asked to read one line from their book. This way whole class finished their reading. During this class observation, the teachers asked them to read aloud those sentences and listened to them carefully if they were doing any mistake or not. If they pronounced them incorrect, the teacher would help them fix their errors. I found twelve students read in a proper way out of twenty-two. Few students took support from teachers and completed their reading activity. When all the students were done with their reading, the teachers told them to draw one of the characters from the story and color. By that time, some of the students were guided on correcting their ways of reading with proper accent. The class had ended. At the end of the period, the English teacher marked their books to practice at home.

On the third day I observed the English literature class on same topic, but at the last period which was held at 11:40 am and finished at 12:20 pm. The class room was well organized like previous observed classes. This particular class had eighteen present students out of twenty, with two block teachers. I found teachers helping students with sight words, helping learners with phonic sounds to pronounce difficult words and spell out some five-six lettered words. Students underlined those words during reading that particular story. As it was their last period of that day, students were a

little absent minded. Teachers were in rush to complete their task and at the end, teachers marked their books to practice at home. Before wrapping up the lesson, students were asked to repeat those difficult words after the teacher. When the bell rang teacher remind all the students to practice reading at home.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

This chapter has portrayed research findings based on interviews and observation. The teachers' interviews and class observations have brought up significant analysis points that immensely affect learning. According to interviewees, students are expected to be able to have some fundamental understanding of the English alphabets, phonic sounds and spelling of two or three lettered words from the beginning. The ability to construct simple three-four worded sentences, along with understanding phonic sounds allow for a more comfortable reading experience for students. This further helps students grasp more relative and advanced content that will contribute to their reading fluency. Towards the end of the year, most of the teachers found the students to be able to read and construct basic sentences with proper use of punctuation marks, right choice of basic words, along with maintaining accuracy and order. There has also been some cases where students started to have increased confidence in reading and writing, which eventually lead to increased proficiency and enhanced vision.

Teachers had also shared their take regarding the amount of time required for kindergarteners to attain richness in their reading and writing skill. There are varied opinions on how much time a child needs, but on most occasions with the exception time may vary in exceptional cases.

Teachers usually rely on certain tools to assist themselves through their teaching experiences. Most teachers usually prefer e-learning over other methods due to the visual fidelity it can reach, providing students with more engaging and interactive learning sessions. To add further on,

gameplay, story books, presentations, flash cards etc. are also tools to help teachers conduct classes, going out of their conventional ways.

The biggest form of inspiration students can get are from their families and their school, as stated by the teachers who have been cooperating with me. Unfortunately, most parents tend to overlook their child's learning habits, preventing any room for motivated learning progress. This has a significant downfall to students' learning growth. It is immensely important that parents assist their children in their learning progress, allowing for more fruitful outcomes in reading progression.

Teachers tend to fall into many difficulties when it comes to taking classes and interacting with students on a more personal level. One of the most difficult issues are helping students to learn coding and decoding. Decoding is when children are able to put sounds to letters in order sound out written language.

In this discussion I want to add one more major point, which is homework. Kindergarteners are very young to motivate themselves directly. It is not that the children cannot do it, but their practice of self-motivation is different from elders. When a child gets direct appreciation in front of others especially in front of their friends, their abilities and interests of doing something increase. So, in reading class teachers recommend homework to practice at home. Which means students know the topic in school and practice at home. This allows them to gain knowledge on the content studied, and gain confidence in participating. During my observation of English Reading classes, I have seen all teachers recommend reading practice at home. Even during my interview session, I asked teachers about the importance of reading homework. All three interviewees mentioned that reading at home helps students to become great readers.

Key Points:

- 1. Proper planning of teaching is very important for reading class.
- 2. Teachers must be aware of the modern teaching methods.
- 3. Schools need to provide all necessary equipment to run smooth class activities.
- 4. E-learning is one of the helpful supports for reading classes.
- 5. All tools of reading classes are not fit for all.
- 6. Parents must be cooperative to support their child's learning.
- 7. A child's successful learning happens when parents and schools support each other.
- 8. Reading at home is a very important habit for becoming a successful reader.
- 9. We cannot fix a child's reading skill development in a time span. It can be a long term procedure.
- 10. Reading helps a child become more confident in writing.

5.2 Conclusion

In a formal education system, there is no substitute for reading. Teachers in the English medium schools expect kindergarten students to come ready with essential aptitudes of tuning in, talking, perusing and composing. These learning steps are very integral in achieving success in educational growth at school. Kindergarten is the foundation of primary education.

This research finds that the English Medium Schools with trained and experienced teachers are able to help the kindergarten students improve their reading skills. When English teachers maintain their lesson plan in an organized way with proper teaching-learning technique, it helps to

improve students' learning. Creating interactive sessions for learners help them become more motivated and attached with reading. Although, the School management needs to provide the facilities for better education. Proper supervision from management helps to improve the quality of support and facilities in every aspect. This support system is the motivation for teachers to take English reading classes efficiently and create attraction for students in learning. This research also shows that the knowledge of phonetics, coding and decoding abilities are playing an important role in English reading development. Moreover, parents' effective support is a mandatory part for reading development.

This research has brought out impactful aspects of what effective teaching can portray. I have learnt the effectiveness throughout my research, which made me realize why they are integral for effective teaching. The required variables of reading abilities, importance of parental support in learners' life and appropriate supervision needed for both teachers and students.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation are proposed:

- Kindergarten teachers need to be well trained in English reading. It will help them to apply
 different teaching-learning techniques in classes, which will help the students to be
 engaged.
- 2. The school management needs to be aware of modern teaching learning system and supportive. Class size needs to be prioritized in order to take effective English reading classes. For parental support, the school management can take some initiatives like: counselling parents, school management-parents-teachers or one to one consultancy,

workshop, seminar, etc. then this will help parents to get the ideas that will be helpful for the children for reading fluency.

- 3. Extra classes or one-to-one classes are required for weak learners. When students' improvement is not up to the mark, these classes will help teachers find out the problem and solve accordingly. Phonetics, coding-decoding and comprehensive ability are some of the important aspects of English reading. Every student needs to use phonetic knowledge while reading. It will help them pronounce difficult words properly.
- 4. Parental help for children's one of the most important supports in English reading skills development. Proper guidance from parents can improve learners' reading practice. Home work is required for daily practice to improve further reading habit. Students require these three components for achieving success in reading fluency: parental support, school management, and support from teachers. Absence of any one of these three components will lower their probability of success.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Consent Letter

BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University Master's Thesis Programme

MEd in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

Consent Form

I am Razina Ferdous Luna M.Ed. student in Educational Leadership & School Improvement at BRAC Institute of Educational Development of BRAC University. A research-based Master thesis will have to be submitted to my thesis committee as part of my obtaining the degree. You are invited to participate in a study titled "Reading Skills of Kindergarten Students: Supports and Facilities in English-Medium Schools" The Purpose of this study is to explore how English medium schools' are helping their students' reading ability. My research will try to look at the present practice of the teaching-learning process of English Medium Schools. You have been chosen as a possible participant in this study. I will observe one of your English reading class to know the views on the issue, and your class about our topic will contribute to the study a lot. Probably, it will take around an hour. There will be no monetary compensation for your participation. There is no identified risk from participating in it.

The researcher will maintain the confidentiality about your identity. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential. The researchers named below will be responsible to ensure the protection of the information.

If you are willing to participate in this research, we would request you to sign this consent form. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Therefore, you may withdraw your participation at any time during the interview or later while the information is analyzed.

If you want to know more about this research or if there is relevant clarification that you may require, please contact the following persons.

Dr. Manjuma Akhtar Mousumi	Razina Ferdous Luna			
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Supervisor	MEd in Educational Leadership & School			
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I have read the consent form or my acquaintance read it to me. I completely understand my rights about participation and am willing to participate in this research.

Name:	Signature & Date	•
maine.	Signature Date	•

Appendix B. Interview Guide

ENGLISH TEACHERS' INTERVIEW FORM

	INTERVIEWEE NO: _	DATE:	TIME:	-
1.	As a kindergarten teache	r, what are the reading qu	alities you expect your students to	attain?
2.	What benefits will the st	udents get from doing re	ading classes?	
3.	How much time would in	t take for a kindergarten s	student to attain fluent reading?	
4.	What are the tools used t	to improve the students'	reading progress?	
5.	Does school provide enowhy.	ugh support for the stude	nts' reading development? If not,	explain
6.	What are the challenges	you face while conductir	g reading classes?	
7.	What steps do you take t	o overcome the challeng	es you face?	
8.	Do parents have any infl	uence on their child's rea	ding development?	
9.	How can parents help wi	th their child's reading p	rogress?	
10	. Will the students be able how.	e to provide self-support	for their reading progress? If so,	explain
11	. Will peer studies be any	beneficial to students' re	ading progress?	
12	. What is the importance of	of home works in reading	development?	

Appendix C. Observation Form

CLASS OBSERVATION RECORD

Date:		Time:				
Class:		Number of students:				
Teacher:						
Objective(s) of the lesson:						
1. Physical aspects of the class (total number of students present)						
2. Interaction patterns (Teacher talking time/ turn-taking procedures/ question types used)						
3. Use of teaching materials (textbook/Teacher-prepared materials/ other materials).						
4. Strategies used- direct developmental/evaluative)	et/indirect; constructive/critical;	supportive/destructive;				
5. Teaching methods, techniques and procedures (activity types used: communication writing; teaching techniques used: elicitation, demonstration, discussion, dramatization etc.)						
6. Attitudes of Teacher and Students. (T: friendly/indifferent/ helpful/ supportive/ distant/etc.; Ss.: animated/ active/ disinterested/ attentive/ passive/ distracted etc.)						
7. Classroom management (instruction	on from Teacher- clear/ unclear; grou	up work/pair work)				
8. General observations regar smiles/Laughter/Embarrassment; raised	ding atmosphere (stressful/stre d voiced of Teacher; etc.)	essed; positive/negative;				
9. Lesson structure (Steps of lesson/ smooth transition from one stage to the other/ time spent on each stage/ use of materials, activates, etc.)						
 10. Books (colorful pages/colored font/charts/flashcards) 11. Beyond the classroom teacher, who else is available to work with students? 12. How did the teacher start a reading class? Did she follow pre-reading and reading strategies? 13. How did the teacher explain difficult vocabularies? 14. How did teacher help the struggling reader? 15. What resources did teacher use for coding and decoding for the struggling readers? 						
16. Number of lights:	17. Number of windows:					
18. Number of fans:	19. Number of AC:					
20. Number of tables:	21. Number of chairs:					
22. Number of doors:	23. Number of computers:					
24. Number of projectors:						