



## Reading Skill Development for Children with Dyslexia and Teachers' Use of the Direct Teaching Method in Ordinary Primary Schools

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**Abstract:** Reading is a mandatory skill to be a functional member in today's society. Modern society relies heavily on the skill to get written information, whether it is for leisure or work. Schooling depends on the skill as reading is the foundation in which other subjects are based. Good reading skills can be seen as a corner stone for academic success. Language acquisition; how to listen, comprehend and speak, is naturally given to a child. The child can receive it without any self-aware effort. Reading on the other hand, is a skill that has to be taught and learned. It is important to note that the degree or level in which pupils experience reading problems vary from one pupil to another. Their areas of strengths and interests may be different too. It is therefore important for teachers to offer instructional support to each pupil depending on his/her strengths, interests and needs. One way of developing reading skills in children with dyslexia is through the direct teaching method. The purpose of this paper was therefore to bring out the importance of the direct teaching method as a means to improve reading skills in children with dyslexia in ordinary primary schools. In order to meet the above purpose, the following areas were conceptually articulated: the concept of dyslexia, dyslexia's effects on reading, and reading skills development in children with dyslexia, factors affecting reading skills, the direct teaching method, and teachers' use of direct teaching method in reading and concluding remarks.

**Keywords:** Reading Skills Development, Children with Dyslexia, Teachers' Use, Direct Teaching Method, Ordinary Primary Schools

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Proficient reading is an essential tool for learning a large part of the subject matter taught at school. With an ever increasing emphasis on education and literacy, more and more children and adults need help in learning to read, spell, express their thoughts on paper and acquire adequate use of grammar.

A dyslexic child who finds the acquisition of these literacy skills difficult can also suffer a lot of anguish and trauma when they may feel mentally abused by their peers within the school environment, because they have a learning difficulty. Much can be done by a teacher to alleviate this by integrating the child into the class environment (which is predominantly a learning environment) where he/she can feel comfortable and develop confidence and self esteem.

Class teachers may be particularly confused by the learner whose consistent underachievement seems due to what may look like carelessness or lack of effort. These children can be made to feel very different from their peers simply because they may be unable to follow simple instructions, which for others seem easy. It is a class teacher's responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning for all pupils within their class.

Of particular importance is an understanding of the problems children with poor reading skills have in a classroom with diverse learners. Contrary to the commonly-held belief that learning to read is natural and easy, learning to read is a complex linguistic achievement. It is an acquired ability that requires effort and incremental skill development. Yet most children can learn to read if taught appropriately. In fact, scientists have estimated that 95 percent of all children can be taught to read at a level limited only by their reasoning and listening comprehension abilities.

Although many children learn to read regardless of the method used, and a few learn to read with little or no formal instruction, pupils with dyslexia have difficulty learning the letter-sound system unless they are taught in an organised, systematic, efficient way by a knowledgeable teacher using a well-

designed instructional approach. Pupils with dyslexia need direct and explicit instruction to develop the knowledge and skills that underpin efficient word reading. These include an understanding of the alphabetic principle (the understanding that speech sounds are represented by letters of the alphabet) and phonological awareness (the ability to segment words into their constituent phonemes).

## **2. THE CONCEPT OF DYSLEXIA**

The International Dyslexia Association (2002) clearly defines dyslexia as a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

According to Reid, (2003) people with reading and writing problems have a great deal to offer society through their creativity, skills and talents which always lie dormant and untapped due to frustration of not being able to read fluently and write like the rest. A friendly environment and appropriate instructional support could open ways for those who might have experienced failure in their school life.

Pupils have different ways of learning and hence have different strengths and needs. Every pupil with a learning challenge has his/her own learning style, interests, needs and strengths. Nonetheless, teachers should be able to help the learners through the use of appropriate instructional strategies to identify their strengths and interests in order for them to be able to learn successfully (Shaywitz, 2003). It is also helpful for teachers to make the pupils aware of their learning difficulty and ability so that the pupils can have a positive self-image which help in building a successful and competent person. Teachers should therefore give the parents and pupils examples of successful people who had reading and writing problem in school (Shaywitz, 2003).

### **2.1. Dyslexia's Effects on Reading**

According to Coordinated Campaign for Learning Disabilities (1997) dyslexia has many effects on reading. These are;

Children with dyslexia have very slow progress in acquiring reading skills and they lack strategy to read new words. Consequently, they have trouble reading unknown (new, unfamiliar) words that must be sounded out; making wild stabs or guesses at reading a word; failure to systematically sound out words.

Children with dyslexia are equally unable to read small "function" words such as that, am, an, and in. Considering their inability to read such small function words, they find difficulties when they stumble on reading multi-syllabic words, or the failure to come close to sounding out the full word. At times they omit parts of words when reading; they fail to decode parts within a word, as if someone had chewed a hole in the middle of the word, such as conible for convertible.

The children with dyslexia also have a terrific fear of reading out loud. Considering their fears, they always try to avoid oral reading. Their oral reading is filled with substitutions, omissions, and mispronunciations. Their oral reading is choppy and laboured, not smooth or fluent. Such oral reading lacks inflection and sounds like the reading of a foreign language. They substitute words with the same meaning for words in the text he or she cannot pronounce, such as car for automobile. They have trouble reading mathematical word problems. Consequently, a listener needs to rely on context to discern the meaning of what is read.

The children with dyslexia equally disproportionately perform poor on multiple-choice tests. They are usually unable to finish tests on time. They have disastrous spelling, with words not resembling true spelling (some spellings may be missed by spell check). Their homework never seems to end, or with parents often recruited as readers. They have messy handwriting despite what may be an excellent facility at word processing-nimble fingers.

The children have extreme difficulty learning a foreign language. They lack enjoyment in reading, and avoid reading books or even a sentence. They avoid reading for pleasure, which seems too exhausting.

Their reading accuracy may improve over time, though it continues to lack fluency and is laborious. This lowers self-esteem with pain that is not always visible to others.

Pupils with dyslexia learn most effectively when information comes in through many sensory channels simultaneously. This is often referred to as multisensory instruction. Multisensory teaching links listening, speaking, reading and writing through the simultaneous and alternative deployment of visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile sensory modalities. Teachers should ensure that their pupils with dyslexia are seeing, saying, hearing and manipulating materials during learning time. Pupils with dyslexia seem to learn more effectively if multisensory approaches are used for mastering and assimilating letter-sound correspondences and sight words. They need systematic multi-sensory teaching that combines encoding (spelling) and decoding (reading), as these processes are inter-linked.

Multisensory instruction allows pupils to use their own approach to the tasks through utilising their strong learning channels and at the same time exercising their weak ones. Multisensory instruction should be supported with other principles of good instruction including enhancing pupil attention and motivation, providing feedback and modeling, avoiding overloading the pupil, giving sufficient practice and providing effective reinforcement. There are numerous multisensory teaching strategies used by teachers working with pupils with dyslexia especially those with reading difficulties. One of these strategies is the direct teaching method.

### **3. READING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA**

Tunmer and Greaney (2010) defines reading as an ability to recode text into something that the reader has command of and that he or she can meaningfully adopt the spoken language. Even though there are differences between spoken and written language, the language proficiency needed is the same for acquiring and understanding writing as for speech. This includes: localizing individual words in lexical memory, using suitable syntactic sentence structures, finding meaning in individually structured sentences and been able to build meaningful contexts and identifying the whole (Catts and Kamhi, 2005). Falth (2013) believes that for a teacher to be able to choose the right level of difficulty appropriate for pupil with dyslexia, the teacher must have access to information on that pupil's linguistic awareness and reading development.

Catts and Kamhi (2005) argue that one of the goals of reading is to automatize word decoding in order to focus on understanding the content of what one reads. Even when one does not immediately understand the meaning of an entirely new word, a visual coupling should be made to the semantic memory without the need to sound the letter. A good decoding ability is emphasized in early reading development. If pupils cannot read the individual words in a text quickly and efficiently, problems for understanding the content may appear. A large part of the reader's cognitive resources will then be tied up in the decoding process, which impairs the understanding of the text and hence also the learning (Falth, 2013).

#### **3.1. Reading According to the Simple View of Reading**

The basic notions of what reading is are represented in a model called the simple view of reading. According to the simple view of reading, the skills and processes that determine reading comprehension are captured by two broad components: decoding and linguistic comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986). The formula reads:  $R$  (Reading Comprehension) =  $D$  (Decoding) x  $C$  (Comprehension).

Hence, if decoding ability is high but language comprehension low, the person in question will not be a good reader. A pupil will not be a good reader, if the opposite pattern obtains with a low decoding ability but high language comprehension. This means that the pupils with problems of decoding in age-adapted texts or with difficulties in understanding what they read will have problems to acquire the content of the text (Gough & Tunmer, 1986).

The model provides a framework within which to understand and conceptualize the phenomenon of reading. It can also guide the structure of directed and suitable early teaching methods and form support in diagnosing reading difficulties. The different processes concerning decoding and comprehension can be analyzed, separately and their development is directly and indirectly affected by a number of other factors (Vellutino, Tunmer, Jaccard & Chen, 2007). These processes include: Linguistic awareness, phonological awareness (PA), morphological awareness.

### *3.1.1. Linguistic Awareness*

Being aware of the language structure and able to shift one's attention from the contents to the form of language and having the ability to step aside from language and reflect on it are the factors usually included in the notion of linguistic awareness. Well-developed linguistic awareness is a good foundation for children to acquire a quick, reliable and gradually automatic decoding ability. It should be possible to analyze the language from a formal point of view without being distracted by the contents. This is a matter of distancing oneself from the meaning, identifying the phonemes and successively becoming aware of how the language is structured (Falth, 2013).

### *3.1.2. Phonological Awareness (PA)*

Phonology refers to the sound system of a language while phonological awareness is defined as the conscious understanding that words can be broken down into smaller units of sound and the awareness of these sounds can be manipulated (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987). With respect to development, Goswami (2002) argues that children speaking English as a first language initially develop an awareness that words are comprised of syllables, followed by an awareness of onset and rime (within a syllable), and lastly, an awareness that spoken words are comprised of individual sounds (that is, phonemes).

The syllable is a unit of spoken language consisting of a single uninterrupted sound formed by a vowel, diphthong (two articulated vowels as in the word "loud"), or syllabic consonant alone, or by any of these sounds preceded, followed, or surrounded by one or more consonants (Pearsall, 1998). The onset refers to the initial single phoneme or consonant cluster in a word while the rime refers to the remaining vowel plus the consonants that follow. The phoneme is the smallest unit that constitutes spoken language and distinguishes one word from another. For example, the first phonemes /l/ vs. /n/ differentiates the words "light" and "night." Phonemic awareness is a fundamental element of the language system and a building block for all spoken and written words. This component of PA takes place at the smallest unit of sound. It involves an awareness, for example, that the word "cat" has three phonemes: /k/, /a/, and /t/, and that likewise, the word "thought" has three phonemes as well: /θ/, /o/, and /t/.

### *3.1.3. Morphological Awareness*

Morphology is a linguistic component of language that concerns the rules for word formation and meaning and provides one of the organizing principles of the mental lexicon (Aitchinson, 2003). It may also contribute to the development of language and literacy in a second language (Wade-Woolley & Geva, 2000). Morphemes are parts of words (sometimes full words), representing the smallest units in language that contain meaning (Carlisle, 1995). Morphological form-to-meaning mappings assist in the expansion of children's vocabularies (Anglin, 1993).

There are two main types of morphemes: free standing morphemes and bound morphemes. A free standing morpheme is generally a morpheme that can stand on its own and is thus a complete word as well (for example, I) while a bound morpheme includes most prefixes and suffixes: parts of words that cannot stand on their own (for example, pro, ism). Morphological awareness (MA) refers to the ability to reflect on and manipulate morphemic structures within words (Carlisle, 1995) and can be considered a deeper aspect of oral language proficiency. MA is complex and involves phonological, semantic, and syntactic knowledge (Ravid & Malenky, 2001), but also needs to be considered on its own.

There are three main ways to make morphologically complex words: inflections affect the grammatical function of the word (for example, play + ing = playing; play + ed = played); derivations alter the word class or the meaning of the base (for example, play + ful = playful; re + play = replay); and compounds join two bases in one word to reflect a new meaning that is often, though not always, related to the meaning of each compound (for example, play + mate = playmate vs. fire + man = fireman). As complex as MA appears to be, English-speaking children process components of unfamiliar words in a very automatic and fast manner, with little overt awareness (Carlisle, 1995). Kuo and Anderson (2006) concluded that overall, across several languages, children appear to develop inflectional morphology skills in their home or first language (L1) before derivational and compound morphology skills, with the latter two continuing to develop throughout the elementary school years.

This is an important point when considering young emerging bilinguals as it suggests that in such a population MA skills, an aspect of oral language proficiency, are likely stronger in their native language than in their second language.

It is not possible to completely predict a child's reading development, since it is affected by genetic disposition, reading experiences and teaching (Höien and Lundberg, 1999). However, it is important for teachers to know where in the reading progress pupils are supposed to be in order to individualize their education. Most children approach reading with a well-established system for how to process speech. The challenge facing teachers is how to make their oral skills benefit their reading, which in turn requires that the teachers know something about reading development (Taube, 2007). There is a great deal of evidence indicating that a measure of letter-sound knowledge and phoneme awareness is what best predicts the ability to read (Bowey, 2005). These are skills that depend on language phonological system.

On the other hand, when it comes to reading, comprehension, vocabulary and grammatical skills are also essential as well as semantic and grammar, two non-phonological language aspects. Beyond the early stages, children have to develop their reading fluency. Even for children who have cracked the reading code it may take time before their reading become automatic and the words are correctly and quickly recognized.

Reading development is often described as taking place in stages or phrases, assuming that everyone passes through the qualitatively disparate steps in a similar way. In the first phase graphemes are linked to phonemes which mean that the reader has cracked the alphabetical code. In the next phase orthographic strategy is used which involves that a child now recognizes the whole or part of the whole visually (Ehri, 2002). The reason why common words are more quickly recognized than new ones is that well-known words already exist in the reader's orthographic lexicon. Falth (2013) states that in this lexicon all knowledge and experiences of words are stored, one prerequisite for orthographic-morphemic reading being that the child has come across the words so many times and consequently have become established in the lexicon. Once the child has reached this last stage the resources can be explored for semantic and syntactic clues that can make a text meaningful. Word decoding has now become automatic and takes place without requiring a cognitive effort.

Reading development is not the same for all the children because some remain longer in a phase that others have left behind quickly, while some shift between the different phases. A reader encountering an unknown word may go back to using earlier strategies. Reading development does not happen stepwise but rather run parallel to each other.

### **3.2. Reading Flow and Reading Comprehension**

Reading flow has been described as a smooth, friction-free reading consisting of several processes at different levels, where the underlying processes have to reach complete automaticity for achieving total concentration on comprehension (Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Comprehension is achieved when readers build a mental representation, an internal image, founded on a text message. Comprehension process consists of two main parts: identifying words and activating language processes when words are combined to messages. Primary prerequisites like word decoding ability and word knowledge are necessary for developing a good reading ability.

When word decoding is automatized, pupils can concentrate more on comprehension than on reading techniques which may help develop further reading flow and contribute to a positive reading experience that may result to increasing reading pace, with word decoding playing a central part in the continued reading development (Wolf and Katzir-Cohen, 2001). Reading flow cannot be equated with automatization but is more of a bridge between word decoding and reading comprehension (Rauschenberg, 2008). This is symbolized by the multiplication sign (x) in the "simple view of reading" (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), with decoding and comprehension happening simultaneously in fluent reading. With every step that increases decoding or comprehension in the model the total reading ability increases as well.

### **3.3. Orthographic Depth and Reading**

Frost, Katz and Bentin's (1987) orthographic depth hypothesis proposes that word reading skills in languages with shallow orthographies, such as vowelized Hebrew, are primarily mediated

phonologically by their straightforward grapheme-phoneme correspondence with respect to lexical word recognition. However, in languages with deep orthographies, such as English, word reading skills are more dependent on orthographic cues. Thus, for accurate word reading, the degree of correspondence between phonology and orthography is an important factor, impacting the rate at which fluent word reading skills are achieved. For example, vowelized Hebrew has a one-to-one grapheme-phoneme correspondence making written Hebrew quite straightforward to decode, while English has a less shallow orthography making it more of a challenge. That is, differences in orthographic depth may have a significant impact on the development of reading (Geva & Siegel, 2000).

### **3.4. Factors Affecting Reading Skills**

According to Dennis (2008), reading and understanding is a complex process between identifying printed symbols and interpreting the meaning behind the symbols. Some factors that affect reading skills include: The complexity of the reading text, environmental influences, anxiety during reading comprehension, interest and motivation, decoding or word recognition speed, and medical problems.

One of the factors that impacts learners' reading comprehension is the complexity of the texts. This factor is influenced by the readers' strength and fluency in language and their comprehending of its applications and different meanings. Oral abilities have a significant part in identifying how skilled a reader can be because learners hear words and obtain a lot of vocabulary. A lot of vocabulary assists learners in explaining the unknown words through applying the opinions of context (Dennis, 2008).

The second factor relates to environmental conditions that impact the learners who try to read a passage. Readers may have a lot of problems to understand a text in an unorganized environment than those who read in calm and controlled place. If learners are in an unsafe place, they find it difficult to focus on their reading. When they are in safe environments, their reading comprehension ability will be better. Readers will lose their concentration in understanding a text when there are noises like televisions or radios (Dennis, 2008).

The third factor is pertinent to the anxiety during reading comprehension. Examinations, class work, or homework situations can put more pressure on readers' reading than reading for enjoyment. Some learners react positively to examinations while others are overwhelmed by the pressure to carry out a reading activity. Learners who experience this anxiety may not completely understand the instructions and this may lead to confusion and poor comprehension of the reading task.

The fourth factor is interest and motivation. According to Dennis (2008), learners' interest and motivation are very important in developing reading skills. If readers find the reading material monotonous, they will have a lot of problems in concentrating on their comprehension. This can lead to a lowering of reading comprehension among readers. If the reading material is interesting for learners they can easily understand it and can remember it clearly. Teachers have the duty to motivate their learners through providing interesting reading materials during their class time.

The fifth factor is related to decoding or word recognition speed. Readers who have problems in decoding and recognizing words read slowly and find it more difficult to understand the meaning of passages than those without decoding problems. Vocabulary influences the reading comprehension skill because readers always apply decoding skills to understand the pronunciation and meaning of words they have not seen before. Persons who have enough vocabulary can clarify the meaning or reading passages faster than those who should guess the meaning of unfamiliar words according to the clues of context (Dennis, 2008).

The last factor is concerned with the medical problems. According to Hollowell (2013), poor reading skill may be related to the medical difficulty that does not get addressed until the child is older. This involves undiagnosed attention deficit disorder, speech problems, and hearing impairments. She emphasized that learners with speech and hearing difficulties are less likely to take part in oral reading and class discussions.

## **4. THE DIRECT TEACHING METHOD**

Direct teaching (also known as Direct Instruction) is a teaching method developed in the United States in the 1960s, focused particularly on the needs of children with learning difficulties (National

Research Foundation,2014). Building on behaviourist learning theory, the direct teaching method breaks each learning task down into its smallest component and requires mastery of simpler skills before proceeding to more difficult skills. Students are grouped according to their achievement, teachers are provided with closely scripted lesson plans, students respond to the teacher orally and as a group, and the group does not move on until everyone understands the material.

Direct Instruction is a family of approaches, rather than a single approach. What is being trialled, for example, in the Cape is a particularly pure form of Direct Instruction, based directly on the work of its originators Englemann and Becker (Engelmann & Carnine, 1991).They went further to explain that other similar and successful approaches have been comprehensive school reform programs such as Success for All in the United States and effective remedial reading programs such as MultiLit in Australia (Engelmann & Carnine, 1991).

Education researcher John Hattie's comprehensive meta-analysis of curriculum reforms rates Direct Instruction among the most effective teaching strategies. Direct Instruction reading programs, however, are nested: Direct Instruction is the approach and reading is the content. In addition to the Direct Instruction approach of ability grouping, scripting, mastery learning and stimulus response teaching, these programs often include characteristics associated with the "gold standard" for effective reading teaching: relentless attention to the component skills required for understanding the letter-sound relationships in written text, and reinforcement of these components in the context of book reading (Huitt, Monetti, & Hummel, 2009).

#### **4.1. The Gold Standard**

The teaching of reading is probably the most researched topic in education. The gold standard consensus, articulated by the US National Reading Panel (NICHD) and supported by the Australian Rowe Review, is that the key components of effective reading teaching are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (The National Reading Panel, 2000).

- Phonemic awareness as mentioned earlier in this paper, is the capacity to break words down into sound units (phonemes): H/A/T; SH/I/P. Some children learn this before they go to school from book reading with parents and from playing rhyming games. Those who don't already know this need to practise segmenting words into sounds and identifying rhyming patterns in words.
- Phonics is knowledge about matching these sounds to letters: how graphemes (letters and letter combinations) represent phonemes. This allows readers to decode new written words by sounding out the phonemes rather than memorising whole words.
- Fluency is the capacity to read unfamiliar texts quickly, accurately and automatically. This is often developed by guided oral reading, repeated reading aloud with feedback and guidance from teachers, peers or parents.
- Vocabulary development is essential to skilled reading. It can be taught directly, by introducing and defining new words, as well indirectly by teaching word-learning strategies such as word roots, dictionary use and context clues.
- Comprehension is the goal of reading teaching. It involves making meaning by connecting what the reader already knows with what have been read, using strategies such as answering questions, generating questions and summarising.

#### **4.2. Direct Instruction and the Gold Standard**

Reading programmes that deal effectively with all five of the essential components, teaching both skills for decoding (phonemic awareness and phonics) and for reading in context (fluency, vocabulary and comprehension), are likely to be effective in teaching young children to read. What makes Direct Instruction programmes incorporating these components attractive is the relative lack of variability in teaching quality that they promise. Rather than requiring a teacher to have the knowledge and wisdom to produce their own individual gold standard programme, teachers are trained to follow a published programme.

This promise of reduced variability is particularly attractive in schools that have many inexperienced teachers and high levels of teacher transiency. Perhaps that is why Bruce Wilson's review of Indigenous education in the Northern Territory has recommended that the use of structured skills-

based literacy programs be mandated (The National Reading Panel, 2000). Although he has stopped short of recommending universal Direct Instruction in bush schools, he has recommended either Direct Instruction or explicit programmes such as Jolly Phonics (where students learn the sounds used in English rather than the letters of the alphabet) or Crack the Code to teach phonics and phonemic awareness.

### **4.3. Teachers' use of Direct Teaching Method in Reading**

Direct teaching as a powerful teaching tool in the classroom has been misunderstood by many teachers. For new teachers, it provides an anchor, a proven technique and focus that can provide a measure of stability in those first hectic months of teaching. Direct teaching is a systematic instructional method that first and foremost requires the teacher to have a command of the subject matter at as close to a mastery level as possible. This means that whether subject matter is at the elementary level, middle school level, high school level, tertiary level or adult education level, that the teacher thoroughly "understands" the content. Such understanding presupposes that the teacher "knows" more than the facts that describe the content. It also means that the teacher understands the structure of the content. In short, it means that the teacher understands each item of the content in more than one way. The main purpose of direct teaching is to provide information within a structure that enables all students to attain the stated objectives at a level of mastery. Inferences may be made at this point that direct teaching is least attractive to those teachers who themselves lack mastery of the content. Can teachers be effective without using direct teaching? Of course. In fact, many, if not most successful instructional episodes occupy a continuum of teaching methods from direct teaching to cooperative learning and individual student projects.

Proponents of the Direct Teaching Method are of the opinion that "language consists - except for lexicographers - not of words, but of sentences" which will enable the students to learn speech earlier (Viator, 1882). In the Direct Method, language is learnt for communication, as primarily speech (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Classroom instruction and classroom activities are carried out in the target language; therefore, students are actively involved in using the target language. Conversational activities hold an important place in this method. Through using language in real contexts, pupils stand a better chance of thinking, and speaking in the target language. Similarly, Stern (1983) points out that the Direct Method is characterized by the use of the target language as a means of instruction and communication in the language classroom, and by the avoidance of the use of the first language and of translation as a technique. The Direct Method will enable pupils to understand the language which will help them to use the language with ease; moreover, as first language does not allowed pupils learn the language through demonstration and conversation which will lead them to acquire fluency which is a strong component in reading. The Direct Method has been useful in that it "provided an exciting and interesting way of learning the foreign language through activity. It proved to be successful in releasing students from the inhibitions all too often associated with speaking a foreign tongue, particularly at the early stages" (Rivers, 1968).

Similarly, Richardson (1983) through explaining the learning process in the Direct Method stresses the role of teachers as they all insisted on the primacy of phonetics as a basis for language teaching; on the importance of oral practice and the necessity for making the reader the centre of instruction; on the principle of direct association between the thing referred to and the new word in the foreign language; on the teaching of grammar by inductive methods, and of the avoidance of the written or printed word until the pupil's pronunciation was so sound that it would not be influenced by seeing how the words were spelt.

Mart (2013) argues that there is a widespread assumption that language is best learnt when students actively use it in the classroom. Mart (2013) further argues that Teachers should value pupils' talk. Acquisition of a good oral proficiency is of paramount importance in foreign language learning process. Creating a positive communicative environment encourages pupils to get engaged in the target language, and enhances their reading skills and oral language development. The teacher should be aware of his/her potential in the direct method as it will positively influence language development of learners.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Learners who have difficulty mastering basic reading skills suffer long term academic consequences. Researchers believe that if children do not master basic reading skills and become efficient readers,



including comprehension which is the end goal of the reading process, they will fall so far behind their peers that they will never be able to catch up (Prado & Plourde, 2011). Because children with learning disabilities especially those with dyslexia represent a population of learners who require individualized and specialized instruction, unique teaching methods must be implemented to meet the needs of this population. One teaching method that has been accepted as an effective way of teaching reading to children with dyslexia in ordinary schools is the direct teaching model. Direct teaching has a long history of effective results for students with learning disabilities, especially when used as an intervention for older students (Shippen, Houchins, Steventon & Sartor, 2005).

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