

**EXPLORING INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL TYPE, GENDER AND
PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT ON PRE-SCHOOLERS' ACQUISITION
OF EARLY LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES IN BUSIA COUNTY,
KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE
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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my unique work and has not been presented to any college or university for any accreditation. This thesis has been supplemented by referred sources appropriately recognized. Where text, information (counting verbally expressed words), designs, pictures, or tables have been acquired from different sources, including the web, these are explicitly authorized and references referred to utilizing the current APA framework and as per agreed copyright infringement guidelines.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my family. Your support both financially and emotionally had been unconditional.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BECF	: Basic Education Curriculum Framework
CALS	: Core Academic Language Abilities/skills
CBC	: Competence Based Curriculum
CELM	: Comprehensive Emergent Literacy Model
ECD	: Early Childhood Education
ECDE	: Early Childhood Development Education
ECEC	: Early Childhood Education and Care
EFAL	: English as First Additional Language
EFL	: English as Foreign Language
ESL	: English as Second Language
FGDs	: Focus Group Discussion
FLAPS	: Foreign Language Attitude and Perceptions Survey
KICD	: Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KNBS	: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MOEST	: Ministry of Education Science and Technology
NACOSTI	: National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation
NASMLA	: National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	: Programme for International Student Assessment
PPII	: Pre-Primary II Learners
RoK	: Republic of Kenya
SPSS	: Statistical Programme for Social Sciences
TIMSS:	: Trends in International Mathematics & Science Study
UK	: United Kingdom
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	: United States of America

ABSTRACT

Early language competencies such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing enable learners to communicate and use both printed and electronic learning resources effectively. These competencies serve as the foundation for gradual development of other core competencies. This study was therefore conducted to explore children's acquisition of early language competencies, owing to their significance—in pre-primary school. Specifically, the study aimed at exploring the influence of type of school, gender and parental engagement on children's acquisition of early language competencies. The parental involvement theoretical model by Epstein (2009), was used to inform the study, while ex post facto research design was utilised to guide the research. Purposive, stratified, and simple random techniques were used to select 7 public schools and 4 private ones out of the 67 public and 40 private schools. A similar number of teachers were purposively sampled from the above schools, while 172 PP2 children/ parents from public schools and 82 children/parents from private randomly selected, formed the study's sample. Early language skills checklist, questionnaire and interview schedules were used for data collection. A pilot study was conducted in two primary schools. Content validity was used to determine research tools validity, whereas reliability of the instruments was established using test-retest method. Thematic analysis was employed to probe qualitative data, while descriptive analysis was used to summarise quantitative data where frequencies, percentages, and means were generated. Additionally, inferential statistics involving two-sample t test (independent t test) and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to test null hypotheses. Results revealed that majority of learners had not acquired the expected early language competencies. Learners in private schools had acquired higher language competencies compared to their counterparts in public pre-primary schools. In addition, female learners had acquired more early language competencies than their male counterparts. The results further revealed that majority of parents did not adequately participate in activities to develop their children's early language competencies. This research recommends that parents should get more involved in activities to develop their children's early language competencies. Management of pre-primary school should introduce programmes to encourage parents to closely monitor and participate in activities that may enhance pre-school children's acquisition of early language competencies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter covers background of the study, the research problem, study's purpose, research objectives, research questions, study hypotheses, significance of the study, as well as limitation and delimitations of the study. It also covers theoretical and conceptual frameworks, as well as operational definition of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Language competencies play significant role in the lives of children. This is true because language helps children to stay organized, share various experiences and also improve their mental capacities (Maric, 2017). Alhaj et al. (2020) opines that language is necessary for communication. Early language competencies on the other hand form a firm foundation on which later learning success is built (Mok et al., 2014). Bleses et al., (2016) reports that early language competencies in children are strongly related with later educational success. Sun (2023) concurs that acquisition of early language skills strongly influences children's growth and development academically, cognitively and socially as Hulme et al. (2015) also affirmed.

Early language skills, especially reading skills, play an important role in enhancing learners' academic achievement in later school years (Mkandawire, 2022). There was therefore need to establish children's early language competencies in pre-primary schools and how it was influenced by parental engagement in children's education.

In early childhood, early language acquisition is the process by which children acquire the ability to comprehend, produce and effectively use language for communication, thought, and social interaction (Clark, 2019). Language can be defined as a mechanism of correspondence and the basic part of socialization as it furnishes learners with abilities that are vital for listening and talking and in particular, creating, perusing and composing preparation (Maaleki, 2018). Language typically has four basic skills (Aydogan & Akbarov, 2014). These are listening, speaking, reading and writing (Sadiku, 2015). According to Huang (2024) listening involves complex cognitive processes where audio stimuli are decoded, construed, and comprehended in context. Rustamov and Mamaziyayev (2022) defines speaking as an active process which involves individuals creating meaning by producing, getting and construing facts. Mishra (2017) defined reading as a process which involves decoding, deciphering and identifying words in print by articulating and pronouncing, understanding, interpreting and making sense of printed words. Puranik et al. (2014) refers writing to representation of verbal language through written letters and symbols. The early language competencies are achieved by engaging learners in various activities which foster the development of appropriate language skills (Republic of Kenya, 2017).

Literature reviewed has shown that inadequate early language competencies pose adverse effects to the learner. For instance, pre-primary school learners who fail to acquire early language competencies are at risk of not learning emergent literacy skills (Cabell et al., 2011). Further, children who fail to acquire appropriate language competencies at early years are at risk of developing low academic outcomes, behavioural problems and develop social and emotional problems which are likely to persist to maturity

(Winstanley et al., 2018). Children with persistent language problems in kindergarten will have a low level of continuous reading by the time they begin formal schooling. Similarly, learners with weak language skills will have difficulty in understanding the learning process (Rintaningrum et al., 2017). This is further supported by Ithindi (2021) who opines that inadequate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills deters the growth of learners at all learning levels. Thus, the importance of early language competencies cannot be underrated.

Despite the significance placed on acquisition of early language competencies, globally, millions of learners are not achieving the expected language competence level. Literature reviewed has shown that 250 million learners have not acquired basic language competencies (UNESCO, 2017). For example, in Iran only 65% of grade four learners were able to read for understanding (Mullis, et al., 2017). According to NAEP data, only 35% of grade four learners in the United States scored at or above reading proficiency level (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Likewise, in the United Kingdom, Key Stage 2 Assessment showed that 25% of the learners did not reach expected proficient level (Department for Education, 2020). Adelaide et al. (2022) ascertained that the reading skills of grade two Filipino school children were very disappointing, raising concerns about the quality of preschool language acquisition, which is the foundation for learning.

In Africa, among the 387 million illiterate children worldwide, the majority of the pupils live in Sub-Saharan Africa (RTI, 2015). In Gweru region, Precious and Lettiah (2020) found out that majority of form four Zimbabwean learners scored lowly on writing

competencies. This raises concerns over the strength of early language competencies laid at pre-primary school years of schooling. In Lusaka, Zambia, Zulu (2019) found that on selective reading tests in grades one to five, 55.6% of fifth graders performed below average and only 44.4% scored average or higher, while in writing it was found that 94.9% scored below average and only 5% scored above average. In South Africa, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results (2019) indicated that only 22% of grade four pupils had the ability to read and understand (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Also in South Africa, Fesi and Mncube (2021) found that 4th grade English First Complementary Language (EFAL) students had poor academic performance. In rural areas of eastern Congo, reading and learning outcomes were very low an indication that these learners were lacking foundational language skills (USAID, 2020). The low reading ability can also be attributed to low attainment of early language competencies which was the focus of the present study.

In Uganda, Uwezo (2021) study established that in 2021, only 39.5 % of all sets of primary school grades were able to read and comprehend primary 2 level task. In addition, the percentage of non-readers rose from 6.2 % to 11.6 % in 2018 and 2021 respectively. Moreover, the percentage of primary 3 who were unable to read or sound alphabet letters rose from 40.5% to 54.55 in 2018 and 2021 respectively. Finally, the percentage of learners aged 8 who could not read letters of the alphabet increased from 32.8% to 50.7 % in 2018 and 2021 respectively.

In Kenya, RoK (2023) reports that out of 1,239,712 candidates who sat for 2023 Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA), in English language, only 41,196

(19.46%) attained Exceeding Expectation, 519,410 (41.90%) attained Meeting Expectation, 398,181(32.12%) attained Approaching Expectation and 80,925(6.53%) attained Below Expectation. FLANA (2023) reported that only 45% of grade 4 learners met expectations in reading a grade 3 level text. According to UNESCO (2024) assessments for Minimum Proficiency Levels, only 36.9% learners in Grade 6 reached or exceeded reading proficiency levels. In Kisii District, Obunga (2016) found that 3rd graders read below their grade level. Still in Kenya, Karanja (2021) found that majority of grade seven learners in Bungoma County were experiencing reading difficulties. Ondimu (2018) also reported that implementation of competency-based curriculum in pre-school which lays the foundation for acquisition of early language skills (Alsaadat, 2020), was not good. Thus, further investigation on acquisition of early language skills in pre-primary was necessary in order to arrest the issue before they got to middle school.

In Busia County, achievement in language competencies was unsatisfactory. For instance, Karogo et al., (2020) found that learners 'performance in English language was 475.3, and below the national standardized mean of 500. Similarly, according to Usawa (2024) findings in the FLANA 2023 report of Western Kenya Sub-Counties including Busia, revealed that only 35.9% of 4th-grade learners and 59.9% of 6th-grade learners could read with comprehension 3rd-grade level English story, in the region. There was thus need to investigate what could be influencing the problem of pre-school children's acquisition of early language skills in Busia County.

Acquisition of language competencies is enhanced by various factors. School type is recognized as one of the determinants influencing acquisition of language skills (Usawa,

2024; Karamage, 2024; FLANA. 2023; Ojo & Adedeji, 2021; Baum and Riley, 2019), gender (Erliana, 2024; Evizariza, 2024; Trang; 2022; Ogweno et al., 2024; Workman & Heyder, 2020) and parental engagement (Nyaenda et al., 2025; Paschal et al., 2024; Alias & Ramly, 2021). It was therefore important to find out the relationship between the factors and children's acquisition of early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County.

More precisely, school type refers to a learning institution being either public or private. According to Ng'ang'a (2019), the Government of Kenya provides FPE in public primary schools and the private sector makes available primary school education via private schools owned by individuals and NGOs. Gender refers to socially and culturally developed roles to be identified with females and males in any specified culture. According to Ibourk and Aynaoui (2024) gender gap within a school setting refers to the difference in academic performance witnessed between girls and boys. Parental engagement refers to parents' actions with schools in an effort to enhance their children's acquisition of knowledge and skills. According to Mwanja et al. (2019), parental engagement in learning may refer to activities and connections that parents make with schools in an effort to enhance their children's learning. Parental involvement significantly impacts children's acquisition of language skills, leading to improved reading, writing, and overall academic performance.

Although Usawa, (2024), Karamage (2024) and FLANA (2023) conducted studies on the influence of school type on acquisition and performance of language competencies, they conducted in other levels of schooling other than pre-primary school. Likewise, Nabwire

et al. (2021), and Eccius-Wellman and Santana (2020) found no difference between school type and language acquisition. Also, although gender positively influence acquisition of language (Huang, 2024; Al-khresheh; 2024); Nadia & Abdelghanie, 2024; Usawa, 2024; Uworwabayeho et al. (2021) found that boys did better than girls. Nonetheless, Alhuqbani et al. (2025), Salimi et al. (2024), Li (2024), Nurhanipah and Karmina (2024) Oyenike et al. (2024) found no significant effect of gender on acquisition of language skills. Additionally, Nyaenda et al. (2025), Lamaclamac and Opina (2025), Andrian et al. (2025) Nordin et al. (2024), Angin and Mohamed (2024) and Smadi et al. (2024) found that parental engagement had a positive effect on learners' acquisition of language skills. However, Feng and Tan (2022) and Edward et al. (2022) found no difference between parental engagement and learners' acquisition of language skills. There was therefore need for a further study to unravel these inconsistencies. Moreover, there was dearth of studies investigating the influence type of school, gender and parental engagement on all the four language competencies at pre-primary school in local settings and in a single study. Hence, there was need for the present study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Language is one of the learning areas in competency-based curriculum and lays the foundation for future learning. Studies have shown low acquisition of early language competencies have negative effects on children's performance. Studies done internationally and locally had also indicated that many children in schools are not achieving the expected language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing skills and yet these skills are important in learning in later years of schooling.

The low performance in language competencies at higher levels of education raised concerns over children's early language competencies in pre-primary school which is the foundation level for acquisition of early learning skills including language. However, in Busia County, the studies conducted to investigate the language competencies, mainly focused on reading language competency level and other factors in primary school level excluding influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on pre-primary school level. Thus there was need to explore children's early language competencies including listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as their acquisition in pre-primary schools in Busia County, with a focus on type of school, gender and parental engagement, leading to improved language outcomes among preschoolers.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the influence of type of school, gender and parental engagement on pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

1.5 Research Objectives

- i. To establish the difference in type of school (Public/ Private), and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.
- ii. To determine the difference in gender (Boy/ Girl) and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.
- iii. To assess the relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

1.6 Research Hypotheses

Ha1: There is a significant difference in school type (Public/ Private), and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

Ha2: There is a significant difference in gender (Boy/ Girl) and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The aim of this research was to explore the influence of type of school, gender and parental engagement on pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County. Thus the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) may use these study findings to or improve on policies for establishing programmes to help accelerate pre-school children's acquisition of early language competencies irrespective of type of school. Equivalently, the (MoEST) may also improve on policies to foster gender equity in acquiring early language skills. Also the MoEST may improve on the existing policies on parental involvement on pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies. Findings of the study could also be used by Curriculum developers, to stress on the fact that there exist differences in acquisition of language skills between boys and girls as they educate parents or even teachers. Parents and teachers may further be guided on appropriate activities that enhance early language competencies.

Concerning county governments, findings of the study may help county governments to address performance disparities by re-evaluating, enhance funding and resource allocation in ECDE, developing a long-term socioeconomic impact on ECDE education, developing and initiating policies and programmes geared towards improving early language skills, creating partnerships or knowledge-sharing platforms between public and private institutions on language skills, conducting audits and increase learners assessments on language competencies at pre-primary school level. Also, it may help county governments to develop language strategic intervention programmes, develop intervention programmes tailored towards improving language acquisition, ensuring education equity by preventing bias and support all children to acquire language competencies, enhancing parental engagement by promoting realistic expectations and responsibilities of parenting, developing and improving policy and advocacy influencing equitable acquisition of early language skills and encouraging parents to participate in their children's acquisition of language skills.

School administrators may benefit from findings of this study by doing benchmarking and setting language performance goals, reviewing and monitoring the implementation of language activity learning area, initiating language training workshops on in early language acquisition techniques, use this data in advocating for more funding to improve early literacy instruction, strengthening home-school partnerships by encouraging parental involvement in literacy development at home, developing and implementing strong monitoring and evaluation systems to track language development progress in early grades, ensuring that all children regardless of socioeconomic background, developing and implementing regular and strong assessment and data analysis

frameworks to inform instruction and interventions, prioritizing budgeting for early literacy tools and digital resources.

Regarding college teacher trainers, findings of the study may help teacher trainers in identifying best practices from high performing schools, improving training content and methods, putting more emphasis on foundational literacy, encouraging reflective practice, highlight the role of teacher quality and training, identifying gaps in public school training, emphasizing on differentiated instruction, supporting early identification of language needs, promoting inclusive, stereotype-free classrooms, empowering teachers to meet all learners where they are, laying a foundation for effective teaching practices and enhancing collaborative teaching models.

Concerning to classroom teachers, findings of this study may help language teachers in reflecting on teaching methods, allocating more language resources, develop professionally, involve parents in their acquisition of language skills, performing early intervention and assessment. Also, these findings may help teachers in ensuring educational equity among learners if different gender, go for teacher trainings and professional development programmes, foster parental and community awareness, conduct differentiated instruction and doo early intervention on children lagging behind in language, avoid bias and stereotypes, enhance classroom management and participation in language activity, reinforce learning outside the classroom, enhance strong home-school connection and identification enhance identification of early language delays. Similarly, these findings may help teachers in improving learners,

engagement in language activities thus fostering confidence and enhance learning outcomes.

In relation to parents, findings of this study may help parents to form foundation for their children' language development, choose the right schools, tailor support towards improving acquisition of language skills, provide equitable language for both boys and girls, encourage early language interventions and work with teachers to promote development of language skills strengthens the emotional connection with their children, regardless of their pace of language development.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This part outlines the limitations and delimitations of the study as represented in sub-section 1.8.1 and 1.8.2 below.

1.8.1 Limitations of the Study

Busia County has a high illiteracy rate of 33.3 % as per 2015/16 report. This implied that many parents could have had challenges in responding to parents questionnaire. To mitigate this, parents' questionnaire was translated to Kiswahili which is easily understood by the inhabitants; Teso and Luhya who are easily understand Kiswahili than English.

1.8.2 Delimitation of the Study

This study delimited itself to studying influence of school type pre-primary II children attended, their gender, and parental involvement in activities related to preschool children's acquisition of early language competencies in Samia Sub-District, Busia

County, Kenya. Due to the limitation of finances, the study was delimited to Samia Sub-district.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The researcher assumed the following:

- i. Respondents gave bonafide and accurate data that was precise impression of parental commitment and pre-primary youngsters' acquisition of early language competencies.
- ii. Parents were involved in enhancing their pre-primary school learner's acquisition of early language competencies at differing levels.
- iii. All pre-primary school teachers had undergone competency-based training and had necessary skills of implementing competency -based curriculum and practices.

1.10 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical and conceptual frameworks discussed are as follows:

1.10.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study applied the theoretical model proposed by Joyce Epstein (2009) ideal for parental engagement. The model explains the interrelationship between the parent, school, family, local area, and children's learning results. Identifying the interdependency of the critical conditions, the model has six components of parental commitment specifically positive or nurturing home conditions, imparting or communicating information, chipping in or partnering in home learning activities, dynamic or assertive

shared decision-making actions within the school and teaming up with the local area or community partnerships.

First and foremost, parenting, in this model, involves parents' input in providing family support, considering the child's behaviour, family dynamics, and environmental factors to help development, advancement, and education in all its forms, at all ages and grades. In relation to Epstein's view, this study focused on actions done at home by parents such as encouraging the child to read books at home and checking the child's homework to improve early language competencies were closely attended to.

Secondly, communication as envisaged by Epstein entails making two-way correspondence channels between home and school. In relation to this study, parents' engagement in activities such as speaking to their children's teacher concerning their children's weaknesses and strengths regarding listening, speaking, reading and writing and activities their children like doing at home in order to improve their children's early language competencies were considered.

Thirdly, volunteering is geared towards family's engagement as volunteers or willing partners in school matters. In regard to this study, activities such as organizing and recruiting parents to help and support early childhood programmes and attending organized talks and awards to improve language skills among preschool children were regarded.

Epstein's fourth stage of home-schooling involves parents and caregivers actively participating in their children's academic development through activities like goal-setting, reading, and completing school assignments. This emphasizes the need for teachers to design lessons that encourage students to involve their parents in engaging classroom activities. In relation to this study, activities such as parents watching informative programs with their children, guided them on how to tackle homework, checking their assignments, and also providing resources to support acquisition of early language competencies were given thought.

In Epstein's 5th level pertains to dynamic or assertive shared decision-making actions within the school, she views, schools, families and community sharing responsibilities as significant in terms of advancement of the children and acquisition of early language competencies. It involves activities such as participating in parents' association.

Epstein's 6th level of community collaboration refers to identifying and matching resources to help schools and families in the community support learning. Community partnership activities including providing voluntary services in their children schools and also helping out in activities that boost language acquisition and offering donations to the school during prize giving days were considered.

Parental involvement Epstein's components of parental involvement are likely to differ may differ in relation to the type of school the child is schooling. Type of school refers to a school either being public or private. Also, parental involvement is likely to differ relative to the child's gender. The extent of involvement is likely to differ from one child

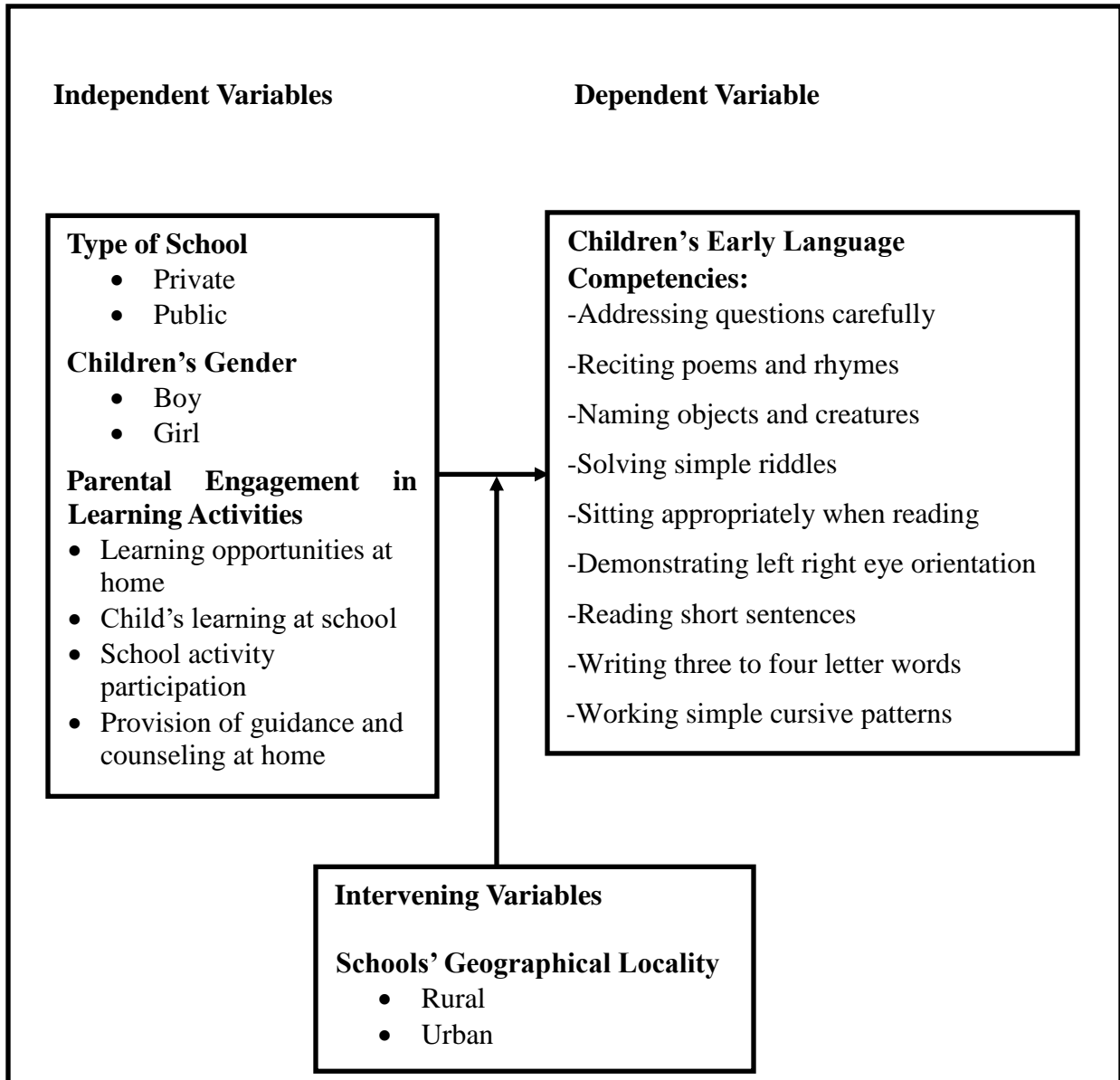
to another according to the sex of the child. Parents tend to place more or less emphasis on learning activities focusing on child's gender.

Epstein's view of schools, families and community in sharing responsibilities is crucial to the progress of the children and acquisition of early language competencies. This hypothesis is applicable to the extent that children's learning is heavily influenced by their home and school settings. Parents' engagement in a child's choice of school can be influenced by child's gender. Using this hypothesis, we can have a clearer picture of how parents may help their children learn language more effectively.

1.10.2 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows possible factors influencing acquisition of language competencies; type of school, parental engagement and children's gender. The intervening variable was location of the school. To deal with the intervening and confounding variables, the sampled respondents were randomly selected from rural and urban schools.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Showing variables affecting children's acquisition of early language competencies



1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Early Language Competencies: These refer to the degree to which pre-primary II learners are able to accomplish pre-primary language activities like; addressing questions carefully, naming objects and creatures, reading short sentences, writing one's name and three to four-letter words. Learners' abilities were categorized into four achievement levels which included below expectation, approaching expectation, meeting expectation and exceeding expectation.

Gender: This refers to a pre-primary II learner being either a boy or girl.

Parental Engagement in Children's Education: This refers to the frequency at which parents participated in their children's acquisition of language activities. These activities involved listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The frequency was measured as never, rarely, sometimes and always.

Pre-primary Two Learner: Pupil's aged 5 to 6 years in their final year in the sampled schools before they transit to Grade One.

Pre-primary School: Institution catering for PP II learners and attached to public or private primary school.

Type of school: - refers to classifying the sampled pre-primary educational institutions based on the characteristics; public or private.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two outlines the literature review of this research and its associated incline was guided by the objectives of the study. The literature has been divided in the following subtitles. Gender and early language development, type of school and acquisition of language skills, parental involvement and young children's language development and a discussion of research needs.

2.2 Children's Early Language Competencies in Pre-Primary Schools

Language is a significant instrument that works with learning as children use it to associate with their nearby environment (Hungu et al., 2018). It fills in as a mechanism of correspondence and a basic part of socialization as it furnishes students with abilities that are vital for listening, talking, perusing and composing preparation (Maaleki, 2018). At the pre-essential level, learners are normally associated with errands that improve their capacity to become attentive people and speakers in assorted circumstances, just as to express their sentiments, thoughts, and assessments plainly and with certainty (KICD, 2017a). At school, acquisition early language competencies at pre-primary school level is very important in enhancing learning in later years of schooling. The four language competencies listening, speaking, reading and writing are important for teaching and learning (Ali, 2022) and therefore their role in education cannot be emphasized. Language competence at pare-primary school level prepares learners for schooling as Mwoma and Serede (2022), Schroeder (2020) and Arora et al. (2022) affirms. The

English language skills are highly valued in the Kenyan context since the Kenyan education is grounded on British English. This implies that inadequate language competencies among the Kenyan population is likely to hinder learning in later years.

The four language skills are important for day to day operations, but children's performance the said skills not impressive. In this connection, Maruf et al. (2020) used qualitative research methods to conduct a case study to explore the determinants of low English proficiency among Indonesian university students using six heterogeneous purposely sampled learners. An individual interview was mainly used to collect data. The collected data was analyzed thematically. Member-checking was used to develop the trustworthiness of the interview. The study established that Indonesian university students showed low English proficiency. However, the current study was conducted among pre-primary school learners to investigate their level of language acquisition.

Language skills necessary for full communication. In Pakistan, Shakil (2020) conducted a survey research study among primary school learners to establish the causes of low reading achievement in English. Data on reading ability was collected using questionnaires and interviews. In addition, in Jordan, Hassan and Dweik (2021) investigated some of the reading using mixed approaches. Sample for the study included grade 1 to 5 teachers, and two supervisors involved in teaching English, especially in grade 9. Interviews were conducted among 2 school supervisors and 5 teachers. It was established that linguistic, curricular, and resource-related factors hindered the acquisition of reading comprehension. This study however did not focus the acquisition of all four language skills.

Speaking as one of the four language skills is not well performed. In Philippines, Orge et al. (2024) conducted a study to education students face in speaking English utilizing a phenomenological research study design. Purposive sampling technique was used in sampling 15 students. Interviews were used to collect data which was analyzed Moustakas methods. Collected data was analyzed thematically. Results of the study revealed that having inadequate vocabulary materials and emotional pressure were found lead to students experiencing difficulties in speaking English. Equally in Indonesia, Usman and Mahmud (2024) conducted a study addressing challenges of insufficient Speaking Proficiency in EFL among university students using classroom action research (CAR). Reflection notes, post-tests and observation checklists were used in data collection. Descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests we used in data analysis. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. Findings of the study revealed that majority of the learners scored fairly with only 24.39% attaining good scores. The study however did not focus on acquisition of all language skills.

Speaking as a language skill is found to lowly performed. In Libya, Tawir and Baharum (2024) conducted a scoping review to explore factors affecting low English-speaking proficiency among secondary school EFL learners. The study reviewed articles published between 2014 and 2024. Results of this study revealed that Libyan learners had inadequate time to practice speaking skills both in home and school setting. The study however did not use primary source of data to establish the level of acquisition of the skill at pre-primary school level.

Although reading as language skill is highly valued, it is widely underperformed. According to research on skills evaluation in primary schools in South Africa conducted by Naidoo et al. (2014), 55.4% of students had below-average reading skills, while just 24% of students had above-average reading skills. This research focused on pre-schoolers, who are thought to experience unique developmental and educational problems compared to pupils in primary schools. Similarly, in Uganda, Uwezo (2021) conducted an assessment of basic numeracy and reading skills on primary 3 to 7 learning. Structured survey instrument was used in data collection. Descriptive statistics were used in data analysis. The study revealed that in 2021, only 39.5% of all sets of primary school grades could read competently P2 grade level work. Also, it was revealed that non-readers in all primary grades rose from 6.2% in 2018 to 11.6% in 2021. Moreover, it was established that p3 non-readers rose from 40.5 % to 54.5 % in 2018 and 2021 respectively. Finally, it was found that 8 years old non-readers rose from 32.8 % to 50.7 % in 2018 to 2021 respectively. However, these studies did not establish language acquisition levels of all the four language skills at pre-primary school level.

Since speaking and writing skills remain to be essential in language, their performance is undoubtedly low. In Namibia, Henok and Ndinga-Koumba-Binza (2023) explored factors causing university learners' Errors in English speaking and writing using qualitative approach. The study sampled 26 participants who included 4 key informants, 2 lecturers and 20 learners. Open questionnaire unstructured interview and class observation were used in data collection. Findings of the study revealed that Namibian university students failed to connect the four language skills as one of the causes thus leading to low reading

and writing skills. This study however, the present study was conducted to establish the acquisition of all four language skill at pre-primary school level.

Reading and writing are among the four language skill which are essential but found to lowly performed. In Uganda, Ssentanda et al. (2020) conducted an anthropological look at the difficulties of learning to read and write in a few randomly chosen rural elementary schools, employing purposive sampling to sample two public and two private rural schools. An ethnographic research design was used. Interviews as well as classroom observations were used to collect qualitative data. This research showed that many learners demonstrated low literacy competencies. However, the current study was conducted to in a Kenyan local context to establish level to which pre-primary school learners have acquired the four language skills of the skills.

Competency in the four language skills enhance learning however it is reported that their performance is not satisfactory, In Namibia, Andreas and Kamati (2024) explored fourth-grade learners in reading, speaking and writing in English as a second language in three sampled schools using qualitative research approach and case study design. The study employed purposive sampling to select 6 English teachers from the 3 sampled schools. Document analysis and face to face interviews were used in data collection. Results of the study revealed that grade four performed relatively low in reading, speaking and writing in English as a second language. However, this study did not investigate the performance of all the four language skills at pre-primary school level in the Kenyan context.

The performance at higher levels of schooling depends on the performance at pre-primary school level. In Kenya, UNESCO (2024) conducted an Assessments for Minimum Proficiency Levels A and B (AMPL-ab) among grade six learners under the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. It was established that only slightly 25% grade six learners reached or exceeded MPLb for reading. Whereas, in MPLa slightly above 75% achieved grade 6 expected competency levels. However, this study was not conducted at pre-primary school level focusing on the level of acquisition of all language skills.

The performance of all the four language skill were found to be low in Kenya. RoK (2023) conducted an assessment among grade six learners in line with Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA). It was revealed that out of 1,239,712 candidates who sat for 2023 Kenya Primary School Education Assessment (KPSEA), in English language, only 41,196 (19.46%) attained Exceeding Expectation, 519,410 (41.90%) attained Meeting Expectation, 398,181(32.12%) attained Approaching Expectation and 80,925(6.53%) attained Below Expectation. However, this study was not conducted at pre-primary school level.

Reading is regarded as one of the four language skill whose acquisition among learners' is unsatisfactory in the Kenyan context. FLANA (2023) conducted a foundation literacy assessment among grade three learners using survey. The study employed stratified and probability sampling techniques. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. English (reading and comprehension) tests were used to collect data. The report revealed that only 45% of grade 4 learners met expectations in reading a grade 3 level text. However, this study was not conducted at the foundational

stage to establish the extent to which pre-primary school learners had acquired language skills.

In western Kenya, the acquisition of language skill is low. Karanja (2021) used a descriptive survey research design to look into the impact of reading challenges among students in grade 7 in public schools in Bungoma County. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and employed questionnaires to compile the findings. Twenty-one educators, 179 students, 10 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and 11 head teachers made up the sample. Bungoma County was chosen at random for this sampling. There was an examination of both quantitative and qualitative information. The majority of 7th graders in the study stated that reading comprehension issues hampered their overall academic performance. In addition, Usawa (2024) conducted a survey in four Western region counties namely; Bungoma, Busia, Kakamenga and Vihiga. The report of the Western Kenya Sub-Counties revealed that only 35.9% of fourth-grade learners in the region could read with comprehension third-grade level English story and only 59.9% of sixth-grade learners in the region could read with comprehension third-grade level English story. This implies that schooling at higher levels are likely to be hampered by inadequate acquisition of language skills which are majorly acquired during the formative stage.

Local studies on acquisition of language skills have reported incidences of low performance among learners. Karogo, et al. (2020) conducted a study in line with NASMLA to establish grade 3 learners' performance levels in English language employing descriptive survey design. The study was conducted in 250 schools drawn from 47 counties. In

Busia County, learners scored a mean of 475.3 which is below the national average of 500. Similarly, Karogo et al. (2020) sought to establish grade 7 learners English language competence levels using descriptive survey design. The study revealed that grade seven learners in Busia County scored a mean of 514.5 compared to Nairobi which scored highest with a mean score of 639.2 in Nairobi. Also, the study found that boys scored a raw mean score of 23.2 out of 50 while girls scored a raw mean score of 24.5 out of 50 with national mean of 23.8 out of 50. However, this study did not investigate pre-primary learners acquisition of the for language skill in a single study.

2.3 Children's Acquisition of Early Language Competencies by Schools' Category

According to the Basic Education Act (2013) which was revised in 2022, part V, Section 43 states that, all schools are categorized as public or private. Further, public schools are those established, owned or operated by the Government of Kenya and include sponsored schools. On the other hand, private schools are those established, owned or operated by private individuals, entrepreneurs and institution. In this connection, researchers have done studies on language competencies in public and private schools; for example, Eccius-Wellman and Santana (2020) conducted research in Mexico to examine what factors influenced learners' linguistic competence in both public and private high schools. Three public institutions and one private one were subjects of the research. The research was quantitative in nature. There were 1188 total student respondents. The information was gathered by means of a questionnaire. Multiple regressions were employed for the examination of the data. The findings showed that students in both public and private schools who put in the effort to read at a high level performed at the same level on average. The reviewed study did not provide any insights into qualitative data because it

only employed inferential statistics to analyze the collected data. Mixed research methods were used in the current study to fill this void in the literature.

The type of school may influence the period of starting acquiring language skills among learners. To this effect, Alhaj et al. (2020) conducted a study to investigate whether early or late starting acquiring of English Language had an effect on later performance of public and public secondary school learners using mixed study approach. Also, the study aimed at showing difference in English performance of learners in private and public schools. English test for learners and questionnaire for EFL teachers were used in data collection. The sample comprised 30 students from both public and private schools. Results of the study found that students of private schools who started acquiring English language earlier scored higher than their counterparts in public schools who started acquiring English language late. This implied that the practice of private schools enhancing acquisition of language skills among their learners earlier had a positive impact on these learners' language performance in later years of schooling.

Globally, it is believed that the type of school influence learners' acquisition of language skill. In Philippines, Cadiz-Gabejan (2022) conducted study to investigate English Proficiency of learners from private and Public Schools. The study employed descriptive and correlational quantitative research study. Total population consisted 136 private and public schools. The study utilized simple random method to sample 51 learners from private schools and 51 learners from public schools. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire. Results of the study showed a significant difference in English language proficiency and the type of school they attended. However, this study did not investigate

the association between type of school and acquisition of early language skills among pre-primary school learners.

Similarly, in Pakistan, Tariq and Durr-e-Nayab (2024) conducted a study Comparing English language performance levels and usage patterns among learners attending public and private schools employing mixed approach. The sample comprised 150 learner selected from private schools and 150 learners selected from public schools. Findings of the study showed that private schools scored higher than public skills. In addition, in Brazil, Oliveira et al. (2024) was conducted to with the aim of comparing reading performance of private and public middle school and high school learners using cross-sectional study design. Data was collected from 436 learners. Descriptive and bivariate analysis were used to analyse data. Results of the study established differences between public and private schools in the reading. However, this study did not investigate the association between type of school and acquisition of early language skills among pre-primary school learners.

In Africa, the performance of English language skills is not impressive. In Nigeria, Dauda et al. (2024) investigated difference between public and private schools in students' English fluency, and motivation in speaking. Data we collected from a sample of 150 secondary school learners. Interviews and questionnaires were used in data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to compare means. Findings of the study showed that learners from private schools reported higher means than learners from public schools. In addition, Danjuma and Usman (2024) conducted a study in Nigeria to investigate the Influence of Socio-cultural status on English language learning of private

and public schools employing mixed- methods approach. Questionnaire was used in data collection. Results of the study found differences in language performance between private and public schools with private school scoring higher. However, the present study will be conducted in the Kenyan context to investigate the differences in type of school influences pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language skills.

Similarly, in Nigeria, Ahmed (2024) conducted a comparative study of private and public secondary school learners' performance in English language as medium of instruction using a target population of 600 participants from private and public secondary schools. Multi-stage sampling technique was used in sample selection. Results of the study showed that public schools provided low quality education compared to private schools.

In addition, Nyatsikor et al. (2021) investigated the impact of different types of schools in Ghana on students' performance in English and mathematics. The research method was a descriptive cross-sectional survey. The research relied on Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological paradigm of human growth and change. Elementary school children made up the bulk of the sample. Responses came from stratified random sampling. A multilevel modelling strategy was employed. Students attending private schools performed better academically than their public-school counterparts, according to the study's findings. However, the present study was conducted among pre-primary school learners using mixed approach.

Still in Nigeria, Majebi and Oduolowu (2022) conducted a study to determine how the language spoken at home and the type of schooling influenced the intellectual and social

skills of preschool students. Questionnaires and rating scales were utilized for data collection. The collected information was examined by descriptive and t-tests. Research results indicated that students in private schools show higher skills than students in public schools. In addition, Vukosi et al. (2023) conducted a study comparing spoken language proficiency between public and private schools in South Africa using mixed study approach. The study employed case study design. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Quantitative data was analysed inferentially while qualitative data was analysed thematically. The results of the study revealed that private schools performed better than public schools. However, the present study focused on the differences in acquisition of listening, reading and writing in addition to speaking skill.

The performance of all four language skills is significant. In Rwanda, Karamage (2024) conducted a study to investigate causes and effects of low English reading skills of grade three learners. The study employed mixed study approach. The sample comprised 213 learners who were randomly sampled from a target population of 445 and 10 teachers who volunteered to participate in the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and semi structured interviews. Interviews were analyzed thematically while questionnaires were analyzed inferentially. Qualitative findings were nested on quantitative findings. The results of the study showed that private schools scored better than public schools with a mean of 7.23 and 2.03 respectively. However, the present study was conducted at pre-primary school level focusing on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

In Kenya, there is some evidence of differences in acquisition of English language skills. FLANA (2023) conducted a foundation literacy assessment among grade three learners using survey. The study employed stratified and probability sampling techniques. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. English (reading and comprehension) tests were used to collect data. Findings of the study showed that 55.5% of learners in private schools 465 of learners in public schools at least met expectations in reading a grade 3 level text. Yet, Nabwire et al. (2021) conducted a comparative study investigating differences in English Language speaking skill in private and public primary schools in Trans-Nzoia County employing descriptive survey research design. Private and public schools were selected using purposive sampling technique. The sample consisted 3 public and 3 private schools. Questionnaires and interview were used to collect data. Data was collected from heads of departments using questionnaires and data were collected from head teachers using interviews. Results of the study showed minimal differences in language skills between private and public and private schools. however, the present study was conducted to unravel these inconsistencies.

Still in Kenya, Usawa (2024) conducted a survey in four Western region counties namely; Bungoma, Busia, Kakamenga and Vihiga. The study was part of the broader survey conducted in all the four counties across the country in June/July 2023. The FLANA Western report highlights learning outcomes revealed that 35.4% of learners in public and 41.4% of grade 4 learners in private schools met the expected reading competency of a grade 3 level English story. The study however investigated reading performance levels of grade for learners in public and private schools and did not investigate the differences in language performance of pre-primary school learners in public and private schools.

2.4 Gender and learners' Early Language Competencies

It has been perceived that gender influences learners' acquisition of early language competencies. According to this study, gender is either a male or female. Different scholars have done studies on gender and language competencies. For instance, the impacts of gender disparities on children's language development were investigated by Rinaldi et al. (2021) in Northern Italy. The purpose of this article was to pinpoint when girls begin to have an advantage over boys in the development of communicative gestures, the ability to produce actions, and early lexical production and understanding. Several studies were analyzed quantitatively for data demonstrating gender disparities in linguistic competence. Sample sizes, age ranges, and methods used varied throughout the research that was compared. In contrast to females, more boys in this study were classified as having low verbal competence, indicating that disparities between both genders appear to be statistically significant only when there are significant variations between the boys themselves. The study also found that the perceived gender gap between boys and girls is small across the board. The reviewed study used analytical analysis of studies conducted by other researchers across many years and countries lacking their own empirical evidence to establish statistical significance, unlike the current study, which will be conducted to establish differences in learners' early language competencies by gender.

Globally, it has been perceived that gender differences influences performance of language skills. Li (2024) examined the effect of gender differences on language expression focusing on masters and undergraduate students in China. The sample comprised learners aged between 19 and 25 years. Data was collected using a

questionnaire and sample analysis methodology. Results of the study showed no difference between males and females in speaking. In addition, Huang (2024) conducted a study to investigate the impacts of Gender in SLA in China. Findings of the study showed more similarities than differences in language acquisition. The studies only sampled higher education school learners and did not focus pre-primary school learners.

Similarly, Salimi et al. (2024) conducted a study to investigate the effect of gender on the acquisition of English adjectives in Turkey. Tests were used to collect data. Two-way ANOVA was used to analyse data. Findings of the study showed that gender did not have a significant effect on acquisition of English adjective. In addition, Alhuqbani et al. (2025) conducted a study to investigate the effect of gender differences on English language proficiency among 10 translation and judgment of English contrastive discourse markers in Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted 77 undergraduate male and females. Results of the study indicated limited differences in male and females in translation. However, the current study focused on pre-primary school learners focusing on the acquisition of all language skills.

Moreover, Alahmadi and Lahlali (2019) conducted a study to explore gender roles on L2 “Inter-Language” Errors using qualitative method in Saudi Arabia. Respondents consisted 15 boys and 15 girls in intermediate levels of schooling. Convenience sampling technique was in sample section. Semi-structured interviews were used in data collection. Results of their study showed that inter-language errors in L2 speaking are more observed females than in males. Further, Al-khresheh (2024) explored English self-efficacy across four language skills and gender differences among Saudi Arabia EFL

learners using descriptive quantitative research design. The study involved a cross-sectional survey of 477 university learners selected via stratified random sampling. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was descriptively and inferentially analysed. Findings of the study showed that females reported higher self-efficacy in speaking skill compared to their male counterparts. These studies however were conducted in western countries and were not conducted in the Kenyan Context.

In addition, Nurhanipah and Karmina (2024) conducted a study to establish whether there are gender variances in the listening approaches used by English Language Education (ELE) learners and whether there is an association between these strategies and listening ability in Indonesia. The study employed quantitative correlational design. The study sample consisted 94 public university students. Online questionnaire was used in data collection. Descriptive statistics, independent sample T-test and Spearman's rank correlation were used to analyse data. Findings of the study indicated no significant gender differences in the listening strategies. Similarly, Erviona and Arsyad (2022) conducted a study to explore gender differences and their impacts on learners' achievement in speaking skill in Indonesia employing descriptive qualitative research. The target comprised 27 learners in Class XI IPS 4 were from where 10 males and 10 females were sampled. Oral recording was used in data collection. Findings of the study showed that female students performed better than males. However, the study was qualitative in nature while the present one used the ex post facto design in a quantitative research and focused on pre-primary school learners.

Still in Indonesia, Erliana (2024) conducted a quantitative study to investigate gender differences and self-efficacy in writing proficiency among college EFL learners using correlation study design. Convenience sampling was used to sample 83 females and 67 males. Hierarchical multiple regression (ANOVA), independent t-test and Pearson correlation moment coefficient were used to analyse data. Findings of the study showed that writing achievement of females and male groups varied significantly. Moreover, Nurlindawati et al. (2022) in a study at Darul Ihsan Islamic Senior High School, examined the association between gender-based differences and mastery of English language skills amongst 1st and 2nd year students in a single sexed educational setting. Data was collected from 330 participating students, while for data analysis, Mann Whitney-U Test was used. Results revealed that female students scored better than male students. These studies although relevant, investigated post primary school learners, while the present one focused on pre-primary school level of schooling.

Similarly, in Malaysia, Ishak et al. (2022) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between gender and English language usage among form 3 secondary school learners using quantitative approach. The study utilized Lakoff's theory of women's language. The sample consisted of 30 students consisting 15 girls and 15 boys. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data. Results of the study revealed some differences and similarities between boys and girls in some aspects. The study however employed a quantitative approach while the present one combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches to give more detailed findings. In a related study, Evizariza (2024) conducted a systematic review on the role of gender in language acquisition in Malaysia. The study involved in-depth literature review covering a number of empirical

studies on gender and language. Findings of the study showed that gender differences had an effect on language acquisition. The above study employed systematic review approach that uses existing literature and studies rather than direct primary data collection like in present research that involved gathering new, original data directly from the source. In addition, the studies were conducted in secondary school level while the present research, the center of attention, was at pre-primary school level.

In related study, Becirovic (2017) in Bosnia, explored the relationship between gender, motivation and performance in learning EFL. The sample consisted 185 school learners aged ten (grade five), fourteen (grade nine) and eighteen (grade twelve). Convenience sampling technique was used in sample selection. Descriptive statistics in terms of means, standard deviations, and frequencies were performed. Independent samples T-test and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient were used to analyse data. Findings of the study revealed that female learners performed better than their male counterparts. Additionally, Huang (2024) in Taiwan, explored gender and English language listening proficiency variations among university EFL Learners using survey study design. The sample comprised 304 learners. Findings of the study showed that females experienced more difficulty in listening than males. The findings of these studies however, contradicted each other. The sampled learners were also past early childhood years.

In another corresponding study, Awan and Azeem (2017) conducted a socio-linguistic analysis to establish gender differences and its effect on students' achievement in Pakistan. The sample consisted 150 secondary school learners. Among the sample, 75 were males and 75 were females. Data on language skills were collected on all four

language skills using questionnaires. Findings of the study showed that girls performed better than boys. The above study however utilized only questionnaires for data collection, while the present research additionally used an interview schedule, and an early language competency assessment checklist for learners, apart from questionnaires. Sarmah (2020) in Nepal, conducted a study to investigate the influence of gender on second language acquisition in a quantitative study. Interviews, questionnaires and journals were used to collect data. Findings of the study showed that girls acquired second language much earlier than boys. However, the above study was quantitative in nature, while the present one employed mixed study approach.

Further, McTigue (2020) conducted a study to explore preschool reading proficiency variations by gender, focusing on Norwegian boys in response to formal instruction. The study involved 5,816 Norwegian learners, of whom 48.1% were female students with an average age of 6 years. The study found that the girls outperformed boys at school entry, but as they approached grade 2, the gap narrowed, although the girls remained a head. In addition, Fonseca et al. (2023) conducted a multi-country analysis to identify gender differences in first grade reading and math achievement of 2nd and 3rd Grade students. The dataset was drawn from countries in the Middle East, Latin America, Asia and Africa. Quantitative comparison scores between boys and girls were performed. Research results showed that girls consistently outperformed boys. The above studies these studies both show that girls outperformed boys. The present study was thus necessary to find out whether or not the results in Kenya would be different.

Hery and Abas (2020) designed a study to investigate the role of gender in vocabulary acquisition via nursery rhymes among grade three elementary school learners in Indonesia. The study used an experimental research design in which the researcher used pre- and post-tests. After the post-test, the study established no significant effect on vocabulary acquisition between boys and girls. The above study however, was experimental in nature, while the current research utilized the ex post facto research design. In addition, Montero-SaizAja (2021) explored gender-based differences in EFL secondary school students' productive vocabulary and language learning strategies in Spain. The sample comprised 51 EFL learners (31 females and 20 males). Questionnaire and language test were used in data collection. Collected data was analysed quantitatively. Findings of the study revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between males and females in productive vocabulary. Although the study is relevant, it differed with the present research in that it employed quantitative approaches while the later used mixed research. Additionally, in Vietnam, Trang (2022) conducted a study to explore gender differences in listening skill. Findings of the study showed that males listen more than females. These research findings showed inconsistent results. Hence, the current study was conducted to unravel these inconsistencies.

To support findings by Montero-SaizAja (2021), Fattahi and Nushi (2021) designed research on the potential effects of gender and language proficiency on metaphors used in writing by EFL learners in Iran. The study involved 23 students at the upper intermediate level and 27 students at the intermediate level. Respondents were tested. The collected data were analyzed using multiple regressions and t-tests. Research showed that gender does not play a role in influencing learners' language use. This document considered that

adult learners sampled were not aware of differences in language acquisition in children during the formative period when language acquisition time was active. In addition, Espinoza and Pena (2023) conducted a study to investigate the effect of gender difference on primary school learners' acquisition of EFL lexicon in Chile, using quantitative method. The study employed non-experimental design and non-probability sampling method was used. The targets population consisted 99 grade five learners from whom 47 females and 52 males were sampled. Tests were used to collect data. Results of the study revealed that gender did not affect acquisition of EFL lexicon.

Moreover, Noor and Bepari (2023) looked into the impact of gender on L2 learning among college students in Bangladesh. Skills in speaking, writing, reading, and listening in English will be evaluated. A basic random sampling technique was used for the research. Learner achievement levels were utilized as a measure of data collection. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized. The results of this study showed no statistically significant disparity in English language proficiency between female and male learners. Hence there was need to study to unravel these inconsistencies.

In Africa, some studies indicate the girls outperformed boys in language skills. Oyenike et al. (2024) explored the impact of gender difference on early childhood education learners' acquisition of literacy skills in Nigeria employing quasi-experimental design of pre-test, post-test, control group of 3x2x3 factorial design. The study consisted 90 learners aged between 5 and 6 years. Multistage sampling method was use to select the sample. Literacy test was used in data collection. Instruments' validity was determined by face and content validity while test-re-test reliability method was used to test

instruments' reliability. Descriptive statistic was analysed using counts, percentage, mean and standard deviation while inferential statistics was analysed using ANCOVA. Findings of the study showed no significant difference between boys and girls in language literacy acquisition. In addition, Nyongesa et al. (2017) conducted study to explore gender as a sociocultural determinant of the choice of language learning strategies in Tanzania, using Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory. Data was collected from 530 secondary and university students. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Descriptive mean scores and *t*-test were used to analyze data. Findings of the study revealed no significant difference between male and females in choice of language learning strategies. The study however focused on secondary and university students in Tanzania, while the present one centered on PP II learners in Kenya.

The findings above were supported by Amadi et al. (2023) who conducted a study to explore university students gender difference in the use of Nigerian English in the writings in Nigeria. The study utilized ex-post facto design. The sample consisted 60 first year students who were purposively selected. The sample comprised 28 females and 32 males. Data was collected using essay writing. Data analysis was done using mean, standard deviation and *t*-test statistics. Findings of the study revealed that females performed better than males. This study however, only investigated writing skill and did not focus on all four language skills in totality.

Uworwabayeho et al. (2021) in a study in Rwanda, mapped the progression of the gender gap in English language skills in secondary and primary schools using a multi-level exploratory research design. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were

used. The interviews were semi-structured with the donor community, government, and stakeholders at the national level. The outcomes of this research suggested that in some districts, boys did better than girls, while in other districts, it was vice versa. The literature reviewed however, yielded conflicting results without clearly understanding which gender outperformed the other in terms of language skills. These findings contradicted with other findings from other studies. Hence, the present research sampled male and female students but specifically in pre-primary schools to try and determine exactly which gender outperformed the other in language related activities.

In the Kenyan context, some studies showed that gender differences influence acquisition of language skills. Kositany-Langat and Chepchieng (2019) explored the influence of gender on secondary school learners' attitudes towards English language in Kericho County. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample 281 participants. Questionnaire was used in data collection. Findings of the study showed that girls held more positive attitude towards English language than boys. In addition, FLANA (2023) conducted a foundation literacy assessment among grade three learners using survey. The study employed stratified and probability sampling techniques. Test-retest method was used to determine the reliability of the research instrument. English (reading and comprehension) tests were used to collect data. Findings of the study showed that 43% of grade four boys and 47% of grade four girls assessed at least met expected grade 3 reading level text. These studies however, only investigated reading skills and did not focus on all four language skills. s

Still in Kenya, Ouko (2015), in an associated study in Gucha District, Kenya, focusing on children's proficiency abilities in class one while utilizing instructors' appraisals, uncovered that girls excelled better compared to boys in education abilities. Furthermore, the study observed statistically significant differences between both genders in terms of academic performance. The study concluded that, girls fared better than boys. This study however, focused on first-grade learners while the current one was conducted in pre-primary schools.

Mwoma (2017) also examined children's reading competencies among grade three primary school learners in Narok County. More specifically, the study aimed to determine if boys and girls differed in their reading abilities. From a pool of 188 potential participants, 18 schools were selected at random. The sample consisted of 18 head teachers, 5 education officers, 66 teachers, 94 boys and 94 girls. Concurrent qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were employed. Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tests were used to gather quantitative information on grade three learners reading competencies. To collect qualitative data, interviews were conducted with education officers and head teachers as key research informants. Additional qualitative information was gathered through focus group discussions (FGDs). The results showed that, across both disciplines, boys performed better than girls. However, the above study focused on Grade three learners in Narok County while the present one targeted pre-primary school pupils in Kajiado County Kenya.

In another study in Kenya, Cherobon and Atoni (2022) used a causal-comparative research method, to examine students' reading abilities in public primary schools in

Nandi County. The hypothesis that there is no substantial correlation between pupils' gender and their reading ability was examined. Two hundred students in grades six and seven were randomly selected to provide data. To collect data, observation schedules and reading tests were used. Both stratified and simple random techniques were used. The study investigated if a learner's gender influenced their reading competencies. The study findings showed a slight difference in mean scores; that is, the mean score of girls was 81.89%, which was slightly lower than that of boys, who had a mean score of 82.04%, implying that boys outperformed girls in language competencies though not so much. However, although this study employed a causal-comparative research method which is also ex post factum nature, it focused on grade 6 and seven learners while in the present one the focal point was pre-primary schools.

Also, Usawa (2024) conducted a survey in four Western region counties namely; Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega and Vihiga. The report of the Western Kenya Sub-Counties revealed that only 56.6% of fourth-grade boys and 62.4% of fourth-grade girls read with comprehension third-grade level English story. Although the study by Usawa (2024) was conducted in western Kenya, including Busia County, it focused on both numeracy and language skills in primary schools, the present study's attention on the contrary, was at pre-primary level and focused on children's acquisition of early language competencies.

2.5 Parental Engagement and Learners' Acquisition of Early Language Competencies

To be actively involved, parents must have a two-way dialogue with teachers on their children's education and other school activities. According to Obunga et al. (2025a),

when teachers and parents share information, children gain more knowledge and skills leading to enhanced learning outcomes. Also, according to Obunga et al. (2025b), parents may be involved in activities such as participating in school meetings, which are likely to enhance academic performance. Learners who have guardians who care about their education are more likely to be successful academically, socially, and behaviourally.

Globally, many researchers have done several studies on parental engagement and language competencies. For instance, in the United States, Gay et al. (2020) investigated the impact of poverty and parental engagement on learners' reading competencies. The study analyzed secondary data from an early childhood longitudinal study from 2010 to 2011. This longitudinal study employed direct learner assessments, teacher questionnaires, as well as parent interviews to collect data. The learners were predominantly Black or African American (17%), Hispanic (40%) and White (32%). To collect data, parents' interviews were conducted mainly via phone interviews using computer-assisted interview technology, and teachers filled out paper and pencil questionnaires. The research showed that parental engagement had a major and beneficial impact on learners' acquisition of language competencies. In addition, Rowiyah et al. (2024) explore the influence of parental participation in the development of speaking skills among young learners in Indonesia. Results of the study revealed that parental engagement in supervision increased learners English speaking skills. However, these studies were not conducted among pre-primary school learners in the Kenyan context.

Also, in Malaysia, Wong and Tan (2021) looked at how parents might help their children in many different ways as they read. The scope-reviewed method was used for this

investigation. Qualitative summaries were created for 42 publications published between 2010 and 2020. The results of the articles suggested that parental engagement facilitated children's reading comprehension, fluency and interest. In addition, Yang and Chen (2023) investigated the impact of parental participation on students' writing skills in China, to using meta-analysis. The meta-analysis included 13 studies with a total of 117-1449 participants conducted between 1996 and 2021. Results of the study showed that parental involvement had a significant and favourable effect on students' writing skills. These studies however, were meta-analysis and therefore did not use primary source of data.

Similarly, Lamaclamac and Opina (2025) conducted a study to explore how parental engagement influence on early literacy development in Thailand employing predictive correlational design. The sample comprised of private and public primary school learners. Data was sampled using questionnaires. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, multiple regression and Pearson correlation moment coefficient. Findings of the study revealed that parental involvement affects learners' development of reading skills. In addition, Ombayao and Tantiado (2023) conducted a study on the influence of parental engagement on reading achievement of grade six learners in Philippines, using a 4-point scale questionnaire to collect data. The study employed descriptive-correlational research design. Findings of the study revealed a significant association between parental engagement and learners reading achievement. These studies however, were not conducted at pre-primary school level and in the Kenyan context.

Moreover, Nordin et al. (2024) conducted a study to investigate the influence of parental engagement on learners's literacy development in Malaysia, using quantitative approach and survey design. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 63 participants. Findings of the study revealed a significant relationship between parental involvement and learners' development of literacy skills. This study however, only used quantitative approach and did not include qualitative approach which would have provided respondents' views.

For language communication to be full, the four language skills are must be well developed. Angin and Mohamed (2024) conducted a study to explore parental engagement level and development of pre-primary school learners' communication skills in Lebanon employing quantitative approach. Data was collected using a 5- point scale questionnaire. Simple random sampling method was utilized to sample 300 parents from 29 pre-primary schools. Descriptive statistics were used to get the mean, standard deviation and percentage of parental engagement. Findings of the study revealed that parental engagement had a positive correlation with learners' development of literacy skills. This study however, investigated parental involvement on speaking skill only leaving out the other three skills, listening, reading and writing.

The development of early English language skills is assumed to be influenced by parental engagement. Khoury and Saada (2023) conducted a study to examine the effect of parental engagement activities on the development of English language skills among elementary school learners in Lebanon using quantitative research approach. A sample of 116 parents participated in the study. Questionnaire was used in data collection. Results

of the study revealed that parental involvement played positive role in the development of learners' English language skills. Additionally, Chand and Chand (2024) explored parental involvement and primary school learners' acquisition of literacy skills in Fiji using mixed research approach. Online questionnaire was used to collect data from 31 teachers and 38 parents. Findings of the study showed that both parents and teachers agreed that both home and school parental involvement enhanced learners' acquisition of language skills. These studies however, were conducted primary and secondary school levels and did not focus on pre-primary school learners.

Similarly, Smadi et al. (2024) assessed influence of parental involvement on elementary learners' development of English language proficiency in Jordan, using experimental design with pre- and post-test design and conventional approach. The sample comprised 92 grade six girls from public schools. The control group comprised 46 respondents and the experimental group consisted 46 participants. Findings of the study revealed that parental involvement had positive significant association with the development of English language proficiency. In addition, Andrian et al. (2025) conducted a study to investigate the influence of Parental engagement the development of language and culture of early childhood learners in Indonesia employing quantitative with a survey approach. The study sample comprised 45 parents whose children were aged between 5 and 6 years. A questionnaire was use to collect data. Reliability of the questionnaire was determined with Cronbach's Alpha. Linear regression was used to analyze data. Findings of the study revealed that parental engagement had significant effect on learners' language development. These studies however, employed quantitative approach only and did not employ mixed study approach which would have yielded rich data.

Moreover, Sumanti and Muljani (2021) carried out research on the impact of parental involvement among grade three learners' English self-efficacy in Indonesia. The study utilized a descriptive-qualitative approach. To collect data, the researcher used observations of third graders and interviewed their teachers and parents. The results showed that parents' involvement at home encouraged their children to learn English. In addition, Caliskan and Ulas (2022) explored the impacts of parental involvement in reading activities on primary school learners' reading comprehension skills in Turkey using pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design with a paired control group. The sample consisted 100 grade four learners. Results of the study revealed that parental involvement in reading activities has a positive effect on learners' reading comprehension skills. These studies however, investigate acquisition of English language skills in the western countries and at higher levels of schooling unlike this study that was conducted at the foundation stage of schooling where forms the foundation for schooling.

Equally, Balderas (2023) conducted a study to explore the influence of parental engagement on the acquisition of Filipino language skills among early childhood education learners. Findings of the study showed that parents played role in pre-primary school's acquisition of Filipino language skills. Although, this study was similar to this study that was conducted in the Kenyan context, it did not focus on acquisition of early language skills.

However, although parental involvement influences the acquisition of language skills, some studies found no association between parental engagement aspects and learners' acquisition of language skills. Feng and Tan (2022) conducted a study to explore the

impact of parental engagement on their pre-primary school learners' development of linguistic skills in China. The study interviewed 874 preschool learners. Findings of the study showed that communication between home and school had a negative impact on learning methods and development of language skills. This study however, only investigated parental engagement on speaking skill and did not focus on the influence of parental engagement on the other three language skills, listening reading and writing as whole.

In Africa, there is some evidence of a positive correlation between parental engagement and learners' acquisition of language skills. Suh (2022) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between parental engagement pupils English language achievement in Cameroon using cross sectional survey design. Lev Vygotsky socio-cultural theory was used. The population for the study comprised 631 grade six learners and their parents drawn from 20 schools. Eighty (80) parents and their children were sampled through purposive and simple random sampling methods. Chi Square test (χ^2) was used to test the hypothesis. Results of the study revealed a significant correlation between parental engagement and learners' academic achievement in English language. In addition, Graham and Mtsweni (2024) explored how parental engagement predicted grade 4 learners' reading literacy in South Africa using sequential explanatory mixed-method design. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Data was also collected from 1025 learners and 10 parents. Findings of the study revealed that children whose parents read books with children performed better in grade four. These studies however, on focused on primary school level learners and did not target pre-primary school

learners and, did not use person correlation moment coefficient to analyse and also did not employ Epstein's theory of parental involvement.

Similarly, Madima and Makananise (2021) conducted a study to explore parental engagement in primary school learners' learning of English in South Africa using qualitative methods. Purposive sampling technique was use to sample 12 parents. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data collected through semi-structured interviews. Results of the study revealed that only literate parents participated in their children learning of English language. This study however, only used qualitative study approach and did not both qualitative and quantitative approaches which would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem.

Equally, Iroegbu and Igweike (2020) conducted a study to explore the impacts of parental engagement on the reading skills of lower primary school learners in Nigeria using descriptive survey design. The target population comprised lower primary school learners and their parents. The sample size consisted 308 selected using simple purposive sampling method. Reading Skills Assessment Test and Parental Involvement Questionnaire were used in data collection. Data were analysed using mean percentage scores and ANOVA. Findings of the study showed that parental engagement impacted on learners' acquisition of reading skills. This study however focuses on lower primary school level and did not focus on pre-primary school level.

Also, in Rwanda, Friedland (2019) investigated the impact of household literacy practices on the early grade reading of learners from rural Rwanda using randomized control trial.

Data was collected from 466 learner reading assessments and 466 parent surveys. The information was examined by means of a multivariate regression analysis. Results showed that early reading achievement might be predicted by a child's level of curiosity, the amount of education their family received, and the level of parental competence. In contrast to the present analysis, which investigated the implications of parental engagement on preschool learners' language acquisition, the reviewed research found no correlation between parental contribution and the development of pre-schoolers' early language skills. This study however, only used quasi experimental design and did not use ex post facto study design.

Similarly, Christopher and Oliver (2022) explored the influence of parental involvement on and English-speaking skill among primary school learners in Rwanda. Survey and correlation research designs were used. The target population consisted of 210 parents and teachers from which a sample of 138 respondents was selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used. Questionnaires and interviews were used in data collection. Findings of the study showed that parental involvement positively correlated with learners' English-speaking skill. This study however, investigated primary school learners and did not focus on pre-primary school learners.

Also, Edward et al. (2022) explored the role of parental engagement in learners' acquisition of Kiswahili pre-reading skills in Tanzania. A sample of 350 respondents was obtained by employing purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. Focus group discussion, questionnaires, semi-structured interview and tests were used in data collection. Findings of the study revealed that parental engagement was not associated

with learners' acquisition of Kiswahili pre-reading skills. The study however, only investigated Kiswahili pre-reading skills in Tanzania and did not focus on the four language skills in the Kenyan context.

Similarly, Kigobe et al. (2021) conducted a randomized controlled experiment in Tanzania with the aim of determining the efficacy of parent-centred interventions in the promotion of literacy among students in the second grade. Training for educators, open lines of communication between educators and parents, and parental involvement in assignments and reading were all examples of effective interventions. Parents and educators made up a large part of the intended audience. Measures were taken before, during, and after the procedure in cluster randomized controlled experiments. The data was analyzed using a hierarchical linear model. Before and after the session, the intervention group showed significant gains in decoding ability, reading fluency, and comprehension, which is why it's important for parents to be involved in their learners' education. The study however, only used quasi-experimental design and did not use ex post facto design.

Still in Tanzania, Nyang'anyi and Bhalalusa (2023) carried out a study on parental participatory approaches to primary school students' reading and writing skills. The research used a qualitative method. For data collection, a semi-interview schedule was used. A purposeful sampling method was used to select respondents. Research results showed that parental involvement affected learners' language ability. This study however, was qualitative and investigated the influence of parental engagement on acquisition of

writing skills and did not use mixed approach and focus on the influence of parental involvement on the acquisition of the four language skills.

In Kenya, there is some evidence of a positive association between parental participation and learners' language achievement. Nyaenda et al. (2025) investigated the influence of parental involvement on early childhood learners' literacy proficiency in Nyamira County employing descriptive research design. Coleman and ecological systems theory guided the study. The target population consisted 7494 parents from where 380 parents were sampled. A questionnaire was used to collect data. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse data. Results of the study found involvement had a positive effect on the development of pre-primary school learners' acquisition literacy skills.

Still, Gichana et al. (2021) undertook research to examine the connection between school communication and literacy acquisition of preschool learners in the Manga sub-district, Nyamira County, Kenya using a participatory model of Joyce Epstein's parents. In this study, a correlational research model was applied. The subjects were 210 preschool learners, 210 parents of preschool students, 3 preschool division supervisors, 65 principals, and 65 preschool principals. Random, targeted, and basic clustering methods were employed to produce the research's sample. The sample size included 136 preschool students, 136 preschool students, 20 head teachers, 3 pre-primary school divisional directors and 65 pre-primary school lead teachers. To collect data, document analysis and questionnaires were used. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed a statistically significant beneficial correlation between student-parent contact and the development of early readers and writers in elementary

school. The study however, was conducted in Nyamira County which is geographically distinct from that of Busia County.

Also, Osabinyi and Ouko (2023) designed a study to investigate the effect of parents' involvement in their children's education on the development of their children's early reading skills in Kiambu County, Kenya, employing a descriptive survey design. As a theoretical lens, the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler parental model was used. Stratified and purposeful sampling techniques were used. Data from private and public primary schools was collected using a reading assessment checklist as well as questionnaires. The correlation between parental participation and students' early reading comprehension abilities was analyzed using the Pearson Chi-square test. The outcomes of learners' preliminary literacy abilities in elementary school were found to be affected by parental involvement. The study however, only investigated acquisition of early reading skills and did not focus on all four language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing.

2.6 Summary of Literature and Gaps

In regard to learners' acquisition of early English language skills, some reviewed studies were conducted in regions other than Busia County. Also, most of these studies were in other levels of schooling but not in pre-primary school. Moreover, majority of these studies used other forms of research tools to measure PPII learners' levels of acquisition of language skills other than observation checklist. Further, the reviewed studies did not investigate acquisition levels of all the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing in a single study.

Regarding the influence of school type, gender and parental engagement, majority of the reviewed studies revealed inconsistent finding about the influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on learners' acquisition of English language skills. In addition, majority of the studies did not employ interviews, questionnaires and observation checklist to collect unbiased data. Moreover, majority of the studies were conducted outside Busia County lacking knowledge about the influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on learners' acquisition of language skills in the County. Further, majority of the studies were conducted in other levels of schooling other than pre-primary school level. Lastly, some studies employed descriptive statistics to establish the association between gender and school type other than independent sample t test.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the research design that was utilized in the study; parts of the exploration plan, variables, the study locale, the objective population, inspecting methodology, test size, pilot study, and instruments for the exploration used were likewise highlighted. The section likewise portrays information assortment and investigation techniques, as well as strategic and moral contemplations.

3.2 Research Design

The current study utilized ex post facto research design, which is a type of quantitative research, to investigate potential cause-and-effect associations by examining existing conditions or events after they had occurred. Furthermore, above research design was used to investigate the degree and direction of association between parental engagement and learners' acquisition of early language competencies without manipulating the variables. Also, ex post-facto research design is suitable for comparing groups that differ on pre-existing key variables such as men and women, and compares them on a dependent variable. The present study utilized this design to investigate the differences in performance between learners in private and public schools and also by gender.

3.3 Variables

In this current study, the variables were as follows:

3.3.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables are the type of school, parental involvement, and preschoolers' gender orientation.

- (i) **Type of school:** The indicators of measurement were private or public pre-primary schools. This was checked on the observation checklist for early language competencies for individual learners. This took a 2-point scale with 1 for Public and 2 for Private. This was measured on nominal scale
- (ii) **Children's gender:** This was measured through a nominal scale that determined whether the children were boys or girls. This was checked on the observation checklist for early language competencies for individual learners. This took a 2-point scale with 1 for Boys and 2 for Girls.
- (iii) **Parental engagement:** indicators of measurement were the provision of learning opportunities geared towards enhancing their children's acquisition of language competencies. This took a 4-point scale with 1 for Never (N), 2 for Rarely (R), 3 for Sometimes (S) and 4 for Always (A). This was measured on an ordinal scale.

3.3.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was children's early language competencies. The indicators of language competencies included addressing questions carefully, reciting poems and rhymes, naming objects and creatures, solving simple riddles, sitting appropriately when reading, demonstrating left-right eye orientation, reading short sentences, writing three-to four-letter words and working simple cursive patterns. This took a 4-point scale with 1 for Below Expectation (BE), 2 for Approaching Expectation (AE), 3 for Meeting

Expectation (ME) and 4 for Exceeding Expectation (EE). The scale of measurement was an ordinal scale.

3.3.3 Intervening Variables

These were factors that had the capability of impacting primary school pupils' acquisition of early language competencies. The intervening variable was school location which was controlled by randomization of the sample schools to include both urban and rural schools.

3.4 Research Methodology

The study applied a mixed research method to collect quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously. This approach added the following to the search: the voice of the respondents, comprehensive analysis of the problem, and increased validity of the research results. In addition, mixed research methods allowed triangulation or corroboration of findings from different data sources, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the study.

Examining the correlation between parental engagement and preschool learners learning progression of early language skills used a mixed approach. It involved combining, testing, and reconciling subjective and quantitative exploratory techniques in a single exploratory study to yield a more multifaceted understanding of a phenomenon that is otherwise inaccessible. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods took place in data collection, analysis, and report writing. The predictive relationship among study variables was discovered from the quantitative data collected.

The current study sought to establish the complexities of acquiring the early language competencies of PP II learners in Busia County. For example, it was important to explain the role of parental engagement in pre-primary learners' acquisition of early language competencies. In addition, it was important to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to determine the influence of learner gender and school type on the acquisition of early language skills. Quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis promoted triangulation as well as cross-validation of the data.

3.5 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Samia Sub-county, of Busia County, Kenya where language of the catchment area is Lughyia and Kiswahili. In the County, children's acquisition of early language skills in the early years of schooling was reported to be below the national standard average of 500 (Karogo et al., 2020). On the basis of this available information, the site was selected for this study. The 2017 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) report placed the county on a poverty index of 67.6%. Busia County has 919 pre-schools associated with private and public primary schools. Busia County Government employed 439 preschool teachers between 2013 and 2017. Currently, the teacher: pupil ratio stands at 1:100. Although by the year 2018, the county had 71,519 pre-primary populations, only 51,160 attended pre-primary schools (Busia County, 2023). Samia Sub-County has a total of 50,821 males, 56,341 females and 14 intersex individuals, totalling 107,176 persons (Rok, 2019).

3.6 Target Population

The target population for the study comprised all 67 public and 40 private pre-primary II units, all pre-primary II teachers, parents and pre-primary II pupils, as per Busia County Director of Education Office (2020), where children's acquisition of early language skills was reported to be low (see 3.5). Public and private schools were targeted because both handle pre-primary school learners. The study targeted teachers because learners are taught and assessed by the teachers. Also, parents were targeted because they are involved in the learning of their children. Equally, pre-primary II learners were targeted because pre-primary school level lays the foundation for learning in subsequent levels of schooling. Therefore, the performance in later years of schooling is determined by the kind of experiences learners get at pre-primary school level. Also, it can be noted that Busia County's literacy rate was reported as 56.7% in 2015/16.

3.7 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Methods of sampling and the sample size have been described as follows:

3.7.1 Sampling Techniques

It is understood that the multi-stage sampling technique enables the researcher to extract rich information from the participants (Etikan et al., 2016). Therefore, the multi-stage sampling (multi-stage cluster sampling) method was employed to generate an appropriate sample size in three stages. Purposive sampling technique was utilized to choose Busia County and simple random sampling was employed to select Samia Sub County. This was suitable for the study since the level of language competencies acquisition was low in the county. Stratified sampling technique was used to group schools into public and

private schools. The sub-county has 107 preschools affiliated with primary schools, including 67 public schools and 40 private schools. Public schools had a population of 2,540 PP II learners. Simple random sampling using 10% of the 67 public and 40 private pre-primary schools in Samia Sub County, was done, ending up with 7 public and 4 private schools. This was done by listing down all urban and rural pre-primary schools separately on different pieces of paper and putting them in two bags according to their category. Seven public schools and four private were then picked on a random basis with eyes closed. Purposive sampling of teachers from the above schools followed, but where there was more than one teacher, random sampling applied. Simple Random Sampling Technique was also used in the selection of the required number of pre-primary II pre-primary II pupils and their parents from the sampled schools. The simple random sampling technique was suitable since it ensured inclusivity of all targeted participants.

3.7.2 Sample Size

The study involved a sample size of 7 (10%) out of 67 public-sponsored pre-primary school II (PP2) teachers domiciled in primary schools as well as parents of PP2 pupils and 4 (10%) out of the 40 private ones in the four wards in Samia Sub-county in primary schools. For pre-primary II school pupils, 172 (10%) of them out of 1,720 from pre-primary public schools and 82 (10%) out of 820 private sponsored ones formed the sample size. According to Gay and Diehl (1992), a minimum of a 10% sample size is acceptable for descriptive research. For pre-primary II school teachers, one (1) respondent was sampled from every school. According to Gay and Airasian (2000), a minimum of a 10% sample size is acceptable for descriptive research. For pre-primary II

school teachers, one (1) respondent was sampled from every school. Table 1 show sampling frame. Table 1:

Sampling Frame

Participants	Categories of Sponsorship	Populace(n)	Sample size	% Sample Size
PP II Teachers	Public	67	7	10%
	Private	40	4	10%
Parents of PP II Children	Public	1,720	172	10%
	Private	820	82	10%
PP II Children	Public	1,720	172	10%
	Private	820	82	10%
Total		5187	519	60%

Source: SCDE Busia, 2020

3.8 Research Instruments

A questionnaire for parents of PP II learners, an interview schedule for PP11 teachers and an early language competency assessment checklist for children were used to collect data.

3.8.1 Questionnaires for Pre-Primary II Parents

Questionnaires were administered to pre-primary school parents of public and private-sponsored primary schools with a pre-primary school unit attached to them. The questionnaire had section A that explored their background information, while section B focused on their engagement in pre-school children’s acquisition of early language competencies (see English and Kiswahili Versions (Appendix VIA and B). The questionnaires were appropriate for providing cheap, quick, efficient and large amounts of information from a large sample and also allowed for standardization.

3.8.2 Early Language Competency Assessment Checklist

A self-constructed early language competencies assessment checklist based on PP2 curriculum design for language activities (KICD, 2017b) was used to ascertain whether some language competencies were attained during class activities (see Appendix VI). The dependent variable was children's early language competencies. The indicators of language competencies included addressing questions carefully, reciting poems and rhymes, naming objects and creatures, solving simple riddles, sitting appropriately when reading, demonstrating left-right eye orientation, reading short sentences, writing three-to four-letter words and working simple cursive patterns. This took a 4-point scale with 1 for Below Expectation (BE), 2 for Approaching Expectation (AE), 3 for Meeting Expectation (ME) and 4 for Exceeding Expectation (EE). The scale of measurement was an ordinal scale.

3.8.3 Interview Schedules for pre-primary II Teachers

To get more in-depth information, an interview was conducted with pre-primary II teachers using a semi-structured interview in order to explore their views about parental engagement in enhancing their children's acquisition of early language competencies. Part I of the interview schedule covered the extent to which teachers perceived their pp II learners acquired activities related to the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Part II covered how teachers perceived parents' involvement in their PP II children's acquisition of the four language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing (See Appendix IV).

3.9 Pilot Study

Before actual data collection, questionnaires, an interview schedule guide and an early language assessment checklist were piloted in two schools randomly sampled from the sub-county. One was public and the other was private. Two pre-school teachers, six parents and six learners who were not involved in the main study to prevent too much familiarity with the final data were used. The reliability coefficient was 0.9, which was very high.

Pilot results made it possible for the researcher to evaluate questions in the questionnaire and interview schedule. Ambiguity and the perfect sequencing of questions were dealt with. In addition, the collection of data using selected interview techniques was tested and improved. The researcher was able to estimate the time needed to interview one respondent. Piloting also enabled the researcher to correct errors in the language competence assessment checklist.

3.10 Validity and Reliability of the Study

The procedure for ascertaining the validity and reliability of the research instruments has been discussed as follows:

3.10.1 Validity

Before administration, the study instruments namely questionnaires, interview schedules, and observation checklist were all evaluated to determine their "face and content validity," or whether or not they measured what they intended to measure. All of the incorrect materials were revised or discarded (Bui, 2009) advises. After the piloting

phase, adjustments were made to assure the face's authenticity. Using the research objectives as a guide, the researcher made sure that all the items on the instruments, adequately assessed the many theoretical characteristics captured by the study variables.

3.10.2 Reliability

During the pilot investigation, a test-retest approach was used to establish the questionnaires reliability. The process involved administering the same instrument to the same individuals on two separate occasions. The second administration was done two weeks after the first test. Wyse (2020) opines that highest reliability in test re-test is obtained when the second test is administered at least 2 to 3 weeks after the first test. The correlation coefficient determined using Pearson's product moment (ρ) was 0.80 and accepted as reliable. Interviews for teachers were also used to cross check information from parents.

3.11 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher first visited the sampled schools for familiarity and the issuing of consent forms to the head teachers, pre-primary II teachers and parents through teachers for signing. The researcher, in collaboration with a pre-primary II teacher, set a date for carrying out the research. The collection of data was done using questionnaires for parents, which were administered and collected on the same day. During the collection of questionnaires, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the pre-primary II teachers to assess the influence of parental engagements on children's acquisition of early language competencies through scrutinizing the responses given. Also, the researcher and

the teacher filled out language competence assessment checklist. Data was collected in three stages within a period of three weeks.

Stage one: Administration of questionnaires

The questionnaires were administered to preschool parents in their children's schools by the researcher during the morning hours. Before filling out the questionnaire, their informed consent was obtained and an appropriate time to fill out the questionnaire was agreed upon.

Rapport was also established with the respondents before administering the questionnaire by clarifying the intentions of the study and how to fill out the questionnaire. The confidentiality of their identity and the anonymity of the information given were assured by the researcher. Thereafter, the questionnaires were administered to the parents. The researcher waited for them to fill the instruments and ensured that every item was filled before collecting them on the same day.

Stage two: Language Competences Assessment Checklist

During this stage, the researcher, with the help of the teacher, filled out a language competencies checklist to establish the language competence levels each sampled learner achieved in each identified and specified learning experience.

Stage three: Conducting Interviews

After the administration of the questionnaires and language competence assessment checklist, selected pre-primary II teachers were interviewed after their informed consent was obtained. The appropriate time was agreed upon.

To avoid interfering with learning in the schools, teachers were interviewed during lunch time. The intention of the interview was clarified and the reason for being chosen was explained. The interviewees were asked questions as per the interview schedule, maintaining the order and manner of asking questions among all the interviewees. Meanwhile, the researcher took notes on the responses for later analysis. Each respondent took approximately 15 - 30 minutes.

3.12 Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data was used to break down information. Data was summarized using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts, averages, and percentages, and displayed in tables and figures within the text. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Interview data was evaluated for recurring themes. The following 0.05 significance level null hypotheses were developed and tested. Thematic analysis was used to inspect qualitative data from interviews to establish views of PPII teachers on extent of learners' acquisition of language competencies. The findings from interviews were also used to determine whether or not parents were involved in their children's acquisition of language competencies.

Table 2:

Data analysis matrix

Null Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Descriptive Statistics	Statistical Test
There is no significant difference in type of school and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.	Type of school	Acquisition of language competencies	Means	Two-sample t-test
There is no significant difference in status of gender and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.	Gender	Acquisition of language competencies	Means	Two-sample t-test
There is no significant relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County	Parental Engagement	Acquisition of language competencies	Percentages	Pearson correlation moment coefficient

3.13 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The logistical and ethical considerations that were observed during the study have been discussed below.

3.13.1 Logistical Considerations

An introductory letter from the Graduate Faculty of Kenyatta University was obtained before proceeding to NACOSTI to obtain a research permit. The research permit was used to obtain research permission from the Deputy County Commissioner and the Sub-

County Director of Education. Respondents' consent to conduct research in the sampled schools was obtained by using consent letters.

3.13.2 Ethical Considerations

To obtain informed consent from the respondents, the researcher informed all participants about the purpose of the study and the risks they might face, and respondents were free to decide whether or not to participate at any time during the research period.

To obtain the confidentiality of the respondents, real names were kept anonymous and codes were used instead. Data acquired from the respondents was confidential and was not to be used against the respondent other than for research purposes. Respondents were protected from all forms of harm by ensuring that none of them was offended by avoiding asking sensitive or life-threatening questions.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by providing background and demographic information, presents the findings, interprets them, and discusses the results, based on the research objectives. In this regard, the study sought to answer the following research objectives:

- i. To establish the difference in school type and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.
- ii. To determine the difference in gender and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.
- iii. To assess the relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

Similarly, the following statistical or null hypotheses (Ho), guided the predictions and analysis of the study variables:

Ho1: There is no significant difference in school type (Public/ Private), and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in gender (Boy/ Girl) and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.

4.2 Distribution of Respondents' Demographic Information

Data on the demographic information of the respondents were analyzed by response rate; distribution of parents by type of school, age, level of education, occupation, gender, distribution of children by type of school, gender and also distribution of teachers by age and gender.

4.2.1 Response Rate

The response rate has been shown in Table 3.

Table 3:

Response Rate of all Respondents

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Respondents	254	100
Total	254	100

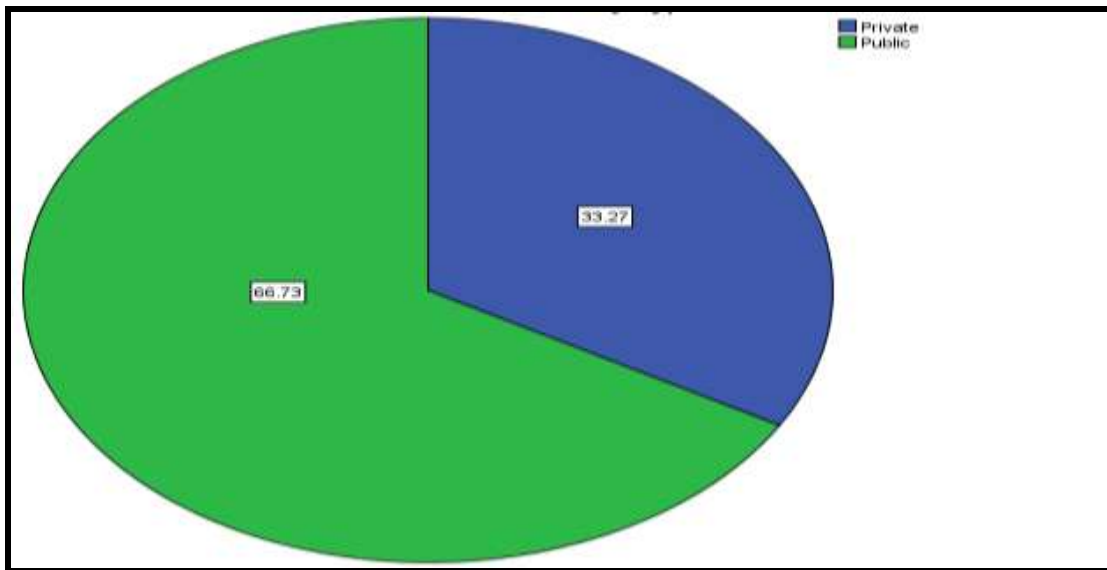
A total of 7 teachers, 172 parents plus their PPII children from public pre-primary schools as well as 4 teachers, 82 parents and their children from private schools responded to questionnaires, and the response rate was 100 %. This indicates that all the participants sampled to take part in the study were present, responded to the questionnaires presented, and returned-hence the study results were credible-

4.2.2 Distributions of Parents by Type of School

The distribution of parents by school type was calculated and the result has been presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2:

Distributions of Parents by Type of School

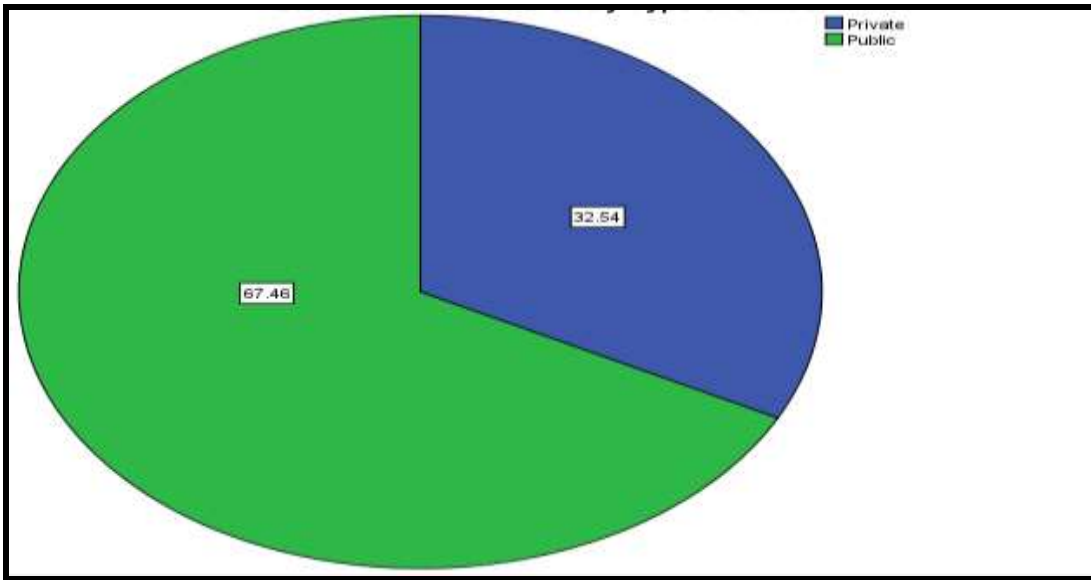


The apportionment of parents by school type was calculated and the result indicated that 66.73% of them were from public pre-primary schools while 33.27% of the remaining ones, were from private primary schools. This is because public pre-primary schools were many in the study area compared to private schools, hence many public schools were selected to give a fair data representation in the sampled schools.

4.2.3 Distributions of Children by Type of School

The distribution of children by type of school was computed and the results have been presented in in figure 3.

Figure 3:
Distributions of Children by Type of School



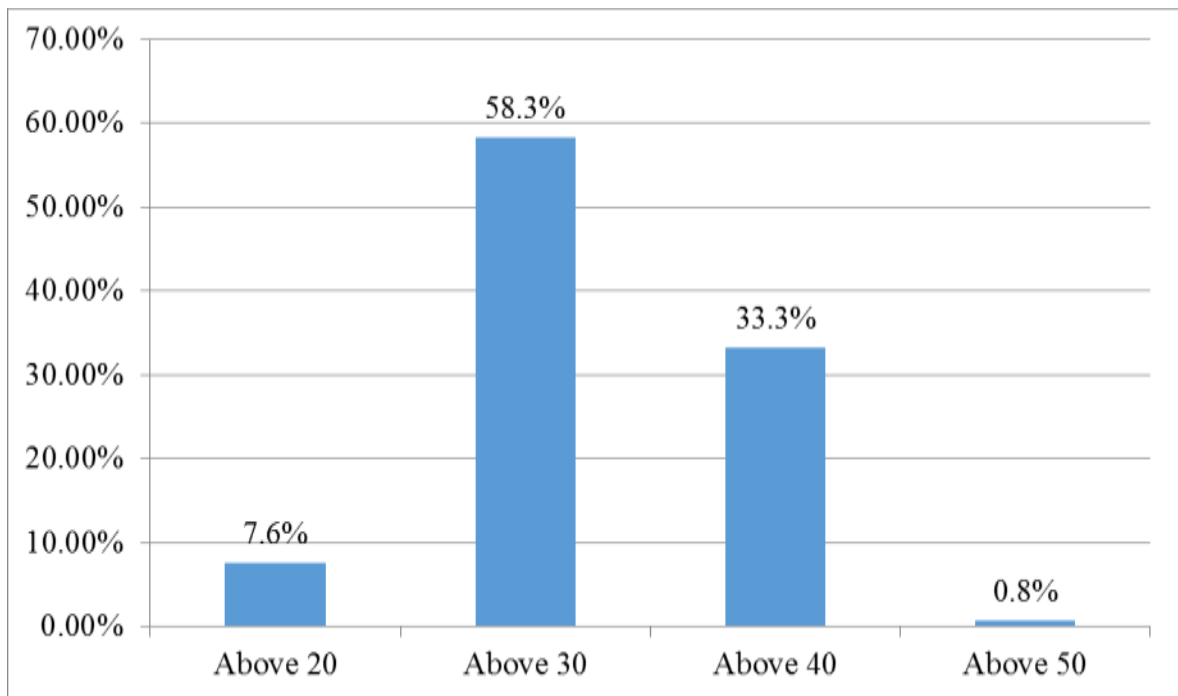
The allocation of children by type of school was computed and the children were also from public pre-primary schools (67.46%), while (32.54%) were from private primary schools. This is because, in public free education requires minimal financial support like buying uniform and providing few academic requirements, unlike private where fees and facilities are paid for by the parents.

4.2.4 Distribution of Parents by Age

Distribution of parents by age was calculated and the results have been summarized and presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4:

Distribution of Parents by Age



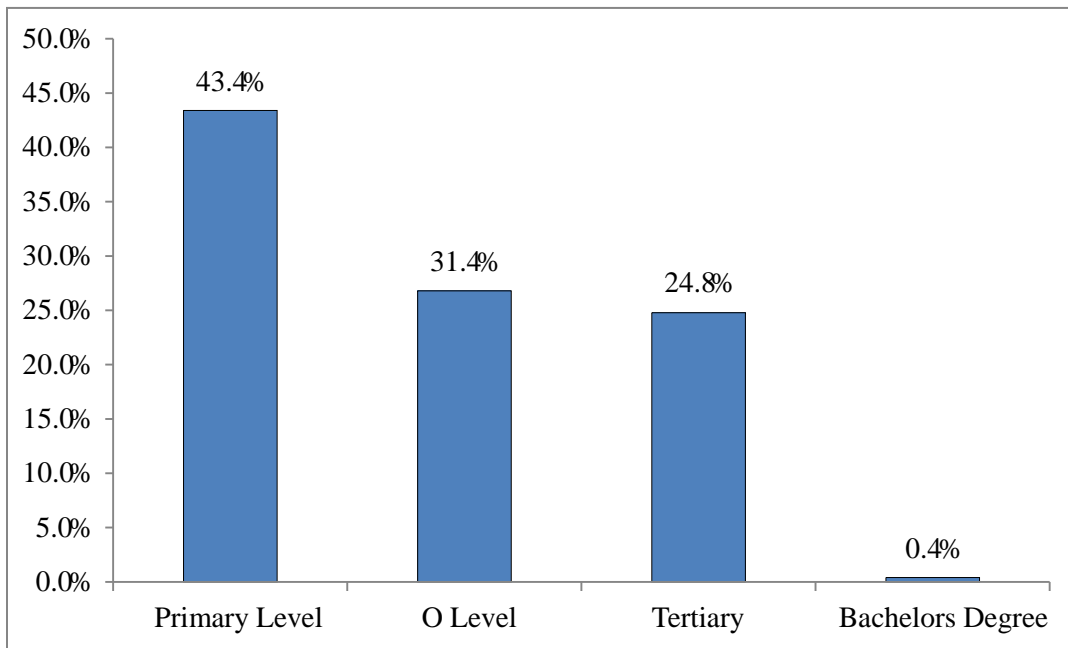
The sharing out of parents by age was calculated and the results show that majority of the parents (58.30%) were aged above 30 years, 33.30% above 40 years and the minority aged above 50 years (0.81%) and 7.60% above 20 years.

4.2.5 Distribution of Parents by Level of Education

Parental level of education was computed and the results presented in figure 5.

Figure 5:

Distributions of Parents by Level of Education



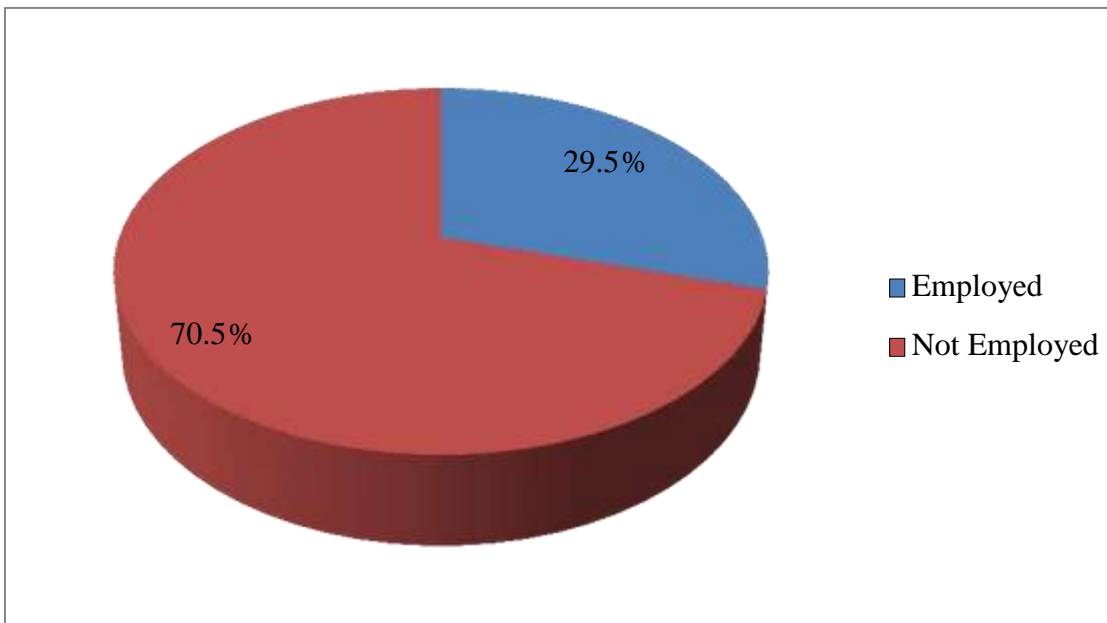
Parental level of education was computed and the results showed that majority of them (43.4%) had a primary level of education, as indicated in Figure 4.3. Secondary level (O level) was 31.4%, 24.8% had diplomas or certificates from tertiary institutions and only 0.4% were university graduates.

4.2.6 Distributions of Parents by Occupation

Occupation of parents is an essential characteristic and was therefore crucial to determining it in the current study. It was computed and shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6:

Distributions of Parents by Occupation



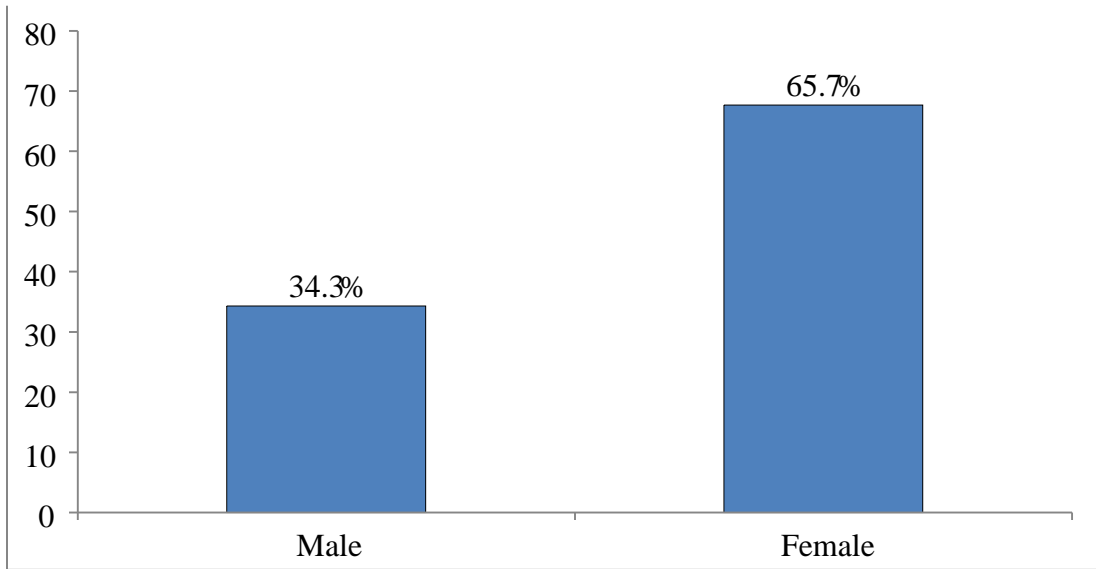
Occupation of parents is an essential characteristic and was therefore crucial to determining it in the current study. It was computed and showed that the majority of the parents (70.5%) were not employed while the minority who were 29.5% were employed.

4.2.7 Distributions of Parents by Gender

Gender of the sampled parents was established. The results were computed, summarized and presented in Figure 7.

Figure 7:

Distributions of Parents by Parents by Gender



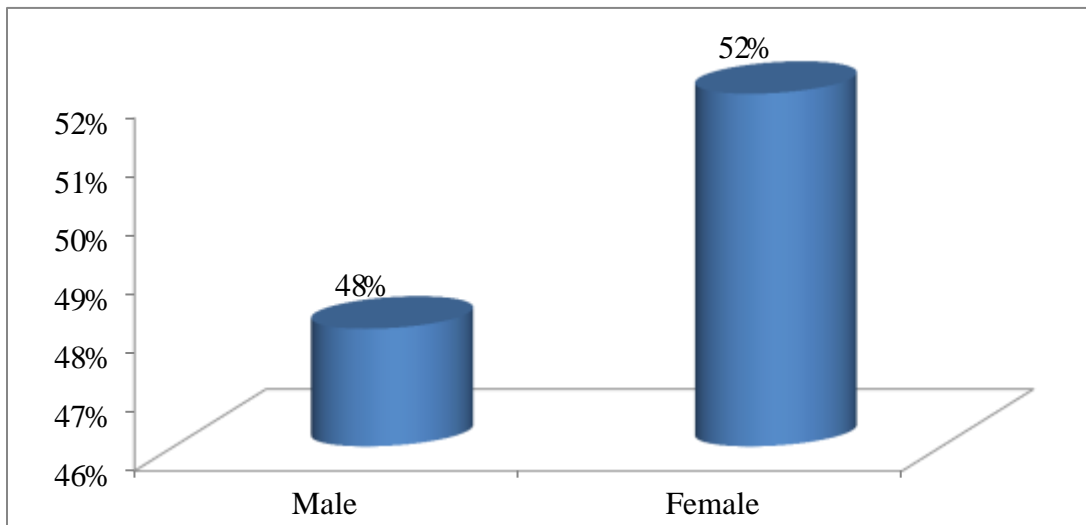
Gender of the sampled parents was established. The results were computed and showed that majority of them (65.7%) were female compared to (34.3%) who were male.

4.2.8 Distributions of Children by Gender

Children's gender was established and the results were as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8:

Distributions of Children by Gender



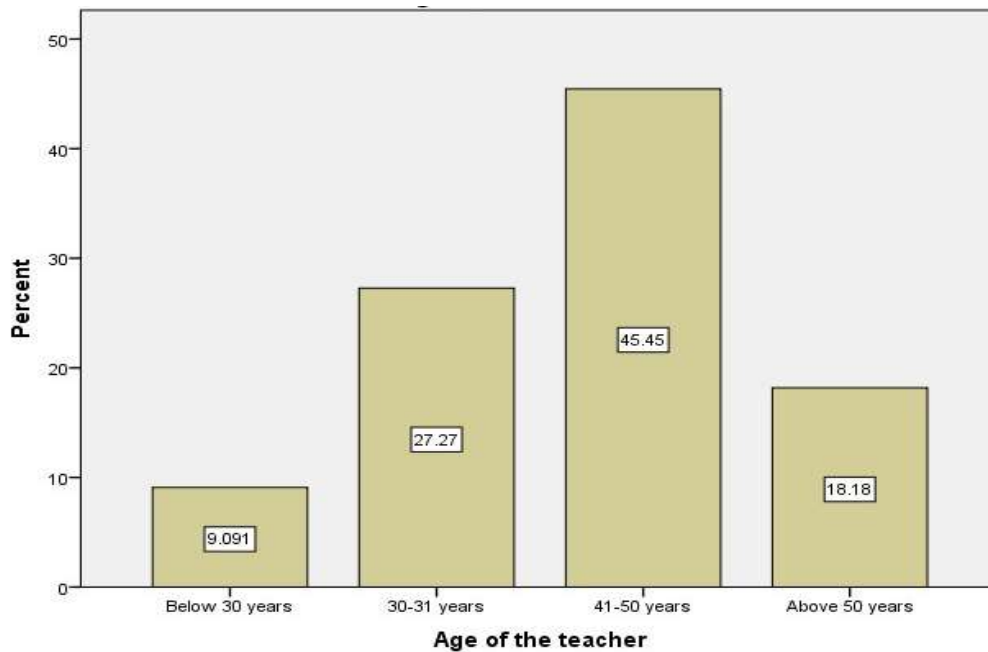
Children's gender was also sought and it was found out that majority (54.2%) of the children participating in the study were girls, compared to 48% who were boys. This implies that male and female children were fairly represented in the study.

4.2.9 Distributions of Teachers by Age

Teachers in sampled institutions were asked to indicate their age and the results are summarized in Figure 9 below.

Figure 9:

Distribution of Teachers by Age



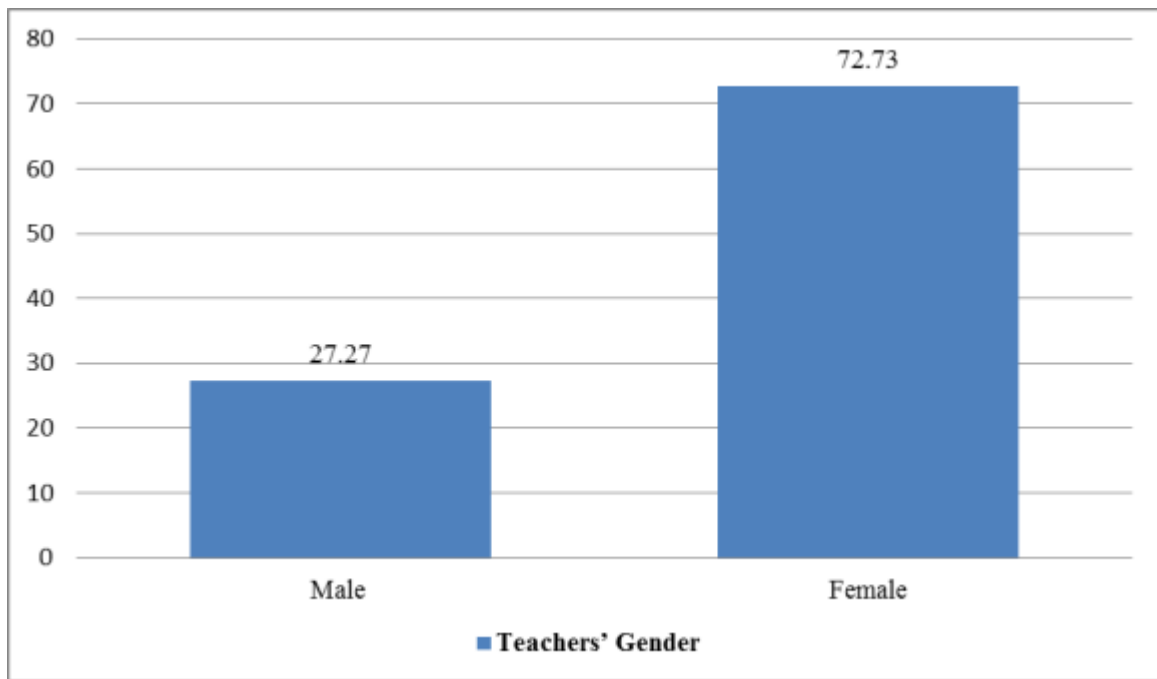
Teachers in sampled institutions were asked to indicate their age and it was established that 9.1% of the sampled teachers were below 30 years, 27.3% were between 31 and 41 years, 45.5% were between 41 and 50 years old while 18.2% were 51 years and above.

4.2.10 Distribution of Teachers by Gender

Teachers in the sampled schools were required to indicate their gender and the results were as summarized in Figure 10 below.

Figure 10:

Distribution of Teachers by Gender



Teachers in the sampled schools were required to indicate their gender and the results established that 27 % of the sampled teachers were male, while 73% of the teachers were female. This implies that majority of pre-primary school teachers were female.

4.3 Overall Children's Early Language Competencies

Overall learners' acquisition of early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County and a checklist was used to gather this information using a checklist. The variables were measured using four levels: Exceeding Expectation (EE) 80-100% (4 points), Meeting Expectation (ME) 65-79% (3-points), Approaching Expectation (AE) 50-64% (2points) and, finally Below Expectation (BE) 0-49% (1 point). The results have been presented in Table 4.

Table 4:***Pre-school Pupils' Acquisition of Early Language Competencies***

Language competencies	Percentage of Children in Various Achievement Levels							
	F	% BE	f	%AE	f	%ME	f	%EE
Addressing questions after listening	82	32.3	89	35.0	66	26.0	17	6.7
Reciting poems and rhymes with actions	81	28.3	88	39.9	73	28.0	12	4.3
Naming objects, creatures, people and colours	72	24.0	100	33.9	71	31.1	11	11.0
Solve simple riddles	61	27.2	86	38.2	79	26.0	28	7.7
Sitting appropriately when reading	69	12.2	31	34.3	82	32.3	54	21.3
Demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading	46	18.1	102	40.2	73	28.7	33	13.0
Reading short sentences	73	28.7	84	33.1	50	19.7	47	18.5
Writing three to four letter words	66	26.0	79	31.1	45	17.7	64	25.2
Matching upper case and lower case letters	30	11.8	87	34.3	85	33.5	52	20.5
Writing simple cursive patterns	45	17.7	81	31.9	77	30.3	51	20.1
Average		22.6%		35.0%		27.3%		14.9%

Table 4 shows the percentage of children who attained different levels in relation to different language activities. The first item on listening and speaking sought to establish children's ability to answer questions correctly after a listening experience. The results acquired indicated that almost a third (32.3%) of the children were below expectations, around a third (35%) were approaching expectations, less than a third (26.0%) met expectation and less than a third (6.7%) exceeded expectation. Cumulatively, majority

(67.3%) of the children were at approaching expectation level and below while below minority (32.7%) obtained meeting expectation level and above. The results imply that in this activity, majority of the learners did not perform well as expected.

The second language activity on listening and speaking sought to establish learners' ability to recite poems and rhymes with actions, was also analyzed. Results from this activity revealed that 39.4% were approaching expectations, 28.3% were below expectations, 28% met the expectation and 4.3% exceeded expectations. The results imply that the majority were approaching expectation. The ability to recite poems and rhymes with actions helps children use their bodies to communicate, develop body coordination, develop motor skills necessary for reading and writing, improve concentration and finally develop language as well as vocabulary.

The third language activity on listening and speaking sought to establish learners' ability to name objects, creatures, people and colours in the environment were obtained. Results show that children who met expectations and above were less than half (42.1%), while more than half (57.9%) were at approaching expectations and below. The ability to name things in the environment enables children to master their environment and use words correctly. This ability triggers affection and bonding with their environment. Competence boosts children's ability to develop mathematical abilities such as classification, builds concentration, memory and vocabulary, enhances visual and problem-solving skills, helps children adapt to their immediate environment and helps them become good listeners and speakers.

The fourth language activity on listening and speaking sought to establish learners' ability to solve simple riddle activities was examined to establish the percentage of children at each achievement level. Almost two-thirds (65.4%) of the children attained approaching expectations and below, while around a third (34.6%) attained meeting expectations and above. By the end of this learning level, all children were supposed to master and solve developmentally appropriate riddles.

The fifth language activity on reading sought to establish learners' capacity to sit appropriately when reading act was also determined and analyzed. Study results indicate that (21.3%) of the children exceeded the expectation level, (32.3%) of the children met the expectation, (34.3 %) were approaching expectation and (12.2%) were below expectation. Children's ability to sit appropriately when reading helps to reduce lower back pain, reduce headaches, increase body energy levels and also ease tension in the neck and shoulder. Also, it helps to increase lung capacity, improve digestion and improve blood circulation.

The sixth language activity on reading sought to establish learners' ability to demonstrate left-right eye orientation when reading was also examined. Regarding this activity, results indicated that (18.1%) of the children were at below expectation level. (40.2%) were at approaching expectation (28.7%) meet expectation and (13.0%) exceeded the expectation. In summary, over half (58.3%) were at approaching expectation level and below, while less than half (41.7%) were at the meet the expectation and above. The results imply that majority of the children were not competent at this activity. This competence is significant since reading and writing is from left to right.

The seventh language activity on reading sought to establish learners' capacity to read short syllables was analyzed. The results of the study show that (28.7%) attained below expectation level, (33.1%) attained approaching expectation, (19.7%) attained meeting expectation and (18.5%) exceeded expectation. In summary, around one-third (38.2%) attained the meeting expectation level and above, while almost two-thirds (61.8%) attained approaching expectation and below. The results imply that a high percentage of learners did not meet the expectation of the ability to read syllables and yet reading plays a significant role in facilitating the learning process. The ability to read syllables increases reading fluency, correct spelling, decoding of words, correct pronunciation, the creation of rhythm and speech emphasis. This activity fosters the development of reading skills, which enable learners to learn independently and become strategic readers. It is important for teachers to improve this skill at an early age since it enhances the development of reading. Failure to achieve the expected language competencies hinders learning in other academic areas.

The eighth language activity on reading sought to establish learners' ability to write three to four-letter words was analyzed. Findings of the study revealed that (26.0%) of the children attained below expectation level, (31.1%) attained approaching expectation level, (17.7%) attained meeting expectation level, while (25.2%) attained exceeding expectation level. The results imply that majority (57.2%) of the children attained approaching expectation level and below, while (42.9%) attained meeting expectation and above. This activity is important because it helps the development of language, reading comprehension and communication skills and boosts learner's confidence. To support the importance of writing skill, learners' proficiency in writing improves

academic outcomes across all subject areas taught and examined at several levels of the education system. It was therefore important for pre-primary school teachers to lay a strong foundation for writing skills. Learners require this important skill for personal, educational and professional development. Also, it should be remembered that most assignments and examinations are done in writing.

The ninth language activity on reading sought to establish learners' ability to do matching uppercase letters with corresponding lowercase language activity was analyzed. Study findings reveal that (11.8%) attained below expectation level (34.3%) attained approaching expectation level (33.5%) attained meeting expectation level while the remaining 20.5% attained exceeding expectation level. The results imply that more than half of the children (54.0%) met the expectation level and above. While almost half (46.1%) attained an approaching expectation level or below. Even though majority of the learners have acquired the skill, teachers need to develop the skill in the remaining population of children. This competency supports reading skills, visual discrimination skills, visual scanning and form constancy. Moreover, this activity enhances the visual processing skills required for reading and handwriting. Matching capital and small letters requires high-order thinking skills and the ability to read. Matching also requires mentally matching letters and symbols.

The tenth language activity on writing sought to establish learners' capacity to work with simple cursive patterns was also determined. From this study, it was established that (17.7%) of the children attained below expectation level, (31.9%) were approaching expectation level (30.3%) met expectation level, and (20.1%) attained exceeding

expectation level. The results imply that a half (50.4%) of the children attained meeting expectation and above while almost a half (49.6%) attained approaching expectation and below. Though cursive is the basis for writing neatly, a good number of the children had not competently acquired the art. Cursive writing is slower, harder to read, and harder to learn. Writing cursive is a very important pre-primary school activity children are supposed to acquire. Cursive handwriting improves neural development, thus improving memory, the capacity to read cursive, children's writing speed, spelling and legibility, fine motor skills, attention span, self-discipline, and finally self-respect. Importantly, cursive writing lays the foundation for writing neatly. Improving writing skills enhances learners' social and academic aspects. The writing of cursive enhances observation skills as well as logical thinking. Cursive takes the form of numeral or alphabetical letters, either capital or small, and sometimes can take alphanumeric.

In summary as Table 4 indicates, averagely around 22.6% of the children were at below expectation level, 35.0% were at approaching expectation, 27.3% were at meeting expectation while 14.9% were at exceeding expectation level in items related to in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class, retelling a brief tale in class, reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class, naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment, solving simple riddles, sitting appropriately when reading, demonstrating left-right eye orientation when reading, reading short sentences, writing own name and three to four letter words, matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case, and finally writing simple cursive patterns. In conclusion, more than a half (57.6%) of the children attained an approaching expectation level and

below, while less than half (42.2%) of the children attained meeting expectation and above.

The study further sought to establish PP II teachers' perspectives on learners' early language competencies. Through interviews, the respondents provided their views in relation to the research questions.

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners' ability to address questions carefully after a listening experience in class, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was "How are the learners' competences in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class?" The following views were given:

".... poor concentration is mostly a result of some children coming to school on an empty stomach and there is also no guarantee of ten o'clock porridge. It is not easy to teach a hungry child" (One Public School, Teacher 1)

"....in some cases, I use English or Kiswahili when speaking to children. You find that most learners know the language of the catchment area and some Kiswahili.

".....So, the failure of learners to comprehend teachers' spoken language makes children not respond appropriately." (One Public School, Teacher 6)

".....some instances force me to rush the language design due to the pressure of performance that comes from management as well as parents. This leads to partial to no concentration from a number of my learners." (One Private School, Teacher 8)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners' ability to recite poems and rhymes with actions in class, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was "How the learners' ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class?" The following views were articulated:

“...most teachers don’t teach children poems and rhymes. If they are taught, it is rarely done. Most of us have mastered very few poems and others do not know even one poem. Also, we don’t give them time to practice the few poems we teach them. Sometimes they only practice when they are out during break time without the guidance and support of the teacher” (One Public School, Teacher 4)

“..... Grasping of words in poems and matching them with actions is not easy for most of them. In some cases, they pronounce words wrongly and this is because they don’t know what they are reciting, making it difficult for them to match words in a poem with actions. Also, most of these poems are in English and these learners are learning English as a second language, thereby hindering them from comprehending what they are reciting” (One Private School, Teacher 9)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to name objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learners’ competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment?” The following views were expressed:

“.....due to limited exposure, sometimes they confuse animals and more especially between a goat and a sheep. Due to limited lesson time, we do not take them out for field excursions or take them to nearby farms to have a look at animals in our environment...” (One Public School, Teacher 2)

“.....resources are highly limited, limiting children’s ability to master the environment. We lack audio-visual resources which can help us bring our environment to class. We need video clips to teach about our environment but the school is unable to purchase one for us” (One Private School, Teacher 10)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to solve simple riddles, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How is the learners’ ability in solving simple riddles?” The following views were given:

“.....Riddles are complicated in the stem and response. In most cases, surface meaning does not match the response. This calls for high

cramming ability, which children lack. You see these riddles are tricky. Since they require deep thinking, it requires them to cram them. Those with low cramming abilities get it rough. They fumble with words and at last come out with nothing...” (One Public School, Teacher 2)

“.....since parents want their children to know English and Kiswahili, we try to teach them Kiswahili and English riddles. This hinders them from grasping the words correctly since we pose riddles in our native Luhya language” (One Public School, Teacher 4)

“.....some riddles contain vocabulary that children find it difficult to understand well. I rarely start with simple riddles and then proceed to more complicated ones” (One Private School, Teacher 11)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to sit appropriately when reading, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learner’s ability in sitting appropriately when reading?” The following views were voiced:

“.....You see a child sitting on a desk, feet dangling and the working table attached to the desk is just above his neck and far ahead of him. Some are forced to stand in order to reach the working bench. This hampers them from practicing good reading posture” (One Private School, Teacher 10)

“.....We do not have appropriate seats here. You see, children use desks which are not suitable for them. The desks are far too big for them. Their feet do not reach the ground when seated. You see their feet hanging in the air. Also, they do not reach the desk top since the desk seating point is far from the desk top where they place books, which is fixed. This makes them bend or hunch their backs to read their books. Others are forced to stand when reading and writing time comes. Our school has failed to provide age-appropriate chairs and tables for these learners.” (One Public School, Teacher 8)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to demonstrate left-right eye orientation when reading, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learners’ ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading?” The following views were echoed:

“.....majority of the children have not mastered this skill because we don't give them enough practice to master the skill. Also, we do not often make use of a few learners who have known how to read in order to assist those who have not mastered the skill. Instead, we want to do it alone, which is rather overwhelming. Also, reading resources are limited; we don't have enough books to use for practice...” (One Public School, Teacher 7)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners' ability to read syllables, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learner's ability in reading short sentences?” The following views were provided:

“.....Some of us do not use varied activities that enhance children's learning of syllables. Learning syllables requires plenty of time and practice which we don't provide.” (One Public School, Teacher 1).

“...Games are important in instilling reading syllable competency. We as teachers have failed to develop songs and games that will make the acquisition of syllable skills easy...” (One Private School, Teacher 9)

“.....There are methods of enhancing the development of syllables. These methods include the chin method and the clap method. Most of us do not know what the chin method is all about but fairly know about the clap method. Unfortunately, again, we rarely use the clap method...” (One Public School, Teacher 7)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners' ability to write three to four-letter words, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learners' ability in writing own name and three to four letter words?” The following views were echoed:

“.....Learning words requires a good number of resources, such as picture books. Unfortunately, we don't have any. We were trained in college how to make them but due to a lack of manila papers, crayons and paints, among others, we didn't develop them. Moreover, to learn simple words, children need storybooks. In this school we have only five storybooks for forty children.” (One Public School, Teacher 4).

“.....Although some parents are willing to help their children learn how to read and write, parents lack the resources to use at home, hindering parental support at home.” (One Private School, Teacher 8).

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to match uppercase letters with corresponding lowercase, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learner’s competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case?” The following views were shared:

“.....Some children have mastered matching upper case with lower case. You know a good number of capital and small letters are almost similar. Look at “C, F, I, J, K, L, M, O, P, S, U, V, W, X, Y, Z.” They only struggle with a few. That is why most of the learners are able to match most of the lower letters with the corresponding uppercase letters.” (One Public School, Teacher 4)

“...We teach capital letters first before introducing small letters. This makes it easier for them to master the capital letters and be able to match with small letters. They are more motivated since they have already acquired capital letters with a lot of ease.” (One Private School, Teacher 10)

To obtain a broad perspective regarding learners’ ability to work simple cursive patterns, interviews with teachers were conducted. The question was “How the learners’ ability in writing simple cursive patterns?” The following views were rendered:

“.....although cursive writing is important for children, it seems difficult for these children since their fine motor skills necessary for writing have not yet fully developed.” (One Public School, Teacher 1)

“... I think this activity is hard for pre-primary school children. This activity should be taught to older children. I mean primary school children because cursive writing heavily taxes the brain.” (One Public School, Teacher 3)

The results of this study on learners’ language competency levels are similar to those of Novela et al. (2022), whose research analyzed the reading ability of learners. The results showed that the overall reading comprehension level of the learners was still relatively

low. Similarly, Treffers-Daller et al. (2022) studied learners' language skills as part of their preparation for learning. The research showed that children's speaking vocabulary did not meet the expected level of proficiency. Similarly, Tomas et al. (2021) conducted a study focusing on learners' reading difficulties. The findings of the research indicated that majority of learners in the sample read with frustration. In addition, Ssentanda et al. (2020) conducted a study on the challenges of literacy acquisition. The research revealed that many learners display poor literacy skills, findings that were similar to the findings of this study.

Furthermore, the findings of this study were supported by Mwoma (2017), who conducted a study to identify the dynamics that influence children's reading ability. The research indicated that a group of children had not achieved the basic English reading skills that should have been learned by the end of second grade. Similarly, Ngure (2019) conducted a study to investigate the implications of instructional strategies and resources used to teach reading skills to third-grade students in Nairobi County, Kenya. The research showed that 50% of third grade students had below-average reading and sound recognition results; 57.1% read sentences and paragraphs; 53.6% read stories and only 60.7% acquired appropriate reading comprehension skills.

Findings from interviews conducted in this study indicated that children's inability to acquire language competencies was attributed to poor class control, failure of children to comprehend teachers spoken language, teachers' inadequate knowledge and skills, children's limited exposure to their environment, limited teaching and learning resources, children having inadequate mastery of their native language, children's developmental

limitations and lack of parental support. The interview results were supported by a study by Cekiso et al. (2022), who explored the factors affecting the reading ability of learners in rural schools. Research showed that low academic performance was caused by parent-related factors.

4.4 Overall Mean Scores for Early Language Competencies by School Type

To understand children’s early language competencies by type of school, overall mean scores and Independent Samples Test of the differences were generated and presented in Table 5 and Table 6 respectively.

4.4.1 Overall Mean Scores

As earlier stated the first objective of the study, sought differences in-early language skills between children in private and public schools. To begin with, Table 4.3 presents the overall mean scores difference in language competencies of learners according to type of school.

Table 5:

Overall Mean Scores in Children’s Language Competencies by Type of School

	Type of School	N	Mean	Std Dev
Average Competence	Private	82	3.17	.469
Level	Public	172	1.91	.609

As Table 5 shows, the overall mean scores in early language competencies for children in public schools was (M=1.91, SD=.609) and for those learning in private schools were (M=3.17, SD=.469). The implication of this outcome is that acquisition of language

competencies in public schools was lower than that of private schools. Results from questionnaires revealed that children's acquisition of language competencies in private schools was higher than that of children in public schools. Data analyzed from interviews revealed factors responsible for the low performance in public schools.

To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the language competence means of children in children in private and private schools, a two-sample t test was generated as shown in section 4.4.2.

4.4.2 Independent Sample T Test

In order to determine if there's a statistically significant difference between the means of children in private and public schools regarding acquisition of language competencies, the following hypothesis was tested. "*H₀₁: There is no significant difference in early language competencies between children in public and private pre-primary schools.*" A t-test was used to determine the difference in means scores. The hypothesis was tested using t test at 0.05 significance level and the results shown in Table 6.

Table 6:***Independent Samples Test of the Differences in Children's Language Competencies by Type of School***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Av language Competencies	Equal variances assumed	7.066	.008	16.499	252	.000	1.257	.076	1.107	1.407
	Equal variances not assumed			18.076	201.908	.000	1.257	.070	1.120	1.394

From Table 6, the difference in early language competencies between children in public schools and private schools was 1.257 with a p-value .000, two tailed). It can be concluded that there was a significant difference in early language competencies between children in public and private pre-primary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings thus imply that the type of school influences children's early language competencies.

To obtain a broad perspective regarding the influence of type of school children's acquisition of language competencies, open ended questions were presented and here are some of their views:

Do you think the type of school your child is schooling influences how you get involved your child's acquisition of language skills? If yes, how?

".....I don't know the difference in parental involvement with type of school. However, believe that parents in private schools are more involved than is in public schools, because of the kind of money they pay for services." (Public School Pre-Primary Teacher 2)

".....I guide my child do general homework not only in language but also all subjects. As part parental participation we as parents are pillars in all learning activities of pre-school and the CBC in general." (Private School Pre-Primary Teacher 8)

"..... definitely yes. I see some private schools around have wi-fi which enables children in those schools to enjoy online educative materials, as a result plus other supportive teachers, these children end up knowing how to read and write English very well compered to our children who are in public schools. Also, many parents in public schools and do not have smartphones hence accessing to the internet is difficult at home which will enable their children to access English language educative materials." (Public School Pre-Primary Teacher 4)

".....I think yes because my child's private school teacher asked us to watch with our children television educative programs like Akili and Me, and Ubongo Kids at home which enable my child to improve on listening, reading and speaking skills. I watch the programmes with my kid on Saturday. My kid is able to learn new words every time they follow the television programmes (Private School Pre-Primary Teacher 10)

From interviews, it was revealed that families with high economic status enrolled their children in private schools where they get better educational services which enhance language skills. It was further revealed that private school parents supported their children more than their counterparts from public schools. These advantaged private school children are better than children from public schools.

Brancalioni et al. (2018), who explored the expressive vocabulary achievement of learners aged between four and five years attending private and public schools,

established that children from private schools presented better outcomes in the vocabulary test than children from public schools. Furthermore, the findings of this study are supported by the conclusion of Crawford et al. (2023), who performed a systematic review in Asia and Africa to investigate the impact of private schools on learning. Their findings suggest a rather strong impact on private schools, although some empirical studies show less impact than semi-empirical studies.

Similarly, these findings are supported by Tariq and Durr-e-Nayab (2024) who conducted in Pakistan who found that only 20% of public school students show high proficiency in English, while 50% display moderate proficiency, and another 30% have low proficiency. This was further supported by Karamage (2024) conducted a study to investigate causes and effects of low English reading skills of grade three learners in Rwanda, who revealed that private schools scored better than public schools with a mean of 7.23 and 2.03 respectively.

In addition, in Kenya, Rono et al. (2020) conducted a study in Kericho County to determine the correlation between class size and the acquisition of early math skills by third graders. The findings of the study revealed that the percentage of pupils who acquired early math skills was high and there was a significant difference in the early acquisition of math skills by pupils between private and public school students. Private primary schools outperform those in public primary schools. Gruijters et al., (2020) conducted a study investigating the effect of private schooling on educational achievements. Findings of the study established that private school learners in India, Uganda and Kenya performed better than those in public schools, whereas in Pakistan,

there was no significant difference in literacy performance between learners in public and private schools. This finding contradicts the findings of the present study which found that private schools outperformed those in public schools.

The findings of the present study are contrary to the findings of Eccius-Wellman and Santana (2020), who compared children's language acquisition between children in public and private schools whose results showed that public school learners can reach the same level of language proficiency as private school learners. Similarly, Vukosi et al., (2021) established that learners from both public and private schools exhibited the same level of language competencies. Equally, Precious and Lettiah (2020) established that most learners in private and public schools had acquired the same writing competencies.

4.5 Gender and Children's Early Language Competencies

The second objective of the study was to determine the difference between gender (boy/girl) and learners' acquisition of Early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County. Thus, to understand children's early language competencies by gender, overall mean scores of difference and Independent Samples Test were generated and presented in Table 7 and Table 8 respectively.

4.5.1 Overall Mean Scores for Gender

To understand the overall mean scores difference in language competencies of learners in by gender, differences in overall mean scores of language competencies of boys and girls were generated. The results are as shown in Table 7.

Table 7:

Mean Scores in Children's Early Language Competencies by Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std Dev
Average Language Competencies	Boys	122	2.28	.654
Gender	Girls	132	2.35	.945

Table 7 indicates average language competencies between boys and girls. The result shows that female pupils were better in early language competencies with a mean score of 2.35 as compared to boys who had a mean score of 2.28 with a mean difference of 0.07. This outcome implies that mean score for girls was a bit higher than that of boys. The average language competency of both boys and girls was 2.32. To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference between the language competence means of children in children of boys and girls, a two-sample t test was generated as shown in section 4.5.2.

4.5.2 Independent Sample T Test

In order to determine if there's a statistically significant difference between the means of boys and girls regarding acquisition of language competencies, the following hypothesis was tested. "***H₀₂***: *There is no significant difference in children's early language competencies between boys and girls.*" A t-test was used to determine the difference in means scores. The hypothesis was tested using t test at 0.05 significance level and the results shown in Table 8.

Table 8:***Independent Samples Test of Children's Early Language Competencies by Gender***

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower		Upper
Average language Competencies	Equal variances assumed	43.837	.000	-.639	252	.523	-.066	.103	-.268	.137
	Equal variances not assumed			-.648	34.029	.518	-.066	.101	-.265	.134

From Table 8, the difference in early language competencies was -.066 with a p value= 0.523, two-sided). The result was not significant at 0.05 level of significance, therefore was rejected meaning that there was no significant difference in early language competency between boys and girls. Therefore, these results imply that gender did not influence children's early language competencies.

To obtain a broad perspective regarding the influence of gender on children's acquisition of language competencies, open ended questions were presented and here are some of their views:

Do you think gender of your child influences how you get involved in his/her acquisition of language skills? If yes, how?

“..... you find that girls have better listening skills than boys. This gives them an advantage of boys. Most of the girls in this class are good listeners. They are more attentive compared to their male counterparts. They often ask for clarity in case of failure to understand something well.” (Public School Pre-Primary Teacher 4)

“..... girls tend to be more obedient than boys. We reward obedient learners than disobedient ones. Since girls are rewarded more than boys, they struggle to be the best even in language competencies.” (Public School Pre-Primary Teacher 7)

“.....girls’ brains are wired in such a way that they have an advantage than boys. Because of this genetic make-up, they outperform boys. (Private School Pre-Primary Teacher 8)

Findings from interviews with pre-primary school teachers in both private and public schools pointed out key reasons which may be responsible for girls outperforming boys in language activities. The reasons raised included; girls pose better listening skills, girls are hardworking and mature than boys, girls are more of the opinion that language learning is fun than the boys, girls are more obedient than boys, girls are more agreeable than boys, girls typically have more positive learning strategies than boys and lastly, female are more motivated to learn language than boys and differences in brain activity. The above identified reasons give girls an advantage over boys in relation to acquisition of early language competencies. To determine the differences in the early language skills of boys and girls, a null hypothesis was stated and tested.

The results of this study corroborate with those of Rinaldi et al. (2021) who did a study to compare the language skills of boys and girls. The results indicated that girls perform better than boys in language skills. Similarly, McTigue (2020) conducted a study to explore gender differences in early literacy, focusing on Norwegian boys in response to formal instruction. Research showed that girls perform better than boys during the

preschool years. In addition, Fonseca et al. (2023), who performed a multinational analysis to identify gender differences in the math and reading achievement of 2nd and 3rd graders, found that girls consistently outperformed boys in reading ability.

However, the results of this study are not supported by the study of Uworwabayeho et al. (2021), who conducted a study to determine the gender gap in language skills. The results of this study indicate that boys learn better than girls. Similarly, Cherobon and Atoni (2022) conducted a study investigating the reading skills of students in public elementary schools. Research results showed that boys outperform girls in language skills. Mwoma (2017) also conducted a study to test children's reading skills. The results of the study showed that boys had slightly higher average reading scores than girls. Therefore, boys performed better than girls in terms of language skill whose results are contrary to the findings of this study.

In contrast, in Bangladesh, Noor and Bepari (2023) conducted a study to investigate the influence of gender on second language acquisition among university learners. The study tested speaking, writing, reading, and listening abilities. Research results showed that there was no significant difference between female and male learners in language skills.

4.6 Parental Engagement in Learning Activities and Children's Language Competencies

The third objective of the study was to assess the relationship between parental engagement in learning activities and learners' acquisition of early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia. To understand the influence of parental

engagement on children's early language competencies, descriptive statistics in form of percentages and Pearson correlation moment coefficient were generated as shown in as shown in the next section.

4.6.1 Views on Parental Engagement and Children's Early Language Competencies

The questionnaire had 10 items which were subjected to four-point Likert scale responses whereby parents of pre-primary school learners were required to specify the degree to which they participated in their child's school activities to develop language skills.

Descriptive statistics involving percentages were used to summarize the data obtained as Table 9 shows.

Table 9:***Frequencies in Parental Engagement in Early Language Learning Activities***

Description	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Sometimes (%)	Always (%)
I enhance my child's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class	44.5	20.9	18.5	16.1
I enhance my child's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class	30.3	32.7	29.5	7.5
I enhance my child's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment	30.3	26.8	31.9	11.0
I enhance my child's ability in solving simple riddles	27.2	31.1	32.3	9.4
I enhance my child's ability in sitting appropriately when reading	30.7	28.7	29.5	11.0
I enhance my child's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading	42.9	27.6	17.7	11.8
I enhance my child's ability in reading short sentences	40.9	29.9	20.1	9.1
I enhance my child's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words	25.2	33.1	27.6	14.2
I enhance my child's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case	15.4	40.2	26.4	18.1
I enhance my child's ability in writing simple cursive patterns	25.6	32.7	24.4	17.3
Average parental engagement	31.3	30.4	27.7%	12.7

The first indicator sought to establish the extent to which parents enhance my child's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class. In exploring

the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class. Results in Table 9 revealed that more than two-thirds (44.5%) never enhanced their children's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class, slightly more than a fifth (20.9%) rarely, almost a fifth (18.5%) sometimes and almost a fifth (16.1%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhance my child's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class which suggests their children are likely to score low in listening skills.

The second item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class. Results in Table 9 revealed that around a third (30.3%) never enhanced their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class, slightly more than a third (32.7%) rarely, almost a third (29.5%) sometimes and slightly more than one in twenty (7.5%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class which suggests their children are likely to score low in listening and speaking skills.

The third item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment. Results in Table 9 revealed that around a third (30.3%) never enhanced their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment, slightly more than a quarter (26.8%) rarely, slightly more than a third (31.9%) sometimes and a tenth (10%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate

in enhancing their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment which suggests their children are likely to score low in listening and speaking skills.

The fourth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a quarter (27.2%) never participated in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles, slightly more than a third (31.1%) rarely, slightly more than a third (32.3%) sometimes and almost a tenth (9.4%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles which suggests their children are likely to score low in listening and speaking skills.

The fifth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading. Results in Table 9 revealed that around a third (27.2%) participated in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading, around a third (30.7%) rarely, almost a third (28.7%), almost a third (29.5%) and slightly more than a tenth (11.0%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading which suggests their children are likely to score low in reading skill.

The sixth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a quarter (27.2%) never participated in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when

reading, slightly more than two-thirds (42.9%) rarely, slightly less than a third (27.6%), almost a fifth (17.7%) sometimes and slightly more than a tenth (11.8%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading which suggests their children are likely to score low in reading skill.

The seventh item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a third (40.9%) never participated in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences, almost a third (29.9 %) rarely, around a fifth (20.9%) sometimes and almost a tenth (9.1%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences which suggests their children are likely to score low in reading skill.

The eighth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words. Results in Table 9 revealed that around a quarter (25.2%) participated in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words, slightly more than a third (33.1%) rarely, almost a third (27.6%) sometimes and slightly more than one in ten (14.2%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words which suggests their children are likely to score low in reading skill.

The ninth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a tenth (15.4 %) parents participated in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case, slightly more than a third (40.2%) rarely, slightly more than a quarter (26.4%) and almost a fifth (18.1%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case which suggests their children are likely to score low in reading and writing skills.

The tenth item sought to exploring the extent to which parents participated in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a quarter (25.6%) participated in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns, slightly more than a third (32.7%) rarely, almost a quarter (24.4%) and almost a fifth (17.3%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns which suggests their children are likely to score low in writing skill.

Averagely, parents' responses about being involved in their children's acquisition of early language skills. Results in Table 9 revealed that slightly more than a third (31.3%) never children's acquisition of early language skills, slightly more than a third (30.4%) rarely, almost a third (27.7%) sometimes and (12.7%) always. Majority of the parents did not participate in their children's acquisition of early language skills which suggests their children are likely to score low in language skills.

Nevertheless, in order to find out if there was any significant relationship between parental home communication and learners' acquisition of CBC core-competencies. A hypothesis was tested as shown in sub-section 4.3.2.

4.6.2 Relationship between Parental Engagement and Learners' Acquisition Early Language Competencies

The study further sought to establish whether there is a relationship between variables, Pearson correlation moment coefficient was used to test the hypothesis that stated;

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between parental engagement in learning activities and children's early language competencies.

The result was shown in Table 10.

Table 10:

Correlation Between Parental Engagement and Children's Early Language Competencies

			Average language competencies	Average parental engagement
Average language competencies	Pearson Correlation		1	.832**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
	N		254	254
Average parental engagement	Pearson Correlation		.832**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	
	N		254	254

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 10 indicate that the coefficient correlation between parental engagement and children's early language competencies was =.832 with a *p* value.000. These results indicated that the relationship between parental engagement and language

competencies was high and the relationship between parental engagement and children's language competencies was significant. As a result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between parental engagement and children's early language competencies was rejected. The assumption which indicated that there was a relationship between parental engagement in children's education and children's early language competencies was upheld. These results also denote that parental engagement influenced children's early language competencies language competencies.

The study further sought to establish PP II teachers' perspectives on parental engagement on learners' acquisition of language competencies. Through interviews, the respondents provided their views in relation to the research questions presented.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some parents are not interested in asking their children to retell what they learnt in in class in areas related to language skills. Instead, I usually tell my learners to tell their parents what new English words they have learned in school. ." (Private school teacher T1)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents did not ask their children to listen carefully in school so that they can retell what they have learnt once they have come home.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some children tell me that their parents are interested in listening new poems children in school. On child told me that his mother asks him to teach her new poems they have learnt in school. The child also asks the mother to teach him new poems" (Private school teacher T3)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were interested in enhancing their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some children tell me that their parents like teaching then new words related to objects birds and animals." (Public school teacher T2)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were involved in enhancing their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some children tell me that their parents are not interested in helping them solve riddles since most them do not know the correct responses to the riddles." (Public school teacher T1)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents are not involved in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some parents do not know the appropriate sitting position for reading and writing. Therefore, parents are not able to guide their children on the appropriate reading and writing positions." (Public school teacher T4)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that parents are not involved in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading. One of the teachers testified that:

"...some parents who want their children to know how to read earlier, guide their children on how to move eyes on scripts. This is usually done at home after children have gone home." (Private school teacher T3)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were involved in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences. Two of the teachers testified that:

"...some parents who are totally uninvolved in their children learning language activities. Most of these parents felt that it is my responsibility as a teacher to

ensure that their children have mastered reading skills. These parents do not engage in their children's reading activities at home whenever requested. They don't have time for their children." (Public school teacher T1)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words. One of the teachers testified that:

"...a good number of parents are really doing a good job in helping their children to master their names and write simple words. As you private children are supposed to be a head of their counterparts in public schools because their parents pay fees and expect better results. Therefore, when you ask them to help their children learn at home, they feel that he schools wants their children to excel even more." (Private school teacher T5)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents are involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case. One of the teachers testified that:

"...there has been a lot of confusion revolving around the type of letters children must know first. Some officers told us to start with sounds in which in their argument that sounds are small letters. This was very wrong till recently were told that capital and small letters are same letters and a child must know first letters before moving to sounds, therefore, initially, we did not involve parents in teaching of letters till recently." (Private school teacher T4)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case.

Some teachers however, reported that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns. One of the teachers testified that:

“...writing being a complex skill, we discouraged parents from engaging themselves in helping their children in writing patterns even cursives. The main reason is that some parents are unable to shape letters conventionally. Therefore, the art of writing still remains to be the class teachers' work.” (Private school teacher T1)

From the excerpt above, it can be noted that some parents were or were not involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns.

The findings of this study is supported by Gay et al. (2020), who studied the effects of parental involvement on children's reading skills. Research shows that parental involvement has a positive and significant impact on learners' acquisition of language skills. Similarly, Lau and Richards (2021), who studied the effects of the home literacy environment on children's literacy and English skills using analytic design, found that engagement in family background is strongly correlated with learners' acquisition and development of alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, and vocabulary. Wong and Tan (2021) also studied parents as multidimensional reading partners in the development of young children's reading ability. The results of the articles show that parental involvement facilitates reading comprehension, fluency, and interest in children.

Furthermore, Iroegbu and Igweike (2020) studied the effect of parental involvement on the acquisition of reading skills of primary school students. Research results show that there was a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and acquisition of reading skills. Gichana et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the relationship between home communication and literacy acquisition of preschool students. Research shows that there was a statistically significant positive relationship between home communication and the acquisition of reading and writing skills in preschool learners, results which are similar to the findings of this study.

Furthermore, these findings are supported by a study conducted in China by Yang and Chen (2023), who conducted a meta-analysis to determine the influence of parental involvement on students' writing ability. Research results show a positive and meaningful relationship between parental involvement and learners' writing ability. Also in Tanzania, Nyang'anyi and Bhalalusesa (2023) carried out a study on parental participatory approaches to primary school students' reading and writing skills. Research results showed that parental involvement affects learners' language ability. In addition, in Zambia, Simweleba and Serpell (2020) conducted a study to investigate the effect of parental involvement on the academic achievement of 4th-grade students in Mathematics and Chitonga. The results of the study showed that parental involvement improved student performance.

Furthermore, the results are supported by a study conducted in Tanzania, by Kigobe et al. (2021) who conducted a study to investigate the impact of parental involvement interventions to promote literacy in second-grade students. Research results show that the

intervention group has significantly improved in decoding skills, reading fluency, and reading comprehension before and after the intervention. This means that parental involvement influences learning outcomes. In addition, in Kenya, Ngangi et al. (2023) conducted a review to investigate the influence of parents' role in academic supervision on student achievement in public high schools in the Kangundo sub-county. The results established a weak positive association between the role of parents in monitoring academic performance and student achievement, results which are contrary to the finding of this study.

The results of this study also contradicted the conclusions of Geraldina et al. (2022), who studied the effect of parental involvement on the pre-reading skills of Kiswahili learners. The results showed no statistically significant difference in parental involvement in high-performing schools and parents in low-performing schools in educational activities. In addition, in China, Feng and Tan (2022) conducted a study to explore the understanding of the impact of parental involvement on preschool students' acquisition of language skills. Research results showed that communication between home and school negatively predicted learning approaches and language skills.

Interview outcomes from the present study showed that, buying storybooks, telling children stories, collaborating with teachers in language activities, guiding children in language activities, guiding children to access educative language programs on television, assisting children to read at home and reading to children. This result is similar to that of Friedland (2019) investigated the influence of home literacy environment on early grade reading of learners from rural Rwanda using randomized control trial. The study revealed

that parental role in reading to their children significantly predicts acquisition of early language competencies. Similarly, Sumanti and Muljani (2021) conducted a study to investigate the effect of parental engagement on grade three learners' English self-efficacy. The results showed that parents' involvement at home encouraged their children to learn English language.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the summary of the results and inferences made from research findings. It further presents the conclusions and recommendations, made in line with study objectives. The chapter also outlines suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This study has provided information regarding learners' language acquisition levels, influence of type school on learners' language acquisition levels, influence of gender on learners' language acquisition levels and influence of parental engagement on learners' language acquisition levels. The study findings are presented as follows:

5.1.1 Acquisition of Early Language Competencies

Findings of this study revealed that majority of PP II learners did not meet the expected language competency levels. Majority of them were at below expectation (BE) and approaching expectation (AE) while few were at meeting expectation (ME) and exceeding expectation (EE). Lack of adequate early language competencies is likely to hinder learning progress in later years of schooling.

5.1.2 Type of School and Acquisition of Early Language Competencies

The first objective sought to establish differences in early language acquisition and school type. Early language competencies of learners in private pre-primary schools was higher than that of learners in public pre-primary schools. The difference in early

language competencies between children in public and private pre-primary schools was significant. This implies that learners in public schools should be given more opportunities to practice language skills to fill the gap between children in private and public schools.

5.1.3 Gender and Acquisition of Early Language Competencies

The second objective sought to establish differences in early language acquisition and gender. The result was not significant therefore was rejected meaning that there was no significant difference in early language competency between boys and girls. Therefore, these results imply that gender did not influence children's early language competencies. This implies that both boys and girls should be given equal opportunities in acquiring language competencies.

5.1.4 Parental Engagement and Acquisition of Early Language Competencies

The third objective sought to establish the influence of parental engagement on acquisition of early language competencies. The relationship between parental engagement and children's language competencies was significant. Parental engagement influences their children's acquisition of early language skills. This implies that parents should be encouraged and given more opportunities to be involved in their children's acquisition of early language skills.

5.2 Conclusions

Findings from this study have clearly shown that pre-primary II learners acquisition of early language skills in Busia County was low. In conclusion, it can be stated that majority of the children's early language competencies were inadequate.

More precisely, in the first objective which sought to find out the difference in school type and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County, it was concluded that school type influences acquisition of early language skills. Findings revealed that early language competencies of learners in private pre-primary schools were higher than that of their counterparts in public pre-primary schools. Thus, learners in private schools outperformed their counterparts in public schools.

The second objective sought to find out the difference in gender and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County. It was concluded that gender difference does not influence learners' acquisition of early language skills. Being a boy a boy or a girl has no influence of the level of language acquisition.

The third or last objective sought to assess the relationship between parental engagement and pre-primary school learners' acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County. The study concluded that parental engagement influences pre-primary II learners' acquisition of language competencies.

5.3 Recommendations of the Study

The following are the recommendations made based on this study's findings:

5.3.1 Recommendations for Teachers

Public pre-primary school teachers to;

- i. Encourage parental involvement, enhance educational equity and educational quality and student outcomes, resource disparities.
- ii. Encourage equity and access, create parental and community awareness, employ differentiated instruction and conduct early intervention in language related skills.
- iii. Avoid bias and stereotypes, improve classroom management and participation of all learners and conduct proper language curriculum planning,
- iv. Reinforcement of learning language outside the classroom, by enhancing strong home-school connection; identify early of language delays and improve learners' engagement and confidence in language.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Parents

- i. Parents of both public and private pre-primary schools should work closely with teachers to promote the development of children's early language competencies. This is because parental involvement enhanced acquisition of early language competencies of pre-primary school learners.
- ii. Parents having children in public schools should be more involved in activities for developing their children's early language competencies. This is because the findings revealed that parental engagement of parents in public schools was low.
- iii. Parents to form foundation for their children' language development, choose the right schools and tailor support towards improving acquisition of language skills.

- iv. Encourage early language interventions and work with teachers to promote development of language skills.
- v. Strengthens the emotional connection with their children regardless of their pace of language development.

5.3.3 Recommendations for School Managers and Administrators

- i. Management of both public private pre-primary schools should be encouraged to be involved in their children's acquisition of early language competencies since the study established a significant positive relationship between parental engagement and early acquisition of language competencies.
- ii. School administrators and managers should organize seminars for parents to educate them on how they can be involved in their children's acquisition of early language competencies. They should also be trained on how to access educative language resources from internet, where to buy language resources and how to find developmentally appropriate language programs on television.
- iii. Do benchmarking and setting language performance goals, review and monitor the implementation of language activity learning area.
- iv. Initiate language training workshops for their teachers on in early language acquisition techniques.
- v. Strengthen home-school partnerships by encouraging parental involvement in literacy development at home.

- vi. Develop and implement strong monitoring and evaluation systems to track language development progress in early grades.
- vii. Ensure that all children regardless of socioeconomic background, receive high-quality early language instruction in their schools.
- viii. Develop and implement regular and strong assessment and data analysis frameworks to inform instruction and interventions.
- ix. Prioritize budgeting for early literacy tools and digital resources.

5.3.4 Recommendations for Policy Makers in the Ministry of Education

- i. The Ministry of Education needs to initiate programs in schools where parents are encouraged to be actively involved in the acquisition of their children's early language competencies. The language activity programs should have activities where learners are supposed to work with their parents/guardians to accomplish the language tasks. Similarly, the language programs should have language projects where parents work together with their children in building language competencies.
- ii. Conduct workshops for parents to sensitize them on the importance of being involved in their children's acquisition of language language competencies and learning in general and the negative effects of non-involvement.

5.3.5 Recommendations for County Governments

- i. County government to re-evaluate funding and resource allocation in pre-primary schools.
- ii. Develop long-term socioeconomic impact on pre-primary school education, as well as develop and initiate policies and programmes geared towards improving the acquisition of early language skills.
- iii. County government to create partnerships or knowledge-sharing platforms between public and private institutions on language skills.
- iv. County government to conduct audits and increase learners' assessments on language competencies at pre-primary school level.
- v. County government to develop language strategic intervention programmes, develop intervention programmes tailored towards improving language acquisition.
- vi. Ensure education equity by preventing bias and support all children to acquire language competencies.
- vii. Enhance parental engagement by promoting realistic expectations and responsibilities of parenting.
- viii. Develop and improve policy and advocacy influencing equitable acquisition of early language skills.

5.3.6 Recommendations for Teacher Trainers

Teacher Trainers to;

- i. Identifying best practices from high performing schools and improving training content and methods,
- ii. Put more emphasis on foundational literacy, encouraging reflective practice and highlight the role of teacher quality and training.
- iii. Identify gaps in public school training and emphasize on differentiated instruction in supporting early identification of language needs,
- iv. Promote inclusive, stereotype-free classrooms, empowering teachers to meet all learners where they are, lays a foundation for effective teaching practices and enhances collaborative teaching models.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

- i. The current study was conducted only Busia County. Hence a more comprehensive study should be done in pre-primary schools in other counties to generate more empirical results.
- ii. A study could be done to investigate the influence different gender of parents on acquisition of early language competencies in Busia County.
- iii. A study could also be conducted in Busia County employing Joyce Epstein's (2005) theory focusing on the six levels of parental involvement.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: MAIL TO THE INSTITUTIONS

Dear Sir/madam,

MAIL OF AUTHORIZATION

My name is Consolata Nabwire Onyango a Ph.D. student at Kenyatta University at the school of Education (Early Childhood Education). I'm at present directing a review that pertains to the Influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on children's early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County. The respondents of this study will include pre-primary II teachers and also language achievement levels will be obtained from teachers' records. I would be exceptionally thankful if you would allow me to utilize your school as one of the chosen schools. I promise great confidentiality of all responses that will be furnished to me by your participants.

I expect for your consent and backing to complete the study in your school.

Yours sincerely,

Consolata Nabwire Onyango.

(Student)

INFORMANT ACCORD:

I have perused and perceived the subtleties of the research as per this letter and agree that my school will take part in this study.

Signature..... data

If you do not wish your school to participate, sign the designated line below.

I DO NOT allow my school to participate. _____

APPENDIX II: INFORMED CONSENT TO PRE-PRIMARY CLASS TEACHER

Dear class teacher,

My name is Consolata Nabwire Onyango a Ph.D. student at Kenyatta University at the school of Education (Early Childhood Education). I'm at present directing a review that pertains to the influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on children's early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County.

I'm presently looking for respondents to participate in the proposed research in which you will finish up a concise survey. There are no expenses or dangers to you by accepting this evaluation as all reactions will stay confidential and results will be summed up. I expect your consent and backing to complete the study.

INFORMANT ACCORD:

I have read and understood all the details of this consent form and agree to take part in this study.

Sign _____ Date

If you don't want to partake in the review, sign the assigned line beneath.

Class teacher's sign _____

APPENDIX III: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS

You have been sampled to partake in this review that tries to acquire data on the influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on children’s early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County. This examination is for instructive purposes.

If you wish to participate in this anticipated research, you will be needed to react to inquiries questions that will require around 45 minutes. Your reactions will generally not be distinguished by your name and all reactions will be treated with great privacy. Partaking in the review is intentional. Having perceived the content of this review, I thus acknowledge - - - -/not acknowledge - - - - - to participate (tick properly).

Sign of informant _____ Date _____

APPENDIX IV: PARENTAL CONSENT TO ACCESS CHILD RECORDS

Dear Parent,

My name is Consolata Nabwire Onyango a Ph.D. student at Kenyatta University at the school of Education (Early Childhood Education). Currently, I am conducting a study on the “Influence of school type, gender and parental engagement on children’s early language competencies in pre-primary schools in Busia County, Kenya.”

Your child’s Early Language Competency Assessment information will be obtained from the class teacher using an Observation Checklist. Your child’s language competency levels in the four language skills will be obtained from teachers’ progress records. Information from your child’s acquisition of language skills will be kept confidential.

Your signature below shows that you have decided to allow the researcher to obtain the required language performance levels of your child from the class teachers.

.....

I agree to allow the researcher obtain my child’s language performance levels.

I do not allow the researcher obtain my child’s language performance levels.

Name of Child: _____

Name of Parent/Guardian: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX V: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRE PRIMARY II TEACHERS

Part I: Interview guide on early language competencies

- i) How are the learners' competences in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class? Give reasons for your answers.
- ii) How are the learners' ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class? Give reasons for your answers.
- iii) How are the learners' competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment? Give reasons for your answers.
- iv) How are the learners' ability in solving simple riddles? Give reasons for your answers.
- v) How are the learner's ability in sitting appropriately when reading? Give reasons for your answers.
- vi) How are the learners' ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading? Give reasons for your answers.
- viii) How are the learner's ability in reading short sentences? Give reasons for your answers.
- ix) How are the learners' ability in writing own name and three to four letter words? Give reasons for your answers.
- x) How are the learner's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case? Give reasons for your answers.
- xi) How are the learners' ability in writing simple cursive patterns? Give reasons for your answers.

Part II: Interview guide on parental engagement on learners' acquisition of language competencies

- (i) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class?
- (ii) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class?
- (iii) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment?
- (iv) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in solving simple riddles?
- (v) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in sitting appropriately when reading?
- (vi) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading?
- (vii) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in reading short sentences?
- (viii) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing own name and three to four letter words?
- (ix) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case?
- (x) How are parents involved in enhancing their children's ability in writing simple cursive patterns?

APPENDIX VI (A): QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

Instructions

- There is no accurate or inaccurate reply. We are keen on your own insight and assessment.
- Remember that by participating in this review, you are adding as far as anyone is concerned about advancing children’s early language competencies.

Section A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Gender Male Female
- Age Below 20 Between 20-30 Between 30-40 Between 40-50 above 50
- Occupation Employed Not employed
- Type of school Public Private
- Gender of your child Male Female

Section B: PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

The coding scale below will be applied. Tick appropriately.

1. Never (N) 2. Rarely (R) 3. Sometimes (S) 4. Always (A)

S/N	ITEMS	1	2	3	4
1	I enhance my child’s ability in addressing questions carefully after listening experience in class				
2	I enhance my child’s ability in reciting poems and rhymes with actions in class				
3	I enhance my child’s competence in naming objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment				
4	I enhance my child’s ability in solving simple riddles				
5	I enhance my child’s ability in sitting appropriately when reading				
6	I enhance my child’s ability in demonstrating left right eye orientation when reading				
7	I enhance my child’s ability in reading short sentences				
8	I enhance my child’s ability in writing own name and three to four letter words				
9	I enhance my child’s competence in matching uppercase letters with corresponding lower case				
10	I enhance my child’s ability in writing simple cursive patterns				

(a) Do you think the type of school your child is schooling influences how you get involved your child's acquisition of language skills? If yes, how?.....
.....
.....
.....

(b) Do you think gender of your child influences how you get involved in his/her acquisition of language skills? If yes, how?.....
.....
.....
.....

NYONGEZA VI(B): DODOSO KWA WAZAZI (KISWAHILI VERSION)

Maagizo

- ❖ Hakuna jibu sahihi au lisilo na uhakika. Tunaenzi bidii na umakinifu wa tathmini yako.
- ❖ Kumbuka kwamba kwa kushiriki katika hakiki hii, unasaidia kendeleza masomo ya watoto kupokea lugha kwa umahiri.

Section A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sehemu A: TAARIFA BINAFSI

- Jinsia Mwanume Mwanamke
- Umri Chini ya 20 Kati ya 20-30 Kati ya 30-40 Kati ya 40-50
- Kazi Umeajiriwa Hujaajiriwa
- Aina ya shule mtoto anasome: Shule ya umma Shule ya Kibinafsi
- Jinsia ya mtoto: Kiume Kike

Sehemu B: UCHUMBA WA WAZAZI

Njia ya usimbaji iliyo hapa chini itatumika Weka Jibu ipasavyo. Kamwe (1), Mara chache (2) Wakati mwingine (3) 4. Kila wakati (4)

HOJA	MAMBO	1	2	3	4
1.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kujibu maswali kwa uangalifu baada ya kusikiliza darasani.				
2.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kukariri mashairi na nyimbo zenye vitendo darasani.				
3.	Ninaongeza umahiri wa mtoto wangu katika kutaja vitu, viumbe, watu na rangi katika mazingira.				
4.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kutatua vitendawili rahisi.				
5.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kuketi ipasavyo wakati wa kusoma.				
6.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kuonyesha mwelekeo sahihi wa jicho la kushoto na kulia wakati wa kusoma.				
7.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kusoma sentensi fupi.				
8.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kuandika jina lake mwenyewe na maneno ya herufi tatu hadi nne				
9.	Ninaongeza umahiri wa mtoto wangu katika kulinganisha herufi kubwa na herufi ndogo zinazolingana.				
10.	Ninaongeza uwezo wa mtoto wangu katika kuandika michoro sahili ya herufi za mwandiko wa kuunganisha.				

(a) Je, unafikiri aina ya shule huathiri ushiriki wako katika uzoefu wa kupata ujuzi wa lugha ya Kiingereza? Kama ndiyo, vipi?.....

.....

(b) Je, unafikiri jinsia ya mtoto wako huathiri ushiriki wako katika uzoefu wa kupata ujuzi wa lugha ya Kiingereza? Kama ndiyo, vipi?.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX VII: RESEARCHER'S CHECKLIST FOR EARLY LANGUAGE

COMPETENCIES

Rating of the (172 + 82 = 254) learners' ability will be done by the researcher, through ticking in the appropriate box, after analyzing their assessment records under the teachers' custody. The coding scale below will be applied.

1. Below Expectation (BE) 2. Approaching Expectation (AE) 3. Meeting Expectation (ME) 4. Exceeding Expectation (EE)

SN	Learner's abilities	BE	AE	ME	EE
1	Can address questions carefully after a listening experience in class				
2	Can recite poems and rhymes with actions in class				
3	Can name objects, creatures, individuals and colours in the environment				
4	Can solve simple riddles				
5	Can sit appropriately when reading				
6	Can demonstrate left right eye orientation when reading				
7	Can read short sentences				
8	Can write own name and three to four letter words				
9	Can match uppercase letters with corresponding lower case				
10	Can write simple cursive patterns				

APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER (G S)



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: kubps@yahoo.com
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: E83/37157/17

Date: 9th December, 2021

The Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MS.CONSOLOATA N. ONYANGO -REG. NO. E83/37157/17

I write to introduce Ms. Onyango who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for a Ph.D. degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood & Special Needs Education in the School of Education.

Ms. Onyango intends to conduct research for Ph.D. thesis entitled "Correlation between Parental Engagement and Children's Early Language Competencies in Pre-Primary Schools in Busia County, Kenya".

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. B. SHIBA KIMANI
DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

EM/cao

APPENDIX IX: APPROVAL RESEARCH LETTER



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: kubps@yahoo.com
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 810901 Ext. 57530

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 0th December, 2021

TO: Ms. Consolata N. Onyango
C/o Department of Early Childhood &
Special Needs Educ
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

REF: E83/S7157/17

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

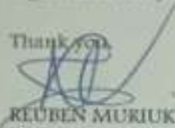
This is to inform you that the Graduate School Board at its meeting 29th November, 2021 approved your Ph.D. Research Proposal entitled "Correlation between Parental Engagement and Children's Early Language Competencies in Pre-Primary Schools in Busia County, Kenya".

You may now proceed with your Data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed supervision Tracking and Progress Report Forms. The Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

By copy of this letter, the Registrar (Academic) is hereby requested to grant you substantive registration for your Ph.D. studies.

Thank you


RUBEN MURIUKI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Department of Early Childhood & Special Needs Education
Registrar (Academic) Att; Mr. Richard Chweya

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Nyakwar Abegi
C/o Department of Early Childhood & Special Needs Edu.
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
2. Dr. Juliet Mugo
C/o Department of Early Childhood & Special Needs Edu.
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

EM/cao

APPENDIX X: RESEARCH PERMIT FROM NACOSTI


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 152730 Date of Issue: 21/January/2022

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms. CONSOLATA NABWIRE ONYANGO of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research in Busia on the topic: CORRELATION BETWEEN PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND CHILDREN'S EARLY LANGUAGE COMPETENCIES IN PREPRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUSIA COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 21/January/2023.

License No: NACOSTI/P/22/15309

152730
Applicant Identification Number


Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.

APPENDIX XI: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER (BUSIA DCC)

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION
State Department for Internal Security and National Administration

Email: ccbusia@gmail.com	County Commissioner's Office
Telephone: 055 – 22598	Busia County
Fax: 055 - 22231	P.O. Box 14 – 50400
When replying please quote:	Busia (K)

Ref No: ADM 15/27 VOL. I (24) Date: 15th July, 2022

Deputy County Commissioner
SAMIA SUBCOUNTY

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.

Following research authorization vide Director General National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) letter Ref No. 152730 dated 21st January, 2022 authorizing research on "Correlation Between Parental Engagement and Children's early Language Competencies in Preprimary schools in Busia County, Kenya."

This is to inform you that Ms. Consolata Nabwire Onyango has been authorized to carry out research in Busia County for the period ending January, 2023.


Adano Kachu Duba
For: County Commissioner
BUSIA COUNTY



Copy: -

Ms. Consolata Nabwire Onyango

County Commissioner - Busia County.

APPENDIX XII: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER (SCDE)



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION**

Telephone: 055-22152
Fax: 055-22152
When replying please quote
Email: cdebusia@gmail.com

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
BUSIA COUNTY
P.O. BOX 15 - 50400
BUSIA (K)

15th July, 2022

Ref No. BSA/CDE/ED/9/6/(230)

Sub-County Director of Education
SAMIA

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

This office is in receipt of letter from Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) authorizing research on "**Correlation between parental engagement and children's Early Language Competencies in Pre-primary schools in Busia County, Kenya**" in your sub-county for the period ending 21st January, 2023.

This is to inform you that Ms. Consolata N. Onyango has been authorized to conduct the research. Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.


NANCY AFANDI
COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
BUSIA COUNTY



APPENDIX XIII: RESEARCH AREA

