Constructivism-Based Guiding Principles and Language Literacy among Pre-Primary Schools in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya

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Abstract: *The study aimed to determine the relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy among pre-primary learners in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya. The study employed correlational and descriptive survey designs, guided by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory and Gagné's Instructional Design Theory. The target population was 9,224 participants including: teachers, headteachers and county ECDE directors from Homabay, Kisii and Nyamira counties. A proportional sample of 384 respondents was selected using simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Data collection involved questionnaires, validated through expert judgment and reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.83. Analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27.0, applying descriptive statistics and logistic regression at α = 0.05. Findings indicated that constructivism-based guiding principles significantly predicted language literacy (Waldχ²(1) =4.400, p=0.036, Exp(B)=2.117). The study recommended enhanced adoption of constructivism-based guiding principles to promote interactive and learner-centered language acquisition practices.*

Keywords: *Competence Based Education, Constructivism-Based Guiding Principles, Language Literacy, Pre-Primay Schools, Relationship ,language acquisition, learner-centered*

1. INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a crucial period for language acquisition as children develop literacy skills that influence their future academic success and personal growth. A research by Johnston (2023) shows that children exposed to rich language environments from an early age are more likely to excel in school and develop strong cognitive abilities. Conversely, those who start school with limited language skills often struggle to keep pace with their peers, affecting their long-term educational and career opportunities (Elek et al., 2022). Recognizing the importance of early literacy, education systems worldwide are adopting competence based education guiding principles to strengthen language literacy in pre-primary education. A study by Saydalievna (2022) highlighted that the pre-primary stage is when children have the greatest potential for acquiring language skills, making it essential to provide structured and engaging learning experiences. Teachers, parents, community and school environments play a critical role in shaping a child's language literacy, with factors such as teaching strategies, home support and resource availability influencing language literacy.

Studies document the significance of developing language skills earlier in a child's life. UNESCO (2021) recognized acquisition of literacy skills early in life and advocated for its recognition as a global human rights issue. According to the world body, language abilities are foundational for a host of cognitive, behavioral and social-emotional outcomes. Thus, literacy in widely spoken languages such as English, enhances learners' chances of accessing global knowledge and economic opportunities. Therefore, it is critical to provide experiences that foster language acquisition across early learning settings an observation supported by Finders, Wilson and Duncan (2023). The study by Mirna and Silvija (2021) as well as Barasa (2023) emphasized the importance of environment, continuity and the intensity of instruction in supporting the process of early language literacy in children. They stress that a language-rich environment is pivotal for fostering literacy skills and it involves providing children with ample opportunities to engage in dialogue, express ideas and encounter language in everyday contexts. Creating such environments within pre-primary schools as well as promoting similar practices in children's families is vital for developing proficient language learners.

The process of implementing language literacy entails acquisition of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Bunch, Kibler & Pimentel, 2012; Galaczi, 2018). The development of these skills are the foundation for any creative and purposeful expression in language. The four language literacy skills are further categorized either as oral language skills (listening and speaking) or written language skills (reading and writing). Listening and reading are also called receptive skills (the learner receives communication in an oral or written form of language) while speaking and writing are expressive skills (the learner expresses herself/himself using the oral or written form of language). The development of each of these skills is significant for the language and literacy development of the child. It is imperative that the development of the four language skills be facilitated in order to ensure holistic development of the learner.

Listening skill is a foundational skill in language literacy, yet it often receives less instructional emphasis compared to reading and writing. Osa-Omoregie (2024) conducted a study in Nigeria to investigate the effects of listening comprehension strategies on junior secondary school students' achievement in English Studies. The study emphasized on the importance of explicit strategy instruction in enhancing learners' listening abilities. Findings revealed that students taught listening strategies significantly outperformed, with female students achieving higher scores than males. The study concluded that integrating listening comprehension strategies into English language instruction not only improves learners' overall achievement but also helps address gender differences in performance. These findings highlights the value of learner-centered approaches aligned with competence-based education, where explicit strategy training equips students with practical tools for developing essential communication skills.

Speaking skill is a cornerstone of early childhood development worldwide, as they enable children to express needs, share ideas and engage in social interactions that shape cognitive, social and emotional growth. Research consistently shows that strong oral language in preschool years is closely linked to later language literacy, with vocabulary, fluency and narrative abilities laying the groundwork for successful reading and writing in primary school (Lervåg et al., 2021). Beyond academic benefits, speaking fosters confidence and participation, empowering children to interact with peers and adults, negotiate meaning and build relationships that are essential for lifelong learning and school readiness (Dickinson, Nesbitt & Hofer, 2019; Snow, 2023). These findings highlight the universal importance of developing speaking skills in early childhood as a foundation for competence-based education and holistic development.

Literacy skills related to reading play a crucial role in enabling children to receive, interpret, classify and critically evaluate information, particularly in today's information-saturated society (Dezuanni, 2021). Reading is not merely a foundational academic skill; it is an essential life competency. For children, the ability to read fluently and with understanding is a powerful predictor of future educational success and lifelong learning. Reading supports the development of critical thinking, fosters imagination, and enhances communication abilities. In early childhood, it forms the bedrock upon which other forms of literacy: such as writing, speaking and digital literacy are built. As children engage with diverse texts, they learn to make connections between ideas, understand different perspectives and build the vocabulary and comprehension skills necessary for advanced learning.

Writing skill is a critical component of early childhood education, as they provide young learners with tools for self-expression, communication and the foundation for later language literacy achievement. Emergent writing activities such as scribbling, drawing and forming letters play a vital role in linking oral language to print and fostering phonological awareness (Puranik & Lonigan, 2012). According to the study by Bingham, Quinn and Gerde (2017) highlighted that children who engage in early writing tasks demonstrate stronger reading outcomes in primary school, since early writing predicts later spelling, decoding and comprehension skills. More recent longitudinal studies confirm that preschool writing instruction that emphasizes fine motor practice, letter formation and meaning-making significantly enhances children's literacy readiness and overall academic performance (Gerde, Bingham & Wasik, 2021). Writing nurtures creativity, confidence and problem-solving abilities, aligning with competence-based education principles that view communication as a lifelong skill. Similarly, Opinde (2016) in a study set to identify the language related barriers in teacher-child interaction in preschools observed several difficulties faced by preschool teachers when instructing children in language literacy classes. These studies thus confirm that language instruction in early

years education faces a number of challenges in need of intervention. In Kenya, implementation of the Competence Based Education (CBE) sought to overcome the challenges faced in acquisition of language skills. It embodies a significant transformation in educational methodology, arising from enhancements applied to the previous curriculum 8-4-4 framework (KICD, 2017; Mauki, Kitur, Ireri, & Ngala, 2020; Njeng'ere, 2020). Through implementation of CBE guiding principles as the foundational beliefs that shape the curriculum's design and implementation, it aimed at fostering well-rounded and competent learners. The Basic Education Curriculum Framework emphasizes on guiding principles as one of the pillars of the curriculum to improve acquisition of language literacy skills among learners generally and ECDE learners in particular (Muchira, Morris, Wawire & Oh, 2023). The competence based guiding principles include: constructivism-based guiding principle of opportunity, excellence and differentiated curriculum (Kenya Institute of Curriculum development (KICD, 2017). This foundational competence based guiding principles ought to be carefully customized to enhance effective and engaging language literacy.

Constructivism is a learner-centered theory of education, as it positions learners at the center of the instructional process and views knowledge as actively constructed by the learner rather than passively received from the teacher (Thomas & Schweisfurth, 2021). By encouraging learners to engage in reading, writing and discussion, constructivist approaches promote deeper comprehension, critical thinking and communication skills, while teachers act as facilitators who design meaningful experiences, scaffold learning and support dialogue to gradually empower students to become independent readers and thinkers. A study by Seh (2021) in Galilee region of Israel, further supports the effectiveness of constructivist teaching model in strengthening reading skills. The study found significant improvements in reading comprehension among students exposed to constructivist strategies. These findings underscore the value of integrating constructivist approaches into language curricula, particularly in Arabic language education, where interactive and student-centered strategies can bridge the gap between learning and application. The study emphasized on the relevance of constructivist teaching as a foundation for innovative teaching practices that enhance reading outcomes. The current study sought to explore the relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy in pre-primary education in Kenya.

Constructivism-based guiding principles include: Opportunity, Excellence, and differentiated curriculum and learning. Guiding principle of opportunity emphasizes on providing equitable access to language learning experiences by pre-primary learners. A study conducted by VanPatten and Williams (2014) pointed out that interactive tasks promoting opportunities for meaningful negotiation are essential for language acquisition. The study underscored the importance of looking at beginning language learners for early language acquisition depending on learning strategies that are appropriate during instructional process. The school and teachers characteristics significantly facilitate language learning experiences that provide learners with opportunity for acquisition of literacy skills. The current study sought to investigate on constructivism based guiding principle of opportunity and language literacy.

Excellence in language literacy begins with knowing the learners by understanding their cultural, linguistic and cognitive backgrounds to design instruction that meets their needs. A research study by Teaching English Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) International Association (2018) emphasizes in their framework, "The Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners." The study highlighted the importance of tailoring instruction to learners' unique contexts to enhance language instruction. Excellence in language literacy is tied to setting high expectations for learners while providing them with the necessary support to achieve these standards. A study by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) discussed that excellent instruction involves creating challenging, yet achievable goals that push learners toward higher-order language use and thinking. Additionally, a study by Ellis (2012) emphasized the role of Task-Based Language Teaching as a research-supported method that fosters meaningful interaction and engagement in the target language. The teachers and schools characteristics provides avenues for effective acquisition of literacy skills. The current study sought to investigate the extent to which instructional practices are designed for appropriate language literacy. Differentiated curriculum and instruction is a pedagogical approach designed to address the diverse learning needs of individual children. A study by Demirci-Ünal and Öztürk (2024) in Turkey examined the extent to which preschool teachers differentiated instructional content, processes, assessment and learning environments within multicultural classrooms. The study explored the

experiences of four early childhood educators through a comprehensive qualitative methodology, including observations, interviews, photographic documentation and field notes. Findings revealed that teachers employed a variety of strategies to differentiate instructional content and processes. Notably, methods such as demonstration, physical support, peer observation and repetition of directions were frequently utilized to facilitate concrete learning. The use of visual materials and diversified activities for similar topics was prominent in tailoring educational content to meet the needs of multicultural learners. However, strategies for differentiating the learning environment such as flexible management of time and resources were applied to a more limited extent. Building on this foundation, the present study aimed to investigate differentiated curriculum design and language instruction practices in pre-primary education in Kenya, thereby contributing to the existing body of knowledge in early childhood education. Building on these insights, the study diverged by focusing specifically on pre-primary centres in such marginalized contexts, examining how constructivism-based guiding principles contributes to language literacy. This generates context-sensitive insights to support policy and practice tailored to pre-primary education in under-served regions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Constructivism-based guiding principle of opportunity, excellence and differentiated curriculum and learning. The teacher is the implementer of language literacy in a classroom who is required to designed the desired opportunities, provide experiences that will enable the learners to excel, engage parents in supporting children's language activities. All these promotes effective lesson development and delivery thus improves quality language literacy learning at pre-primary level.

A study by Hilmawan, Musthafa and Agustin (2022) examined the effectiveness of a social constructivism-based literacy learning environment model in improving literacy skills among third-grade students in a public elementary school. The study used a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent pre-test–post-test control group, the study involved 74 participants. Literacy performance was assessed through reading skill tests and rubric-based evaluations of narrative essay writing. Findings showed that the experimental group, which was taught using the social constructivism-based model, achieved higher average scores in both reading and writing compared to the control group. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant positive effect of the intervention on literacy outcomes, with marked differences between the experimental and control classes. The results suggest that embedding literacy instruction in a socially interactive, constructivist learning environment can substantially enhance students' reading and writing abilities. The current study sought to establish the relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles, teacher characteristics, school characteristics and language literacy among pre-primary schools in Kenyan context.

Constructivism-based guiding principle of opportunity on language literacy emphasizes on providing equitable access to language learning experiences by pre-primary learners. Language learners must have ample opportunities to use the target language in meaningful, authentic and varied contexts to develop proficiency. A study conducted by VanPatten and Williams (2014) pointed out that interactive tasks promoting opportunities for meaningful negotiation are essential for language acquisition. The study underscored the importance of looking at beginning language learners for early language acquisition, depending on learning strategies that are appropriate during instructional process. The current study determined the relationship between constructivism based guiding principle of opportunity and language literacy thereby, adding to the existing body of knowledge.

In Eritrea, Haile and Ghirmai (2024) conducted a study on play-based learning (PBL) and its role in promoting learning among pre-primary learners. The research was grounded in social cognitive theory and employed a qualitative design to address its objectives. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews involving nine teachers, six school principals and two pre-primary curriculum developers. An inductive, thematic analysis approach was used to interpret the data. The study revealed a gap between participants' conceptual understanding of PBL and how it was actually implemented in classrooms. Most respondents had associated PBL with both free play and guided play. While free play was acknowledged as valuable for children's overall development, the study found it insufficient for teaching structured lessons aimed at specific learning outcomes such as literacy skills. The current study determined the relationship between constructivism based guiding principle of opportunity and language literacy thereby, adding to the existing body of knowledge.

In addition, Haile and Ghirmai (2024) examined how PBL had been practiced in classrooms and discovered that most educators operated at the two ends of the Child–Adult Involvement Continuum either relying heavily on free play or direct instruction. A key barrier identified was the limited awareness among parents and school principals regarding the principles and benefits of PBL, which had hindered effective implementation. The study concluded that educators' placement at the extremes of the continuum was likely influenced by their perceptions of PBL, its advantages and the practical challenges they faced in implementing it. This research study contributed to the growing body of literature on how PBL was conceptualized and integrated into early childhood education within the Eritrean context. The current study was conducted in Kenya and focused specifically on language literacy among pre-primary learners, thus contributing further insights to the existing field of knowledge.

Constructivism-based guiding principle of excellence in language literacy begins with knowing the learners by understanding their cultural, linguistic and cognitive backgrounds to design instruction that meets their needs. A research study by Teaching English Speakers of Other Language International Association (2018) emphasizes in their framework, The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners. The study highlighted the importance of tailoring instruction to learners' unique contexts to enhance language literacy. Moreover, excellence in language literacy is tied to setting high expectations for learners while providing them with the necessary support to achieve these standards. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) discussed that excellent instruction involves creating challenging, yet achievable goals that push students toward higher-order language use and thinking. Additionally, a study by Ellis (2012) emphasized the role of task-based language teaching (TBLT) as a research-supported method that fosters meaningful interaction and engagement in the target language. The current study determined the extent to which constructivism based practices are designed for appropriate implementation of language literacy.

Deris and Geyer (2024) conducted a research study on differentiated instruction in the inclusive Early Childhood Classroom in United State. The study involved a sample size of 104 early childhood educators, who participated by completing a structured survey designed to assess their knowledge, attitudes and practices related to differentiated instruction in inclusive classrooms. The study revealed that differentiated instruction (DI) is a teaching approach based on the understanding that every classroom consists of a diverse group of learners and that effective teaching requires the use of varied methods and activities to meet each student's unique needs. This approach supports the inclusion of second language learners, students with special education needs and gifted learners within the same learning environment. As the number and diversity of students within these categories continue to grow, it becomes increasingly clear that learners process information differently and require personalized support. With the growing emphasis on evidence-based practices and research-informed curriculum, it is no longer effective for teachers to deliver one-size-fits-all instruction. Instead, differentiated instruction enables educators to create meaningful learning experiences tailored to students' readiness levels, interests and learning profiles, moving beyond simply transmitting knowledge. To implement DI successfully, teachers should greatly benefit from collaboration, professional guidance and ongoing support. The study offers an overview of differentiated instruction, outlines strategies for applying it in inclusive early childhood education settings and provides practical techniques for enhancing its use in diverse educational environments.

A study by Demirci-Ünal and Öztürk (2024) in Turkey to investigate the extent preschool teachers differentiated content, process, assessment and learning environment within multicultural classrooms. Four early childhood teachers' experiences were examined through observations, interviews, photographs and field notes. It was found that teachers used multiple strategies to differentiate their instructional process and content. Strategies of demonstration, providing physical support, peer observation or repeating directions were prominent for concrete learning. Also, it was determined that teachers implemented several strategies such as using visual materials and activities and/or diversifying the types of activities for similar topics to differentiate educational content in multicultural classrooms. Moreover, teachers used a limited number of strategies including managing time and resources flexibly as a means of differentiating the learning environment. The current study determined the relationship between differentiated curriculum and learning, and implementation of language instruction in pre-primary education in Kenya thereby adding literature in the existing body of knowledge.

The study by Maruf (2023) on the interplay of teachers' Beliefs, Attitudes and the implementation of Differentiated Instruction was conducted in Indonesian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Contexts. The study aimed to explore the extent to which English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' beliefs and attitudes impact their implementation of differentiated instruction (DI) in classroom situation. The study employed a structured survey questionnaire to collect data from a sample of 56 EFL teachers across various Indonesian schools. The participants were selected to represent a cross-section of teaching contexts, including differences in years of experience, school types and regional settings. The findings revealed that although the majority of teachers expressed positive beliefs and favorable attitudes toward differentiated instruction their classroom practices did not always align with these beliefs. The study identified several barriers that hindered effective implementation of DI strategies, including large class sizes, limited resources, time constraints and insufficient professional development opportunities. The study concluded that for differentiated instruction to be more effectively adopted in Indonesian EFL classrooms, institutional support, ongoing teacher training and policy alignment are essential. The study highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between theory and practice and calls for systemic changes to empower teachers to implement inclusive and student-centered pedagogies. The current study aimed to determine the relationship between differentiated curriculum and learning, and language literacy in pre-primary schools in the context of competence-based education in Kenya.

Wakhungu and Njoroge (2023) examined the role of differentiated instruction in enhancing students' self-efficacy in private primary schools in Ruiru Sub-County, Kenya. The study emphasizes that differentiated instruction provides both academic and non-academic benefits, noting that individualized learning approaches can improve academic achievement while simultaneously fostering students' confidence in their abilities. The authors further assert that teachers view differentiation as a hallmark of professional competence, reflecting skilled and adaptive teaching practices. Focusing specifically on content differentiation, the study was guided by the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and Self-Efficacy and employed a post-positivist research design. The sample comprised 1,022 pupils from grades 6 to 8 and 45 teachers across nine private primary schools. Quantitative data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed with SPSS Student Version 14.0. The findings indicated that differentiated content has a statistically significant positive impact on students' self-efficacy. Based on these outcomes, the authors recommend the implementation of structured teacher professional development programs to enhance educators' capacity to deliver differentiated instruction effectively. The study highlighted on the need for further research in public primary schools, as well as longitudinal and experimental studies to explore the relationship between differentiated instruction and student self-efficacy. The current study determine on the relationship between differentiate learning and language literacy among pre-primary learners in Southern Nyanza region.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Social Constructivism Theory, which posits that knowledge is co-constructed through social interaction and language use. Vygotsky emphasized that learning occurs first on a social level (interpsychological) and then within the individual (intrapsychological). Language serves as both a communicative and cognitive tool that mediates understanding and meaning-making. In this framework, teachers act as facilitators who provide scaffolding—temporary support that enables learners to progress within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) until they achieve independence.

Vygotsky argued that social interaction and dialogue enhance learners' cognitive growth and linguistic competence. As children engage in guided conversations and collaborative tasks, they internalize new concepts and vocabulary, which later support independent problem-solving. Cabrera (2018) extended this notion, emphasizing that teachers play a critical role in nurturing both linguistic and cultural competence through structured guidance. The theory therefore aligns with constructivist pedagogy, where active participation, collaboration, and reflection form the basis of effective language literacy instruction.

Within early childhood contexts, social constructivism underscores the importance of creating interactive environments that connect home, school and community experiences. Learners acquire literacy through culturally relevant practices and meaningful interactions that link spoken and written

language. Teachers' use of scaffolding, modeling and dialogic teaching strategies directly supports the development of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills. Hence, Vygotsky's theory provides a conceptual lens for understanding how constructivism-based guiding principles: opportunity, excellence and differentiated Curriculum and learning collectively promote language literacy in pre-primary education.

4. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted both a descriptive research survey and a correlational research design to facilitate the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The sample was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula. The study sampled 384 ECDE teachers, headteachers and County director in Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay County. Data was obtained using questionnaires both ECDE teachers and their headteachers. Interview guide was used to obtain data from County Director of Education(ECDE) in Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay. Data obtained was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS software.

4.1 Research Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ significant level

$H_0 1$:   There is no statistical significant relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy among pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya.

4.2 Study Variables

The study utilized the following variables: constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy. Constructivism-based guiding principles was assessed using three sub-constructs including opportunity, excellence as well as differentiated curriculum and learning while language literacy was assessed based on four sub-constructs such as listening skills, speaking skills, reading skills and writing skills each sub-construct having at least 5 statements based on a set of five Likert scale where 1=strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree. The variables attained reliability index of 0.823 and 0.905 respectively thus were found reliable for use.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study sought to determine the relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy in public pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Kenya. The constructivism-based guiding principles were assessed based on teachers and head teachers' conception of the contributions of opportunity, excellence and differentiated curriculum and learning principle.

5.1. Language literacy

The study explored the views of ECDE teachers and headteachers regarding their perception of the dynamics of language literacy especially listening skills, speaking, reading and writing. Data in Table 1 presents ECDE teachers' responses on listening skills:

Table1. *Views of ECDE Teachers and head teachers on listening skills*

Listening skill	Teachers (N=252)		Headteacher (N=126)	
Statement	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE
Regular storytelling activities to promote listening skill	36.5	63.5	22.2	77.8
Daily songs opportunities to engage in listening activities	15.1	84.9	23.8	76.2
Age-appropriate listening materials that match children's developmental levels.	21.1	78.9	18.2	81.8
Encourage children to listen attentively during group activities.	9.1	90.9	24.6	75.4
Listening activities which are based on children's concentration span	8.4	91.6	22.2	77.8
Variety of listening activities which are based on children's comprehension ability	17.9	82.1	12.7	87.3

The data in Table 1 reveal that both teachers and headteachers overwhelmingly agreed that practices to support listening skills are being implemented to a great and very great extent (GE/VGE) in public

pre-primary schools. According to a majority of the ECDE teachers, regular storytelling activities (63.5%), daily songs opportunities (84.9%) and age-appropriate listening materials that match children's developmental levels (78.9%) were some of the practices that were being used to support teaching of listening skills in their classes. Participating teachers also indicated encouraging children to listen attentively during group activities (90.9%), providing listening activities which are based on children's concentration span (91.6%) and availing a variety of listening activities which are based on children's comprehension ability (82.1%). Findings show that more than three quarters of the participating teachers (81.98%) indicated implementing a number of practices to a great or very great extent to support teaching of listening skills. Their observation was supported by a significant proportion of head teachers (79.38%) who confirmed that in their schools, ECDE teachers used various practices to support teaching of listening skills. Storytelling, songs and varied listening activities are consistently used, reflecting teachers' efforts to embed listening development into daily routines and foster foundational language abilities. The alignment of activities with children's developmental levels and concentration spans demonstrates pedagogical sensitivity to learners' needs, which is critical for sustaining engagement.. In general, these practices point to the intentional nurturing of listening skills with direct implications for children's comprehension, vocabulary growth and language literacy.The study findings consistent with a study by Isbell et al. (2004) which pointed out that, storytelling has been shown to enhance listening comprehension and narrative skills, while songs and rhymes support phonological awareness and sustained attention. Gathercole and Alloway (2008) further emphasized adapting instruction to children's limited concentration spans and Cameron (2001) highlighted the value of diverse listening activities tailored to learners' comprehension levels. Collectively, these studies affirm that structured and varied listening practices as reported in this study, are crucial for strengthening children's early language development. Findings on practices for speaking skills were as presented in Table 2.

Table2. *Views of ECDE Teachers and headteachers on speaking skill*

Speaking Skill	Teachers (N=252)		Head teacher (N=126)	
Statements	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE
Create a language-rich environment that encourages verbal expression.	37.3	62.7	18.3	81.7
Regular role play activities based on children's comprehension ability to express themselves.	27.1	72.9	17.5	82.5
Model correct language use during interactions with children.	73.9	26.1	18.2	81.8
Support shy children to participate in speaking activities.	17.5	82.5	23.8	76.2
Support less verbal children to participate in speaking activities.	61.1	38.9	24.6	75.4

Data in Table 2 presents ECDE teachers and their head teachers conception of practices for instruction of speaking skills. Findings showed that a majority of the teachers were creating a language-rich environment that encourages verbal expression (62.7%), providing regular role play activities based on children's comprehension ability to express themselves (72.9%) and supporting shy children to participate in speaking activities (82.5%) in an attempt to promote teaching of speaking skills to a great and very great extent. However, fewer teachers acknowledged modeling correct language use during interactions with children (26.1%) and supporting less verbal children to participate in speaking activities (38.9%) to a great and very great extent. Findings show that more than half of the participating teachers (56.62%) acknowledged integrating various practices to support teaching speaking skills. Their observation was corroborated by a significant proportion of head teachers (79.52%). The findings of this study demonstrate that strategies such as creating language-rich environments, role play, modelling correct language and supporting shy or less verbal children are central to the development of speaking skills in early childhood classrooms. The findings are in agreement with existing empirical studies which have shown that language-rich environments increase both the frequency and length of children's utterances (Piasta et al., 2017; Mwangi, 2019) while role play is widely acknowledged as an effective method for improving fluency, vocabulary and speaking confidence (Ahmada & Munawaroh, 2022; Katemba & Grace, 2020). Similarly, modelling correct language and providing feedback enhance accuracy in word learning and oral competence, even though teachers in this study appeared less confident in applying this strategy in practice

(Matthews et al., 2009; Mwangi, 2019). Inclusivity was also emphasized, with evidence showing that supporting shy or less verbal children through peer mediation and symbolic play interventions promotes greater participation and expressive growth (Sobel et al., 2021; Watkins et al., 2023).

The study also sought to assessed the extent to which various strategies were being implemented to support reading skills. Table 3 presents study findings.

Table3. *Views of ECDE Teachers and Headteachers on Reading Skill*

Reading Skills	Teachers (N=252)		Headteacher (N=126)	
Statements	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE
Read aloud to children regularly to develop their listening skills.	48.7	51.3	16.6	83.4
Read aloud to children regularly to develop their comprehension skills.	74.5	25.5	12.7	87.3
Expose children to picture books	72.2	27.8	19.0	81.0
Expose children to charts.	59.1	40.9	23.9	76.1
Use storytelling to support early reading skills.	48.0	52.0	43.7	56.3
Use picture reading to support early reading skills.	39.8	60.3	26.3	73.7
Incorporate sound recognition activities into daily routines	29.7	70.3	55.6	44.4

Data in Table 3 show that read aloud to children regularly to develop their listening skills (51.3%), use storytelling to support early reading skills (52.0%), use picture reading to support early reading skills (60.3%) and incorporation of sound recognition activities into daily routines (70.3%) were some of the activities used by a majority of teacher to teach reading skills to a great and very great extent. However, fewer teachers indicated reading aloud to children regularly to develop their comprehension skills (25.5%), exposing children to picture books (27.8%) and exposing children to charts (40.9%) to a great and very great extent to teach reading skills. Data obtained thus illustrated that slightly less than a half of the participating teachers (46.87%) acknowledged integrating to a great and very great, various practices to support teaching reading skills. Their observation was supported by a majority of participating head teachers (71.74%). The findings of this study concur with empirical studies indicating that both phonics-based and meaning-focused strategies are essential for early reading development. Teachers' emphasis on sound recognition reflects a focus on phonological awareness, a well-established predictor of reading success (Lonigan, Burgess & Anthony, 2000; Muter, Hulme, Snowling & Stevenson, 2004) and aligns with evidence on the role of phonics in decoding and word recognition (NELP 2008). Conversely, headteachers' higher ratings of read-aloud, picture books, charts and visual aids are supported by studies showing that print-rich environments and shared reading enhance vocabulary and comprehension (Mol & Bus 2011) and that illustrations improve attention and recall (Evans & Saint-Aubin, 2005). Storytelling and interactive read-aloud have also been found to foster comprehension and narrative ability (Nicolopoulou et al. 2023; Şimşek 2024). Data practices that supports writing skills were as presented in Table 4.

Table4. *Views of ECDE Teachers and head teachers on writing skill*

Writing skills	Teachers (N=252)		Head teacher (N=126)	
Statement	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE	NE/LE/ME	GE/VGE
Daily drawing opportunities for children to practice pre-writing skills	27.4	72.6	27.8	72.2
Daily scribbling activities for children to practice pre-writing skills	20.7	79.3	23.0	77.0
Provide regular building blocks activities to enhance pre-writing skills	18.7	81.3	5.6	94.4
Use crayons regularly which are developmentally appropriate.	33.3	66.7	30.2	69.8
Use pencils regularly which are developmentally appropriate.	27.7	72.3	19.8	80.2
Integrate writing activities with reading.	42.9	57.1	28.6	71.4
Individualized learning support to children at different levels of writing development.	46.8	53.2	19.9	80.1
Integrate play activities that promote pre-	44.5	55.5	12.7	87.3

writing skills				

Data in Table 4 show that daily drawing opportunities for children to practice pre-writing skills (72.6%), daily scribbling activities for children to practice pre-writing skills (79.3%), regular building blocks activities to enhance pre-writing skills (81.3%) and use crayons regularly which are developmentally appropriate (66.7%) were some of the activities that participating teachers indicated integrating to support writing skills. Other activities include use pencils regularly which are developmentally appropriate.(72.3%), integrating writing activities with reading (57.1%), individualized learning support to children at different levels of writing development (53.2%) and integrating play activities that promote pre-writing skills (55.5%) to a great and very great extent. Findings show that more than two thirds of the participating teachers (67.25%) indicated adopting various practices to teach writing skills. Their observation was supported by more than three quarters of head teachers (79.05%) who confirmed that the ECDE teachers integrating various practices for writing skills. Both teachers and headteachers agreed that play activities promote writing skill, with a higher percentage of headteachers. The lower percentage of teachers could be as a result of insufficient of play materials that limit practical integration of play activities during instructional process to enable learners to acquire writing skill.The study findings are consistent with the study by Pinto (2022) who demonstrated that emergent drawing, scribbling and visual–motor integration are interdependent skills that directly influence the trajectory of emergent writing in preschool children. The study established that as children refine their ability to produce intentional drawings and scribbles, their capacity to generate early written forms improves correspondingly. In addition, visual–motor coordination was found to be particularly crucial in younger learners (ages three to four), supporting the use of manipulatives, crayons, and pencils. In conclusion, the structured opportunities for drawing, scribbling, manipulation and play alongside the use of appropriate writing tools and individualized support are foundational to developing pre-writing competence in early childhood education.

Descriptive data illustrated that more than three quarters of the participating teachers (81.98%) indicated implementing practices to support teaching of listening skills, more than half (56.62%) integrated practices to support teaching speaking skills, slightly less than a half (46.87%) integrated practices to support teaching reading skills while more than two thirds (67.25%) adopted practices to support teaching writing skills to a great and very great extent. Collectively, findings implied that slightly less than two thirds of the participating teachers (63.18%) acknowledged integrating practices meant to support language literacy programs. Their observation was corroborated by more than three quarters of participating head teachers (77.42%) who confirmed that ECDE teachers integrate various practices to implement language literacy programs in their schools. This discrepancy could be as a result of differences between administrative expectations and actual classroom realities. This indicate to the need for better alignment and collaboration between headteachers and teacher experiences and enhanced support for teachers. The findings of the study compares with the study by Oduor and Simiyu (2020) whose study focused on school leadership and Competency-Based Curriculum implementation in Kenyan public primary schools. The study reported that headteachers often reported higher levels of Competency-Based Curriculum implementation compared to classroom teachers. This is largely due to their administrative roles and oversight responsibilities. Similar observatios are attributed to Awili and Begi (2021)

The study also sought information from County Directors of Education (ECDE) in the Southern Nyanza Region regarding the general trends in language literacy development within pre-primary schools in their respective counties. Key informant interviews were conducted to complement data collected from teachers and headteachers. Qualitative data obtained illustrated that language literacy programs in pre-primary schools in the counties though improving, vary in terms of pace and quality of progress significantly across the counties due to policy and resource-related challenges. According to ECDE Director1;

> *Language literacy programs in pre primary schools is on an improvement path. The pace is slow due to the fact that in public schools, there is a challenge of inadequate teaching and learning support materials. Also in some areas, the enrollment is very high and the teachers are not able to pay attention to individual learners.*

This observation was supported by ECDE Director 2 and 3 who observed that;

> *The language policy, which mandates the use of the mother tongue (the language of the catchment area) as the medium of instruction in early learning could be responsible for the*

improvement in implementation of language literacy programs. However literacy (speaking and reading) continues to lag behind in many areas due to the fact that school environment often lacks adequate instructional resources and effective teacher support.

Qualitative findings therefore indicate that language literacy in pre-primary schools the counties though improving, continue to face policy and resource-related challenges. The resources-related challenges include inadequate teaching and learning resources such as limited access to digital tools and large class sizes. A study by Kimalel (2023) established that audio and audio-visual resources were entirely absent in the schools studied, hindering development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. The study concluded that equitable provision of these materials is critical for literacy acquisition. Mwoma (2017) in a study on children's reading ability in early primary schooling in a Kenyan Rural Community emphasized the critical role of reading materials like storybooks and textbooks in shaping literacy outcomes. The also highlighted that learners in rural public schools performed significantly lower in reading tasks, suggesting that resource availability is a key in language literacy.

5.2. Constructivism-Based Guiding Principles and Language Literacy

The study focused on determining the relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy in public pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Kenya. The constructivism-based guiding principles were assessed based on teachers and head teachers' conception of the contributions of opportunity, excellence and differentiated curriculum. Table 5 presents ECDE teachers view of opportunity principles.

Table5. *Contribution of Opportunity on Language Literacy (Teachers)*

Opportunity	Teachers (N=252)					
Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
I use play-based learning activities during language learning	14.7	15.9	17.1	21.8	30.6	100.0
I give learners ample opportunities to use language during interactive activities.	6.0	7.5	20.6	27.0	38.9	100.0
I give learners ample opportunities to use language during collaborative activities.	14.3	9.1	15.1	26.2	35.3	100.0
I provide classroom environment that encourages spontaneous language use during free play.	14.7	7.9	23.8	23.0	30.6	100.0
Use storytelling to create opportunities for language learning.	15.1	13.5	9.5	27.4	34.5	100.0
Use songs to create opportunities for language learning.	7.9	6.3	12.3	46.8	26.6	100.0
Use games to create opportunities for language learning.	19.0	7.9	11.9	27.8	33.3	100.0
Incorporated child-led language activities into the daily routine.	8.7	9.9	10.3	33.3	37.7	100.0
Provide equal opportunities for children with different learning abilities to succeed in language literacy.	9.9	12.7	11.5	30.2	35.7	100.0
Ensure that language literacy activities are accessible for all children, regardless of their starting skill level.	7.9	19.4	14.7	19.4	38.5	100.0

Data in Table 5 indicate more than half of teachers (52.4%) use play-based learning experiences across ECDE classroom. Less than two-third of teachers give learners ample opportunities to use language during interactive activities (65.9%), less than two-third of teachers provide ample opportunities for learners to use language during collaborative activities (61.5%) and slightly more than half of teachers (53.6%) provide classroom environment that encourages spontaneous language use during free play. At the same time, slightly less than two-third of teachers use storytelling to create opportunities for language learning (61.9%), about three-quarter use songs to create opportunities for language learning (73.4%) and less than two-third use games to create opportunities for language learning (61.1%). Similarly, less than three-quarters of teachers (71.0%) incorporate child-led language activities into daily routine, about two-third (65.9%) provide equal opportunities

for children with different learning abilities to succeed in language literacy and more than half (57.9%) ensure that language literacy activities are accessible for all children, regardless of their starting skill level. Findings from ECDE teachers show that a majority of them (62.5%) are making effort to provide learning opportunities for all learners without discrimination. Data obtained from head teachers on the variable were as presented in Table 6.

Table6. *Contribution of Differentiated Curriculum on Language Literacy (HeadTeachers)*

Opportunity	HeadTeachers (N=126)					
Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Teachers use play-based learning activities during language learning	3.2	3.2	18.3	36.5	38.9	100.0
Teachers give learners ample opportunities to use language during interactive activities.	-	7.9	10.3	57.1	24.6	100.0
Teachers give learners ample opportunities to use language during collaborative activities.	3.2	2.4	22.2	27.0	45.2	100.0
Teachers provide classroom environment that encourages spontaneous language use during free play.	0.8	7.1	11.9	24.6	55.6	100.0
Teachers use storytelling to create opportunities for language learning.	0.8	10.3	10.3	28.6	50.0	100.0
Teachers use songs to create opportunities for language learning.	-	9.5	8.7	22.2	59.5	100.0
Teachers use games to create opportunities for language learning.	0.8	7.1	17.5	33.3	41.3	100.0
Teachers incorporated child-led language activities into the daily routine.	-	11.1	6.3	23.0	59.5	100.0
Teachers provide equal opportunities for children with different learning abilities to succeed in language literacy.	0.8	7.1	9.5	27.8	54.8	100.0
Teachers ensure that language literacy activities are accessible for all children, regardless of their starting skill level.	4.0	6.3	10.3	42.9	36.5	100.0

Data in Table 6 indicate that three quarters of headteachers (75.4%) believed that teachers use play-based learning experiences across ECDE classroom. More than three quarters (81.7%) indicated that, teachers give learners ample opportunities to use language during interactive activities. Less than three quarters (72.2%) believed that, teachers provide ample opportunities for learners to use language during collaborative activities. More than three quarters (80.2%) indicated that teachers provide classroom environment that encourages spontaneous language use during free play. At the same time, more than three-quarter (78.6%) use storytelling to create opportunities for language learning. More than three-quarter (81.7%) have a strong believe that teachers use songs to create opportunities for language learning. Less than three-quarters(74.6%) indicated that, teachers use games to create opportunities for language learning. More than three-quarters (82.5%) believed that, teachers incorporate child-led language activities into daily routine. Similarly, more than three-quarters (82.6%) had a strong belief that teachers provide equal opportunities for children with different learning abilities to succeed in language literacy. More than three-quarters (79.4%) believed that, teachers ensure that language literacy activities are accessible for all children, regardless of their starting skill level. Findings from headteachers indicate that a majority of them (79.0%) believe that ECDE teachers are making effort to provide learning opportunities for all learners without discrimination.

The study sought the opinions of ECDE teachers on excellence and language literacy as demonstrated in Table 7.

Table7. *Contribution of Excellence on Language Literacy (Teachers)*

Excellence	Teachers (N=252)					
Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Language literacy methods are age-appropriate for pre-primary children.	11.9	18.3	14.3	22.2	33.3	100.0
I provide high-quality instruction tailored to the needs of diverse learners.	8.7	17.5	13.9	23.4	36.5	100.0
I give children opportunities to develop	13.1	20.2	17.5	21.4	27.8	100.0

listening skill in a meaningful way.						
I give learning opportunities to children to enable them to develop speaking skill.	13.9	8.7	14.3	33.7	29.4	100.0
I give children opportunities to develop pre-literacy skill in a meaningful way.	17.5	4.0	20.6	26.2	31.7	100.0
I integrate play-based activities into language literacy.	9.5	14.7	14.7	27.8	33.3	100.0
I regularly assess teaching strategies to ensure excellence	7.9	2.8	25.8	24.2	39.3	100.0
I am adequately trained to implement excellent language literacy for pre-primary learners.	9.9	14.3	10.7	23.8	41.3	100.0
I receive sufficient resources and materials to maintain high-quality language literacy.	8.3	6.3	21.4	21.8	42.1	100.0
Collaboration between teachers and administrators supports excellence in language literacy.	0.8	5.6	9.9	19.4	64.3	100.0

Data in Table 7 indicate that, slightly more than half of teachers (55.5%) revealed that language literacy methods are age-appropriate for pre-primary children, provide high-quality instruction tailored to the needs of diverse learners (59.9%) and give children opportunities to develop pre-literacy skills in a meaningful way (57.9%) while less than half (49.2%) give children opportunities to develop listening skill in a meaningful way. Less than two-third (63.1%) give children learning opportunities to develop speaking skill, integrate play-based activities into language literacy, regularly assess teaching strategies to ensure excellence (61.1%) integrate play-based activities into language literacy, regularly assess teaching strategies to ensure excellence and receive sufficient resources and materials to maintain high-quality language literacy (63.9%). Almost two-third of teachers (65.1%) are adequately trained to implement excellent language literacy for pre-primary learners while more than three-quarters (83.7%) revealed that collaboration between teachers and administrators supports excellence in language literacy. Findings from teachers indicate that, a majority (62.3%) ensure that they are providing teaching practices that enhances learners' excellence during language learning. Data obtained from head teachers on the variable were as presented in 8.

Table8. *Contribution of Excellence on Language Literacy (Headteachers)*

Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Language literacy methods are age-appropriate for pre-primary children.	-	18.3	11.9	42.1	27.8	100.0
Teachers provide high-quality instruction tailored to the needs of diverse learners.	-	12.7	19.0	26.2	42.1	100.0
Teachers give children opportunities to develop listening skill in a meaningful way.	5.6	10.3	25.4	31.7	27.0	100.0
Teachers give children learning opportunities to develop speaking skill.	3.2	2.4	11.9	45.2	37.3	100.0
Teachers give children opportunities to develop pre-literacy skill in a meaningful way.	0.8	6.3	15.9	30.2	46.8	100.0
Teachers integrate play-based activities into language literacy.	-	15.9	9.5	34.9	39.7	100.0
Teachers regularly assess teaching strategies to ensure excellence	5.5	13.5	16.7	36.5	27.8	100.0
Teachers are adequately trained to implement excellent language literacy for pre-primary learners.	0.8	7.9	4.0	32.5	54.8	100.0
Teachers receive sufficient resources and materials to maintain high-quality language literacy.	3.2	12.7	26.2	41.3	16.7	100.0
Collaboration between teachers and administrators supports excellence in language literacy.	3.2	9.5	19.8	33.3	34.1	100.0

Data in Table 8 indicate that, more than two-thirds of headteachers (69.9%) believe that language literacy methods are age-appropriate for pre-primary children, teachers provide high-quality instruction tailored to the needs of diverse learners (68.3%) and collaboration between teachers and headteachers supports excellence in language literacy (67.4%). More than half (58.7%) felt that, teachers give children opportunities to develop listening skill in a meaningful way, teachers regularly assess teaching strategies to ensure excellence (64.3%) and teachers receive sufficient resources and materials to maintain high-quality language literacy (58%). At the same time, more than three-quarters (82.5%) stated that, teachers give children learning opportunities to develop speaking skill, teachers give children opportunities to develop pre-literacy skills in a meaningful way (77%) and teachers are adequately trained to implement excellent language literacy for pre-primary learners (87.3%) while less than three-quarters (74.6%) confirmed that, teachers integrate play-based activities into language literacy. Findings from headteachers indicate that, a majority (70.8%) reveals that their teachers had a generally positive perception of language literacy practices, particularly in areas such as teacher training, speaking and pre-literacy development and use of play-based instruction. This indicate that there are efforts of implementing excellence in language literacy.

The study sought the opinions of ECDE teachers on differentiated curriculum. Findings were as presented in Table 9.

Table9. *Contribution of Differentiated Curriculum on Language Literacy (Teachers)*

Differentiated Curriculum and Learning		Teachers (N=252)				
Statement	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
I assess children's language abilities regularly to inform my instruction.	-	8.3	7.5	31.7	52.4	100.0
I plan language activities that cater to different learning levels.	0.8	7.9	8.7	12.7	69.8	100.0
I modify language lessons to suit the needs of children with different language proficiency.	-	7.9	10.7	26.6	54.8	100.0
I incorporate relevant songs as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences.	0.8	9.5	5.2	22.6	61.9	100.0
I use storytelling as a teaching strategy to address different language learning preferences.	-	11.9	4.4	25.8	57.9	100.0
I use games as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences.	2.4	6.0	11.1	36.5	44.0	100.0
I adapt visual materials to meet the individual language needs of children.	2.4	18.3	15.5	33.7	30.2	100.0
I group children flexibly during language activities based on their learning needs.	1.2	8.7	15.1	28.6	46.4	100.0
I provide additional language support for children who need more practice.	6.3	9.9	23.8	25.8	34.1	100.0
I offer enrichment language activities for children who show advanced language skills.	3.2	8.7	13.1	40.9	34.1	100.0
I use educational apps to support differentiated language learning.	1.2	8.3	15.1	30.6	44.8	100.0
I use videos to support differentiated language learning.	0.8	15.5	10.7	29.8	43.3	100.0

Data in Table 9 indicate that, more than three-quarter of teachers (84.1%) assess children's language abilities regularly to inform instruction, plan language activities that cater to different learning level (82.5%), modify language lessons to suit the needs of children with different language proficiency (81.4%) and incorporate relevant songs as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences (84.5%). At the same time, a similar proportion (83.7%) use storytelling as a teaching strategy to address different language learning preferences, use games as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences (80.5%) and group children flexibly during language activities based on their learning needs (75.0%) while slightly less than two-third (63.9%) adapt visual materials to meet the individual language needs of children and provide additional language support for children who need more practice (59.9%). Similarly, about three-quarter of the teachers (75.0%) offer enrichment language activities for children who show advanced language skills, use educational apps to support differentiated language learning (75.4%) and use videos to support differentiated language learning

(73.1%). The findings from teachers indicate that, a majority (76.6%) recognizes the importance of differentiated curriculum and learning to inform their language instruction thus, enhancing language literacy skills. Data obtained from headteachers on the variable were as presented in 10.

Table10. *Contribution of Differentiated Curriculum on Language Literacy Headteachers)*

Differentiated Curriculum and Learning	HeadTeachers (N=126)					
Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total
Teachers assess children's language abilities regularly to inform instruction.	4.0	4.0	16.7	43.7	31.7	100.0
Teachers plan language activities that cater to different learning levels.	6.3	1.6	23.0	49.2	19.8	100.0
Teachers modify language lessons to suit the needs of children with different language proficiency.	-	4.8	3.2	42.1	50.0	100.0
Teachers incorporate relevant songs as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences.	3.2	2.4	25.4	34.9	34.1	100.0
Teachers use storytelling as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences.	4.8	4.8	14.3	41.3	34.9	100.0
Teachers use games as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences.	-	4.0	19.0	38.1	38.9	100.0
Teachers adapt visual materials to meet the individual language needs of children.	-	8.7	11.1	30.2	50.0	100.0
Teachers group children flexibly during language activities based on their learning needs.	1.6	11.9	10.3	28.6	47.6	100.0
Teachers provide additional language support for children who need more practice.	5.6	12.7	5.6	29.4	46.8	100.0
Teachers offer enrichment language activities for children who show advanced language skills.	1.6	15.1	5.6	34.1	43.7	100.0
Teachers use educational apps to support differentiated language learning.	-	11.9	16.7	22.2	49.2	100.0
Teachers use videos to support differentiated language learning.	0.8	10.3	11.9	29.4	47.6	100.0

Data in Table 10 indicate that, three-quarter of headteachers (75.4%) believed that, teachers assess children's language abilities regularly to inform instruction. More than two-thirds (69.0%) indicated that, teachers plan language activities that cater to different learning levels. A significant majority (92.1%) recognized that, teachers modify language lessons to suit the needs of children with different language proficiency. More than two-thirds (69.0%) incorporate relevant songs as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences. At the same time, more than three-quarters (76.2%) had a strong belief that teachers use storytelling as a teaching strategy to address different language learning preferences. More than three-quarters (77.0%) believed that, teachers use games as a teaching strategy to address different learning preferences. More than three-quarters (80.2%) had a strong believe that teachers adapt visual materials to meet the individual language needs of children. Slightly more than three-quarter (76.2%) support the idea that teachers group children flexibly during language activities based on their learning needs. Slightly more than three-quarter (76.2%) perceived that, teachers provide additional language support for children who need more practice. Similarly, more than three-quarter (77.8%) indicated that, teachers offer enrichment language activities for children who show advanced language skills. Less than three-quarters (71.4%) believed that, teachers use educational apps to support differentiated language learning. Slightly more than three-quarter (76.9%) had a strong belief that teachers use videos to support differentiated language learning. The findings from headteachers indicate that, a majority (76.5%) largely affirm that, ECDE teachers are incorporating differentiated strategies in language instruction thus, promoting language literacy skills.

Relative to constructivism-based guiding principles, the findings indicate that a majority of the ECDE teachers (67.1%) confirmed that the principle influences language literacy. They indicated that the principle of opportunity (62.5%), the principle of excellence (62.3%) and the principle of differentiated learning (76.6%) had an influence on language literacy. This suggests that they have a

greater consensus on differentiated curriculum and learning. Teachers' observation was supported by a significant proportion of the headteachers (75.4%). The findings suggest that constructivism-based guiding principles constitute a foundational framework for enhancing language literacy in pre-primary education. Although opportunity and excellence were identified as influential, the stronger consensus regarding differentiated curriculum and learning highlights its pivotal role in responding to learner diversity and promoting equitable literacy development. This emphasize the necessity for instructional practices to institutionalize differentiated approaches as a means of fostering inclusivity and optimizing literacy outcomes. Moreover, the convergence of teachers' and headteachers' perspectives reinforces the need for sustained institutional commitment to embedding these guiding principles within pedagogical practice and school-level strategies. The findings supports that of Tomlinson (2014); Suprayogi et al. (2017). who established that differentiated instruction significantly enhances languade literacy outcomes by addressing diverse learner needs. Similarly, studies in African and international contexts confirm that opportunities for active, learner-centered engagement foster language acquisition and literacy development (Ackesjö & Persson, 2019; Orodho, 2014). In addition, excellence-oriented practices such as high expectations and structured support, contribute to improved early literacy performance (Mashburn et al., 2008).

The study thus proceeded to assess the inferential relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and Language literacy among pre-primary schools in southern Nyanza region Kenya. Study objective sought to determine the relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and Language literacy among pre-primary schools in southern Nyanza region, Kenya. The hypothesis, H_01 formulated for this purpose sought to establish whether there existed a significant relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and Language literacy among preprimary schools in southern Nyanza region Kenya. The study thus tested the relationship between pre-primary teachers perceived constructivism based guiding principles and language literacy. Since normality test showed that data obtained from study variables were non-normal, logistic regression was used for the test. Table 11 and 12 presents the findings.

Table11. *Relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and Language literacy (Model Summary)*

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R^2	Nagel R^2	Model fit			Model Sig.			Obs.	Pre.
				χ^2	df	Sig.	χ^2	df	Sig.		
1	323.926	.083	.111	1.667	1	.123	17.280	1	.000	63.9	56.0

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 3 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Independent variable in the model was constructivism based guiding principles. The model was significant $\chi^2(1)=17.280$, p<0.001 and the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test confirmed model fit, $\chi^2(1)=1.047$, p=0.277. Cox & Snell R square predicted a variance of 8.3% while Nagelkerke R square predicted 11.1% variation in language literacy explained by the model. The model with independent variable explained 63.9% of constructivism based principles, an improvement from the initial 56.0% initially predicted. Table 12 presents information on variables in the equation.

Table12. *Relationship between Constructivism-Based Guiding Principles and Language Literacy (Regression Coefficient)*

	B	SE	Waldχ^2	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Opportunity	-1.428	.319	20.098	1	.000	.240
Excellence	.239	.127	3.554	1	.039	1.270
Differentiated curriculum	-.413	.374	1.214	1	.217	.662
Constructivism based guiding principles	.750	.358	4.400	1	.036	2.117
Constant	.724	.196	13.700	1	.000	2.062

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Constructivism based guiding principles

The elements of the independent variables were entered into the model stepwise. Regression analysis illustrated that opportunity negatively and significantly predicted language literacy, Waldχ^2 (1)=20.098, p<0.001, Exp(B) = .240. Similarly, excellence on its own was found to positively and

significantly predict language literacy, Waldχ^2 (1)=3.554, p=0.039, Exp(B) = 1.270. However, differentiated curriculum and learning negatively predicted language literacy, Waldχ^2 (1)=1.214, p=0.217, Exp(B) = .662, the observation being insignificant. Ultimately, constructivism based guiding principles positively and significantly predicted language literacy,Waldχ^2 (1)=4.400, p=0.036, Exp(B) = 2.117. Findings mean that constructivism based guiding principles is positively and significantly related with language literacy. Therefore, the first hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and language literacy among pre-primary schools in southern Nyanza region, Kenya was rejected. Findings means that constructivism based guiding principles is significantly related with language literacy among pre-primary schools in southern Nyanza region, thus its implementation would significantly contribute to language literacy in the study area. The findings collaborate with Awandu (2023) study on the implementation of constructivist pedagogies in Grade 3 competency-based curriculum. The study concluded that constructivist pedagogies significantly predicted effective curriculum implementation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study sought to determine the relationship between constructivism based guiding principles and language literacy among pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Region. Findings on the opportunity and excellence,Logistic regression analysis illustrated that, both predict language literacy. Principle of differentiated curriculum and learning. Logistic regression analysis indicated that, differentiated curriculum and learning negatively predicted language literacy. The study concluded that there is a positive significant relationship between constructivism-based guiding principles and language literacy. Qualitative data obtained from the teachers indicated that, there is need for additional learning resources and interactive learning experiences to better integrate constructivism-based guiding principles to enhance language literacy. Qualitative data obtained from the Director of education (ECDE) revealed that, constructivism based learning experiences, enhance acquisition of language literacy skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing). The study recommended that, teachers should enhance the implementation of constructivism guiding principles in order to harness their potentials in promoting interactive teaching practices that actively engage learners in language acquisition.

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