

## **INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL TRAINING ON ERRORS CHILDREN MAKE AS THEY LEARN ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PUBLIC PRE-SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of teachers' professional training on errors pre-school learners make as they learn English language in public pre-schools in Bungoma south sub-county in Kenya. The study adopted the social construction theory. It used descriptive survey research design with the target population comprising 3698 preschool teachers and preschool learners in top classes in Bungoma south sub-county.. Simple random sampling was used to select the preschools to participate in the study from each zone. Purposive sampling was used to select teachers and pre-school learners to participate in the study from the pre-schools in the zones. The researcher used observation schedules, documentary analysis forms and interview schedules to collect data. A reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained and indicated that the research instruments were reliable. The data collected from the field was examined, edited, coded and presented according to the themes of the research questions and presented in tabular form using frequencies and percentages. The findings showed that the untrained teachers contributed to 42.4% errors made in English language by pre-school learners while degree trained teachers contributed to 2.4% errors made by pre-school learners in English language. These findings indicated that professional training of ECDE teachers has a significant impact on errors made by pre-school learners in English language in Bungoma south sub-county in Kenya. This implies that teacher's professional training influence errors made by pre-school learners in pre-schools in the research location.*

**Keywords-** *Educators, Errors, Pre-school learners, Professional training*

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### **Introduction**

Muchau (2015) noted that English language has increasingly become the international language for business and commerce, science, technology, international relations and diplomacy. Therefore it's important for learners to have a good English language foundation during early years of education in pre-schools. Recently, teacher professional education training programs are prevalently becoming important around the world since it has a great impact in reducing errors pre-school learners make when learning English language (Rao, 2019).

Teacher's professional training refers to educators in pre-schools skills' development and enhancement in order to meet the ever-changing needs of their pre-school learners. According to Muchau (2015) a teacher's professional training is very critical in reducing errors of pre-school

learners make. This is because a knowledgeable English teacher has a pivotal capacity to provide effective English instruction and to ability to meet pre-school learners' ever-changing needs.

Errors refers to developmental errors are mistakes that pre-school learners commonly commit when first learning English language. Harris (2019) states that increasing reading errors of pre-school learners occurs when a child acquires a word for a particular thing and fails to extend it to other objects in the same category. Muchau (2015) notes that up to a certain proficiency standard, the fault which most severely impairs the communication process is pronunciation, not vocabulary or grammar. Since these errors are systematic, and are usually not explicitly corrected, pre-school learners could never learn to make the transition to adult English language based on experience alone but through assistance by the professionally trained English teacher (Muchau, 2015).

Teacher professional training in terms of the quality of trainers, the length and structure has a very significant impact on teachers' self-belief which in turn impacts on errors pre-school learners make in English language (Rao, 2019). This is because a knowledgeable teacher who believes in his or her ability to teach English language has a critical capacity to effectively teach English language and meet the pre-school learners' learning needs (Rao, 2019). In addition, for pre-school learners to be able to attain certain English proficiency standard, pre-school English teachers have to have effective teaching skills and appropriate teaching pedagogy which they acquire through professional training since learning even simple aspects of grammar in English language is logically impossible in the absence of innate constraints on what is taught and lack of teaching skills (Muchau, 2015).

## **Literature Review**

### **Teacher's Professional Training**

Teacher's professional training refers to a set of educator's tools, training and resources sessions aimed at improving their quality and effectiveness in teaching English language. A teacher's knowledge in English language play a critical role in their capacity to provide effective English instruction and to their ability to assess pre-school learners (Muchau, 2015). The National Council for the Teaching of English clearly states the need for teachers to have knowledge about the important ideas that are key to their grade level (NCTM, 2000). In addition Muchau (2015), stated that teacher professional skills in terms of mastery of content and excitement about teaching shows that he or she knows and motivates children to desire learning English and further develop their confidence and interest in the construction of English knowledge which depends on both aural and oral skills in English language.

### **Errors Learner's make in English Language**

Errors pre-school learners make refers to something that is not correct, a wrong action or statement or a mistake made by a pre-school learner in English language. English language learning process occurs in several ways, which include the study of the learners' pragmatic features, errors portrayed, variability, and various types of development patterns (Ellis & Ellis, 1994). The errors pre-school learners make identified are classified as developmental errors and interference errors. In the course of learning English language, pre-school learners undergo through English language developmental phases where predictable errors are made when talking, writing, reading and spelling words in English language (Muchau, 2015). According to Skinner (2004) language problems and planning is the application of principles of regular change to a word that changes irregularly. For example in verb use include using the word *comed* instead of *come* and in the word

*tooths* instead of *teeth*. Language development can be through reinforcement shows that children construct words meanings and forms during the child’s own development (Skinner, 2004). Pre-school learners make various errors when developing and learning English language as Dulay and Burt (1974) proposed the following three categories of errors pre-school learners make: developmental, interference and unique. In addition, Stenson (1974) proposed another category of errors pre-school learners make when learning English language, that of induced errors, which result from incorrect instruction of the language.

**Social Construction Theory**

In this theory, Vygotsky (1978) claimed that learning is enhanced when interacting with more knowledgeable other. He further proposed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) concept (Vygotsky, 1978). It refers to the observation that children, when learning a particular task or body of information, he may end up by not being able to do the task. They then are able to do it when the assistance of an adult or a significant other and finally they can do it without assistance. The Zone of Proximal Development is a stage where they can do it assisted, but not alone. Thus, the teacher is typically active and involved. Therefore, teacher must be in position by acquiring professional training as to be able to correct errors children make as they learn English language.

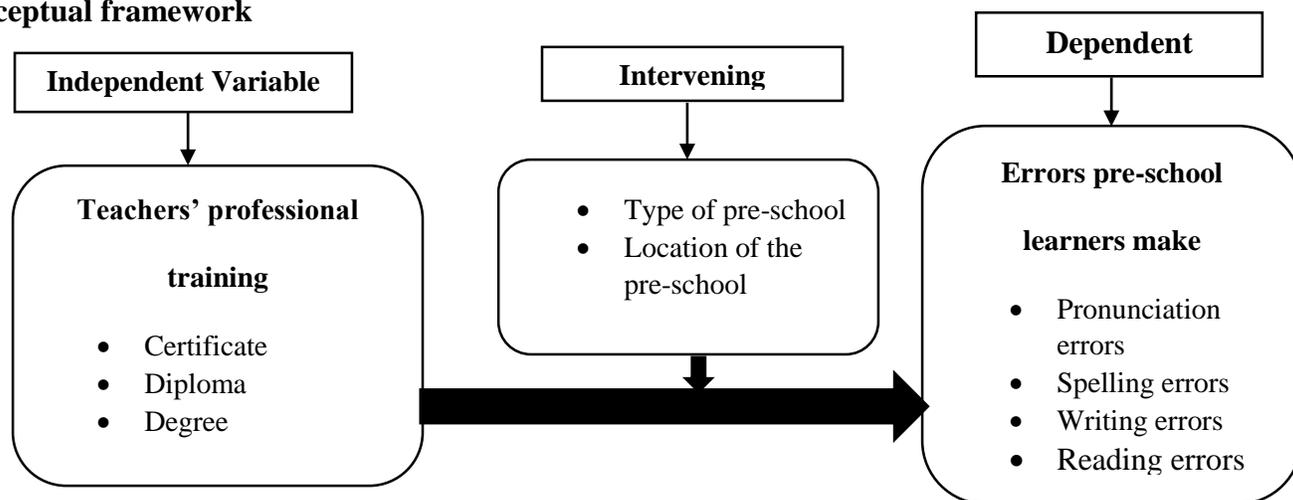
**Research Objective**

To examine how teachers’ professional training contributes towards errors children make as they learn English language.

**Research Question**

How does teacher’s professional training contribute towards errors made by pre-school learners in Pre-schools in Bungoma south sub-county sub-county, Kenya?

**Conceptual framework**



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of influence of teacher’s professional training on errors pre-school learners make as they learn English language in Public pre-schools**

Sources: Adapted from (Rao, 2019; Muchau, 2015; Irumbi, 1990)

### **Methodology**

The study used descriptive survey design with the target population comprising 3698 preschool teachers and preschool children in ECDE centers in Bungoma south sub-county, Kenya. Simple random sampling was used to select the preschools to participate in the study from each zone whereby a total of 51 pre-schools were randomly selected. Purposive sampling was used to select 52 teachers and 688 pre-school learners to participate in the study from the pre-schools in the zones. The researcher used observation schedules, documentary analysis forms and interview schedules. The data collected from the field was examined, edited, coded and presented according to the themes of the research questions and presented in tabular form using frequencies and percentages.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Response rate**

The response rate measured how well the targeted sample size was arrived at. A high response rate obtained minimized the chances of biased statistics and hence, the study findings are valid and reliable as shown in table 1

**Table 1: Response Rate**

<b>Questionnaires</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent %</b>
Response	500	73%
Non-response	188	27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>688</b>	<b>100%</b>

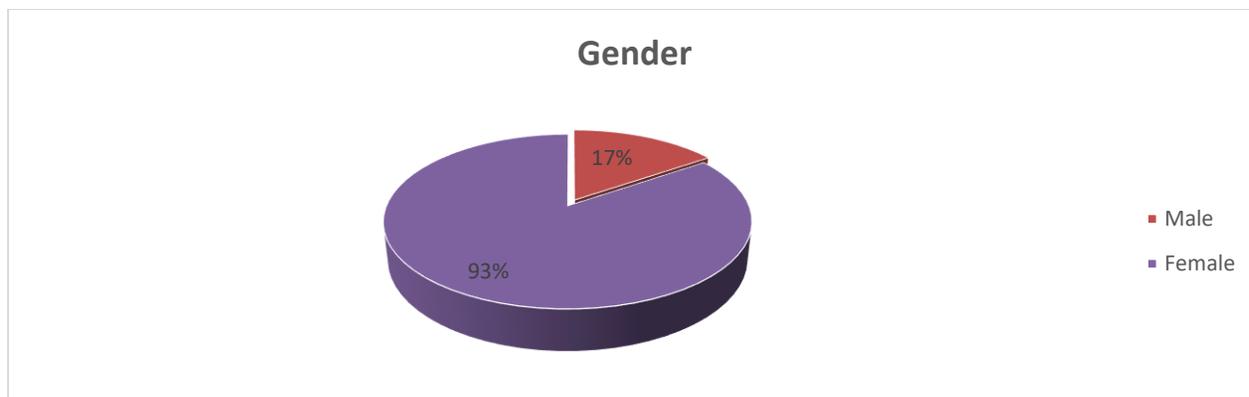
Out of a total of 688 questionnaires which had been issued to respondents, only 500 were completed which represented a 73% response rate. Response rates approximating 60% for most research should be the researcher's goal (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2013). This shows that the researcher met the minimum required response rate to make the results reliable and conclusive. A non-response rate of 27% was found due to respondents not being co-operative.

#### **Demographic characteristics of the study**

The researcher obtained information about the personal data of respondents. The data was related to gender, age, and academic level. The quantitative data were presented in the form of tables and pie charts below:

#### **Gender of respondents**

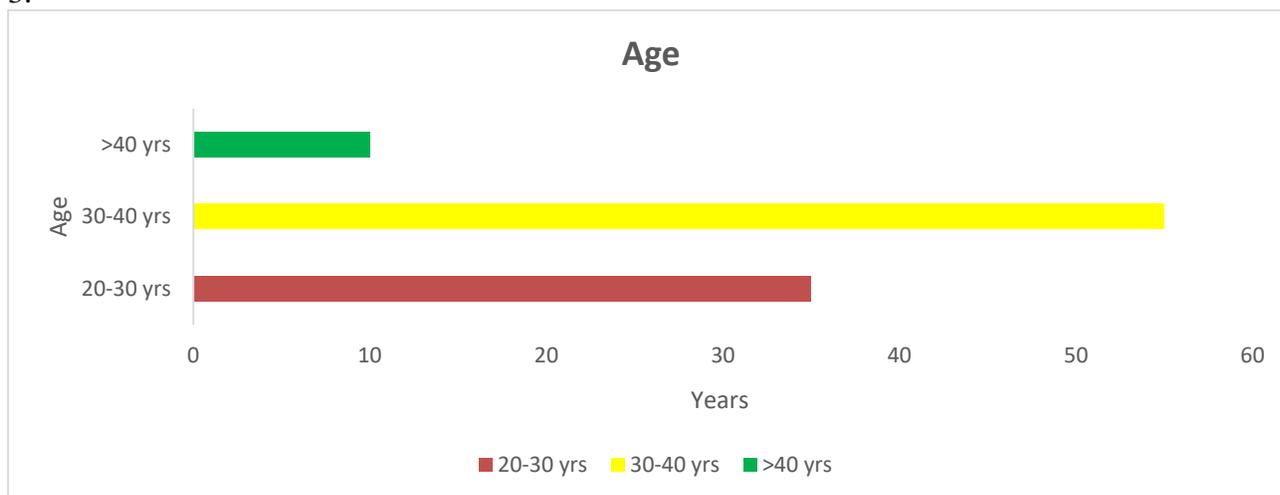
The demographic characteristics results indicated that 93% were female while the male counterparts were 17%.



**Figure 2: Gender of respondents**

### **Age of respondents**

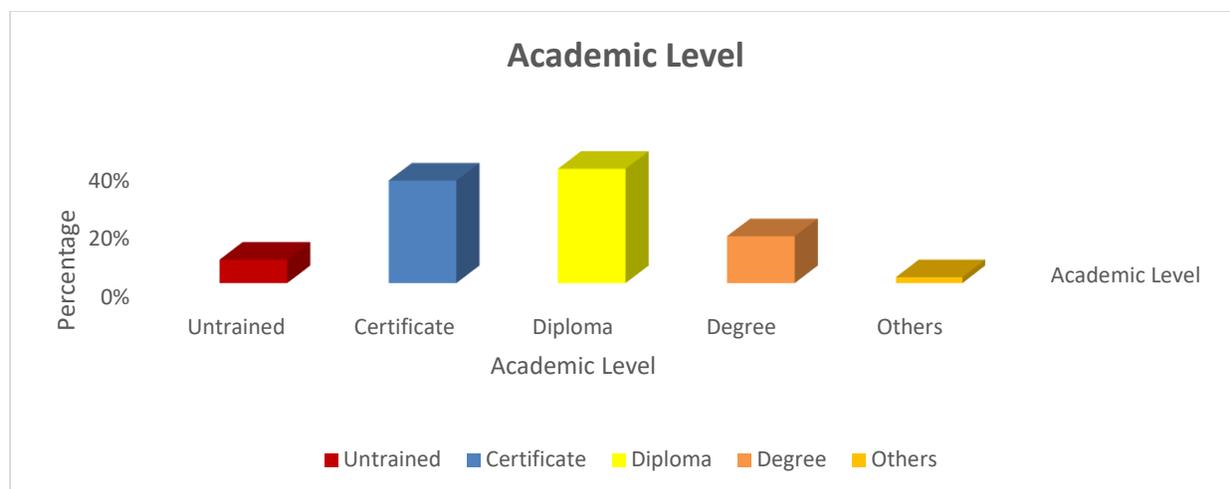
The results indicate that most of the respondents were between the ages of 20 to 30 years by 35% while 55% were between the ages of 30-40 years and 10% were above 40 years as shown in figure 3.



**Figure 3: Age of respondent**

### **Academic level of respondents**

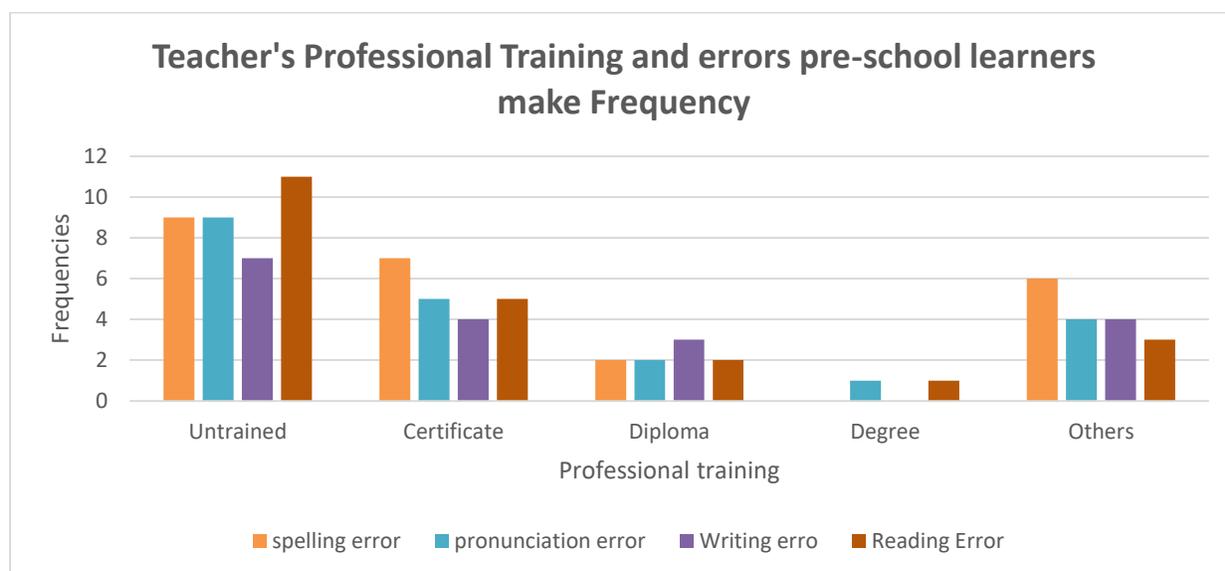
The results indicated that untrained teachers comprised of 8%, certificate holders comprise of 35%, 39% were diploma holders while 16% were Bachelor's degree holder while others are 2% as summarized in figure 4. The results indicate that majority of public pre-school teachers are diploma holders. This implies that proper English is being taught in public pre-school in Bungoma south sub-county, Kenya since according to Gumo (2003), states that training helps teachers to understand the English content and how to teach pre-school learners whose levels of development and growth in terms of language acquisition vary.



**Figure 4: Academic level of respondents**

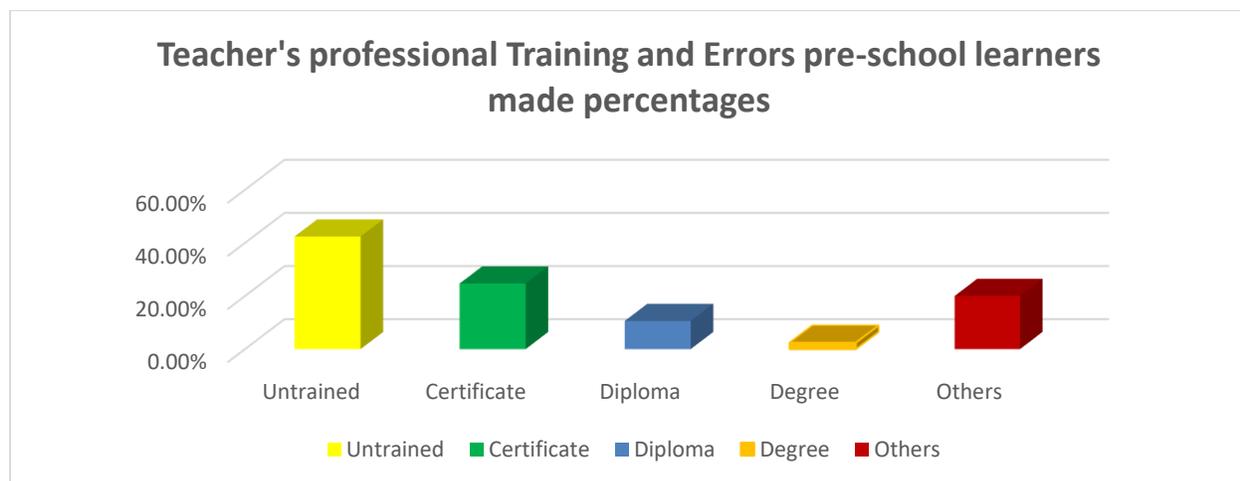
### Descriptive Statistics

The study showed that untrained teachers contributed to a frequency of 9 spelling errors, a frequency of 9 errors in pronunciation errors, a frequency of 7 errors in writing errors and a frequency of 11 reading errors. Certificate holder teachers contributed to a frequency of 7 spelling errors, a frequency of 5 errors in pronunciation errors, a frequency of 4 errors in writing errors and a frequency of 5 reading errors. Diploma holder teachers contributed to a frequency of 2 spelling errors, a frequency of 2 errors in pronunciation errors, a frequency of 3 errors in writing errors and a frequency of 2 reading errors. Degree holder teachers contributed to a frequency of 0 spelling errors, a frequency of 1 errors in pronunciation errors, a frequency of 0 errors in writing errors and a frequency of 1 reading errors. Other Certificates holder teachers contributed to a frequency of 6 spelling errors, a frequency of 4 errors in pronunciation errors, a frequency of 4 errors in writing errors and a frequency of 3 reading errors.



**Figure 1.5: Teacher's professional training and errors pre-school learners make Frequency**  
**Influence of Teacher's professional training and errors Pre-school learners make**

The study sought to find out the influence of teacher's professional training on errors pre-school learners in public schools in Bungoma south sub-county, Kenya made in English language. The results were summarized in Figure 1.6.



**Figure 1.6: Teacher's professional training and errors pre-school learners make percentages**

The findings indicate that untrained teachers contributed to 42.4% errors made by pre-school learners, certificate holder teachers contributed to 24.7% errors made by pre-school learners, Diploma holder teachers contributed to 10.6% errors made by pre-school learners, Degree holder teachers contributed to 2.4% errors made by pre-school learners while others contributed to 20% errors made by pre-school learners. It is evident that the pre-school learners taught by untrained teachers make errors frequently by pronouncing words wrongly like in the word *children* as *children* 's. In addition the pre-school learners taught by untrained teachers failed to spell the words correctly as they are not familiar with the correct letter sounds like in the word *food* as *foot*. Pre-school learners taught by degree teachers in ECDE had the least frequency errors made in English language. Furthermore, pre-school learners taught by Degree holder teachers made only errors in both pronunciations and reading; this was due to mother tongue influence like the researcher observed a lesson where some two children were not able to read properly words like *table* and *door*. In a children's test the researcher discovered that some five children could not pronounce the words *dress*, *bag*, *paper*. When it came to spelling and writing two children wrote the words from right to left and two were unable to spell the word *zebra*.

### **Descriptive Analysis of Teacher's professional training and errors pre-school learners make in English Language**

The study sought to find out the effect of teacher's professional training and errors pre-school learners make in English language and the results are summarized in Table in 2.

**Table 2: descriptive analysis of Teacher’s professional training and errors pre-school learners**

<b>Professional Training</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Untrained	4.64	.483
Certificate	3.70	.572
Diploma	2.98	.021
Degree	2.43	.884
Others	4.11	.426

The study shows that the respondents agreed that untrained teachers highly contributed to the errors pre-school learners made English with a mean of 4.64 and a standard deviation of 0.483. In addition, certificate holder teachers contributed to the errors pre-school learners made English with a mean of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 0.572. Diploma holder teachers contributed to the errors pre-school learners made English with a mean of 2.98 and a standard deviation of 0.021. Majority of the respondents agreed that Degree holder teachers contributed least in the errors pre-school learners made English with a mean of 2.43 and a standard deviation of 0.426. The findings indicate that pre-school learners taught by untrained teachers made the highest errors since it had the highest mean which is >4. Pre-school learners taught by Degree holder teachers made the least errors since it had the least mean which is <3. This implies that professionally trained teachers had a great impact on reducing errors made in English language unlike untrained teachers who impacted negatively on errors made in English language pre-school learners.

### **Conclusion**

The findings showed that untrained teachers made most of the errors in all the language skills taught. This implies that teachers’ competence may be based on his/her training levels. There is need to evaluate the importance of early years of development and the benefits of investing in the early years through providing quality training to the pre-school teachers in order to effectively handle the children. In addition, teachers’ academic background and later training may affect children’s’ learning in the classroom. Teacher skills in terms of mastery of content and excitement about teaching may show that he/she knows and motivates children to desire learning and further develop their confidence and interest in the construction of knowledge.

### **Recommendations**

Following the conclusions made above, the following recommendations can be made;

- (i) Quality standards and Assurance officers should visit preschools to provide proper guidance especially in teaching of English language.
- (ii) English teachers should organize for preschool workshops, play writing and reading competitions, drama festivals to encourage preschool children to practice speaking fluently and writing well.
- (iii) In service training courses for preschool teachers should be held regularly to remind them on correct teaching methods and giving them a chance to share experiences with teachers from nearby preschools.

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