



Original Research Article

Implications of instructional materials on oral skills among early childhood learners in central zone, Kisumu County, Kenya

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This study was conducted in Kenya and focused on the use of instructional materials at the Early Childhood level. Purpose of the study was to establish the implications of instructional materials on oral skills among early childhood learners. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The target population comprised 42 head teachers, 126 teachers and 3180 learners. It was found that that teaching using instructional materials improved the performance of learners in various learning activities such as repetition of letters, repetition of words and ability to write dictated words. The improved performance was in a range of 11% to 18%.

Key words: Instructional materials, oral skills and performance.

INTRODUCTION

Language is a medium of communication. Since language is pervasive in almost everything children do, it should be central to the early childhood education program. Adults are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that children grow and develop in the most natural way to obtain holistic development. Consequently, adults are expected to harness language development during preschool years. Preschool is the main formal institution catering for children especially those in the age group 3-6 years. It prepares the child for later schooling at primary level where the child is expected to receive basic education (Cummins, 1979). The Kenyan ECDE policy on language states that all learners at preschool level should be instructed using languages of the catchment area. In town centres, Kiswahili is the main language for instruction.

Statement of the problem

Development of pre-reading, writing and oral skills in early years is influenced much by the child's immediate environment which should be organized in such a way that

it offers rich and valid experience that support and stimulate their development. The ECDE policy on language states that all learners at preschool levels must be instructed using languages of the catchment area which is mother tongue, that is, Kiswahili in town centers. Despite the fact that all learners are expected to use culturally-relevant instructional materials and by extension that all learning materials need to be in a language of the catchment area for ease of comprehension, many preschools use instructional materials that are written in other languages other than the language of the catchment area. This is likely to affect the learners' motivation to read and eventually might not effectively use instructional resources. This has resulted into poor achievement in oral skills, reading readiness skills and writing readiness skills among early learners at the ECDE centers. In addition, many ECDE teachers do not use the instructional material during teaching lessons and even the few that use instructional materials concentrate only on one type of the instructional materials and ignore the others. The study therefore sought to fill this gap by examining the

implications of instructional materials on language achievement among early childhood learners in Central Zone, Kisumu East Sub County.

Research objective

The objective of study was to establish the implications of instructional materials on oral skills among early childhood learners in Central Zone, Kisumu East Sub County.

Literature review

Instructional materials are the teaching and learning aids used by teachers to make the content of what they present more vivid, interesting and pragmatic to learners. The study by Brown (2010) indicated that Instructional materials vary from simple and inexpensive ones, such as the chalkboard, flat pictures, text books, flash cards, counters, diagrams, worksheets, illustrations, and maps, to more complicated and expensive ones like the television, computers, movie projectors, slides and filmstrip projectors. Instructional materials are broadly grouped into two categories printed and non-printed materials (Brown, Oke & Brown, 2010).

According to World Bank (2007), instructional materials are gradients in learning and the intended curriculum cannot be implemented without them. Over the past years, the importance of adequate learning and teaching materials (including text books, teachers' guide and supplementary materials) to support educational development and quality upgrading has been recognized by governments among developing and developed countries.

According to Mollica (2009) the broad categories of printed materials that are being used in classrooms include books, and supplementary reading materials. These broad categories of instructional materials have implications on early learners' performance on prerequisite skills taught in an Early Childhood Education (ECD) classroom. A study by Ndalo & Okoth (2010) indicated that instructional materials are believed to offer variety of experiences to the lesson and thus keep monotony and boredom at bay. They, thus make learning interesting, they help shorten the explanations and make abstract concepts to be understood easily by the learners. Effective uses of instructional materials provide firsthand experience with the realities of the social and physical environment and encourage active participation in the lesson. They also cater for individual learners' differences as they are able to appeal to several senses, for example, providing learners with sand paper flash cards of letters to touch along the strokes and feel how they are formed help develop their fine motor muscles. Learning materials help in developing in the learners the power of observation, imagination and reasoning especially when using real objects as they manipulate and handle the resources.

In order to make learning and teaching meaningful and interesting to pre-school learners, teachers should provide variety of instrumental materials such as picture books

for age 2-4 years; simple story books, phonetic reading books, for age 5-8 years to develop different skills. To ensure that the learner remains active participant during learning process, a teacher should create a classroom library with relevant, adequate and variety of printed instructional materials considering learners interest. Scholars like Mutebi and Matova (1994) emphasized the implications of using instructional materials on teaching and learning and found that we learn and remember 10% of what we hear, 40% of what we discuss with others and as high as 80% of what we practice directly.

A study by Duke and Pearson (2002) in America on implications of printed instructional materials on literacy asserted that a print-rich environment is one in which students see their own writing, drawing and printed materials all around them through class-created stories on bulletin boards, environmental print, word walls, magazines and classroom library. In such environment, students come to recognize the value of many different types of writings. The text available to students for reading aloud, small group instruction, and independent reading are also important and should include texts from a range of genres in order to develop skilled readers. Another study by Dodge, Laird and Lochman (2002) established that creating a library centre in a classroom enables children to explore different types of stories and books, learn to listen for understanding, recognize written words and symbols, begin watching words with printed text and then recognize printed words, sight words and high frequency words.

In a study conducted in Mauritius, education is free at all levels, right from primary through the university level at one of the two public Universities. The Education structure consists of four cycles, ECD, primary, secondary and post-secondary. The aim and purpose of education in preprimary in Mauritius is to ensure that all children aged 3-5 years have an opportunity to develop their individual intellectual, socio-emotional and psychomotor skills to the best of their capacity in order to build confidence and self-esteem in learning that will not only prepare them for the next level (primary school) but more importantly, lay the foundation for learning that will support them throughout their lifetime. The choice of the language of instruction used in school is considered to be of utmost importance and needs to be given attention especially in socio-economically disadvantaged areas where both family and community exposure to the English language/the official language of instruction and assessment in schools is limited. The curriculum highlights this issue and the fact that teachers need to be made aware of the principles underpinning language acquisition so that they can make use of the language of the environment to facilitate learning (GRM, 2008).

A study by Adwale (2011) done in Nigeria, noted that instructional materials help teachers to hold students' attention in the class. This is because it makes students believe in their teacher who teaches objectively as it will help students understand the mechanism of learning. Ani (2006) noted that instructional materials help students to

improve in their learning procedure and develop their language skills. It also helps students' range of experiences to achieve their desired aim. Brown (1982) pointed out the vital roles of the teacher in the curriculum process, where it was noted that the curriculum can be a great success or a dismal failure depending on teachers and the instructional materials at the disposal of the teachers. Several Nigerian educators have emphasized the importance of instructional materials in successful implementation of any curriculum (Okobia, 2011). Relevant and appropriate text books, visual materials like globes, charts, slides, maps and tapes are of paramount materials that supplement and consolidate what is read in text books and journals.

The aim of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in Ugandais to develop children's capabilities healthy physical growth and good social habits (MoES, 2007). Although ECD covers children in the age range of 0-8years, ECD Centers take up children from 0-5years (MoEST, 2008). Emphasis in ECD Centers is moral development, imagination, self-reliance, thinking power, appreciation of cultural backgrounds, customs, and language and communication skills in the mother tongue (National Curriculum Development Center, 2005).

In Kenya, the use of teaching and learning materials in early childhood education (ECD) and indeed any other level cannot be over emphasized. In 1948, the government established teachers' advisory centre (Resource centre) to serve a cluster of schools. A major goal of clusters and resource centre was to provide pupils and teachers with access to learning materials including teacher made materials, supplementary texts, teacher guides, curriculum guides, science equipment, maps and charts and other audio visual aids for the classroom to improve early childhood learners' achievement (UNESCO, 2014).

The Ministry of Education manages preschool programmes through National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE). The NACECE develops preschool curriculum and formulates policies related to early childhood programs. The policy recommends the use of language of the catchment area in ECD Centers and lower primary as a medium of instruction and children should learn using culturally-relevant instructional materials to help them appreciate their culture and promote a smooth transition from home to school. The implementation of language policy require that the syllabus, textbooks and teachers' guides and other culturally-relevant materials be developed and delivered in schools for use before the implementation starts. UNESCO (2005) indicated that the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction boosts children's confidence and academic performance. This means that children who start their education in their mother tongue have a good start and perform better than those who start school in a foreign language.

A study in Kenya by Begi (2014) in three districts; Bondo, Kisii and Kericho sought to establish whether mother tongue was used as a language of instruction in preschools and lower primary and the findings revealed that the majority of the teachers did not have culturally-relevant

materials in the market, teachers lacked information on published materials and also there was lack of funds for developing and acquiring culturally- relevant materials. Yet, Walter (2010) emphasized that learning is effective when both learners and the teachers speak well the language of instruction. He found that this does not happen in developing countries like Kenya that has continued to use colonial language as primary languages of education from earliest years of formal school.

Language is a tool of communication through which every individual expresses his or her feelings, emotions, likes and dislikes. Instructional materials, if used effectively and efficiently facilitate language skills acquisition in preschools. However the situation is not good in most of preschool centers; the available instructional materials are of low quality and inadequate while some classrooms are empty. Most of ECD teachers are also untrained meaning that more of abstract learning rather than practical learning is practiced in preschools exposing learners to non-rich literacy learning environment (Waithaka, 2005).

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework offers the conceptual foundation to proceed with the research, and since a theoretical framework is none other than identifying the network of relationships among the variables considered important to the study of any given problem situation, it is essential to understand what a variable means in this study. This study was guided by Montessori's theory of child sized environment in an attempt to explain the implications of instructional materials on language activities among early learners. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was an Italian scholar who devoted her life to the promotion of Education for young children, with her ideas influencing virtually all subsequent ECDE programmes (Povell, 2007). Montessori was best known for her design of materials for sense training. Committed to the idea that movement, manipulation and the isolated training of the senses develops the capacity or thought, she developed materials that could be self-administered and that were self-correcting. The younger children practiced sensory discrimination of various graded stimuli, proceeding from a few which were strongly contested to many stimuli gradually and imperceptibly differentiated. Activities were developed for touch, visual and auditory senses; identifying objects through words. Montessori claimed that it is through movement and manipulation of the senses that children would gain knowledge of language, abstract thought, critically thinking and problem solving skills, math skills, independence, practical life skills and discipline. Montessori's idea of sensory education included hands on activities that would require the child to tune their five senses to heightening their intellectually abilities. The hands and the mind work together, making the learning experience one of doing rather than simply observing, (Hainstock, 1997).

Based on Maria Montessori's theory, her work included

development of specific educational methods and materials based on her belief about how children learn which are practiced in our today's classroom situation. Montessori programs are currently found in a variety of settings, including inner-city and affluent areas, large urban magnet programs, preschools for children at risk and early childhood and child care centers (Haines, 1995). At present, there is an estimated 4000 private Montessori programs and more than 200 Montessori-styled public schools serving students from infancy to 8th grade (North American Montessori Teachers Association, 2003) The Montessori classroom is arranged to create a learning environment that will reinforce the child's independence and natural urge towards self-development. According to Tylor and Vlastos (2009), the Montessori materials are tools to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery, beautifully handcrafted and displayed on low shelves within every learner reach whereby each piece of material has a specific purpose and is presented to the children in a manner that will enable them to direct their own learning.

The study therefore, attempts to find out to what extent the theory is applicable in indicating the implications of instructional materials on learning among preschoolers to improve their achievement in different skills. Based on this theory, it is hoped that the solutions could be suggested. According to Montessori, young children when engaged with a rich environment of instructional materials, high achievement of results will be experienced in language activities, that is, oral skills, reading readiness skills and writing readiness skills.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for this study is descriptive survey design. Kerlinger (1969), points out that descriptive study are not only restricted to fact findings, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems.

The study was conducted in preschools in Kisumu East sub-county, Kenya. The target population for this study consisted of 42 ECD centres, 126 preschool teachers, 12 head teachers and 3180 learners in both public and private preschools in central zone in Kisumu County.

Sample size and sampling procedures

In this study the sample size included 10-30% of the entire of population preschools in central zone who were randomly sampled. The target population of ECD children is 3180 and therefore 10% was 318 children. Stratified random sampling method was used in selecting schools to be included in the sample. This sampling method was suitable because it involved dividing the population into homogenous sub-groups and then taking a simple random sample in each sub-group. The sample was selected in such

a way that certain sub-groups in the population were represented in the sample proportion to their number in the population, (Kombo and Tromp, 2006).

In this study the preschools were categorized into two; public and private preschools. In central zone there were 18 public preschools and 24 private preschools, simple random sampling was used to select 7 private and 5 public preschools. The researcher identified all those participants to take part by using random numbers, numbering all the participants of the population and then randomly collecting the sample required. The Table 1 below shows sample size for this study.

Data collection Instruments

The research instruments in this study included the following; Questionnaires and interview schedule. The instruments were developed by examining the research objectives, research questions and reviewed literature.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Questionnaires return rate

The study achieved 100% response return rate of teachers in which all the 40 teachers duly filled the questionnaires. As for the head teachers, all the 12 head teachers took part in the interview attaining 100% response return rate. Out of the 318 preschool learners, 275 (86.5%) returned duly filled questionnaires, implying that all except 43 respondents participated fully in the study. This response return rate was achieved because the researcher administered the instruments to each respondent and also organized the interviews with the head teachers in person to ensure that each and every respondent took part in the study.

Respondents demographic characteristics

Response by Gender

Considering the responses by gender, all of the preschool teachers were female (100%) as none was of male gender. This because female teachers are more understanding, can spend their time playing with preschool children and can handle children same way they are handled at home with their parents.

Professional qualifications

The respondents were asked to indicate their professional qualification and the findings were presented in Table 2.

The study established that most of the respondents (preschool teachers), 41.7% were ECD diploma holders, followed by those with ECD certificate holders (38.9%), those with Bachelor degree accounted for by 8.3%, while P1 certificate holders represented 5.6% and those with

Table 1. Sample size

Respondent	Public	Private	Total	Sample Size (n) (30%)
Teachers	54	72	126	40
Learners	1046	2134	3180	318
Head teachers	18	24	42	12
Total	1118	2230	3348	370

Table 2. Professional qualification (N=40)

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percentage
ECD certificate	16	38.9%
ECD diploma	17	41.7%
P1 certificate	02	5.6%
Bachelor's degree	03	8.3%
Others	02	5.6%
Total	40	100

Table 3. Number of years in service (N=40)

	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	14	36.1%
6-10	16	38.9%
Above 10 years	10	25%
Total	40	100

other qualification were at 5.6%. This showed that 94.5% of the respondents had relevant ECDE training. This was good for quality teaching at ECDE level.

The results showed that there was significant improvement in quality of teachers. According to Waithaka (2005), most ECDE teachers were untrained. That position had changed positively.

Teaching experience

Respondents were also requested to indicate their teaching experience based on the number of years they had taken in service. Table 3 shows the response.

The study found that majority of the respondents at 63.9% cumulatively had taken more than 5 years offering their services as preschool teachers in ECDE settings. This implies that they had good teaching experience and were therefore able to give information on how they perceived the implications of instructional materials on language activities among early childhood

Findings on Implications of instructional materials on oral skills among ECDE learners

The objective of the study was to establish the implications of instructional materials on oral skills among early childhood learners in Central Zone, Kisumu East Sub County. To address this research objective, two questionnaires were carefully developed; the first one was

to establish teacher's views on implication of instructional materials on oral skills among early childhood learners, while the second set of questions was administered to preschool learners in form of exams testing on their oral skills. The teachers view regarding the implication of instructional materials on oral skills was measured on a five point LIKERT scale where strongly agree (SA) = 5, agree (A) = 4, neutral (N) = 3, disagree (D) = 2 and strongly disagree (SD) = 1.

Further, the researcher computed the frequencies and percentages as well as the mean regarding each statement. The results of the findings on teachers opinion on implication of instructional materials on learners' oral skills is presented in Table 4 below.

From the findings, the preschool teachers generally appreciated the use of various instructional materials to improve the oral skills of the learners with an aggregate mean score of 4.35. This indicated positive approval and shows that instructional materials are significant in enhancing learners' oral skills as indicated by 92.5% of the respondents..

Cumulatively, 92.5% of the teachers encourage learners to listen and respond to one another through discussions as they either strongly agree (50%) or agree (42.5%) with only 7.5% of the teacher respondents disagreeing with this statement. Further, 90% cumulatively agreed that they initiated conversations that maximize talk and build on oral language skills by using the well-designed instructional materials. This shows that preschool teachers highly rated

Table 4. Teachers' Opinion on Implication of Instructional Materials on Oral skills

Statement	SA		A		N		D		SD		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I encourage children to listen and respond to one another through discussions.	20	50.0	17	42.5	0	0.0	3	7.5	0	0.0	4.35
I initiate conversations that maximize talk and build on oral language skills by using the well designed instructional materials	21	52.5	15	37.5	3	7.5	1	2.5	0	0.0	4.4
I read a book or books everyday to the children in my classroom in a group setting.	33	82.5	6	15.0	1	2.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.8
I read chart, books and flashcards spontaneously with children throughout the day in multiple settings to enhance their reading skills	30	75.0	10	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.75
Videos and sound recordings are useful to my learners for oral skills	11	27.5	9	22.5	11	27.5	5	12.5	4	10.0	3.45

the contribution of well-designed instructional materials on encouraging learners' oral skills. This concurs with the findings of Stempleski (2007) who also found that instructional materials such as charts encourages oral skills of the learners in oral languages, which provides a foundation for communication of ideas and intelligent conversation.

Teachers agreed that they read a book or books everyday to the children in their classroom in a group setting 97.5% agreed and only 2.5% were undecided. This finding stresses the use of books as instructional material to enhance oral skills among learners. Through reading of books, learners are able to speak and pronounced the words exactly the way their teachers read them in books.

It was found that 100% of the teachers agreed that they read charts, books and flashcards spontaneously with children throughout the day in multiple settings to enhance their reading skills with 75% strongly agreeing and the other 25% agreeing. This showed that there was an emphatic approval for the use of various instructional materials to enhance oral skills.

Regarding visual and audio media, the opinion of teachers was varied as to whether videos and sound recordings were useful to learners for oral skills, 50% agreed, 27.5% were neutral while 22.5% disagreed with the statement that "videos and sound recordings are useful to my learners for oral skills". This divergent opinion was due to the fact that most of the teachers interviewed did not have access to audio and visual media instructional materials.

During interviews with head teachers, some of the themes that emerged were book reading, chart reading and video recording. On book reading it involved engaging the learners to pronounce properly the words in texts in order to improve their oral skills. It was found that book reading was improving the learners' oral skills through correct pronunciation of the words with the teachers' guidance. When interviewed on this, one of the head teachers said:

"When learners are put to read text books either as in groups or as individuals, they not only sharpen their reading

skills and mastery of the spelling but also improves their oral skills through correct pronunciation of the words as they are spelt in the textbooks. This is effectively achieved through close supervision of the teachers" [Head Teacher, 5]

From these statements, it was deduced that book reading is very helpful to the learners in terms of oral skills. This is also supported by Kinsella (2006) who found that book reading in classes not only provide the learners with skills to master the vocabulary but also give them opportunity to recognize and possibly use new words when they hear or see them again.

Chart reading involves giving the learner a chance to express himself or herself with illustrative charts which are written in letters, words or diagrams. It was found that when children are given opportunity to express themselves with charts e.g reading the alphabetical letters and numbers, learners were able to improve on their oral skills. This was justified by one of the head teachers during the interview when he said that:

"Chart reading help learners achieve much in their class during the class lessons given that it helps them pronounce and master the words properly. Through this activity, learners also develop confidence and improve on their expression skills". [Head Teacher, 7]

These views imply that chart reading is helpful for the oral skill development of the learner. This corroborates the finding of Neuman (2010) who found that development of thinking and reading abilities are closely linked to the development of oral language and that speaking to learn is the vehicle for increasing and deepening knowledge. This was also found by Gunning (2013) who established that instructional materials such as cards, charts, books are used to teach new vocabulary and concepts and that a teacher should introduce a concept and then let the children discuss about it then later show the children pictures of parts of the body with their names to read.

"Video recording helps the learners to master the best way to pronounce the words during communication. This in turn provides good oral skills to the learners. The speaker during video recording pronounce the words correctly, making the

Table 5: Findings from preschool learners' on their oral skills

Test	Using Instructional Materials		Without Instructional Materials		Difference in Mean (%)
	Yes (%)	No (%)	Yes (%)	No (%)	
N= 275					
Repetition of letters					
A	30	20	16	34	
F	36	20	20	24	
E	45	15	15	25	
S	32	16	20	32	
Mean	35.75	17.75	17.75	28.75	18.0
Repetition of Words					
Cat	38	16	30	16	
Dog	35	30	18	17	
Mean	36.5	23	24	16.5	12.5
Doing things as instructed					
Jump	30	27	13	30	
Sit	26	30	10	34	
Mean	28	28.5	11.5	32	16.5
Ability to write dictated words					
Boy	18	42	10	30	
Girl	20	35	13	32	
Pencil	30	30	12	28	
Mean	22.67	35.67	11.67	30.00	11.0

Source: Researcher's Analysis (N=40; F is Frequency)

words to come out clearly for the listeners, thus the learners learn good oral and communication skills" [Head Teacher, 10]

From these statements, it can therefore be deduced that video recording is very crucial for learners' mastery of correct pronunciation and communication skills. This is also supported by the findings of Ogunlade and Amosa (2013) in their study in Nigeria, where they also found that the pupils taught using the audio instructional package performed significantly better in oral skill examinations than their counterparts taught using the expository method.

The learners were tested on various oral skills such as repeating certain words and sounds after the teacher, following given instructions and writing dictated words. The ability to respond appropriately was reported as yes while the inability was recorded as no. The numbers of learners getting each item right were recorded as the frequency with yes on the given item with ones failing recorded as frequency for no.

The study also sought to examine the scores on the tests administered to preschool learners. The researcher translated frequency into percentages of the responses from the learners in order to compare performance with instructional materials and without instructional materials as shown in Table 5.

The findings of this study showed that, on average, use of instructional materials to teach preschool learners enhanced the ability of learners to understand and repeat letters by a margin of 18% while for repeating words, it enhances it by a margin of 12%. Further, the study found

that the use of instructional materials for oral skills enhanced learners ability to do things as instructed with a margin of 16.5% over and above learners taught without using instructional materials.

Overall, the study found that the ability of learners to write dictated words improved with the use of instructional materials with a margin of 11% as compared to those learners who were taught without instructional materials.

Specifically, the study showed that use of instructional materials enriched learners oral skills since majority of the learners who were taught by the use of instructional materials were able to repeat letters, repeat words, do things as instructed as well as write dictated words correctly. This was contrary to learners who were taught without instructional materials since most of them were unable to repeat letters, repeat words, do things as instructed and correctly write dictated words.

The findings in the Table 5 above showed that majority (54%) of preschool learners (both taught with and without instructional materials) were not able repeat letter 'A'. More than a half was able to repeat the letters 'F' (56%) and 'E' (60%). A number of preschool learners could not repeat the letter A (54%), 44% of the respondents didn't repeat letter 'F'. Similarly 40% of the respondents and 48% of the respondents were unable repeat letters 'E' and 'S' correctly.

On the other hand even though majority could repeat the words 'Cat' 68% and 'Dog' 53% correctly, a proportion of the preschool learners 32% and 47% could not repeat correctly the words 'Cat' and 'Dog' respectively. Thus, majority of the learners 53% and above risked suffering embarrassment when talking to their peers. This could

make their learning environment dull and unattractive.

On doing things as instructed, the use of instructional materials contributes on average 16.5% in learning. Majority of the preschool learners 57% couldn't jump when they were instructed to do so; similarly 64% of the respondents could not sit when they were instructed to sit. This showed that most of the preschool learners in ECDE centers had problem coping with the teaching methods used.

Similarly, preschool learners had poor dictation skills as depicted in the study findings. In all the three words dictated to them, only less than a half of the preschool learners wrote the three words correctly, and majority couldn't write the words correctly as dictated. For instance, 72% couldn't write the word Boy correctly, 67% couldn't write the word Girl correctly while 58% of the preschool learners couldn't write the word pencil correctly as dictated. This developmental pattern continues throughout schools and among the learners in both the groups taught by use of instructional materials as well as those taught without the use of instructional materials.

From the interviews made with the head teachers, one of the head teachers voiced that,

"instructional materials help the learners repeat letters and words correctly and this helps them have good oral skills" [Head Teacher, 11].

Another head teacher echoed these statements when he reiterated that:

"instructional materials help in boosting the performance of the learners in writing correctly the dictated words, doing things as instructed and correct repetition of words and letters." [Head Teacher, 9]

From these statements made by the head teachers, it can be interpreted that instructional materials improved the performance of learners in various learning activities such as repetition of letters, repetition of words and ability to write dictated words. These findings support the findings of Nsa, Ikot and Udo (2013) in their study conducted in Nigeria, where they also found that there was a significant difference between the reading performance of learner taught with instructional chart and those without and there was significant difference between the performance of learners taught with instructional pictures and those taught without.

Conclusions

The study found that instructional materials had implications on oral skills. Teachers were found to positively view use of instructional materials in teaching the ECDE classes. It was concluded that teaching using instructional materials improved the performance of learners in various learning activities such as repetition of letters, repetition of words and ability to write dictated words. The improved performance was in a range of 11% to 18%.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests

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