

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA



TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON PRE-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ON
PUPILS' LEARNING OF ORAL ENGLISH: THE CASE OF PRE-
SCHOOLS IN GABORONE

A research essay presented to the Faculty of Education in partial
fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Masters of Education
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by

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Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

APPROVAL PAGE

This special supervised research project has been examined and approved as meeting the required standards of scholarship for partial fulfilment of the required of the required of the degree of Masters of Education.

As supervisor, I agree to the submission of the research project

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

The work contained in this report was compiled by the author at the University of Botswana between August 2012 and May 2015. It is my original work except where due reference is made and neither has been nor will be submitted for the award of any other university.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated with gratitude to the memory of my late father Meshack Antshia Pelekekae!! To my two daughters, Tatenda and Shathani Pelekekae respectively and my son Ndulamo Pelekekae who sacrificed so much by letting me spend most of my family time and finances studying. Once again thank you. I owe much of my success to my friend Ookeditse Kgaditswe who has been supportive in every possible way throughout this study. You have been a great inspiration to the development of this work. God bless you. Finally to my loving fiancé Tshephang Ntanda Gobela. What a blessing to have you around, a real blessing!

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

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TABLE OF FIGURES

Table 1: Demographic variable of teachers	37
Table 2: Teachers' responses to perception statements.....	39
Table 3: Demographic variables of pupils.....	40
Table 4: Pupil's responses to a test on a picture.....	41
Table 5: Pupils' responses to where the animal in the picture lives.....	41
Table 6: Responses of children to what the animal in the picture eats.....	42
Table 7: Pupils' responses to identification of humans.....	42
Table 8: Pupils' responses by location on what the baby in the picture feeds on.....	43
Table 9: Children's responses on what the baby likes	43
Table 10: Children's responses to items on knowledge	44
Table 11: Analysis of children's knowledge by location	45

ABSTRACT

Teachers' perceptions of pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English: The case of pre-schools in Gaborone (under the supervision of Professor M. Mosothwane).

This study sought to examine teacher's perception of pre-school attendance on standard one pupils' learning of oral English. Teachers and pupils were chosen as respondents and they were provided with questionnaires to respond to. The information they filled on the questionnaires was analysed by the researcher. According to the data that were analysed, teachers who teach standard one pupils have indicated that pupils who come to primary school with pre-school background have higher cognitive knowledge as compared to their counterparts. The paper concluded by observing that pre-school education equips children with pre-requisite skills which make learning in standard one easier and faster for children so exposed.

Finally, the researcher suggested recommendations that when implemented, a good number of pupils may enrol in pre-schools before starting regular schools, hence they will start standard one with a higher cognitive level in the learning of oral English language.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL PAGE	i
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	v
TABLE OF FIGURES	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background.....	2
1.1.1 Origins of pre-schools	2
1.1.2 Pre-schools in Africa.....	4
1.1.3 Pre-schools in SADC	5
1.1.4 Pre-schools in Botswana	7
Summary	8
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	9
1.3 The purpose of the study.....	10
1.4 Research objectives.....	10

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

1.5 Research questions.....	10
1.6 Theoretical framework.....	11
1.7 Significance of the study.....	12
1.8 Limitation of the study.....	12
1.9 Delimitation of the study.....	13
CHAPTER TWO.....	14
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
2.0. Introduction.....	14
2.1. The concept of pre-school education.....	14
2.2. Pre-school education and readiness.....	15
2.3. The importance of pre-school education.....	16
2.4. Tools for assessing oral language in pre-primary classroom contexts.....	21
2.4.1. Anecdotal notes.....	21
2.4.2. Narratives.....	22
2.4.3. Language samples.....	22
2.4.4. Checklists.....	23
2.4.5. Rating scales.....	23
2.4.6. Scoring rubrics.....	25
2.5. Parental contribution to language acquisition at pre-schools.....	25
2.6. Transitions from a pre-school setting to primary school.....	26

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

2.6.1. Children's needs and wellbeing.....	27
2.7. Parents socio economic backgrounds and pre-school education.....	30
2.8. Summary.....	31
CHAPTER THREE.....	32
METHODOLOGY.....	32
3.0 Introduction.....	32
3.1 Research design and justifications.....	32
3.2 Population of the study and justifications.....	33
3.3 Sample of the study and justifications.....	33
3.4 Sampling procedures justifications.....	33
3.5 Instruments, data collection and justifications.....	34
3.6 Validity and reliability of instruments.....	35
3.7 Data analysis.....	36
3.8 Ethical considerations.....	36
CHAPTER 4.....	37
PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS.....	37
4.0 Introduction.....	37
4.1 Demographic variables of teachers.....	37
4.2 Teachers' responses to perception statements.....	38
4.3 Pupils' demographic variables.....	40

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

4.4 Pupils' responses to the test	41
4.5 Cross tabulated analysis of location with knowledge	45
CHAPTER 5	47
SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	47
5.0 Introduction.....	47
5.1 Summary of the study	47
Discussions	48
Research question 1	48
Research Question 2.....	49
Research Question 3.....	49
Collateral findings.....	50
Implications.....	50
Recommendations.....	51
Concluding statement.....	52
REFERENCES	53
APPENDICES	57
Appendix A: Standard 1 teacher questionnaire.....	57
Appendix B - Pupil questionnaire	60

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This study will examine teachers' perception of pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English. The chapter gives the background of the study, statement of the problem, theoretical framework, purpose of the study, significant of the study, limitations and delimitations are also discussed.

As the number of child bearing women increases and more young mothers join the workplace early after giving birth, there is a growing need for infant stimulation programs such as pre-schools. Pre-school education refers to the educational process including children between 0-8 ages (Gilley & Gilley, 2000).

More parents around the world have become more sensitized to the valuable contributions of pre-school education. There are added pressures and demand for quality pre-schools. Quality pre-school is important to create social and physical atmosphere to completely back up the development of children. Experiences during this period are the main determinants on what kind of a person they are to be in the future (Johnson, 2010).

Child psychologists agree that early learning is the foundation on which future learning is built. Within the framework of the individual psychology, the period when children start pre-school is regarded as the most important period in their life (Mwamwenda, 1996). Children who have entered into a different social environment through attending pre-schools make and develop new skills, attitudes, interests, values and personality traits. However, the breadth of knowledge

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language children learn depends on the richness of their experience and the environment (Mwamwenda, 1996).

It is important for all children to have proper start in life in order to maximize their potential for optimal development throughout life. Botswana perceives pre-school education as an effective mechanism for preparing children for primary education both socially and intellectually (Otaala, Njenga, & Monau, 2000). According to recent studies many educators agree that early childhood education programs help children to develop socially, physically, cognitively and emotionally (Taiwo & Tyolo, 2002). Children's early start in life through pre-school education helps them to begin to develop complex skills that are needed later in life.

The study therefore covers an investigative approach on teachers' perceptions of pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Origins of pre-schools

Pre-school education started in Europe some time ago and it mainly thrived after the industrialization era as the European economic and social life changed (Welton, 2005). As early as 1779, Johann Friedrich Oberlin and Louise Scheppler founded an early establishment for caring for pre-school children whose parents were absent during the day. At about the same time, in 1780, similar infant establishments were established in Bayern, Germany. In 1802, Pauline ZurLippe established a pre-school centre in Detmold, Germany (Gilley & Gilley, 2000). Froebel opened pre-school institute in 1837 in the village of Bad Brandenburg in the principality of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt in Germany, which he renamed Kindergarten in 1840. Women

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language trained by Froebel opened Kindergartens or pre-schools throughout Europe and around the World (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002).

In England there was also a period when primary schools were targeting children who had already learnt how to read and write at home. Many parents attempted to enrol their children in pre-schools, although these pre-schools were inadequate by then. This led Samuel Wilderspin to open his first infant school in London in 1819 and went on to establish hundreds more. He published many works on the subject, and his work became the model for infant schools throughout England and further afield (Welton, 2005).

The expansion of pre-school provision in the United Kingdom started in the 1970s with the idea of promoting school readiness for children who were considered economically and socially disadvantaged (Gilley & Gilley, 2000). The number of children attending pre-school nurseries were managed by local government or privately owned, hence child-minders, and playgroups increased steadily from the late 1970s. The Children Act of 1989 introduced mandatory inspections by the social services departments of local government for all childcare centres and imposed new requirements for the registration and review of private and voluntary day care centres (Welton, 2005). It prompted increased attention to the contents of the educational curriculum for children under five and the implications for the training of staff working in pre-school settings. The introduction of a system of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in 1991 brought nationally agreed standards across various professions including childcare. Before that, there were many different qualifications in the childcare sector, with very different levels of study ranging from short courses to 4-year degree pre-school education to foster the development of some basic social skills on young learners (Vahedi, Fathiazar, Hosseini-Nasab, Moghaddam, & Kiani, 2007).

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Also in European countries, pre-school education emphasizes individuality. Children are frequently permitted to choose from a variety of activities, using a learning centre approach. During these times, some children draw or paint, some play house, some play with puzzles while some listen to the teacher read a story aloud (Moyles, 2007). Activities vary in each session. Each child is assumed to have particular strengths and weaknesses to be encouraged or enhanced by the teachers. A typical belief is that "children's play is their work" (Bee, & Boyd, 2006, p. 7). In that way, by allowing them to select the type of play, the child will meet their developmental needs.

1.1.2 Pre-schools in Africa

Pre-school education in Africa existed long before then, when stories were told around fires (Mwamwenda, 1996). In the African traditional setting, the family in which early pre-school education took place was decentralized to extended families as young children love stories. The society told their children African folk tales as part of their pre-school activities about Africa. This was a great way for them to learn (Mwamwenda, 1996). The system had them ask questions and give their opinions of what they thought about the tales. Stories developed children morally, while riddles developed them intellectually (Muchiru, 1998). Oral language was acquired by young children through series of stories.

Africa is centred on the development of pre-school education. Well-functioning and sustainable national education and training systems are key tools in achieving this. Therefore pre-school education is an important sector whose performance directly affects the quality and magnitude of Africa's development.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

1.1.3 Pre-schools in SADC

SADC aims to spearhead education and economic integration between and among its current fifteen Member States with a population of about 238.8 million people and which comprise of Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe (Johnson, 2010).

SADC member countries envision a common future that will ensure pre-school development in its region by identifying pre-school education as one of its nine priority areas (Fitzgerald, & Shanahan, 2000). Therefore SADC seeks to improve the current and relevant pre-school education data for planning, decision making and monitoring at national and regional levels through the development of a comprehensive, integrated, compatible and functional curriculum. Among the key strategic interventions for achieving this is the development of policies at national level, development and implementation of regional norms and standards, and building capacity of its Member States to be able to provide the necessary data and information for monitoring pre-school education (Eivers, Shiel & Shortt, 2004). The key national plans and international policy agendas on development of pre-school education enhance the drive for the eight Millennium Development Goals which range from halving extreme illiteracy and providing universal primary education for all by the target date of 2015 (Otaala et al., 2000).

The Education For All goals in SADC dictates key statistical indicators which ministries of education need to monitor and assess. There are also SADC's own regional policy frameworks such as the SADC Regional Implementation Plan on Education and Training of 2007 to 2015 which guides and informs the implementation of pre-primary policies in the SADC region. SADC Ministries of Education, as do all regions and continents, need measures and

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language statistical indicators to monitor and evaluate their progress in implementing these various policy agendas in pre-school to which they have committed themselves. It lists the following nine priority areas of focus during this period:

- Mandate for data collection: The Ministry of Education must have a clear legal mandate to collect pre-primary information from all education and training institutions and bodies, both public and private, for educational statistical purposes.
- Quality commitment: The Ministry of Education commits itself to work and cooperate according to the norms fixed in the quality declaration of its national statistical systems and in other international statistical frameworks.
- Reporting accountability: The Ministry of Education adheres to a policy of timely and accurate reporting to the statistical information requirements of national, regional, continental and international pre-primary education frameworks.
- Registration of institutions: All pre-primary education and training institutions must be compelled to register with appropriate education Ministries if they are to operate as an education and training institution.
- Registration of learners: All learners are required to present their birth certificate upon registration at any education and training institution.
- Adequate resources: The Ministry of Education ensures that resources are commensurate with the statistical programmes, personnel, facilities, equipment, technology, training and financing of their education management information systems.
- Accessibility and clarity: Pre-school education should be presented in a clear and understandable form, disseminated in a suitable and convenient manner, available and

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

accessible on an impartial basis with supporting knowledge and guidance (Otaala et al., 2000).

1.1.4 Pre-schools in Botswana

An evaluation study by Otaala et al. (2000) indicates that pre-school education in Botswana started after independence and has grown then by demand. Pre-schools were run by organizations like women's groups, churches, Red Cross and individuals without any policies. Pre-schools at the moment are enjoyed by few children due to financial constraints experienced by some families. This statement is also verified by Mwamwenda (1996) who argues that most children in the west attend pre-school programmes while only a privileged few do so in Africa. The above reading depicts Botswana's situation. Pre-school education is available only to those children whose parents can afford to send them to expensive private day care centres and pre-schools. The overwhelming majority of children have no access to pre-school programs (Mwamwenda, 1996).

The University of Botswana's Primary Education Department and Home Economics Education Department offer courses for students seeking the Baccalaureate Degree in Education. In 1998 (Otaala et al., 2000) reported that the university lacked a comprehensive plan and policy on pre-school education and that the Department of Primary Education did not offer a full-fledged program in pre-school education. The Department of Home Economics Education in the University of Botswana opened a day care centre. The centre, managed by students as part of their curriculum, was for children of the university's employees who did not have the financial resources to send their children to other day care centres.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Botswana, as an African state, has only a few children who acquire formal pre-school education. This therefore justifies the researcher's opinion and reasons laid down for pre-school education programme advocated for by the National Development Plan 8 to improve on pre-school education by investing on pre-school education and making it accessible to all children irrespective their social background (Republic of Botswana, 1998).

Due to a high social demand for more widely available pre-school education in Botswana, there has been a large increase in different kinds of pre-school provision since 1997. This necessitated the establishment of a multi-sectoral Reference Committee on early childhood education in 1980 which was composed of representatives from the Ministries of Education, Health, Local Government and Lands, voluntary and religious organisation (Muchiru, 1998). Its mandate was to look into the activities of pre-schools and draw up guidelines for their operation. The work of the Committee resulted in the adoption of the National Policy on Pre-Schools Centre in 1980. The policy was to provide guidance and reduce problems that were inherent in the uncontrolled establishment of pre-schools in the country.

The Ministry of Education has continuously made proposals since the late 1980s for a greater involvement of the education sector in the provision of pre-primary education. This was recognized by the Government in National Development Plan 7 where a commitment was made to prepare a comprehensive policy on pre-school education and to link it to the formal education system (Republic of Botswana, 1994).

Summary

Pre-school education is very important to the development of the child since it helps the child to have access to resources and knowledge at a very early age (Taiwo & Tyolo, 2002).

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Since pre-school education involves the first eight years of the child's existence, the education given during these years of a child's life plays a very important role and helps in proper development of children. Research has shown that early eight years in children's life are crucial time because during this phase their brains develop and much of its wiring is laid down (Doherty & Hughess, 2009). Therefore the education experiences and relationships a child has along with nutrition can actually affect child mental growth enormously (Madhavan, 2004). While good early childhood education helps the brain to develop in healthy ways, improper education or study without play on other hand may affect brain development in a different way. So the experiences and the learning of a child in early years can support them in their entire life (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Pre-school education, according to Evans, & Jones (2007) is a vital phase of life in terms of a child's intellectual, emotional and social development. The most important point to know is that the growth of mental abilities is at an amazing rate and high proportion of learning takes place during this period. It is therefore very important for every parent to understand that a child spends first eight years in realization of their own identity. These are very crucial years when children gain a sense of self and learn to associate themselves with the people around them. They develop an understanding and good behaviour to a certain extent (Madhavan, 2004).

1.2 Statement of the problem

In Botswana primary schools teachers who teach standard one pupils have indicated that pupils come to schools with different cognitive levels. Some pupils are able to communicate in oral English while some are not. These teachers who teach standard ones have consistently argued that standard one pupils who are able to communicate better in oral English are those who attended pre-schools.

1.3 The purpose of the study

The study intends to assess the extent to which pre-school education improves the knowledge of oral English for standard one pupils. The researcher further intends to find out the importance of pre-school education for standard ones. The study will also investigate the perceptions held by teachers on the introduction of pre-school education in regular schools and to sensitize them about the benefits of pre-school education.

1.4 Research objectives

- Specifically the study intends to assess teachers' perceptions on the extent to which pre-school attendance help children to be proficient in oral English.
- Investigate what teachers perceive as important things to be taught in the learning of oral English in pre-schools.
- Solicit information from teachers on the importance of pre-school education on the child's learning of oral English language.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions addressed in this study include:

- Does pre-school improve the child's knowledge of oral English language?
- What is the importance of pre-school education in children's learning of oral English language?
- How do teachers perceive pre-school education in connection to the child's learning of the oral English language?

1.6 Theoretical framework

My theoretical framework will be based on Vygotsky theory of socio cultural development. His theory focuses heavily on language and social interaction, and the role they play in helping learners acquire an understanding of the culture in which they live. According to Vygotsky (1978) language is a tool which people use for cultural transmission, communication, and reflection on their own thinking.

Vygotsky similarly views the teacher-pupil relationship as critical to language learning (Bruce & Meggin, 1996). He uses the term "scaffolding" to describe the learning assistance provided by the teacher who knows how to control elements which are beyond the child's capabilities. Vygotsky views language as providing the basis for concept formation and as a tool for cognitive growth (Otaala et al., 2000).

Central to Vygotsky's theory of socio cultural development, he constructed the zone of proximal development. He proposed that a child's immediate potential for cognitive growth is bounded on the lower end by what the child can accomplish on his or her own and on the upper end by what the child can accomplish with the help of a more the other knowledgeable person, such as a peer or teacher. This region of immediate potential is the zone of proximal development. As a child learns to complete tasks with less and less assistance, the child's cognitive skills develop. Vygotsky's ideas concerning the zone of proximal development provide strong support for the inclusion of cooperative learning strategies in classroom instruction (Bee & Boyd, 2006).

Vygotsky's work has exerted influence in classrooms. Teachers are encouraged to engage pupils in meaningful learning tasks that involve language and social interaction.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Learners who benefit from assistance are in what Vygotsky calls the zone of proximal development. Learners within this zone can profit from instructional scaffolding in the form of modelling, questions, prompts, and cues (Doherty & Hughess, 2009).

1.7 Significance of the study

The study will benefit all stakeholders in society and education such as the Ministry of Education and Skills Development (MoESD), teachers and parents as they will be in a position to advise that the early children learning be taken seriously as research has shown that it improves the child's cognitive ability later in life. The study will be beneficial to the policy makers such as teachers, education officers and curriculum developers. Teachers who pursue careers in early childhood education will also benefit from the study. The community at large will as well benefit if the recommendations on pre-school introduction is done in all primary schools in Botswana.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The research was conducted in some of Gaborone primary schools only. Therefore, the results will serve as a sample to the whole of Gaborone. The research was also conducted on the time of the year which was a busy term in primary schools because it was characterized by extra mural activities. This obstructed the researcher since teachers and pupils had to keep on leaving classes to attend to those activities. As a result, the findings of this study cannot be generalised but rather should provoke further research and pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

1.9 Delimitation of the study

The study was confined to teachers and pupils in Gaborone primary schools as they were accessible to the researcher due to time and financial constraints. The study did not include rural schools since it was only carried out in Gaborone.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

According to Chilisa and Preece (2005) literature review is a summary of what others have written on the topic or topics that are similar to the one under investigation. Therefore, this chapter reviews literature related to the study undertaken. Creswell (2002) maintain that review of literature helps to answer research questions. In this chapter, literature is reviewed on the following subtopics.

- The concept of pre-school education
- Pre-school education and readiness
- The importance of pre-school education
- Tools for assessing oral language in pre-primary classroom contexts
- Parental contribution to language acquisition at pre-schools
- Transitions from a pre-school setting to primary school
- Parents socio economic backgrounds and pre-school education

2.1. The concept of pre-school education

Pre-school is designed to prepare four-year olds for formal schooling and introduce pupils to concepts and skills necessary for future academic success. According to studies pre-school attendance at age four will affect how a child learns at the age of seven. Therefore children need to be developed through provision of vibrant and responsive pre-school programme (Moyles, 2007).

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Pre-school centres were known by various names such as day care centres, nursery school, crèches, pre-primary units, reception schools, and kindergarten classes. They also served different functions. While some provided custodial care to young children, others functioned as preparatory classes for the primary school level (Kinney & Wharton, 2008). Officers who were responsible for supervising pre-school programs were social workers in district and town councils, who, understandably, lacked a professional background in education. There was no prescribed curriculum for this level, and the qualities of leadership in many pre-schools were inadequate (Johnson, 2010). Furthermore, many pre-schools did not have any links with primary schools which received their graduates. Meanwhile, pre-schools are places at which parents can take their young children on daily basis before they are old enough to enrol in regular schools. Pre-school is only a general term that refers to day-care centres and pre-primary education program (Welton, 2005).

Pre-school education is a complex area and it is still at a formative stage in Botswana (Taiwo & Tyolo, 2002). There still remain some gaps in information about characteristics of the pre-school education, children and teachers of pre-school centres, the curriculum being taught, or whether the pre-schools adhere to the standards and guidelines in terms of health, safety, enrolment and age of children (Otaala et al., 2000).

2.2. Pre-school education and readiness

Eivers, Shiel & Shortt, (2004) define readiness as “a particular state in the child that depends on both growth and maturation and the social experiences of the child” (p. 9). Readiness, if evaluated gives the teacher a chance to identify weaknesses displayed by children. Teachers take note of the skills that are lacking in children and give them exercises to practice

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language and improve those skills (Meisels, Marsden, Wiske, & Henderson, 1997). Early identification can accurately pinpoint the child's difficulties and a program can be designed to help solve those difficulties. It is therefore necessary that there be readiness tests carried out before a child is admitted in pre-schools. This will ensure accurate placement and instruction since the children will be grouped according to their levels of readiness or perhaps to their similar needs (Eivers, Shiel & Shortt, 2004).

Readiness is an off shooting stage that should be noticed by some ability in speaking, reading and writing. These are the pre-requisite skills which are the main foundation for the pre-school education program. Readiness also cultivates the physical, emotional and social development of a child. It also culminates experiential background, interest and willingness to learn (Abbeduto, Brady, & Kover, 2007). However there are four factors that determine readiness. Teachers should be observant enough to check if the development of these factors is effective. These are physical factors such as hand and eye coordination, muscle development, intellectual factors such as experimenting, emotional and social factors such as games and play in general (Cummins, 2000).

2.3. The importance of pre-school education

Many people had reservations about the importance of pre-school education (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006). This was clearly noticeable in the 1600 century when the California legislature unsuccessfully attempted to pass a law that would make pre-school education mandatory for all children. Many Californians did not agree with the importance of using tax payer funds to fund pre-school programs (Fisher, 2002).

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Meanwhile, pre-school education is essential for children because it is the building block of children primary education. It helps in laying down a healthy foundation for the all-round development of the child. Wood & Attfield (2005) state that it is necessary to provide a child with good pre-primary education in order for them to be prepared for future education. Research has shown that children enrolled in Head Start pre-school programs benefit by receiving formal education before formal schooling (Kinney & Wharton, 2008). According to some studies, children enrolled in these programs are more behaved and have higher IQ scores upon enrolling in formal education than their peers without pre-school education. Likewise, it was also shown that children enrolled in Head Start programs in America learnt quicker than children not enrolled in these programs (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006).

Critics of primary education claim that there are differences between children enrolled in pre-school programs and children not receiving pre-primary education which are noticeable during first and second grade. During subsequent years, children who have not received pre-primary education prior to primary school did not perform at the same level and behave like their peers at primary education (Kinney & Wharton, 2008).

Children taught at an early age usually benefit in the following ways: improved social skills, better grades, and enhanced attention spans (Doherty & Hughess, 2009). Likewise, some researchers have concluded that young children enrolled in pre-school programs usually graduate from high school, attend college, have fewer behavioural problems and do not become involved with crime in their adolescent and young adult years. In addition to benefiting children experiencing normal development, it was also shown that children with learning or other physical disabilities benefit immensely from pre-school education. Children taught how to speak

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language a second language during their early developmental years are also in a better position to learn at a young age (Moyles, 2007).

Children develop physically, socially and cognitively. Pre-schools provide learning experience which promote physical development because children manipulate objects like toys, clay and blocks. In this way, muscle coordination is improved through exercises. Kinney and Wharton (2008) state that: "The term motor skills describe a child's use of large and small muscles, eyes, hands, legs and arms in a coordinated manner" (p. 49). This kind of coordination is important as children use it for holding writing materials and holding books as they read and write in primary schools.

Children can be developed intellectually through some activities which arouse their interests some of them are puzzles, sorting, matching, and classifying. Intellectual development is influenced by the exposure to the environmental circumstances (Madhavan, 2004). I therefore believe that pre-schools are important because they provide learning materials which promote the child's cognitive development. Furthermore, the pre-school teacher develops the child's intelligence by encouraging curiosity, thinking, reasoning and using information. These skills mentioned are necessary in primary schools when carrying out primary school tasks such as problem solving and working on comprehension tasks (Kinney and Wharton, 2008).

Children can also be developed socially because they will be made to play with other children at school. Parkinson (1997) states that "social interaction usually contributes greatly to oral language development" (p. 630). This means that children can be trained socially and emotionally through activities in class such as games and play. The child also learns to be self-reliant and independent through series of tasks like tying up shoe laces and dressing. Kinney and

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Wharton (2008) states that “children will begin to think of themselves as independent, capable individuals” (p. 47). Self-reliance can be achieved if children are given the opportunity to do some tasks on their own. Pre-school education nurtures social skills such as cooperation, sharing and communication. These interactive activities prepare children for group work at primary where they share materials most of the time.

Therefore, pre-school children are at an advantage in overall classroom performance. One major problem with pre-primary programs is that children qualifying for these programs usually come from rich families, so these programs are not readily available for children who live below poverty line (Whalley, 2007). However, children can receive pre-primary education in other ways including parents teaching their young children. Children also benefit most when parents stay at home with their children and educate them (Dodici, Draper, & Peterson, 2003).

Most childhood education specialists claim that young children learn best when they are trained by their parents (Johnson, 2010). One reason for this is children who are educated by their parents during their early developmental years' experience the same benefits as children enrolled in pre-school programs, especially children receiving a lot of attention from parents. Parents deciding to educate their young children themselves should utilize creative ideas and activities when educating them (Dodici, Draper, & Peterson, 2003).

No matter the differences in opinion about formal pre-primary education, children benefit from receiving some type of education during their early developmental years. However, there is not one-size fits all instruction best suited for all children. While some children benefit immensely from pre-school, it may not be the best educational setting for other children. In most cases, children benefit most by receiving educational instruction from their parents. Parents must

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

evaluate a child's unique personality before determining which activity is best suited for the child since not all activities benefit children the same way. Whalley (2007) argues that these parents activities which children go through at home are neither organized, not structured and are generally practiced without any objectives hence they are not good. However, Johnson (2010) asserts that pre-school education should start from home with parents taking a role. He further argues that at home children are not pushed too hard, they have an opportunity to interact with their peers, and parents treat them kindly.

However, I feel that pre-school education should be given a priority. It allows children to expose their inner skills so that the children develop their personalities. It allows children to give vent to their inner desire in positive ways. Some pre-schools have activities designed for children in such a way that their inner talents are exposed. Pre-primary education exposes the creativity of children, thus allowing them to develop their personalities in a natural way (Dodici, Draper, & Peterson, 2003). Children learn to adjust with their peers and learn to interact with outsiders. They learn to find a life outside of their homes. Children develop independent personalities. Becoming independent is the first stage of growth and besides learning to eat independently, sleep independently, children learn to exist independently. Pre-schools provide a nurturing environment where children learn skills in communication, sharing, constructing, engaging others, negotiating, planning and working together. These skills are necessary components for a child to function within a classroom or group dynamic (Otaala et al., 2000).

Pre-schools provide the expertise which most parents could not otherwise offer at home. Sending children for pre-school education is important because they are manned with well trained personnel who specialize or rather have knowledge on child development. These teachers are also equipped with instructional activities and techniques to develop children holistically. A

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language child in their care is bound to receive a well purposeful, insight guidance and character (Meisels et al., 1997).

It is therefore important for all children to attend pre-school education in order to maximize their potential for the optimal development throughout life. This is the beginning of the strategy for making vision 2016 a reality. These ideal long term visions for Botswana have their roots in pre-school education. In order for each citizen to make a contribution towards prosperity, productivity and innovation, it requires among other qualities; creativity, critical thinking, and appreciation of the culture which are basically cultivated at pre-schools (Otaala et al., 2000).

2.4. Tools for assessing oral language in pre-primary classroom contexts

This section outlines number of tools that can be used to assess oral language in pre-primary classroom settings. These include tools that can be used to record observations of language in use as well as standardized measures of performance. The assessment tools include anecdotal notes, checklists, rating scales, and scoring rubrics (Smith, Cowie, & Blades, 2003).

2.4.1. Anecdotal notes

Anecdotal notes are short notes made by the teacher about a pupil's achievement. In using anecdotal notes to record information about proficiency in oral language, it is recommended that the teacher records three or four observations about each pupil each month. In planning and presenting an oral language activity the teacher may engage pupils in listening to a story, telling news or presenting short reports. Wood & Attfield (2005) argues that it is useful to focus on one or two dimensions of the task that can be assessed, and to observe particularly carefully how pupils perform on those dimensions. For example, if pupils are telling the news,

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language assessment might focus on ability to use descriptive language in presenting an object or describing an event, ability to sustain a conversation about a topic, or use of appropriate non-verbal behaviours such as facial expression or gesture. Evans and Jones (2007) provided the following advice about using anecdotal notes:

- Observe and document specific dimensions of a pupil's engagement in oral language.
- Record comments that individual pupils make about their listening, speaking and thinking processes.
- Note any target indicators that have been achieved.
- Note concerns and issues you want to address with the pupil in the future.
- Maintain objective records that can be shared with other teachers or with parents.

2.4.2. Narratives

Citing work by an Australian, Carr cited in Wood and Attfield (2005) had proposed that narrative accounts be used as a vehicle for recording oral language in early childhood and primary education (3-8 years). Learning stories are narratives in which the teacher documents a child's development in relation to key dispositions and areas of learning, while also noting the broader socio-cultural context in which learning occurs. Cummins (2000) observes that in the learning stories approach, children's learning requires "rich and deep accounts of selected events as they are observed through specific lenses" (p. 26).

2.4.3. Language samples

An informal oral language sample typically allows a teacher to determine the child's functional language skills. The sample can be elicited using a picture, a planned play activity or a

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language story starter (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Aspects of a language sample that can be assessed include communicative intent, social register, figurative language, sequencing of events, and story development. Sometimes an informal language sample can provide information that cannot be obtained using formal tests, and hence may allow users to 'fill in the gaps' as they seek to draw up a profile of a child's language skills (Eivers, Shiel, & Shortt, 2004).

2.4.4. Checklists

Checklists offer a convenient and flexible approach for assessing oral language. Checklists can be developed by teachers to include the particular skills and strategies reflected in their teaching plans, or checklists developed by others can be adapted to fit particular teaching or learning contexts (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000). The teacher's role is to appraise the performance of pupils on the task, and to indicate whether, or to what extent, evidence of achievement of each element in the checklist has been observed. The checklist also provides for the possibility of observing development over time, as provision can be made for recording outcomes on more than one occasion (Edwards, 1997).

The teacher must identify a standard that is appropriate to the class level of the pupils and apply that standard when making judgment. Sometimes teachers in a school can work towards an agreed standard by sharing and discussing examples of children's work (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000).

2.4.5. Rating scales

Rating scales are similar in many ways to checklists. In rating scales, a list of indicators is provided or generated, and the teacher evaluates pupil's achievement against the indicator (Smith, Cowie, & Blades, 2003). In the case of rating scales, there is the possibility of indicating

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language varying degrees of achievement. For example, a rating scale might be ranged from three to one. Three might be awarded if an indicator has been clearly demonstrated by the pupil; two might be assigned if some evidence of achievement has been demonstrated and finally, one might be assigned if no evidence of achieving the indicator has been demonstrated. Teachers may wish to develop their own scales, or work with other teachers teaching at the same class level as they develop scales (Muchiru, 1998).

Welton (2005) developed a rating scale that asked teachers to rate children's performance on a number of aspects of oral language. Items rated include whether the child can do the following:

- can give or keep eye contact.
- can initiate conversations with adults.
- can initiate conversations with other children.
- has clear articulation.
- adopts appropriate manner of speech.
- can combine words.
- can use full sentence structures.
- can use complex sentence structures.
- can follow simple instruction.
- can give a simple instruction.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

- can listen attentively while an adult names common items in a picture book, game/magazine, and newspaper/poster.
- can make a complaint.
- can explain a problem.

I however feel that the above discussed rating scales suits the Botswana situation. Most children in Botswana face similar conditions.

2.4.6. Scoring rubrics

Scoring rubrics are used to assess performance on language in general or for specific language tasks such as retelling of a story that has been read aloud by the teacher (Tarr & Barnett, 2001). Teachers wishing to assess pupils' retellings using a rubric will need to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of each score description in the rubric. For example, if the focus of a rubric is on how well children retell stories, teachers might assemble examples of children's oral stories at different levels of complexity. This approach allows teachers to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of each score point, and this improves the reliability of teachers' scores (Cummins, 2000).

2.5. Parental contribution to language acquisition at pre-schools

Given the importance of adult child dialogue in developing oral English language, researchers have tried to evaluate adults' interaction styles (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006). Adults who follow the child's attention by leading those who label, describe, or comment upon objects, actions or events to which the child is currently attending are generally facilitative of children's language development, compared with adults who have more directive responding styles, and

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language seek to control children's communicative behaviour and to change their focus of attention (Evans & Jones, 2007). However, early intervention research suggests that directives may also be a necessary part of teachers' repertoires of supportive strategies, constituting an adaptive response to children who themselves are less responsive and who display less differentiated cues to adults during interactions. Along with particular kinds of interactive style, specific features of adult talk have been identified as facilitative of children's language development. Adult talk or communicative behaviour in the form of imitation, prompts, repetitions, recasts and expansions of children's utterances and the provision of multiple models, has been shown to support children's acquisition of vocabulary, grammatical structures and verb complexity Reynolds, (Temple, Robertson & Mann, 2001). They are described as naturalistic language intervention procedures through which specific teaching episodes, employing specific talk strategies, can be used in response to children's initiations and can be embedded in the on-going stream of interactions in the early childhood. Research on shared reading involving parents and young children shows reasonably strong effects on oral language for children in the 2-3 years age range, but less powerful effects for older children (4-5 years). This might be interpreted as indicating that parents need support in maximizing gains for older children, as well as children who are at risk for language and literacy difficulties (Smith, Cowie, & Blades, 2003). Significantly, researchers were more effective in general in raising vocabulary knowledge, indicating that extensive parents preparation may be required if parents are to significantly raise children's oral language proficiency through dialogic and other forms of interactive reading (Gee, 2001).

2.6. Transitions from a pre-school setting to primary school

Transition is the term used to describe the period of time before, during and after the move that children make from a pre-school setting into primary school (Johnson, 2010). The

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language transition from pre-school to primary school can be a difficult time for many young learners as they have to cope with the differences and challenges that school may pose. Many children worry about making new friends and it can be intimidating for them to enter a new environment without knowing anyone (Nagy et al., 2001). Some authors state that children entering school face a setting that is qualitatively different from their previous experiences in terms of the curriculum, the setting and the people (Reynolds, Temple, Robertson, & Mann, 2001). In 2004 there was a curriculum review in Scotland which led to the development of Curriculum for Excellence which covers learners aged 3-18 years. The Scottish Executive have produced experiences and outcomes that are designed to ensure continuity within the education system and to create young people that are ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. The Scottish Executive stresses the importance of continuity in the curriculum between pre-school and primary school in building a curriculum. This curriculum looked at how active learning can be used in both pre-school settings and the primary classroom to engage and challenge learners (Johnson, 2010).

The transition period centres on parents, pre-school staff, primary teachers and any other professionals. The challenges that children may face when they make the transition from a pre-school setting to primary school should be considered when planning an effective transition programme to meet the needs of every individual pupil. During the transition period, children's needs and wellbeing should be taken into consideration (Tarr & Barnett, 2001).

2.6.1. Children's needs and wellbeing

In every pre-school setting there are a wide range of needs that the children will have. When practitioners plan for the transition from a pre-school setting to primary school they need to take into consideration the needs and wellbeing of each individual child involved, especially

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language the children who have additional support needs (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002). There are six basic needs that should be met to achieve high wellbeing of children. Some of these attributes associated with high wellbeing are: feeling great and enjoying life, exuding vitality, having an open and receptive attitude, having good self-esteem and being resilient. If any of these needs has not been fulfilled, then the wellbeing of the child involved may be affected and this could cause disruption to their transition (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Good health is also central to effective transition and preparation for successful independent learning. Educators can develop these attributes to help children to become confident individuals, successful learners, responsible citizens and effective contributors and to help them get ready for the transition.

Smith et al. (2003) recognized the importance of play when they published the importance of role play during transition stage. Role play is often used in nursery and early year settings to prepare children for changes such as transitions. Role play can help children to develop skills such as listening and showing empathy towards others which will help them to make new friends and build relationships when they make the transition to primary school. Role play can also be used to help children to learn how to deal with new situations and conflicts in their lives.

Some early years practitioners work with the feeder primary schools to try to ensure that the children making the transition are put into a class with a familiar face. Research by Wood & Attfield (2005) found that children who started primary school with a playmate were more sociable and progressed quicker than the children who did not have a familiar face in the class with them. Fabian and Dunlop (2002) also agree when stating that children get more from school if they have friendships. Not all children will come from a pre-school setting that will enable them to be put into a class with someone who they know. To target this problem Hawthorn West

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Primary School in Australia ran a valuable mentoring programme that relies on partnerships between parents of the children involved in the transition. The families are matched and the parents and children meet to build friendships and this means that every child entering the primary setting will have a familiar face in the class with them. This approach can also be beneficial to the parents as they can support each other during the transition and have someone to talk about any worries that they might have (Wood & Attfield, 2005).

To ensure that children have a smooth transition from pre-school to primary, it is crucial that early year practitioners, primary teachers and parents work in co-operation to share information and knowledge about children's lives. The continuity of parental involvement in their child's education benefits children (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002). Children with special needs may find transitions more difficult to deal with than other children. It is therefore crucial that there is an effective transition plan in place to support these pupils and their parents in the process (Tarr & Barnett, 2001). Communication between parents, pre-school staff, the primary teacher and any other professionals involved is vital when planning a transition for a child that has special needs. The more information that is known will help everyone involved to develop strategies to support the child. Some children may need extra time to adjust to the new environment and extra visits may be arranged to support them, other children may benefit from resources that could be recommended for them, but it is important to recognize that every child will have different needs and it is important that each child is treated as an individual in order for them to have the smoothest transition. If there has been good communication between everyone involved the transition should be effective and children should settle into school life (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002).

2.7. Parents socio economic backgrounds and pre-school education

Literature indicates that there is a positive correlation between the parents' level of education, income and occupation with pupil's pre-school attendance (Otaala et al., 2000). Mwanwenda (1996) argues that parent's level of income and parents' occupation are significant to children's enrolment at pre-school. Most children do not enrol for pre-school education because they come from low socio-economic background and most parents are unable to pay for their school fees at preschool while others do not possess any education about the importance of pre-school education. The researcher concluded that parents' low socio-economic status has a negative impact on pupils' performance (Taiwo & Tyolo, 2002).

The need for better enrolment of pre-school education was realized far back in 1990, at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand, when some 150 organizations agreed to make pre-primary education universal and greatly decrease illiteracy (Gee, 2001). In 2000, ten years later, the international community and most countries including Botswana met again in Dakar, Senegal, and took stock of many countries that have met universalization of pre-primary education. They made a commitment to achieving pre-school education for all by the year 2015, and identified six key measurable goals. The six goals are: to expand early childhood care and education; provide free and compulsory primary education for all; promote learning and life skills for young people and adults; increase adult literacy by 50 per cent; and improve the quality of socio economic status in adults by supporting policies that helps eliminate socio-economic disparities by 2015 (Republic of Botswana, 2001).

2.8. Summary

Pre-primary education is the key element that helps in building a good foundation for child's educational success. Every child learns habit and forms patterns that are not easily changed in later years that can help the child to improve on oral language (Moyles, 2007). If parents and educators can develop productive early education patterns for the children in their charge, those children will be on their way to achieve education success. A lack of parental interaction during early childhood can negatively impact a child's development since it negatively affects the child's brain development (Dodici, Draper, & Peterson, 2003). Ultimately it is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to ensure that children have a good early childhood education that can help them develop their personalities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces research design, population of the study, sample of the study, instrumentation to collect data, reliability and validity of the instruments, data analysis as well as ethical consideration.

3.1 Research design and justifications

This study adapted a non-experimental quantitative approach in which the researcher measures the variable perceptions without manipulating it. The researcher represented the responses of teachers in numerical forms. Furthermore, the researcher assessed standard one pupils content knowledge using oral test designed for the study. The researcher marked the tests and recorded the scores in numerical form.

Amongst the pupils, there were those who scored higher and those who scored low. The researcher was informed by classroom teachers that the classes consisted of pre-school attendances and non- attendances. However, these people were not identified by the class teacher to the researcher. It was only after marking that classroom teachers presented registers which indicated attendances and non-pre-school attendances.

Quantitative non-experimental design was a suitable design for this study because the data collected was recorded in numerical forms, that is, it was quantified.

3.2 Population of the study and justifications

The target population of the study was teachers in Gaborone who taught standard one pupils and standard one pupils in primary schools in Gaborone. Standard one teachers were important subjects because they are people who meet children who first enter primary schools. Consequently, they need to know the background of all pupils in their classes so that they can give them the appropriate help specifically in connection with children's health, social background and developmental level as well as their personality. In addition, the educational background if any, prior to enrolment in primary school, is needed. If any of standard one pupils does not have pre-school education, the teacher must be knowledgeable, so that he/she could prepare his/ her teaching accordingly (Silverman, 2000).

3.3 Sample of the study and justifications

Since the population of standard one pupils in Gaborone is large, the researcher decided to choose a sample. The information abstracted from the sample is crucial in the sense that represents information from the population and consequently it will be generalized to standard one teachers in Gaborone primary schools. The sample for this study consisted of two types of subjects, fifteen (15) standard one teachers and eighty (80) pupils. The research was of the view that the chosen pupils would answer that test questions like all standard one pupils in Gaborone. Likewise the perceptions of fifteen teachers on the effect would represent the perceptions of teachers in Gaborone.

3.4 Sampling procedures justifications

This study adopted purposive sampling. In purposive sampling participants are purposely selected because they can help with the issues that are important to the research (Denzin &

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Lincoln, 2000). Purposive sampling has an advantage due to the fact that the researcher purposefully selects people or objects that have knowledge on the area under study (Salomon & Perkins, 1998).

For this study, purposive sampling was identified as the most suitable sampling method. It was chosen because the researcher wanted a particular group of people, namely those who are teachers of standard one pupils. In that way purposive sampling eliminates those who are not suitable for this study, therefore saving on time and finances.

3.5 Instruments, data collection and justifications

A questionnaire on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-school attendance on pupils' performance of oral English was designed for the study. The instrument was composed of three sections. Section one was on demographic variables. Section two was composed of six perception statements to which standard one teachers were to respond by ticking likert scales they agreed with. The likert scales consisted of SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), D (Disagree) and SD (Strongly Disagree). The instrument was used to collect data on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-school attendance on oral English. A pupils' test was also designed for the study. The test was designed to assess children's oral English. In standard one, oral speaking is considered very important instructional strategy because it enhances children communication skills. The results of oral English would help teachers to know what to start with or where to start when meeting standard one children in the first week of the school. Although the study is on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-school attendance on enhancing oral English, pupils' test was to confirm the importance of pre-schools attendance in standard one. The

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language instrument was administered to 80 pupils. Research has represented that pupils who attended pre-schools are able to communicate freely and to interact easily. (Eivers, Shiel, & Shortt, 2004).

Pre-schools are available in urban and semi-urban but not in poverty stricken urban areas where a large number of people reside. Consequently, the residential areas of pupils were also requested.

3.6 Validity and reliability of instruments

Questionnaire on teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-school attendance on enhancing oral English was given to the supervisor to establish its validity. The supervisors agreed that the questionnaire specifically measures the construct 'perception' by matching the questionnaire with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was also given to two graduate students to check grammatical errors, omissions etc.

To establish reliability a pilot study was conducted to check if the subject will give responses which are the same. Corrections were made in response to the suggestions/ answers given by the teacher. The questionnaire was then administered to teachers who did not participate in the pilot study. The reliability of the results (instrument) was established or calculated using Cronbach Alpha and was reported to be at 0.86 which confirmed that the instrument/ results was/were very reliable.

To establish the validity of pupil's oral English test, then test was given to four standard one teachers to check if the test measures the skills and competences that are required for learning oral English in standard one. Three of them agreed that the test has content validity for laying a strong foundation for standard one pupils.

3.7 Data analysis

The results of the study were analyzed using simple descriptive statistics especially frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics reports information in simple logic form for readers to make comparisons.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) stated that, ethics in research are the principles of right and wrong that a particular group accepts at a particular time. Ethics has to do with moral aspects of research. Punch, cited by Berg (2004), pointed that, to a large extent concerns about research ethics revolve around various issues of norm, consent, privacy, and the confidentiality of data. The researchers was concerned much with the informed consent bearing in mind that respect, honestly, integrity, and sensitivity have to be part and parcel of a researcher. This was done so as to gain access to some population that might otherwise be difficult to reach and to familiarize the population with the study. The participants in the research were on the basis of the informed consent. This was done for subjects to enter research voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved. It was also because the subjects have a say in regulating the relationship and they can continuously make decisions about their participation. To seek permission, letters were written to the Schoolheads of concerned schools. Then after wards, with the assistance of the schoolheads to arrange for the meetings teachers and pupils involved.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. Furthermore, the chapter also presents the analysis of the findings. The results of the study are presented below.

4.1 Demographic variables of teachers

Introduction: The below presents the demographic variables of participating teachers.

Table 1: Demographic variable of teachers

Teachers			
Item		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	15	100%
Age group	20 - 29	3	20
	30-39	3	20
	40-49	4	27
	50 and above	5	33
Qualification	PTC	2	13
	DPE	5	33
	BEd	8	54

N=15

Table 1 shows that all teachers who taught standard ones were females. This agrees with research that females are caring, loving, friendly, patient than are their counterparts (Hart, Newell, & Olsen, 2003).

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Furthermore Table 1 shows most teachers who taught standard one pupils were aged 40 and above. Research suggests that older teachers tend to enjoy teaching lower classes because they love and care about young children, that is lower grades.

4.2 Teachers' responses to perception statements

Table 2 below presents teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English in Gaborone.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Table 2: Teachers' responses to perception statements

	Item	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	The communication skills of children will improve when they learn oral English	7	47%	4	27%	2	13%	2	13%
2	I would recommend that pre-school education be offered to every child and oral English be emphasized on it.	6	40%	7	47%	2	13%	0	0%
3	Pupils with pre-school background learn Oral English better than those without	7	47%	3	20%	4	27%	1	7%
4	Most pupil in my class have pre-school background and can express themselves orally in English	5	33%	4	27%	2	13%	4	27%
5	I would expect improvement in pupils' performance in my class if pre-school education was free and compulsory	9	60%	4	27%	2	13%	0	0%
6	It is important to sensitize parents about the importance pre-school	9	64%	5	26%	0	0%	0	0%

N=15

From the above table, 74% of the teachers agree that there is a difference between pre-school attendances and non-pre-school attendances. 87% of teachers who participated in the study reported that they will recommend that pre-school education be offered to every child. 60% of teachers reported that children in their classes had pre-school education background while 40% reported that children in their classes did not attend pre-school. 87% of the

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

participants reported that they expect children who have attended pre-school would improve performance in oral English while 13% disagreed. All teachers agreed that parents should be sensitized about the importance of pre-school education.

4.3 Pupils' demographic variables

Table 3: Demographic variables of pupils

N=80	Item	Frequency	%
Location	Extension 12	35	44
	New Canada	25	31
	Old Naledi	20	25
Parents working	Yes	43	54
	No	37	46
Attended pre-school	Yes	33	41
	No	47	59

N=80

From Table 3, 44% of children were from Extension 12 (an area where people of high status live), 31% came from New Canada (an area where middle class people live) while 25% came from Old Naledi (a slum where poor people live). From Table 3, 54% of children reported that their parents were working and 46% of children reported that their parents were not working. The table also shows that 41% of the children attended pre-school while 59% did not attend pre-schools.

4.4 Pupils' responses to the test

Pupils/children were also given a content test. The results of the test are given below.

Table 4: Pupil's responses to a test on a picture

Location	Cow	%	Cat	%	Snake	%
Extension 12	28	80	4	11	3	9
New Canada	12	34	5	14	8	23
Old Naledi	7	20	6	17	7	20

N=80

80% of children who come from Extension 12 correctly said the picture in the test was a cow while 34% from New Canada and 20% from Old Naledi also answered the question correctly.

11% from Extension 12 were incorrect by saying the picture was of a cat while 14% from New Canada also incorrectly said the picture was of a cat and 17% from Old Naledi incorrectly said the picture was of a cat.

9% of children from Extension 12 incorrectly said the picture was of a snake and 23% of pupils from New Canada also incorrectly said the picture was of a snake. 20% of pupils from Old Naledi also incorrectly responded the picture was of a snake.

Table 5: Pupils' responses to where the animal in the picture lives

	Kraal	%	House	%	Cage	%
Extension 12	25	71	8	23	2	6
New Canada	12	48	6	24	7	28
Old Naledi	6	30	5	25	9	45

N=80

From Table 5, 71% of pupils from Extension 12 correctly said the animal lives in a kraal, 23% of pupil from Extension 12 incorrectly think the animal lives in a house while 6% also incorrectly think the animal lives in a cage.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

From Table 5, 48% of children from New Canada correctly said the animal lives in a kraal, 24% of children from New Canada incorrectly said the animal lives in a house, while 28% incorrectly reported that the animal lives in a cage.

30% of children from Old Naledi said the animal lives in a kraal, 25% of children from Old Naledi incorrectly said the animal lives in a house and 45% of the children from Old Naledi incorrectly reported the animal lives in a cage.

Table 6: Responses of children to what the animal in the picture eats

	Food	%	Paper	%	Grass	%
Extension 12	2	6	4	11	29	83
New Canada	3	12	7	28	15	60
Old Naledi	6	30	8	40	6	30

N=80

From Table 6, 83% of children from Extension 12 reported incorrectly that the animal eats grass, 6% of the children incorrectly reported that the animal eats food while 11% said the animal eats paper. From Table 6, 60% of pupils from New Canada correctly reported that the animal eats grass, 28% incorrectly reported that the animal eats paper while 12% of the children reported that the animal eats food. 30% of the children from Old Naledi correctly said that the animal eats grass, 40% incorrectly said it eats paper followed by another 30% who incorrectly said that it eats food.

Table 7: Pupils' responses to identification of humans

Picture shows	Location	Baby	%	Man	%
	Extension 12	25	71	10	29
	New Canada	8	32	17	68
	Old Naledi	6	30	14	70

N=80

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

From Table 7, 71% of children from Extension 12 correctly said the picture was of a baby, 29% incorrectly said the picture was of a man. 32% of the children from New Canada correctly reported that the picture was of a baby, while 68% of the children from New Canada incorrectly said the picture was of a man. 30% of children from Old Naledi correctly said the picture was of a baby while 70% of the children from Old Naledi incorrectly said the picture was of a man.

Table 8: Pupils' responses by location on what the baby in the picture feeds on

The baby feeds on	Location	Biscuits	%	Milk	%
	Extension 12	5	14	30	86
	New Canada	13	52	12	48
	Old Naledi	13	65	7	35

N=30

14% of children from Extension 12 incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture feeds on biscuits, while 86% correctly said the baby feeds on milk. 52% of the children from New Canada incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture feeds on biscuits while 48% of the children from New Canada correctly reported that the baby in the picture feed on milk. 65% of the children from Old Naledi incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture feeds on biscuits while 35% correctly reported the baby in the picture feed on milk.

Table 9: Children's responses on what the baby likes

The baby likes	Location	Sleeping	%	Singing for a long time	%
	Extension 12	25	71	10	29
	New Canada	10	40	15	60
	Old Naledi	5	25	15	75

N=80

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

71% of children from Extension 12 correctly reported that the baby in the picture like sleeping while 29% incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture like singing for a long time. 40% of the children from New Canada correctly responded that the baby in the picture likes sleeping while 60% incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture likes singing for a long time. 25% of the children from Old Naledi correctly reported that the baby in the picture likes sleeping while 75% of the children from Old Naledi incorrectly reported that the baby in the picture likes singing for a long time.

Table 10: Children's responses to items on knowledge

Item	TRUE	%	FALSE	%
1 An orange is green in colour	33	41	47	59
2 good eating habits are taught at school	46	58	34	42
3 Fighting is a good habit	35	44	45	56
4 At school we learn how to read and write	44	55	36	45
5 Sweets are good for our teeth	30	38	50	62

N=80

From Table 10, 41% of the children did not know that the colour of orange is not green, while 58% of the children knew that the colour of orange is not green. From Table 10, 58% of children reported that it was true that they were taught eating habits at school while 42% said it was not true that they were taught good eating habits at school.

44% of children reported that fighting was a good habit while 56% reported that fighting was not a good habit.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

55% reported that it was true that at school they are taught how to read and write while 45% said that at school it was not true that they were taught how to read and write.

38% of children reported that sweets were good for their teeth while 62% said that sweets were not good for their teeth.

4.5 Cross tabulated analysis of location with knowledge

Table 11: Analysis of children's knowledge by location

	Item	Extension 12				New Canada				Old Naledi			
		T	%	F	%	T	%	F	%	T	%	F	%
1	An orange is green in colour	10	29	25	71	13	52	12	48	10	50	10	50
2	good eating habits are taught at school	26	74	9	26	11	44	14	56	9	45	11	55
3	Fighting is a good habit	13	37	22	63	12	48	13	52	10	50	10	50
4	At school we learn how to read and write	24	69	11	31	10	40	15	60	10	50	10	50
5	Sweets are good for our teeth	10	29	25	71	9	36	16	64	11	55	9	45

N= 80 T = True F = False

From Table 11, 29% of children from Extension 12 reported that the colour of orange is green while 71% of children from Extension 12 reported that it was false to say that the colour of orange is green. 52% of children from New Canada reported that the colour of orange was green. From Table 11, 50% of children from Old Naledi have reported that the colour of orange was green while the other 50% reported it is false to say that the colour of orange was green.

74% of children from Extension 12 reported that good eating habits are taught at school while 26% said it was false to say that good eating habits were not taught at school. 44% of children from New Canada reported that good eating habits were taught at school while 66%

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language disagreed. 45% of children from Old Naledi reported that good eating habits are taught at school while 55% reported that it was false to say that good eating habits were not taught at school.

37% of children from Extension 12 said fighting was a good habit while 63% disagreed. 48% of children from New Canada reported that fighting habits was good while 52% said that fighting was not a good habit. From Table 11, 50% of children from Old Naledi said that fight was a good habit while another 50% disagreed.

From Table 11, 69% of children from Extension 12 reported that they learnt how to read and write at school while 31% disagreed. 40% of children from new Canada reported that they learnt how to read and write at school while 60% of children from New Canada reported that it was false to say that they learnt how to read and write at school. 50% of children from Old Naledi reported that they learnt how to read and write at school while the other 50% reported that they did not learn how to read and write at school.

29% of children from Extension 12 reported that sweets are good for their teeth while 71% disagreed. 36% of children from New Canada reported that sweets were good for their teeth while 64% disagreed. 55% of children from Old Naledi agreed that sweets are good for their teeth while 45% disagree.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a summary of the study, discussions, implications and recommendations.

5.1 Summary of the study

The purpose of this study was to assess teachers' perceptions of pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English. Two instruments were used to collect data. One was on teachers' perceptions of pre-school attendance on children's learning of oral English. The other instrument was an oral English content test designed for the study.

Teachers' perceptions of the effect of pre-school attendance on learning of oral English were assessed because it is a lens through which the effectiveness of pre-school attendance could be assessed. Standard one teachers are the only people who meet children who enter school for the first time and as such need to know who attended pre-school and who has not attended pre-schools so that they can offer the help that each group needs. All teachers who taught standard one children were females. Most of them were 40 years and above and well experienced.

Eighty pupils who participated in this study were from three different residential places. Those who were from extension 12, a residential area of middle class people performed well in the content test while pupils from Old Naledi, a residential place where poverty stricken people live performed extremely poor in the content test. Pupils from New Canada, an area where low and middle class people reside performed above average. Most pupils from Extension 12

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language attended pre-school while very few from New Canada also attended pre-school and no children from Old Naledi attended pre-school.

Discussions

Research has reported that children who attended pre-school grasp English in standard one quickly than those who did not attend pre-school. The findings of the study are discussed by answering research questions.

Research question 1

Does pre-school improve the child's knowledge of oral English language?

Standard one pupils who came from Extension 12 performed higher than children from New Canada and Old Naledi. This is because most pupils who came from Extension 12 attended pre-school with materials that help them to master English words, Table 5 and 6 are a testimony to this perspective. Although children from New Canada were average performers, further investigations suggest that pre-schools where the children attended did not have adequate teaching materials. Children from Extension 12 were able to communicate well in oral English, were not shy and were very active in class. It can be concluded that the pre-schools they attended had good teaching materials. Children who came from Old Naledi could not express themselves freely in English, were shy and reserved. Their need to attend pre-school before beginning standard one is eminent and the Government has realised that. There are more pre-schools in urban areas than there are in rural areas in Botswana. This disadvantages children from rural areas in communication skills.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Research Question 2

What is the importance of pre-school education in children's learning of oral English language?

Pre-schools are important in that they teach children communication skills. Table 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 basically test children's observation and communication. Displaying pictures of various things (animals, etc) help children to become confident in saying some words. Pre-schools also help children to socialise. My observation as an infant teacher is that children who attended pre-schools like communicating in English and this enhances their language development. Pre-school attendance helps children to ask questions freely in class, they are not afraid or reluctant to speak in English.

Research Question 3

How do teachers perceive pre-school education in connection to the child's learning of oral English language?

Oral English helps children to express themselves. Expression in English shows that children are beginning to communicate their thoughts, ideas and are not shy and reserved. English is the language of communications in Botswana, and children learn it better when speaking.

From Table 2, teachers perceive pre-school education as a foundation for learning oral English for developing children's skill in communications, and for identifying the physical, emotional and intellectual development of the children.

Collateral findings

Although there was no research question on demographic, they are part of collateral findings. The demographic variables which were assessed included age, gender and qualifications.

The findings of the study suggest that teachers who were 40 and above preferred teaching standard one classes. Literature suggests that these teachers are patient, well experienced, motherly and nurturing. This support the perception that females are mothers and are very good at upbringing children. Experienced female teachers who acquired Bachelor of Education (Bed) Degree through in-service were more than all other teachers with Diploma in Primary Education (DPE) and Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC).

It can be concluded from Table 1 that those teachers aged 40 years and above were the ones who taught standard ones.

Implications

This study shows that few children from low socio-economic status attended pre-schools while more children from middle class group attended pre-schools. Regrettably, most pre-schools are private and charge exorbitant fees which people from low socio-economic status cannot afford. The results of the study have the following implications:

1. Quick introduction of compulsory pre-school education in all Government primary schools.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Although Government has taken a step in the right direction by introducing pre-schools in the same primary schools, not all Government primary schools have pre-schools. The situation is even worse in rural areas. Most children from rural areas do not have pre-school experiences.

2. Radio programme on pre-schools

Some parents still do not view pre-schools as important foundations for standard one pupils. If Government introduced radio programme in pre-schools to teach the public about the importance of pre-schools, most parents will send their children to pre-schools.

3. Subsidy to private pre-schools

In places where there are no Government pre-schools, but private pre-schools are available, Government should help parents by paying part (half) of school fees to enhance pre-school attendance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. Introduction of pre-schools in all Government primary schools.

A complete introduction of pre-school education should be introduced as quickly as possible. Teaching materials should be provided to help pre-school teachers to expose children to objects that are in their environment in English. Pre-school attendance should be made free and compulsory.

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

2. Motivational strategies

Primary schools lower class teacher must develop strategies that will motivate parents to send their children to pre-schools.

3. Core-curriculum for pre-schools

A pre-school curriculum should be introduced/ developed to help pre-schools to teach the same content. Pre-school Teachers Parent Association (PTPA) which oversees the running of pre-schools should be formed.

Concluding statement

The findings of the study confirm in the general sense that pre-school attendance should be given priority by parents/guardians and Government. It will help to develop children's physical, emotional and intellectual abilities. It is hopeful that Government will soon man all primary schools with pre-school teachers. As a teacher, I found that oral English helps children to be social, inquiring and confident.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Standard 1 teacher questionnaire

Section 1

Please tick the appropriate box that best describes your response

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

20 – 29

30 – 39

40 – 49

50 and above

3. Highest qualification

PTC

DPE

Bed

Others (specify)

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

Section 2

Tick the most appropriate on the given scale. Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD).

	SA	A	D	SD
Questions on learning styles				
4. There is performance difference between pupils who have been to pre-school and those who have not.				
5. I would recommend that pre-school education be offered to every child				
6. Pupils with pre-school background learn better than those without				
7. Most people in my class have pre-school background				
8. I would expect improvement in pupils' performance in my class if pre-school education was free and compulsory				
9. It is important to sensitize parents about the pre-school				

Tick the appropriate box for the following questions

10. What level are you teaching at lower primary school?

Standard 1

Standard 2

Standard 3

Teachers' perceptions on pre-school attendance on pupils' learning of oral English language

11. Are you teaching in a private or public school?

Public school

Private school

12. Was there any performance difference between pupils who have been to pre-school and those who have not?

Yes

No

13. Would you recommend that pre-school education programme be offered to every child?

Yes

No

Appendix B - Pupil questionnaire

Section 1

Fill in the blanks.

1) Location

a) Extension 12

b) New Canada

c) Old Naledi

2) Parents working?

a) Yes

b) No

3) Have you attended pre-school?

a) Yes

b) No

Section 2



4) The above picture shows a:

a) Cow

b) Cat

c) Snake

5) The animal drawn in a picture lives in a:

a) Kraal

b) House

c) Cage

6) The above animal eats:

a) Food

b) Papers

c) Grass

Section 3

Tick the correct answer for the following:



- 7) This is the picture of a baby/man.
- 8) The baby feeds on biscuits/milk.
- 9) The baby likes sleeping/singing for a long time.

Section 4

Circle T for the correct statement and F for the false statement.

- 10) An orange is green in colour. T/F
- 11) Good eating habits are taught at school. T/F
- 1) Fighting is a good habit. T/F
- 2) At school we learn how to read and write. T/F
- 3) Sweets are good for our teeth. T/F