

**COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION GUIDING PRINCIPLES, SELECTED
TEACHER AND SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS AND LANGUAGE
LITERACY IN PUBLIC PRE - PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN
SOUTHERN
NYANZA REGION, KENYA**

ENIDY CHRIS BOERA

**A Thesis Submitted to Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment for the
Requirement of the Award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Early
Childhood Development and Education of Chuka University**

CHUKA UNIVERSITY
OCTOBER, 2025

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for any award of a diploma or conferment degree in any institution.

Signature.......... Date14/10/25.....
Enidy Chris Boera
ED19/63400/23

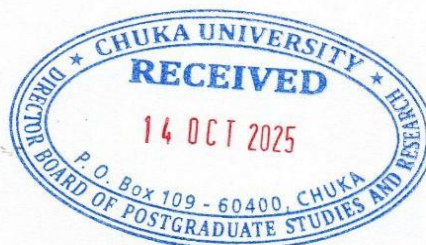
Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with my approval as University supervisor.

Signature.......... Date14/10/25.....
Dr. Hannah Wanjiku Kangara
Chuka University.

Signature.......... Date14/10/25.....
Dr. Peter Kimanthi Mbaka
Chuka University.

Signature.......... Date14/10/2025.....
Dr. John Otieno Ogembo
Chuka University.



COPYRIGHT

© 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means: mechanical, electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from Chuka University.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband Mr. Apiuty Nyakundi, my dear children: Brian Boera and Mark Benjamin, my supportive mother Linet Magoma, my brothers: Enock Ndubi and Eric Obare, my sisters: Mercy Monyangi, Damaris Moraa and Cynthia Kwamboka and my nephew George. I also dedicate it to Andrew Motobi and to the cherished memory of my late father Mr. George Boera, whose good memories have been a constant source of comfort and inspiration throughout my academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give my deepest gratitude to the Almighty God for granting me life, wisdom and good health and for sustaining me and my sons throughout this research endeavour. I am sincerely thankful to my supervisors: Dr. Hannah Wanjiku, Dr. Peter Kimanthi and Dr. John Otieno Ogembo for their dedicated intellectual guidance, academic encouragement and unwavering support, which enabled me to produce this scholarly work.

I extend my appreciation to Chuka University Ethics Review Committee led by Dr. Benjamin Kanga for granting me the opportunity to undertake this study and to NACOSTI for authorizing my data collection. I am also grateful to the County Director of Education, County Principal Comprehensive School Office, County Secretary and Head of Public Service in Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay county for granting me permission to undertake the research in the study region.

Special thanks to County Directors of Education (ECDE) in Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay for their contributions and participation towards this research study that enhanced the completion of this research. I extend my appreciation to all the respondents who generously provided the valuable information necessary for the successful completion of this research.

My heartfelt thanks go to the panel of examiners who evaluated both my proposal and thesis for offering insightful contributions and constructive criticism that greatly enhanced the quality of this work. Special recognition goes to the Faculty of Education and Resource Development at Chuka University, under the leadership of Prof. Eric Mwenda for their encouragement and support during my research journey. I Salute Dr. Ituma for her contributions that improved this study. My deepest appreciation go to my data analyst for his contributions that helped me to produce this quality work.

Finally, I express my profound appreciation to my husband, children, mother, siblings and my friend, Richard Oloo Onyango for their sacrifices, patience, understanding and unwavering support throughout this study period. May the Almighty Lord bless you all abundantly and meet your needs according to His heavenly riches.

ABSTRACT

Language literacy in pre-primary schools remains a critical area of concern amidst the ongoing implementation of the Competency Based Education (CBE) principles, particularly in relation to varying teacher and school characteristics. The purpose of the study was to establish the relationship between CBE principles, selected characteristics and language literacy in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya. The study sought to determine the relationship between CBE guiding concepts specifically constructivism-based and instructional design-based guiding principles and language literacy in pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya, with a focus on variations based on teacher and school characteristics. The study adopted both correlational research design and descriptive survey design. The study was guided by Social Constructivism theory by Lev Vygotsky and instructional design theory by Gagne. The study population consisted of 9,224 which comprised pre-primary teachers, headteachers and county directors of ECDE in Homabay, Kisii and Nyamira County. The study comprised a sample of 384 respondents, proportionately drawn from three counties, with 67 from Nyamira, 151 from Kisii and 166 from Homabay. Three respondents were selected from each pre-primary school which implied that the number of pre-primary schools per county were 22, 50 and 55 pre-primary schools from Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay respectively. Simple random technique was used to select 44, 100 and 110 teachers in Nyamira, Kisii and Homabay respectively. Purposive technique was used to select ECDE headteachers and ECDE county directors. 10% of the sample size was used for piloting in Migori County to determine validity and reliability. Expert judgement was sought to ensure face, content and construct validity. The reliability of the instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an overall coefficient of 0.83, which indicated a good internal consistency and was deemed acceptable for the study. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed by aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 27.0. Descriptive statistics were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. The hypotheses were tested at $\alpha = 0.05$ using the logistic regression model. The study concluded that, constructivism based guiding principles, Instructional designbased guiding principles positively and significantly predicted language literacy, competency-based education guiding principles and teacher characteristics positively and significantly predicted language literacy. There was no statistically significant influence of school characteristics in the relationship between competency-based education and language literacy. Qualitative data analysis was categorized according to the themes based on research hypotheses. The findings of this study might benefit pre-primary schools which are the primary beneficiaries, by supporting pre-primary schools managers in coordinating quality services that help children develop essential language skills and competencies. The findings might also benefit the children, as recipients of improved language literacy by enabling them to acquire the language proficiency required for their development. The findings of this study might help preprimary teachers and school administrators identify effective CBE strategies tailored to individual and school characteristics, with the aim of improving language literacy in public pre-primary schools in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya. The study recommended that there was need for county government to provide targeted training,

provision of resources and technical support to implementation of competency-based education guiding principles, enhancing language literacy.