

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE IMPACT OF PLAY PEDAGOGY ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF
PRE- SCHOOLERS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS**



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MASTER OF EDUCATION

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PRE- SCHOOLERS IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS**



**A Dissertation in the Department of Early Childhood
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of the requirement for the award of the degree of
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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Hanna Kobiah Amanfi**, hereby declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotation and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Signature:

Date:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that, the preparation and supervision of this research work was done in accordance with guidance for the supervision of research work as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba.

Dr. Nutifafa Banini (Supervisor)

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

To my daughter, Nana Ama Dufie Gyamfi



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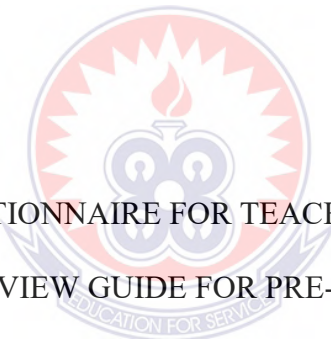


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	12
1.3 Theoretical Framework	13
1.4 Purpose of the Study	15
1.5 Research Questions	16
1.6 Significance of the Study	16
1.7 Delimitations of the Study	16
1.8 Definition of Terms	17
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.1 Introduction	19
2.2 Theoretical Review	19
2.3 Empirical Review	22
2.4 Conceptual Review	25
2.4.1 Types of Play and Language Skills Development	27
2.4.2 Manipulative Play and Language Skills	28

2.4.3 Creative Play and Development of Language Skills	29
2.4.4 Dramatic Play or Role-play and Development of Language Skills	30
2.4.5 Physical Play and Development of Language Skills	32
2.4.6 Availability of Play Materials and Development of Language Skills	33
2.4.7 Teachers' Role in play and Development of Language Skills	37
2.5 Policy on Play and Development of Language Skills	40
2.6 Conceptual Framework	60
2.7 Knowledge Gap	61
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	62
3.1 Introduction	62
3.2 Research Method and Design	62
3.3 The Study Area Population	63
3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques	64
3.5 Sampling Procedure	65
3.6 Research Instruments	65
3.7 Validity of Research Instruments	66
3.8 Data Collection Procedures	66
3.9 Data Analysis	68
3.10 Ethical Considerations	68
3.11 Chapter Summary	69
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	70
4.1 Introduction	70
4.2 Characteristics of Respondents	70
4.3 Objective 1: To investigate how the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan	73

4.4 Objective 2: To determine how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills	80
4.5 Objective 3: To find out the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills	83
4.6 Objective 4: To ascertain how the school policy on play influence the development of preschool children language skills	87
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	94
5.1 Introduction	94
5.2 Summary of Findings	94
5.3 Conclusion	95
5.4 Recommendation	96
REFERENCES	99
APPENDICES	109
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS	109
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN	115



LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1: Population for the Study	64
2: Background Information on Learners	71
3: Background Information on Teachers	72
4: At your school, there are various types of play	73
5: Language Skill Development of Learners can be enhanced by Manipulative Play	74
6: Play enhances the development of gross motor skills of pre-schoolers	74
7: Learners are able to practice the language skills they learn through play	75
8: Creative play is not the best way to improve one's speaking, reading, and writing abilities	76
9: The children learn to interact and express themselves through play	76
10: Play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers	77
11: Physical play improves listening and speaking abilities	78
12: Dramatic play fosters the development of all language, reading, and writing skills	79
13: Students can use constructive play to experiment with drawing, music, and building things	79
14: To determine how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills	81
15: To find out the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills	84
16: How the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills	87

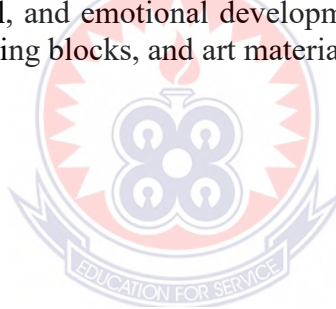
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1: Language Acquisition Theory	20
2: ZPD and Scaffolding	21
3: Conceptual Framework	60



ABSTRACT

The study investigated the use of play as a teaching strategy for language skill development for pre-schoolers in Kumasi Metropolis. The project investigates how various types of play influence development of preschool children language skills, how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills, the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills, how the school policy on play influence the development of preschool children language skills. The study's sample size was 133 which comprised 40 Early Childhood Education teachers and 93 learners. Data was collected from teachers using closed and open-ended questions, and the results were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively. A questionnaire was also created in order to elicit responses from the pre-schoolers. The close-ended questions from the questionnaires were analysed quantitatively using frequencies, percentages, and descriptive statistics, whereas the open-ended questions and responses from the learners were thematically analysed based on significant emergent themes. A descriptive survey method and secondary data sources were used to design the study. Purposive sampling was also used to choose the teachers and students. According to the findings, teachers must ensure that play materials and activities is based on the children's interest, age and skill level. It is therefore recommended that teachers ensure to help and promote children's development in a variety of areas, including cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. For example, providing age-appropriate puzzles, building blocks, and art materials, among others.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Play enhances children's development and is fundamental for every child's acquisition of language skills (Gleave & Cole-Hamilton, 2012). Play is a critical element of early childhood, curriculum and pedagogy development. In addition to being recognized as a vehicle for learning, play is described as a context in which children can demonstrate their own learning and help scaffold the learning of others (Ojuondo, 2015). According to the United Nation High Commission for Human Rights (UNHCHR 2006), play is very important to optimal child development.

Play benefits children's language development through socially interactive and cognitive elements known to enhance language skills (Tarimo, 2013). In 2013, Giardiello, noted that play is children's work as it often mirror in aspects of lives through development of language skills. Children talk about having fun, mingling with friends and sequencing activities for sustained fulfilment through use of language. Language performance is the manner in which the learner comprehends, how a learner uses language, the extent of vocabulary uses and how one is understood using language. Language learning involves both the receptive skills (listening and reading) and the productive skills (Ojuondo, 2015). Naturally, the receptive skills should be learnt first. In schools, learning to read becomes the most celebrated achievement in a child's schooling. Play encourages Language growth through a curriculum that introduces interesting play objects, activities, experiences and concepts as well as creating an indoor and outdoor environment that set up to invite groups of learners to work together. As children play, they manipulate, explore, experiment and develop language and reasoning skills while they acquire concept of

the world around them. In the contemporary society, play has been undervalued in school because the goals of learning in these settings have been defined narrowly in terms of mastering a set of basic academic skills. In this regard, most readers find it difficult to incorporate play in and outside classroom.

Tarimo (2013) stated that currently in the UK, the government has taken keen interest in developing the standard of the children studying in pre-schools by providing relevant facilities and play materials that enhance holistic development of the learners (Aliza & Rahety 2011). They believe that children are playful by nature. Their earliest experiences of exploring with their senses leads them to play by themselves at first and then eventually with others. Available research in Western world shows that play materials tend to be differentiated according to gender. Play materials for girls are attractive and nurturing while materials for boys are aggressive and competitive based, (Mweru, 2012).

In California, there is well-established consensus among early childhood professionals that play is an essential element of developmentally appropriate high quality early education program (National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), 2003). Play provides benefits for cognitive, social, emotional, physical and moral development for children from all socio-economic cultural & linguistic background (Pesce et. al., 2016). To provide these benefits, play must be consciously facilitated by skilled teachers who are well trained in observing children and in understanding how play contributes to the children's mastery of concepts and skills. The exploratory and creative activity that young children initiate themselves is the primary way they develop concepts and understanding about the world. In California, teachers use the power of developing ideas, interests and competencies to promote

learning through play, circle time and small groups (James, 2013). Children have many opportunities to apply and integrate all types of learning – physical, social, emotional, intellectual and language development. Children engage in activities they are interested in so that they have a natural motivation to learn (Malone & Lepper, 2021). These oral narratives, capacity and oral language skills form the foundation for reading comprehension, the ability to produce coherent writing.

In Malaysian context, the play-based approach has been emphasized in the pre-school curriculum and teachers are encouraged to adopt play-based activities in their teaching and learning process. Korir, Mutea and Ayodi (2016) reiterated that play focuses on children's natural characteristics and that learning through play is the most appropriate approach in early childhood curriculum. Nonetheless, managing play-based activities is one of the most challenging tasks that teachers in Malaysia have to face. Studies have shown that many teachers never prioritize the use of play approach in their teaching instruction (Sanchez et. al., 2016). They do not possess skills in planning and organizing activities by identifying appropriate age to use materials and resources effectively during play activities, structuring environment to suit learners' needs during play. In addition, constant pressure for academic achievement and lack of support from school administration has resulted in play-based approach being abandoned by many teachers.

In Ghana, ECE focuses on learning through play, which Jean Piaget posits that meets the physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social needs of children. Children learn more efficiently and gain knowledge through activities such as dramatic play and social games. It is important that teachers promote children development through play by various types of play on daily basis. In Ghana pre-schools, the key guidelines

for creating a play-based learning environment include providing a safe space, correct supervision and culturally aware trained teachers who are knowledgeable about early years' foundation. Learning through play has been seen regularly as the most versatile way a child can learn. According to Nnaeme (2022), play allows children to talk, socially interact, and use their imagination and intellectual skills.

Taylor & Boyer in 2020 stated that play was a vehicle of child's development, "the more the child plays the more the mind becomes" hence play helps children learn to solve problems in an environment that is supportive to this process. Play enhances children's skills to ask questions and figure out how things work. Through these activities, children strengthen their language development when given the time and basic play materials that provide the child with a variety of valuable learning opportunities. In reading, children learn to hold a book properly and turn pages, understand that words convey messages through pictures and enjoy reading picture storybooks. Children's play unlocks their creativity and imagination and develops reading; thinking and problem solving skills. When playing with children and adults, vocabulary and language skills are fostered. Children will learn to use language to communicate meaning as well as picking up new words and hearing grammatical structure of the English language. Children's symbolic play is cognitively valuable occupation because such play allows them to practice the skills required in later life. The ability to pretend at a young age is a sign of early competence in understanding mental status. Even though considerable research has explored play's development potential in early years, play has been reduced or eliminated from some early childhood classrooms in Ghana. The press for academic readiness through direct teaching is now affecting the amount of time assigned for play in pre-school in Ghana (Ojuondo, 2015).

Psychologists generally agree that the period below six years is critical in the development of human beings. Theories of intellectual development take place in stages and it therefore follows that certain concepts, skills and attitudes must be developed and nurtured at particular periods in a child, failure then the concepts can be stunted or missed completely. There is a growing concern among Ghanaian pre-school education practitioners on the current approach to ECE that emphasizes the academic component at the expense of other areas of child development. Over emphasis on cognitive development observed, goes against child development research findings that define quality and relevance of ECE to be, that which caters for total development of the child (Mike & Aiko, 2019).

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education syllabus intended for use in pre-schools places emphasis on the use of play and play materials by teachers during teaching and learning process (Monda, 2012). The schools should ensure that there is equal opportunity for girls, boys, and children with special needs in all aspects of play. However; there is a lot of rote learning with more emphasis on academic achievement depriving the learner time to play. Evidence is seen in schools that have perfected teaching over the weekends even to pre-schools yet what is done is within the confines of classrooms. The school policy requires the adoption of pre-school curricula that emphasize play and child initiated activities yet both parents and teachers who believe in academic achievement hinder this.

The influence of globalisation of education systems from early childhood education to higher education has been under enormous pressure to reform. Many countries undergoing educational reforms have referred to international research findings and trends to create new pedagogy to meet those trends. Children in literate and non-

literate cultures play regardless of their strength, challenges, mental health, socioeconomic status, and parenting. Play is a crucial component of an appropriate early childhood classroom. The past decade has seen an increase in research documenting the benefits of children learning through play. However, in the global world, the amount of play in American kindergarten classes, for instance, remains on a steady decline (Lynch, 2015). Play research has witnessed a rise in two seemingly contradictory trends. First, research increasingly shows that play expedites a variety of social, cognitive, motor, and linguistic improvements (Lynch, 2015). Social play allows children to become more creative and more adept at explaining meaning verbally, they are more successful at manipulating different symbol systems, and more confident when experimenting with new activities (Bjorklund & Gardiner 2011; Eberle 2011; Pellegrini 2011). In school settings, teachers gently guide play, using play-based teaching and learning activities to promote curricular goals while maintaining the critically important aspects of play such as children's intrinsic motivation to engage in play (Eberle 2014).

Second, and ironically, in spite of the many benefits of play recognized by academics, recent years have seen a steady decrease in the amount of time kindergarten classes devote to play (Lynch, 2015; Kekesi, Donkor, Aburampah & Torkonyo, 2019). Past research has well documented the challenges public school kindergarten teachers face in implementing play in their classes and the shift towards more academically focused kindergarten teaching. The early years of human life provide a unique opportunity for social and cognitive investment, but at the same time, this is the most vulnerable period for all forms of stunting in development if holistic development is not nurtured (Glenn et. al., 2013). Writing on children's play contends that, play is not only the children's natural occupation before constraints and formal schooling takes over, but it

also serves as a major means by which children use to communicate to themselves and to the world around. Children's play and teacher's involvement in play activities have received recognition and attention by philosophers and educationist for centuries (Kekesi, Donkor, Aburampah & Torkonyo, 2019).

The activity of play in kindergarten is crucial to the development of children (Coplan, 2010). With obligations to fulfil mandates such as "No Child Left Behind" (Darling-Hammond, 2006) and pressure to meet state and national standards, teachers are continuously decreasing the amount of play-cantered activities in kindergarten classrooms. However, it is important to incorporate play into the curriculum for the development of children. Miller and Almon (2009), discuss that, "the traditional kindergarten classroom that most adults remember from childhood-with plenty of space and time for unstructured play and discovery, art and music, practicing social skills, and learning to enjoy learning-has largely disappeared" (p.42).

Much has been written about the cognitive, social, emotional, and language benefits of play, as well as the types and stages of play that take place in early childhood classrooms. Both the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recognize and uphold the need for play as an essential part of early childhood education (Aras, 2016). The theories of Piaget (cognitive and physical development) and Vygotsky (socio-cultural experiences) describe playing for children as optimal learning times (Lefa, 2014). Brain research also supports the importance of play during the critical periods of brain growth during the preschool years (Brooker, 2010). The language supports symbolic thought in the play setting and is seen as a vehicle for the

development of self-regulation, cognition, and social competence (Kekesi et. al., 2019).

Today, the play seems to have taken a backseat in kindergarten to teacher-directed instruction based on the belief that the latter is more effective than the former in preparing children to perform well on standards-based assessments. Einarsdottir, Dockett and Perry (2009) explained this by stating, "it seems expectations have evolved without a clear sense of purpose or of the needs of the children. The current focus on benchmarks and achievement has focused effort on what is tested rather than what is learned" (p. 30). This describes common practices seen in most kindergartens today (Einarsdottir, Dockett & Perry, 2009). In some kindergartens, the focus is mainly on drilling students with information that they need to know to meet expectations, with little time for play. Because of the expectations and standards that must be met, many teachers do not allow time for play, or only allow time for play if all material for the day is covered (Kekesi et. al., 2019). However, teachers may not take into consideration the benefits of play for the development of children. Nijhof et. al. (2018) expressed that, "Play is healthy and in fact, essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient" (p. 2). Therefore, it is critical for teachers to understand the importance of play in improving stress management and social skills, as well as to feel empowered to integrate play based learning activities in their kindergarten instruction (Nijhof et. al., 2018)

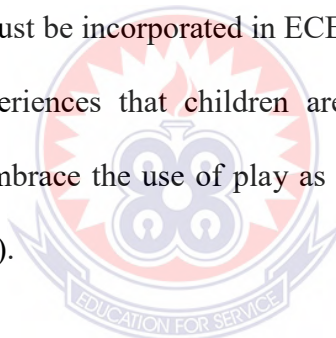
Ghana is among African countries that gave Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme a minimum attention in the past three decades. During this period, the children's early learning and stimulation were informal and unstructured. The absence

of the formal Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes made children below eight years' invisible in the country's education programme, a situation that denied children the opportunity to thrive both academically and socially. In the year 2007, a policy document on Early Childhood Care and Development for Ghana was made operational. The document forms part of the recommendations of the Government's white paper on Educational Reforms, makes kindergarten education progressively part of the Universal Free and Compulsory Basic Education. Under the policy, all Ghanaian children at the age of four are to receive two years of compulsory Early Childhood Development (ECD) education before entering primary one. Early childhood is the period of a child's growth from conception to the first eight years. This was contained in a speech delivered by the then First Lady Mrs. Theresa Kufour when she was opening the International African Conference on Early Childhood Development in Accra on the theme: "Moving Early Childhood Development Forward in Africa" (GNA, 2005). The most convenient way of assessing whether teaching in ECE is friendly and relevant to the child is through the teaching and learning strategies. Strategies and methods used by both teachers and pupils in teaching and learning are vital in the promotion of self-mastery of skills and concepts, especially at this tender age (Nijhof et. al., 2018).

In a child-centred kindergarten, teachers incorporate play into the daily curriculum. Students have the opportunity to explore their learning environment by means of free-play as well as through teacher-initiated play. Free-play is a play that is initiated by the child (Cavanaugh, 2017). Furthermore, free-play allows children to develop social relationships with other students, the opportunity to choose their own level of challenge, and the overall ability to make their own decisions (Cavanaugh, 2017). Teacher-initiated play is where the teacher is involved in the interactions between

students. The teacher is there to provide feedback, extend conversations, and bring in appropriate resources (Brooker, 2010). With the focus on play-based learning, students continue to grow and develop appropriately as well as meet the expectations expected of them (Kekesi et. al., 2019).

Early Childhood Education must support children to develop the ability to work and communicate their own impressions through creative processes with various forms of expression. The Ghanaian Pre-school curriculum is very flexible in terms of lesson content, coupled with the absence of external examinations to assess pre-schoolers' eligibility for primary school education (Aras, 2016). The play has been described as a vehicle for learning, especially in an early childhood setting. This implies that for effective learning, play must be incorporated in ECE programs. Since teachers are key determinants of the experiences that children are exposed to, it is necessary to ascertain whether they embrace the use of play as a teaching technique in Ghanaian Kindergarten (Aras, 2016).



After making Kindergarten Education compulsorily part of the formal school system in 2007, the Ministry of Education has continued to put emphasis on the use of child-centred teaching techniques that includes the use of play as a teaching approach in both indoor and outdoor learning activities. For most people, the fondest memories in school and outside of school were the times that they were involved in activities that incorporated play. One remembers kindergarten as a happy place one went, where one rarely sat at a table or desk. It was a place of creativity and fun. There was an abundant amount of art supplies, books, and an entire room with blocks, toys, and balls. Kindergarten was a place to interact with others and begin friendships (Eberle, 2011). Ironically, it is hard to imagine being a child in the kindergarten of today.

There is a constant pressure and rush to finish work, meet standards, exceed milestones, and not be left behind. A metaphor that perfectly illustrates many kindergartens today was provided by Aras (2016), "Several ways exist for planning a trip. One way is to find a destination and get there as quickly as possible. The trip is all about being there, not getting there. It puts the race ahead of the journey" (p. 30).

Today, there is constant pressure put on kindergarten learners and teachers to succeed and tackle milestones; however, in the process, play is being pushed out of kindergarten in order for students to rush toward the acquisition of skills or knowledge without consideration for how the process of learning itself can lead to more important outcomes in addition to the targeted skills or knowledge (Lindy, 2012). Mtahabwa and Rao (2010) conducted a study in Tanzania on how pre-primary school teachers' professional qualifications significantly affected the quality of classroom interaction. Complaints are raised by different ECE stakeholders on the unaddressed pedagogical challenges, especially teachers' tendency of using compulsive, direct, and unfriendly teacher-centred teaching strategies. The case of Ghana is similar to that of Tanzania based on several reports from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including Sabre Charitable Trust, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), The Right to Play and many others. In spite of the government of Ghana's strong policy commitment to the kindergarten sector, it continues to face challenges of access and quality. The needs at this level are significant, whereas learning materials are in short supply: almost half of all kindergarten teachers have never received any formal training (Kekesi, Donkor, Aburampah & Torkonyo, 2019). Also, another NGO called The Right to Play reports that early childhood educators still face curricula and pedagogical challenges and

there is a discrepancy between the emphasis and the teaching techniques at the kindergartens.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Kumasi Metropolis is one of the largest and most diverse urban centres in Ghana, with a growing population of preschool-aged children (Kabay, Wolf & Yoshikawa, 2017). According to Weisberg et. al (2013), language development is a critical aspect of early childhood education, and play pedagogy has been shown to have a positive impact on language development. Parents' and teachers' expectations of their children's academic achievement in Kumasi Metropolis practically compel teachers to push for more and more developmentally inappropriate academic programs in early childhood education, which does not help the child's language development as pointed out by Bago et al. (2020). Researchers indicate that language development is influenced by social interactions and the kinds of play materials children use (Howe & Mercer, 2012). Preschool language activities play an important role in the development of a child's vocabulary, and communication skills through activities like singing games, poems, rhymes and role-plays. A healthy brain development depends on vigorous physical activities children engage in during the early years of childhood. An environment rich in language and literacy interactions full of opportunities to listen and use language constantly should be provided for children to explore (Biddle & Asare, 2011).

It is unfortunate that rote learning is prevalent today in the public pre-schools in Kumasi, with a primary emphasis on the cognitive development of the child which practically deprive pre-schoolers with adequate playtime. Although the curriculum for Early Childhood Education in Ghana is focused mainly on play pedagogy, play has

been dismally below expectation with more emphasis on classwork (Dzamesi & van Heerden, 2020). During playtime when the children should be out playing, they may be in class completing class work. According to Ntumi (2016), even in pre-schools where children are allowed to play to develop their language skills, the quality of it is often been hindered by many factors such as inadequate playground, limited play materials, and lack of teachers' interest in play supervision, among others. Again, the majority of teachers in public pre-primary schools are simply recruited from higher primary school classes, they are incapable of effectively using play to help the pre-schoolers to develop their language skills because they mostly use traditional teaching strategies at the expense of child-centred methods such as play, and attempts by school administrators and the government to train these teachers in order for them to acquire the necessary expertise and knowledge are also failing (Megersa & Ababa, 2015). Using play in the teaching and learning in pre-schools to enhance the language development of pre-schoolers is not being well utilized (Mohan et. at., 2022).

People have the notion that the decline in the language skill development of pre-schoolers is as a result of lack of play. Therefore, the goal of this study is to evaluate the impact of play pedagogy on language development of pre-schoolers in the Kumasi Metropolis.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is modelled on two theories the Nativist theory by Noam Chomsky's on Language Acquisition and Lev Vygotsky's on Social Cognitive theory. Noam Chomsky Nativist theory on language acquisition holds that people are born with a predisposition to learn language. The theory holds that children are born with a hard-wired language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains and that the brains contain

the major principles of language, which is ready made to quickly, acquire language at specific stages in the development process. According to Chomsky's theory when young children are exposed to a language, their LAD makes it possible for them to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles because the principles are innate. He states that language structures are heavily influenced by the environment hence the theory holds that language skills were developed through watching and learning our parents and other people in the environment. He states that the environment heavily influences language structures. The theory is relevant to the study because it posits that children acquire language in a social interactive environment with the help of adults who are parents, peers and teachers during play.

Lev Vygotsky's Theory on Social Cognitive is based on the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD). The concept of ZPD was established as a framework to describe the process of self-development as it occurs with the guidance of adults and peers in the learning environment. Vygotsky focused on the role of social interaction in human development and examined the complex relationship between language and thought as well as learning and play. He found out that children's social interactions with significant individuals in their lives profoundly shape their interpretation of the world. As applied to this study the theory holds the idea that child development is because of social interactions between children and their social environment. These interactions involve parents, teachers, playmates, sisters, brothers and other relatives. Vygotsky's research focused on the role of social interaction in human development. It means that the most significant psychological achievement of the early childhood age occurs while children engage in play. According to Vygotsky, play creates a broad zone of proximal development, both in cognitive and socio-emotional development. According to Smolucha and Smolucha (2021), play contains

all the developmental tendencies in a condensed form. Vygotsky theory is relevant as it emphasizes on self-development of the child through play in a social context. These theories are supported by Johansson (2018) which emphasizes on the need for the child to engage in play with objects'. Froebel states that with objects the child will learn the underlying concepts represented by the objects. He not only emphasizes on children playing with objects but also playing outdoors with objects.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perception of Early Childhood educators on the use of play as a teaching technique in the Kumasi Metropolis. Specifically, this study sought to:

- i. To establish how types of play influence development of pre-school children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan.
- ii. To assess how the availability of play materials influence development of preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan.
- iii. To examine how the role of teachers in play influence development of Preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan.
- iv. To determine how School policy on play influences the development of preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan.

The findings from this study would potentially improve the way kindergarten teachers employ play as a teaching technique. Additionally, this research finding would help Early Childhood Educators in the Kumasi Metropolis to uncover their own perceptions about play.

1.5 Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions.

- i. How do the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan?
- ii. How does the availability of play materials influence development of preschool children language skills?
- iii. How does the role of the teacher on play influence development of preschool children language skills?
- iv. How does school policy on play influence development of preschool children language skills?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study will be of immense value to school administrators and teachers in ensuring that specific, relevant and adequate play materials are provided to pre-school children to enhance language skills development. The findings will be important to school administrators and pre-school teachers in ensuring that they provide adequate time for play. The researcher hopes that the study will form a basis for future involvement of play in preschools in general and will lead to the generation of new ideas for better and more efficient control of ECE educational institutions in Ghana.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study had no control of other variables that may also have effect on language skill development like environment and social economic activities. The study was limited to public ECE Centres in Kumasi Metropolis. The respondents for the study include head teachers, preschool teachers and preschool children. The study focused on language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The study used

questionnaires, interview schedule and observation checklist to collect data from the respondents. The findings of the study cannot be generalized to other parts of the country unless a similar study is done in areas with similar characteristics

The study assumed that all ECE centres exposed learners to various types of play and had play materials and that the children were given enough time to play. The researcher conducted the study under the assumption that play influence the development of language skills. The researcher assumed that all the respondents would give the correct information.

1.8 Definition of Terms

<i>Development</i>	The action or process of developing or being developed
<i>Influence</i>	Ability to persuade an individual to change his or her opinion
<i>Language</i>	Any set of defined rules that can be used to convey thoughts, ideas and instruction.
<i>Language skills</i>	Language abilities the child acquire in order to communicate
<i>Language performance</i>	This is the output or product of a language learning process usually given in series.
<i>Language Acquisition Device</i>	Is an inborn mechanism that enables children to infer linguistic rules from the languages children hear.
<i>Language Acquisition</i>	Process by which children acquire the capacity to perceive, produce and use words to understand and communicate.
<i>Play</i>	Performing or doing an activity for pleasure enjoyment, or for amusement

<i>Speaking skills</i>	Ability to produce flexible, appropriate and indefinite number of utterances in particular language.
<i>Skill</i>	Ability or talent or potential to perform tasks.
<i>Readiness</i>	Is the development level that a child is expected to achieve prior to being engaged in teaching and learning process.



CHAPTER TWO

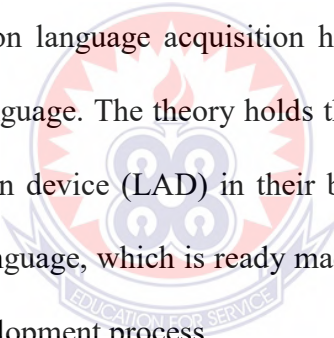
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the concept of play, types of play, availability of play materials, age appropriate play materials, attitude of teachers towards play, teachers' role in play, and school policy on play, conceptual, theoretical and empirical works that have been done both in Ghana and abroad on the study.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study is modelled on two theories the Nativist theory by Noam Chomsky's on Language Acquisition and Lev Vygotsky's on Social Cognitive theory. Noam Chomsky Nativist theory on language acquisition holds that people are born with a predisposition to learn language. The theory holds that children are born with a hard-wired language acquisition device (LAD) in their brains and that the brains contain the major principles of language, which is ready made to quickly, acquire language at specific stages in the development process.



language acquisition theory chomsky diagram

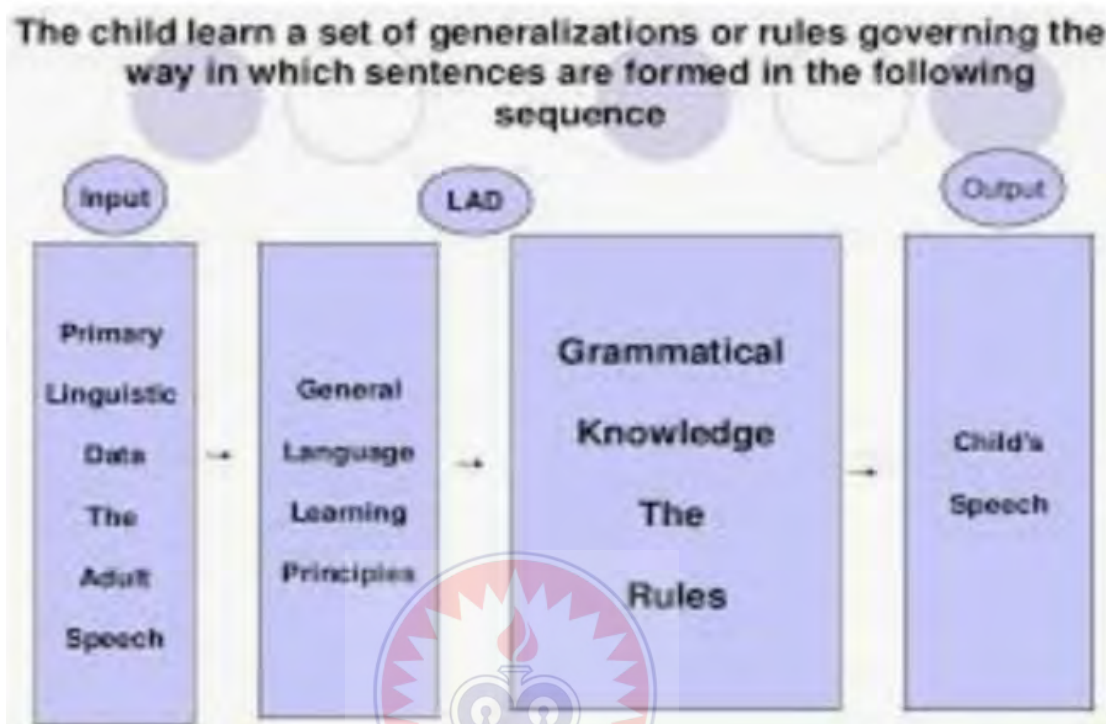


Figure 1: Language Acquisition Theory

According to Chomsky's theory when young children are exposed to a language, their LAD makes it possible for them to set the parameters and deduce the grammatical principles because the principles are innate. He states that language structures are heavily influenced by the environment hence the theory holds that language skills were developed through watching and learning our parents and other people in the environment. He states that the environment heavily influences language structures. The theory is relevant to the study because it posits that children acquire language in a social interactive environment with the help of adults who are parents, peers and teachers during play.

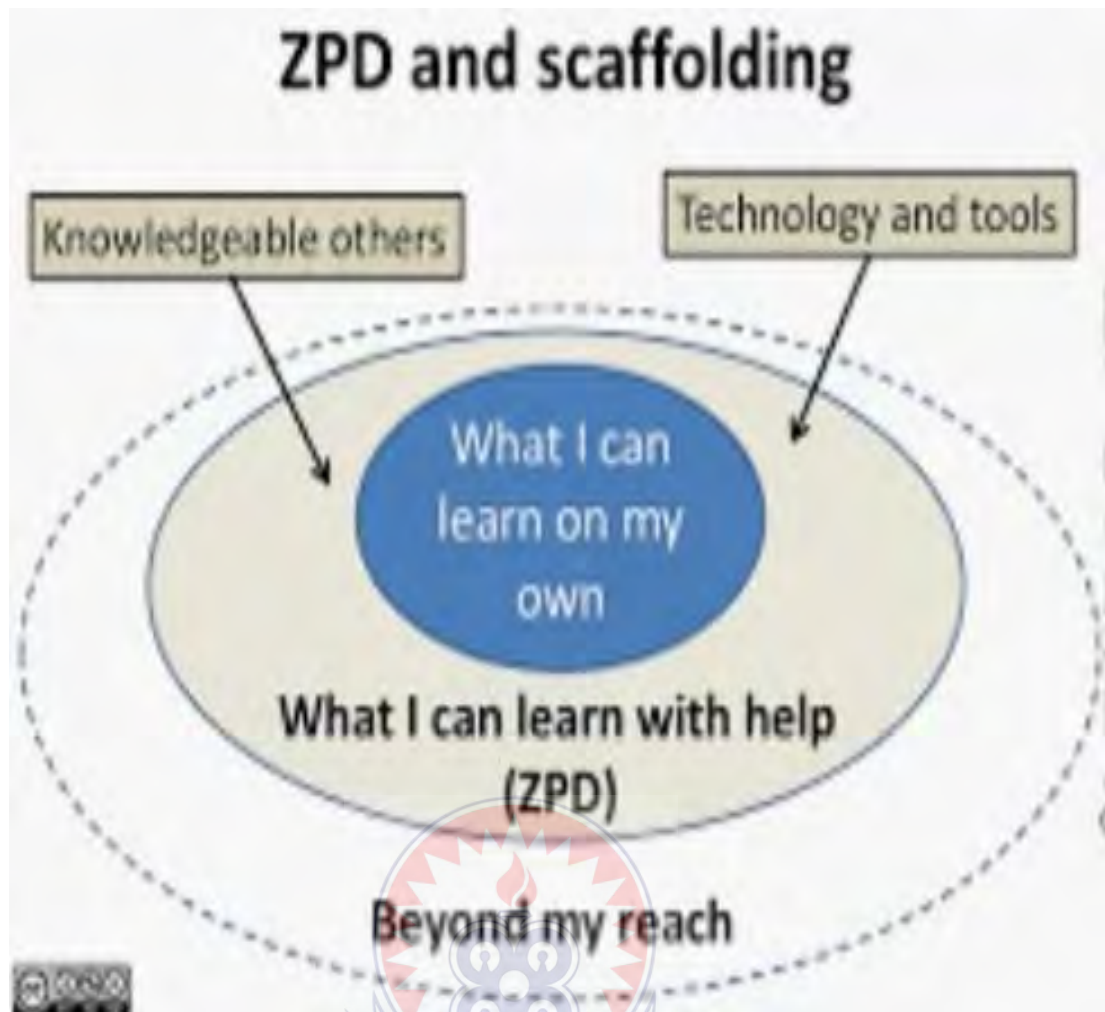


Figure 2: ZPD and Scaffolding

Lev Vygotsky's Theory on Social Cognitive is based on the concept of zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The concept of ZPD was established as a framework to describe the process of self-development as it occurs with the guidance of adults and peers in the learning environment. Vygotsky focused on the role of social interaction in human development and examined the complex relationship between language and thought as well as learning and play. He found out that children's social interactions with significant individuals in their lives profoundly shape their interpretation of the world. As applied to this study the theory holds the idea that child development is because of social interactions between children and their social environment. These interactions

involve parents, teachers, playmates, sisters, brothers and other relatives. Vygotsky's research focused on the role of social interaction in human development. It means that the most significant psychological achievement of the early childhood age occurs while children engage in play. According to Vygotsky, play creates a broad zone of proximal development, both in cognitive and socio-emotional development.

According to Smolucha and Smolucha (2021), play contains all the developmental tendencies in a condensed form. Vygotsky's theory is relevant as it emphasizes on self-development of the child through play in a social context. These theories are supported by Johansson (2018), which emphasizes on the need for the child to engage in play with objects'. Froebel states that with objects the child will learn the underlying concepts represented by the objects. He did not only emphasize on children playing with objects but also playing outdoors with objects. In play, a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour, in play it is as though he were a bit taller than himself'. This statement means that play can stimulate children to think at a higher level. In addition, it is a significant and effective medium of teaching in Early Childhood Centres.

2.3 Empirical Review

Historical and archaeological studies provide evidence that supports the claim that children in every culture play (Whitebread, Basilio, Kvalja & Verma, 2012). They identified two features that are unique to play in all human cultures. According to these authors, adults and children in every culture play. Secondly, play is multi-faceted, manifesting in a variety of types which differ in form and frequency in diverse cultures. These variations are the result of differing views that diverse cultures have regarding the nature of childhood (Whitebread, Basilio, Kvalja & Verma,

2012). For instance, in certain cultures adults see children's play as a waste of time and dismiss it; some restrain play as something perilous, whereas others consider it as a learning and socialisation tool.

As noted by Göncü and Vadeboncoeur (2017), play involves children enacting their social and cultural world through a range of expressions that are specific to the cultural communities in which they live. When designing an indigenous play-based programme for implementing the KG curriculum, it is important to examine the importance of play to children from a global perspective (Lester & Russell, 2010).

Globally, scholars have suggested that play is important in the development and learning of the child (Fearn & Howard, 2012; Spiegel et. al., 2014); Keniger, Lester & Russell, 2010). This is perhaps the reason why Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) classified play as a right of the child. In support of the stance of the UNCRC, the International Association for Play (IPA) states that "Wherever children's right to play is negatively impacted there are consequences for children's health, development and well-being" (Mannello, Casey & Atkinson, 2020). In other words, when children enjoy their right to play, they derive holistic benefit from it. Therefore, as children play in different environments (indoors and outdoors), several aspects of their lives are developed and enhanced. To explore the importance of young children's outdoor play, Gill (2014) analysed 61 empirical studies. The findings showed that when children engaged in outdoor (in nature) play, they improved in psychosocial health, language and social skills as well as physical fitness. For instance, Gill found that playing in nature improved pre-school children's motor fitness. Additionally, it was evident from the review that children who took part in a school gardening project developed the habit of eating

healthy and were exposed to scientific learning, unlike their mates who did not participate in such projects. Moreover, the gardening project also made children more aware of themselves, and they developed social skills too (Gill, 2014). Gill further explained that the benefit that children derived from their play was dependent on the style of engagement. For example, Gill found that more playful engagement such as free play and exploration produced health benefits as well as environmental awareness as compared with less playful engagement such as school gardening projects, which are associated with education benefits. Examining the socio-emotional benefits of play, Lester and Russell, (2010:52) explored children's play in relation to the development of adaptive systems (such as "pleasure, emotion regulation, stress response systems, peer and place attachments, imagination, learning and creativity") in children. They noted that play contributes to the development of children in all domains (emotional, social, physical and cognitive). They further explain that socio-emotionally, when children play, it promotes positive attachment with other people, thereby helping children to develop.

The impact of play on the language skill development of pre-schoolers is a topic that has been extensively studied in the empirical literature. Researchers have conducted numerous studies to investigate the relationship between play and language skill development of pre-schoolers (Maftai, 2019; Girgin, 2020; Weisberg et. al., 2013). Some of the similarities between this study and the empirical studies cited include the fact that, the researchers' studies and the empirical literature focuses on the impact of play on the language skill development of pre-schoolers. Both use a variety of research methods to investigate the topic, such as surveys, observations, and experiments and both aim to contribute to our understanding of the ways in which play can support or enhance language skill development in young children. On the

other hand, some of the differences include the fact that, the researchers' studies are typically more narrowly focused and specific in their research questions and methodology, whereas the empirical literature is broader and encompasses a wider range of studies and perspectives. Also, this research is more up-to-date and reflects the latest thinking and trends in the field, whereas the empirical literature includes older studies that are still relevant but may not incorporate the latest research findings. Lastly, this study may be more likely to have limitations and biases that can affect the validity and generalizability of their results, whereas the empirical literature is generally more objective and impartial. Overall, both researchers' studies and the empirical literature are important sources of information for understanding the impact of play on the language skill development of pre-schoolers, and each has its own strengths and limitations. By considering both types of sources, researchers and practitioners can gain a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of this important topic (Lai et. al., 2018).

2.4 Conceptual Review

Play is one of the most relevant ways through which children learn. Play based teaching and learning promotes positive social skills in young children. In Ghana, many children are not given time to play and teachers do not integrate play as a school based policy as stipulated in the curriculum yet the entire teaching and learning of young children is entirely based on play. Play is part of children's behaviour embedded in day-to-day activities. It forms an important part of pre-school and out of school early learning. Play is important to healthy brain development (Ojuondo, 2015). Article 31 of the UN Convention states that every child has the right to rest, leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and arts. The article also states that member

governments shall respect and promote the rights of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

Parker et al., (2022) proposed that children in school should construct their own knowledge and insisted on integration of relevant play activities in teaching and learning that is conducted in a relevant learning environment that is ideal for young children. The study noted that, when relevant play activities go along with relevant learning environment, higher learning results are yielded in children. In the article, play as a curriculum, (Flint & Adams, 2018), claims that, in most East Africa countries, children play progresses through various stages and levels of complexity. In addition, a study by Ojuondo (2015) enunciates clearly common characteristics of relevant play for small children in ECE classroom as active, adventurous, communicative, enjoyable, involving, symbolic, and interactive. Lindy's (2012) study in Tanzania emphasized that preschool should be child's place of play. Her study differs from this study as her study was on relevance of play on pre-schoolers in Tanzania while this study is on influence of play on the development pre-schoolers' language skills in Kenya. When deprived of play, the child is a prisoner shut off from all that makes life real and meaningful. The impulse to create and achieve, working through play allows the child to grow in body and mind. Play helps to enhance a child's readiness for more formalized learning.

Through play in early childhood, a child strengthens his or her language development. It presents a child with many opportunities for oral communication. This early language development will in turn help children as they later learn to read and write. Mwatha et al., (2017) stated that play is integral to the academic environment. It

ensures that school setting attends to the social and emotional development of the children as well as their cognitive development. Play has been shown to help and motivate children adjust to the school setting and even to enhance children learning readiness, learning behaviours and problem-solving skills. Play and unscheduled time that allows for peer interaction are important components of socio-emotional learning. Play that involves language activities plays an important role in the development of child's vocabulary, listening skills and communication skills. Therefore, play materials are integral component of learning process hence their adequacy, sustainability is important (McMahon, 2012).

The relationship between play and learning is complex, reciprocal and multidimensional. The process of play and learning stimulate one another in early childhood. There are dimensions of learning in play and dimensions of play in learning. Play and learning are inseparable dimensions in pre-school practice. Subsequently, this study intends to establish the effects of play on the development of pre-schoolers' language skills in Early Childhood Schools in Suame.

2.4.1 Types of Play and Language Skills Development

The playtime activities children engage in vary based on their motivation levels. Play fosters children cognitive growth. According to Oburu (2017) as children grow, they develop their social skills since they are capable of playing together in a social manner. The social play that children engage in can be classified into four stages. There is the solitary play stage that involves children between one to two years old. At this stage, children play alone but seek reassurance from adults. They tend to develop independency because they want to do things alone. Parallel play stage involves two years olds where they meet other children for the first time. They play alongside

others even without communicating. Cooperative or group play stage is between 3 and $\frac{1}{2}$ years.

They play actively with others, they talk and decide about play, they share and make their own rules. Exploratory play, which is sometimes, called unoccupied play where a child randomly interacts with things and people around them. The adult may not be able to tell whether the child has a purpose to this play or not. Plays of different forms in children enhance language skills development.

2.4.2 Manipulative Play and Language Skills

Manipulative play involves the use of hands and legs and all body parts. This kind of play develops hand-eye coordination in children as they interact and manipulate play materials. The manipulative area should therefore, consist of relatively small materials like balls, ropes, clay, blocks, beads brushes, paints in addition to swings that can be used for both indoor and outdoor play activities respectively. . In writing readiness, the child learns how to paint, draw and colour pictures, write letters, scribble, write patterns, draw and model. Reading readiness involves looking at and differentiating details in pictures and objects and moving eyes according to the accepted reading style from left to right. Manipulation of play materials enhances the development of gross motor skills, hand-eye coordination that is important in the development of writing and speaking skills in language. As they hold play materials during play, get ready to hold writing tools with a fist or finger grasp and draws with a variety of items like crayons, pens, and pencils, make marks and scribbles. This is developed through their muscles during manipulative play. Work in this area; primarily enhance their fine motor skills and spatial awareness. The items to be manipulated should vary

depending on the age, interests and needs of the children in the pre-school centre. It is therefore important to maintain a wide range of play materials.

2.4.3 Creative Play and Development of Language Skills

Mabagala (2016), states that creative play promotes social, emotional and intellectual skills. Many early learning and childcare programs take learning through play approach and ensure that there are large blocks of time each day when children choose an activity from a number of activities selected by the educator. By allowing children to select their own learning activities, they become the leader of their own learning.

According to Mabagala (2016), imagination is more important than knowledge. Through play, children learn that their personal gratification is often dependent on their cooperation and creativity with other children. Play teaches children about partnership, teamwork and fair play. In creative play, learners use art materials such as paint, clay markers, pencil, and glue.

Games that require interaction with other learners are a great way to develop interaction with other people. Expression of thought and articulation in conversation are some of the speaking skills that are developed. In developing reading skills, children require to read the instruction provided so that they could proceed through the next level. These games are not only essential in developing vocabulary but also empower children to develop reading comprehension. A study on language skills asserts that reading skills involve training children to observe and interpret details in pictures, objects and symbols. In addition, it entails classification of objects by colour, size, kind shape and texture (Mabagala, 2016)

2.4.4 Dramatic Play or Role-play and Development of Language Skills

This kind of play involves acting out roles and situations. Many young children spend a lot of time engaged in imaginative play by themselves throughout the early childhood years. They invent scripts and play many roles simultaneously. Toys, dolls, cars and action figures usually support this kind of play. As children grow old, they create entire world in solitary pretence, often with large collections of small objects or miniature figures. This kind of play fosters communication (listening and speaking) skills in language as children express their emotions, feelings, fears and aspirations through dramatic play. This play also fosters sharing, self-confidence, problem solving, cooperation and conflict resolution.

In dramatic or role-play situation children learn to use language to explain what they are doing. They learn to speak fluently by asking and answering questions and the words they use fit whatever role they play. Personal vocabularies grow as they begin to use new words appropriately and the importance of reading and writing skills in everyday life becomes apparent by their use of literacy materials. Christensen et al., (2010), study on British children aged 1-6 years, measured children's capacity for symbolic play. Children were asked to perform symbolic tasks as substituting a teddy bear for absent object. They found out that the kids who scored higher on a test of symbolic play had better language skills-both receptive language and expressive language.

Dramatic play promotes the use of speaking and listening skills. When children take part in the play they practice words they have heard others say and realize that they must listen to what other players say in order to respond in an appropriate manner. It teaches children to choose their words wisely, so that others will understand exactly

what it is they are trying to communicate. As they play children learn to follow instructions and directions, and take turns. This play helps children feel proud of what they can do hence they develop a sense of who they are. According to De Rood (2010), outside their own and immediate families, children see how older children and adults talk, play and work with each other hence they develop their social skills. De Rood (2010) concludes that this is how children learn ways of how to relate with people outside their confines. The opportunity for dramatic play is a way for children to explore the meaning of the activities they see in grown-up world. Here they learn to interact with others and they gain a sense of competence. The children are immersed in social talk that includes greetings, goodbyes, chatting and jokes. Daily activities like tidying up, story time, and telling teachers and parents about their personal experiences, are opportunities for children to use their language listening and speaking skills in a meaningful way. Moreover, it enhances the child's needs to organize a complex environment into meaningful scripts, encourages children to plan, communicate their plans and courses of action, stimulates children to listen, speak, think creatively and predicts later creativity.

Dramatic play not only offers social and emotional development but also offers language development. A teacher can incorporate writing skills into dramatic play. For instance, if the teacher wants the child to learn writing, then they can take down an order in a restaurant with a pad and crayon or they can make a grocery list. When they finally internalize it through play, they will be ready to move on to formal writing.

A study by Ojuondo (2015) based on the relevance of symbolic play activity on improvement of mathematical thinking confirmed that symbolic play activities are

important and relevant to teaching of most mathematical problems but did not address influence of play on the development of preschool children's language skills. Therefore, this study seeks to establish the influence of play on pre-schoolers' language skills in Public Schools in Suame Circuit.

2.4.5 Physical Play and Development of Language Skills

Despite the known benefits of play, there is evidence to suggest that less of children's time is being devoted to play in favours of structured education activities (Sahlberg & Doyle, 2019). Appropriate toys and materials encourage children to build muscle and strength. Children gain practice and confidence as they manipulate play materials. Toys, swings, balls and ladders for climbing that children can explore in many different ways build eye-hand coordination and encourage children to think about how things work. Some of these items like ladders swings and balls promote balance and body awareness. These play materials that promote active physical learning motivate children to pursue their own ideas and interest enthusiastically developing writing skills. During this kind of play, the children are able to develop listening and speaking skills as they coordinate, give instructions, listen and follow rules during play. Children gain practice and confidence as they manipulate materials. Hobart and George (2016) confirms that play is away through which children expend on excess energy and maintains physical fitness.

Some items also promote balance and body awareness. In this type, children use the whole body in activities with bicycle, balls and ropes to build their muscles, and to enhance or develop their muscles in writing skills. They act out their feelings, and they listen and talk (listening and speaking skills) to playmates as they follow rules.

2.4.6 Availability of Play Materials and Development of Language Skills

Play facilities and materials in children's play add value. Children learn best when they are part of a secure and stimulating environment full of materials for manipulation. Teachers, parents and school administrators are expected to provide play materials to the children to help them engage in meaningful play that will influence the development of language skills. Play helps children learn language because it incorporates many of the socially interactive and cognitive elements known to enhance language skills (Taylor & Boyer, 2020).

Play materials range from balls, ropes, dolls, swings, clay, blocks, beads and ladders. According to Ngecha (2011), parents should provide security and protection, stimulation, socialization, play and learning materials. Interactive display and availability of play materials in schools, thematic collections of carefully selected materials entice pre-school children to explore a wide range of ideas. Children are active learners and if they are to develop the skills and competence, they must be able to work and access play materials. Increased time spent talking during play with peers is associated with better comprehension and production (Sanchez et al., 2016). Play is important for language development because when they are in control of an interaction, they are engaged; they speak about and listen to what interest them. As pointed out by Ngecha (2011), children who had used variety of play materials had developed better than those who were not exposed to variety of play. However, his study did not address effect of play materials on the development of language skills; hence, this study wants to fill this gap. The materials should be organized in such a way that opportunities for learning and discovery, that enhance the development of language skills, are maximized. Physical manipulation of these play materials promote coordination which is important in developing communication as well as

hand-eye coordination. Amadioha (2009) when stressing the importance of using variety of instructional materials observed that:

–People receive experience though all the five senses (touch , taste, smell, hearing and sight). If you can appeal to more than one sense at a time your message is likely to be understood and accepted more permanently.

Different materials appeal to different people. When you plan your work, don't concentrate on memory work alone, but on hearing, seeing, touching, doing and making”.

Applied to early childhood learning, this argument is relevant because much of the children's knowledge is attained by coming into contacts with objects and situations which always give them a new experience. Teachers have to allow children to participate freely in activities of their own choice and also have to organize instructional materials at free choice activity corners.

The anticipation, preparation and instruction from teachers before and after play provide opportunities for listening and use of new vocabularies relevant for that time. Other listening skills that develop during play include giving clear, simple instruction for everyday tasks, being a good listener, praising and playing listening games. All these activities are aimed at helping the children acquire listening skills that are vital for learning and acquiring language skills. Language skills are primarily avenues for cognitive development because they allow children to talk about their experiences and discoveries. With the availability of play materials children learn words used to describe concepts and words that let them talk about activities and events in the field. Language is dependent upon the amount of practice children have in both speaking and listening skills during interactions with good adult models (Brooker, 2010).

The priority currently given to the early acquisition of academic skills is another threat to children's play. These emphases always constrain and limit the scope of

learning that unfolds naturally in play. Children need time, space, materials and support of informed parents and thoughtful skilled early childhood educators in order to become master players. A study by Manyara and Murungi (2018), found a strong relation between resource availability and effective use as related to academic achievement. She noted that physical facilities, teaching, learning, and play materials are important determinants of pre-school performance in the learning of all subject areas. The importance of play in a child is grounded in Vygotsky theory that children learn at the time they play. Play, according to McLeod (2014), contains rules for behaviour that the child should follow to be successful in play situation. Proper materials engage children in a wide range of play, alone and with others. The curriculum and play materials and activities should be based on the children's interest, age and skill level. The teachers should provide a variety of activities for different age groups that focus on language, social development, fine and cognitive development and gross motor skills.

The teacher is the facilitator of play by working with children to develop rules for appropriate indoor and outdoor play environment. The issue about the appropriate use of materials, age and developmental levels must be carefully considered in design and selection of materials. The quantity, quality and selection of play materials influence the interactions that take place between children, thus these materials provided to children should be age appropriate and flexible to the children. Flexibility allows the teacher to maximize on the space for integration of learning activities such as dancing, dramatization, skipping, jumping and hide-seek.

As for the structure of knowledge in language skills, the content should be presented in a way that the child understands so that the vocabulary, terminology, symbols and

examples given are at the child's level. Through age-appropriate materials, the desire to learn is stimulated and children are free to discover language concepts (Honauer et al., 2019). According to Honauer et al. (2019) language development begins with cooing games and evolves to sophisticated language levels such as telling stories and jokes where children develop their language. Safety of equipment encourages children to use their imagination and learn to cooperate. A facility like the playground maximizes opportunities to engage in greater amount of play with peers. The interaction with their peers allows children to express ideas and feelings and develop oral skills.

According to Ihmeideh (2015), an aspect of school management that is generally overlooked is the physical facilities maintenance. School managers and teachers constantly use play facilities but ignored facilities maintenance. Repairs take place only when problems arise. The administrator should put in place guidelines and rules to be followed by both teachers and children on use of play materials (Ihmeideh, 2015). Teachers need to facilitate play by working with children to develop rules for safe indoor and outdoor play. No matter how careful the child, teacher and administrators are to follow rules, sometimes children are bound to get hurt. The playground should be designed in a way that from whichever position the children and adults are where they can clearly see each other while playing. This can help reduce injuries or accidents that are bound to happen during play. The playground should be free from stagnant water, sharp objects and stones to allow relaxed movement of children during play. For children to reach their potential, they should feel comfortable in a safe context of the world around them (Navy, 2020). Safety measures will ensure effective use and manipulation of play materials that will

enhance development of fine and gross motor skills hence the development of writing skills in language.

2.4.7 Teachers' Role in play and Development of Language Skills

To provide quality education, the teacher must have attained a given level of education relevant to the task and be properly trained. The success of any literacy program is largely dependent on the type of teacher's performance in that field. Each teacher should recognize the value of play in the programs for young children. Unfortunately, teachers often fail to take advantage of the opportunities play provides for children's development and learning. Through observation, teachers can learn about children's social interactions, cognitive and language abilities, motor skills and emotional development. Adult supervision can help prevent injuries by making sure children properly use playground equipment and do not engage in unsafe behaviour around (Singer et al., 2014).

The role of the teacher is to select activities and organize the learning environment in such a way that creates a language rich environment (Singer et al., 2014). This safe environment will encourage children to use freely the play materials and facilitate the development of oral, listening and speaking skills. Singer et al., (2014) additionally noted that skilled teachers, who are well trained in observing children, must consciously facilitate play and understand how play contributes to the child's mastery of concepts. The teacher should organize activities and materials that promote language development for use throughout the indoor and outdoor daily schedules. The teacher should establish an environment where language exploration and usage is encouraged. Language here should be used to develop reasoning skills. This can be done through logical relationships and concepts, which should be presented in

appropriate ways. Children learn through interactions with materials and people, both peers and adults in the context of play and daily routines. The teacher should have a daily schedule, which is essential to the basic structure of each day.

Consistency enables children to feel secure, giving them confidence and freedom to explore the environment. The daily schedule is to make the teacher be a keen observer of children's characteristic and behaviour. The teacher should therefore keep brief and accurate records of children's interests, abilities and emotional aspects and use them for noting improvement. Some specialists in play activities argue that the ever-increasing amount of knowledge and skills needed by young children through play require teachers' guidance or direct instruction to specific learning goals and objectives (Lillemyr, Søbstad, Marder & Flowerday, 2011).

Teachers have a variety of roles in supporting integration of children's play in ECE curriculum (Singer et al., 2014). These roles include providing materials for play, encouraging high quality play, structuring environments for play, modelling play and introducing children to new play opportunities. During planning and preparation, the teachers can arrange for physical places suitable for different types of play, find and provide accessories for play (dress props) and decide how play periods can fit into the daily routines and schedules of the school and class. Teachers in ECE programs are facilitators who need to engage children in multiple experiences to foster their all-around development. They need to observe children to identify their needs and capabilities and move with their pace of development. They need to create a nurturing and positive relationship with children and among children.

Play appears to be the source and motivator for eagerness to learn and think creatively. The teacher should facilitate the transition process of moving from one

activity to another, which is often difficult for young children. The teacher must prepare and point children for change of activities. They need to use attention getters like signals, songs, finger play, rhymes, games and puppets to signal change. These activities promote listening and speaking skills in language. Teachers who use transition activities will have calm and organized classrooms and environments with happy cooperative children during play. The environment of play and the attitude of the supporting teacher towards play shape the quality of the play experience for children. One of the most important attitudes and roles of the teacher is facilitation of play.

The teacher should set this stage, creating and maintaining an environment conducive for rich, spontaneous play and interactions in ways that enhance children's language skills, without interrupting the flow and direction of play. Play is a valid learning experience in and of itself albeit one that has been difficult to justify and sustain in formal education settings. Creating environments where children can learn through play is not a simple thing to do consistently and well. It needs one with a positive attitude towards the tasks and one who joins and enjoys with the children in their play for the children to learn. The role of the teacher is critical for the children to become skilled at play; they need uninterrupted time and knowledgeable teachers who pay attention to support the right to play. Teachers' perception to use of play-based approach provides learning benefits to children. Their perception of play impacts children's learning experiences.

It is appropriate for pre-school teachers to understand the appropriate teaching approach such as learning through play and its role in early childhood development. Children's listening and communicative skills are fostered as they talk with teachers

and play with other children. By using carefully chosen comments and open question, teachers can assist children in their thinking and help to build their confidence in the use of language. As children browse in the book corner, look at books in various areas of play and listen to stories read to them, they become aware that the printed word has meaning. Pre-writing skills develop as children play and have opportunities to experiment with variety of media such as pencils, crayons and paint brushes. This they use to scribble and make patterns hence develop writing skills. The teachers' attitude towards play should be geared towards acquiring language through social interactions. Play activities give children opportunities to learn language from their peers and practice what they have learnt in different situation.

Despite the fact that teachers may assign time for play in their lesson plans, their attitude towards playtime may not be routinely built into the program because teachers generally hold diverse viewpoints about teaching, one that is child-centred and one that is teacher-directed. Most often ECE teachers may set up appropriate stimulating environment for young children but decide to stand back and may not follow up with guidance, scaffolding or supportive and responsive interactions with children as they play. A study on effects of television watching on preschool learners' language skills was confirmed to be enhancing children's vocabulary, pronunciation of words and spelling. (Weisberg et al., 2011) however, did not address effects of play on pre-schoolers' language skills development. Therefore, this study needs to address this gap.

2.5 Policy on Play and Development of Language Skills

Proper time management in pre-school leads to effective learning in class (Holmes, Romeo, Ciraola & Grushko, 2015). Time management techniques have great

implication for learning in pre-school and if implemented well, can go a long way to optimize time spent on instruction (Holmes et al., 2015). The school should provide space and appropriate periods for children to experience a holistic learning through play to sustain interest and development of languages skills. In many early childhood programs across the country, time for play is dwindling away as pre-school teachers tend to spend time stressing on academic performance; however, this inhibits communication among learners that is enhanced through play. Almost every adult you have met can recall a pleasurable childhood play experience often in rich and vivid detail. Many remember endless delicious time spent in secret places enjoying various play activities, yet most teachers in Ghana do not integrate play in curriculum leading to poor performance by children while teaching and learning of children should be entirely based on adequate playtime.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on Rights of the Child states that play is part of children's lives and development. The article states that every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in culture and arts. It further states that the member government shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and should encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for recreational and leisure activity (Lester & Russell, 2010).

In order to provide services for children, pre-school teachers are expected to be guided by the use of ECD policy framework as a foundation for improved service delivery to pre-school children. Quality of ECE is determined by facilities that are child friendly for example, school infrastructure, playground and play facilities (ROK, 2006). In order for pre-school teachers to provide these facilities, a framework that

provides appropriate play facilities for all children should guide them. According to pre-school guideline, play activity is acknowledged as a vital activity and thus it is allocated much time in the timetable. The general objective of ECE states that allocation of time to play enables children to enjoy living and learning through play since it develops the children's self-awareness and self-esteem (Pan, Wang & Li, 2018). The ECE syllabus allocates five lessons per week of 30 minutes and it incorporates play activities in every other activity area in ECE. The ECE guidelines states that the pre-school teachers should work with parents and community members towards provision of quality materials, feeding programs, health services and safety for children.

The ability to create and strengthen friendship, friends, in turn, serves as a protective tool against stress. In summary, play provides limitless possibilities for learning and development. Through play, children naturally learn about their surroundings, express their thoughts and feelings, advocate for their own points of view, and learn to respond to other people's perspectives" (Parker et al., 2022). If play is this important in the development of children, one would want to find out what teachers perceive to be the link between play and learning; and how these constructions influence the way the teachers support play in their classrooms.

There are divergent schools of thought about play and learning and the place of each in the education of the child. While some scholars think play and learning are two different things and need to be separated, others are of the view that they are two sides of the same coin and hence should be put together (Makaudze & Sukutai Gudhlanga, 2011). They continued to explain that play and learning should not be separated from each other. They argue that in early childhood, children do not see play separately

from learning. Both sides of the argument show how important these concepts of play and learning are in the life of children. Research have shown that a teacher's understanding and view of the relationship between play and learning influence greatly their pedagogical decisions and practices such as classroom arrangement, the level of their involvement in children's play and the provision of support to children (Agbagbla, 2018).

Einarsdottir (2014) conducted a participatory action research study involving two Icelandic preschool teachers, each with about 20 years' teaching experience. The study was part of a larger action research project involving preschool and first-grade teachers. Einarsdottir wished to find out how preschool teachers deal with play and literacy and whether their ideas about the connection between play and literacy (learning) changed during the action research period. She found that although the teachers became more mindful of the significance of children's play in their learning, they remained steadfast in their beliefs that play should be separate from learning. Einarsdottir (2014:106) noted that this reflected in the way the teachers handled literacy activities; reserving them for "specific well-defined periods".

A similar result was reported by Wu (2015) when they examined early childhood educators' perceptions of the relationship between play and learning in German and Chinese cultures. Twenty-two Chinese and 15 German early childhood educators took part in the study, in which early childhood educators watched and explained videotapes of play episodes from their own settings as "insiders" and then watched and commented on tapes from the others' context as "outsiders". They reported that teachers' view of play and learning was mirrored in their classroom arrangement and influenced their level of participation in children's play. According to the study,

Chinese teachers linked the acquisition of pre-academic and cognitive skills with children's play and frequently intervened in it, unlike their German counterparts, who believed children's free play allowed them to acquire social and decision-making skills and to deal with life.

Teachers' understanding of the relationship between play and learning also influences how children conceptualise this relationship. Wu (2015) investigated the views of 48 children between the ages of three to five years old. Half of the participants were German children and the others were Chinese. Data for the study were collected through observations of children's classroom learning and play activities and through interviews with children. Wu (2015) reported that in contrast to the German children, who viewed play and learning as inseparable, most of their Chinese counterparts viewed learning as separate from play. This, in Wu's view, was due to the structure of the individual classrooms. Chinese classrooms reflected an academic orientation, while the German classrooms allocated much time to free play. What is implied here is that the teachers' philosophical orientation regarding play and learning is usually made evident in their classroom arrangement and organisation. The argument that is put forward in the foregoing discussion is that teachers' views of the relationship between play and learning influences the way they arrange their classroom learning environment, the level of their involvement in children's play and the kind of support they provide for children during play.

In the current study it was necessary to draw the attention of the teachers to children's learning and holistic development (language and literacy skills, pre-academic skills, social skills and cognitive skills) through the implementation of the indigenous play-based programme. This programme sought, among other things, to introduce teachers

to organising their learning environment to reflect the philosophical underpinning of the indigenous play-based pedagogy (teaching and learning through indigenous play). In this regard, it is relevant to examine the roles of teachers in children's play to facilitate children's learning and development.

Controversies about adults' role in children's play seem far from being resolved (Aras, 2016). While some scholars believe children's play must happen without adult involvement (Makaudze & Sukutai Gudhlanga, 2011), others think the important issue to consider should rather be how much adult involvement is needed in children's play. Einarsdottir (2014) agreed on the key role of adults in children's play. However, it is observed that the role that teachers perform in children's play is influenced by the teachers' theory of play (Agbagbla, 2018). Agbagbla (2018) further explained that early childhood teachers who view play as "natural, intrinsically motivated, and free choice" take the backstage, handing over "ownership and control" of the play to the children. Such teachers, according to Agbagbla, adopt a "constructivist approach" to play and hardly intervene in it. The roles of these teachers usually included "watching, observing or facilitating play." On the other hand, Agbagbla notes that the teachers who adopt a "socio-cultural" approach, in addition to providing children with resources and facilitating play, place more emphasis on "active adults' involvement in play and a high level of scaffolding." These teachers believe that by actively engaging in children's play, they are able to introduce children to more complex play.

Fleer (2015) studied teachers' roles in children's imaginary play in play-based settings in Australia. The study revealed that the teachers mostly assumed supervisory roles. Fleer noted that most of the teachers were positioned outside children's play, providing resources instead of entering the children's play. She further reported that

there were hardly any cases of adults initiating and leading children's play. Fleer (2015) explained that the distance between the teachers and children during play influenced the kind of support they provided to children. She found that when the teachers were near children, they were able to enter children's play and provided the appropriate support to children. Furthermore, Fleer observed that the teachers missed opportunities to provide children with the right support when they sat far from where the children engaged in their play.

In a similar study conducted in Finland, Hakkarainen et al. (2013) reported that although the adults were near and joined in children's play, they failed to understand the children's play intention. Being involved in children's play goes beyond just being part; teachers need to be actively involved in children's play (Agbagbla, 2018) by communicating with children during the play for the adults to follow and understand the direction of the play. The indigenous play-based pedagogy provides a familiar context for both kindergarten learners and teachers that enable teachers to join in children's play. The teachers provide children with the necessary support (appropriate vocabulary, play materials and other tools) that will enhance children's play and consequently help teachers direct children's attention to concepts embedded in those play activities with the view to achieving curriculum goals.

Early childhood curricula all over the world are delivered through various pedagogical approaches. Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk and Singer (2009) identify two approaches to the preschool curriculum: the "empty-vessel" approach and the "whole-child approach." The empty-vessel approach is characterised by direct instructional practices, teacher-centeredness, worksheets, memorisation and drills. In this approach children are viewed as blank slates, passively absorbing the teacher's knowledge;

learning is put into learning areas or subjects and school readiness is limited to cognitive learning. In the empty-vessel approach, developmental dimensions such as social skills and other skills needed for children's learning are relegated to the background.

The whole-child approach, on the other hand, sees the child as an active constructor of knowledge who learns by exploring and discovering. This approach emphasises playful learning, where children find meaning in every interaction they have within a rich environment under the guidance of a supportive adult. In the whole-child approach, learning is seen as an integrated whole and not as fragments.

In view of this, several scholars (Thomas, Warren & DeVries, 2011; Barblett, 2010; Flee, 2015; Danniels & Pyle, 2018) support a play-based approach to the early childhood curriculum delivery. This is because play-based teaching reduces stress in the classroom, cultivates happiness, pride and confidence and fosters communal attachment; all of which increase academic achievement (De Rood, 2010). Agbagbla (2018) concurs and adds that play-based learning enhances child-initiated investigations and promotes social development among children. Through play-based pedagogies, children are provided with specialised pedagogy that engages them and focuses on the children instead of pedagogy based on the delivery of knowledge and predetermined curricular goals (Danniels & Pyle, 2018). Hence, an early childhood curriculum delivery should employ pedagogies that capitalise on children's desire to learn; their competence in their activities and their ability to invite collaborators (Danniels & Pyle, 2018). In Danniels & Pyle's view, play-based pedagogy helps to nurture and sustain these characteristics. Therefore, different play-based pedagogies need to be explored in early childhood education.

Barblett (2010) describe play-based pedagogies as occurring on a continuum ranging from “open-ended and freely chosen” play to more teacher-oriented play-based activities. Although the authors do not completely disregard “freely chosen open-ended” play oriented pedagogy when it comes to knowledge construction and the teaching and learning of concepts, they believe that a more teacher-oriented play-based pedagogy is relevant for knowledge construction and the teaching of concepts. Barblett (2010) note that teacher-oriented (pedagogical) play seeks to keep an equilibrium between child-initiated play and teacher-directed play activities. Pedagogical play (also known as conceptual play, pedagogical activity, intentional teaching and educational play) encourages adult engagement in children’s play activities with the view to deliberately providing children the needed support. The role of the teacher in pedagogical play, according Fler (2015) is to provide support for children’s learning during play instead of a more instructive approach of directed teaching.

In spite of the many studies that support play-based learning in ECE, it is no secret that in recent times play-based learning has gradually been replaced with more academic instructional approaches because of seemingly irresistible pressure on teachers (Clyde, 2012; Hirsh-Pasek, Golinkoff, Berk & Singer, 2009)

Recent publications globally have shown that early childhood curricula and pedagogy are steadily moving away from the well-established child-centred, play-based learning towards more formal school approaches (Lester & Russell, 2010). Researchers have identified several factors that are responsible for this shift, such as pressure from government and other stakeholders (Roberts-Holmes, 2015), teachers’ pre-service

training and deficiencies in curriculum guidance (Mike & Aiko, 2019) and teachers' misinterpretation of the curriculum (Maftei, 2019).

Studies have shown that early childhood educators all over the world are facing difficulties in implementing play-based pedagogy due to pressure from governments, parents and school principals to meet set targets in the form of completing topics in the curriculum (Glenn, Knight, Holt & Spence, 2013).

In the UK, for instance, the government's continuously increasing policy regulation, which is explained by the quest of the country to be part of a "global education race" that commences in preschool, has proven to be a major setback to the delivery of a play-based pedagogy in the early years (Agbagbla, 2018). Glenn, Knight, Holt and Spence (2013) observed that government's focus on children's performance in numeracy and literacy, for example, has influenced the pedagogy early childhood educators in the UK employ in the early childhood settings. Roberts-Holmes states that the teachers feel under pressure to fulfil government demands of producing data for education authorities instead of employing child-centred play-based pedagogies. This is how one of the teachers in Roberts-Holmes' study put it: "It's all based on data, the data is driving the pedagogy" Glenn, Knight, Holt and Spence (2013) explained that as much as the teachers tried to hold on to their philosophy of child-centred, play-based learning in their learning centres, they could not implement play-based pedagogy.

The UK is not the only country where government policy regulations impact negatively on the implementation of a play-based pedagogy in the early years. In the Netherlands, the introduction of a mandatory curriculum defeated teachers' quest to be "good pedagogues" to their learners through the implementation of pedagogies that

were beneficial to the children (James, 2013). According to James (2013), a good pedagogue places emphasis on the holistic development of the child, bearing in mind the child's personal characteristics as well as their cultural needs. To achieve this, the teacher needs the freedom to make relevant decisions, which is forfeited by compliance with the dictates of a mandatory curriculum. The situation is similar to what is happening in kindergarten classrooms in the United States.

In the United States, an associate professor of Curriculum and Instruction in Early Childhood Education at the University of Texas, Christopher Brown, notes that kindergarten teachers have replaced play-based learning opportunities such as the sensory table and dramatic play centre with teacher-directed teaching time, writing areas and sight words that children must commit to memory. The teachers engage children for long hours doing academic activities such as practising sight words, decoding word drills and completing science tasks (Boyd, 2012). Brown notes that children have recesses of only 15 minutes or so. This situation, Boyd observed, was due to the pressure on both the teachers and their learners to achieve higher academic levels.

Early childhood teachers in Africa have also had their fair share of pressure from stakeholders in the ECE sector. In South Africa, the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), for example, plugged early childhood educators into a lot of implementation difficulties (Matsepe & Maluleke, 2019). They examined how teachers experience the implementation of CAPS in three primary schools. The findings show that the teachers found it difficult to implement the curriculum because they lacked the skills and knowledge needed to implement the curriculum. Mohan et al. (2022) argue that ECE teachers need to draw upon their

professional knowledge and skills to be able to effectively employ a play-based pedagogy. Therefore, ECE teachers who lack the necessary competencies for implementing the curriculum are not likely to achieve success even if they try.

The characteristics of play and the way play is used in an early childhood curriculum could influence the way the teachers implement the curriculum (Nijhof et. al, 2018). Nijhof et al. (2018) indicate that the characteristics of play (intrinsic motivation, spontaneity and free choice) render play unsuitable in ~~an~~ educational culture that prioritises accountability, measurable results and tangible outcomes.”

Ojuondo (2015) concur and point out that ‘play’ and ‘curriculum’ contradict each other. The conceptualisation of play as a spontaneous, child- initiated activity that does not fulfil any practical need contradicts the concept of a ‘curriculum’, which is concerned with intentional teaching planned to achieve set learning outcomes. To resolve such a contradiction, Ojuondo (2015) recommend that curriculum documents should be specific in the way the word ‘play’ is used. They suggest that the term ~~“playful learning”~~ should be used in curriculum documents to express the intentional use of play for teaching purposes. They add that the distinction between play and playful learning must be reflected both in their objectives and the exact pedagogies that go with each of them.

What emerges here is that early childhood educators could fail to implement an early childhood curriculum with the recommended play-based pedagogy due to lack of adequate and clear guidance from the curriculum document itself. In this vein, the IPBP is specific on guiding the kindergarten teacher in the use indigenous play such as Anansi stories and *Nana wo ho* in implementing the KG curriculum.

The kind of pre-service preparation early childhood educators receive could determine the way they employ play-based pedagogy in the early childhood settings. Singer et al. (2014) reported that early childhood teachers were unable to teach through play because the pre-service training the teachers received did not equip them with the relevant knowledge to understand and implement play-based teaching. The teachers explained that during their university training, the lectures they received did not explain in depth, with practical demonstrations, how they could plan and implement play-based learning in their classroom situations. The teachers stated that they felt like they did not even understand what play-based learning entails. This view agrees with Thomas, Warren and DeVries (2011) assertion that several teacher education programmes are struggling to design instructional models that can equip early childhood teachers with the competencies they need to teach young children. While it is true that lack of adequate training results in early childhood teachers not being equipped sufficiently with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to implement child-centred, play-based pedagogies, it is also important to note that some teachers, though adequately trained, could not implement the things they learned during their training. Atmore, van Nwokah, Hsu and Gulker (2013) assert that qualification (in other words, training) does not necessarily determine the quality of teaching. Atmore et al. advance three possible reasons why teacher training or a qualification does not necessarily produce quality teaching: a lack of practical demonstration and instruction during training; a lack of on-site support to assist with implementation of theoretical training; and a lack of follow-up after the completion of training so as to ensure consistent implementation.

Nwokah, Hsu and Gulker (2013) results are in line with these findings, but went further to explore the link between teacher training and the pedagogical practices of

preschool teachers in the actual teaching context (teaching practice). Nwokah, Hsu and Gulker (2013) affirm that “the theoretical input students received regarding contextually appropriate practice was frequently in conflict with a very different reality.” The authors note that 95% of the student teachers in the study agreed that they could not apply the child-centred, play-based teaching strategies they learned during their teacher education because of the circumstances prevailing in those settings, where they were under pressure to introduce learners to more formal academic work. Hence, the teacher-trainees could not do otherwise, even though they knew that the right thing to do was to engage children in child-centred, play-based activities. As Parker, Thomsen and Berry (2022) pointed out, new teachers face the risk of being resisted by their principals and older teachers in their attempt to change the way instruction is given in ECE settings.

In another study, Bago et al. (2020) confirm that contextual factors such as parental expectation and professional training prevent preschool teachers from practising their beliefs regarding teaching and learning in the preschool. Their results further reveal that although almost all the teachers strongly approved of child-led learning, in actual practice they did the opposite, mostly giving direct instruction. It is evident from the discussion above that the factors that influence the way early childhood teachers implement a play-based pedagogy are complex. In addition to the issues related to external pressure, some of the teachers were not adequately trained to be able to implement play-based pedagogy; and those who were trained and had clear ideas regarding what to do as far as preschool teaching and learning were concerned, are unable to do so due to context-related factors (Bago et al., 2020). In view of this, teachers need to be engaged in discussions that help them to reflect on their instructional choices. One way of engaging teachers is ongoing training with a focus

on practical activities to help teachers acquire the needed skills, knowledge and attitudes to implement a play-based pedagogy. An Indigenous play-based professional development programme (IPBPDP), with a focus on equipping kindergarten teachers with the needed competencies for implementing the KG curriculum, seems to be the way forward.

In order to design an IPBPDP for Ghanaian kindergarten teachers, it is important to delve into play in the Africa context as a whole, with a specific focus on play in Ghana. The survival of any society is determined by how its young members are socialised into their culture and are equipped with survival abilities (Clyde, 2012). In African cultures, play, ‘work’ and learning are inseparable (Boyette, 2016; Gwanfogbe, 2011; Michelet, 2016; Wadende, Oburu & Morara, 2016). This is because the delivery of learning content to African children involves wedging children’s daily routines into the community and family livelihood (Boyette, 2016). Thus, as children engage in social life and leisure, including play in their community, they discover the embedded skills, knowledge and attitude inherent in such activities (Gwanfogbe, 2011). Therefore, children in Africa do not see any difference between playing and working or participating and learning” (Michelet, 2016:234). Ng’asike (2014) explains that children’s play activities are closely linked with the economic ventures of their families and communities and that children develop relevant skills as they participate in such activities.

Christie and Ruckus (2009) identified five varieties of childhood play. She mentioned physical play that included children running errands for adults within their neighbourhood; music and dance; children moving in groups and role-playing of adult roles (which falls under social play); children’s free play, including using readily

available local materials such as empty cans, clay, sticks, and plastic to create objects with which they played; games with rules, consisting of games that already have established rules which children follow; and adult-moderated play, which included moonlight storytelling, community festivals and dancing.

Additionally, Taylor and Boyer (2020) found that Anansi stories served as a tool for developing pre-school children's oral narrative and oral language skills and that the mentoring role of the adults provided opportunities for both adults and children to share their ideas in a non-competitive manner. The findings further showed that through Anansi stories, family and societal values were passed on from generation to generation. The authors concluded that Anansi stories enabled children to be creative and empowered them with social and spiritual values, which prepared them to understand their world better.

Moreover, African indigenous play promotes lifelong qualities in children. Bayeck (2018) found that through Oware (a board game), for example, children can develop skills such as patience, negotiation, spatial thinking and decision making. Lynch (2015) also noted that story-telling and a practical assignment afforded young children the opportunity to develop qualities such as being responsible for themselves and others; to do hard work and be truthful. Materials needed for play in the African context are cheap to design and readily available within the local context. Bayeck (2018) studied five board games from four African countries: Oware from Ghana; Bao from Tanzania; Moruba and Morabaraba from South Africa and Mweso (Omweso) from Uganda. Bayeck suggested that by just creating holes in the ground on a playground, children could for example play Oware. What is being suggested here is that through the indigenous play-based programme, teachers are empowered to

use diverse types of indigenous play and resources and to design play materials for children with little or no financial constraints.

As evident from the literature, indigenous African play has the potential to be employed in the teaching of young children in the kindergarten. However, there is little to no evidence of work that has systematically employed a theoretical underpinning to teach teachers how to unearth the potentials in this indigenous play for implementing it in the kindergarten curriculum. The gap that the present study sought to fill was to employ some theories to design a professional development programme that employs indigenous play to equip kindergarten teachers with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for implementing an indigenous play-based pedagogy.

The next section identifies and discusses selected Ghanaian indigenous play (Anhwɛ akyire, Ampe, Nana wo ho, Pilolo and Anansi stories). Children in Ghana enjoy different forms of play, including games with rules that help them learn and develop (Bayeck, 2018). There are various categories of children's play: gender-specific games such as Ampe, Asorba and Nkro done by girls. Pilolo, Sansakroma and Merepe kwan ako are usually physical and are played by boys. Pinpina and Panpana are played by both sexes, either together or separately. Other categories of children's play are physical play, visual memory play, role play and games with rules. (Dickey, Castle & Pryor, 2016) notes that children's games used in a school situation should be simple to prevent frustration on the part of the children. He therefore suggests that games that look complex could be adapted and simplified to the level of kindergarten children, need to play in groups whether large or small. Furthermore, he advises that adults need to ensure that all children are included in the games. He suggests that

different children could be involved in various aspects of the game. For example, some children could perform the actual game; others can sing and clap while the rest are looking on eagerly; –jumping, clapping or just giggling happily.” Later in this section I describe the following indigenous Ghanaian games: Anhwe akyire, Ampe, Nana wo ho and Pilolo. I selected these games for discussion as these are some examples of the indigenous games that are performed in the research context. Secondly, I enjoyed playing them as a child, which put me in a better position to understand their significance in kindergarten indigenous play-based pedagogy.

Dickey and Pryor’s study (2016) emphasized that preschool should be child’s place of play. Her study differs from this study as her study was on relevance of play on preschoolers in Tanzania while this study is on influence of play on the development preschoolers’ language skills in Kenya. In the ECE syllabus, five lessons per week are set aside for play activities and that is a clear indication of the recognition of the importance of play (Pellegrini, 2011). When deprived of play, the child is a prisoner shut off from all that makes life real and meaningful. The impulse to create and achieve, working through play allows the child to grow in body and mind .Play helps to enhance a child’s readiness for more formalized learning. Through play in early childhood, a child strengthens his or her language development. It presents a child with many opportunities for oral communication. This early language development will in turn help children as they later learn to read and write. A study by Ojuondo (2015) based on the relevance of symbolic play activity on improvement of mathematical thinking confirmed that symbolic play activities are important and relevant to teaching of most mathematical problems but did not address influence of play on the development of preschool children’s language skills.

Play, according to Bodrova, Germeroth and Leong, (2013), contains rules for behaviour that the child should follow to be successful in play situation. Proper materials engage children in a wide range of play, alone and with others. The curriculum and play materials and activities should be based on the children's interest, age and skill level. The teachers should provide a variety of activities for different age groups that focus on language, social development, time and cognitive development and gross motor skills.

To provide quality education, the teacher must have attained a given level of education relevant to the task and be properly trained. The success of any literacy program is largely dependent on the type of teacher's performance in that field. Each teacher should recognize the value of play in the programs for young children. Unfortunately, teachers often fail to take advantage of the opportunities play provides for children's development and learning. Through observation, teachers can learn about children's social interactions, cognitive and language abilities, motor skills and emotional development. Adult supervision can help prevent injuries by making sure children properly use playground equipment and do not engage in unsafe behaviour around (Hudson, Olsen & Thompson, 2008).

The role of the teacher is to select activities and organize the learning environment in such a way that creates a language rich environment (Massey, 2013). This safe environment will encourage children to use freely the play materials and facilitate the development of oral, listening and speaking skills. Massey (2013) also pointed out that skilled teachers, who are well trained in observing children, must consciously facilitate play and understand how play contributes to the child's mastery of concepts. The teacher should organize activities and materials that promote language

development for use throughout the indoor and outdoor daily schedules. The teacher should establish an environment where language exploration and usage is encouraged.

Proper time management in pre-school leads to effective learning in class (SELİMHOCALOĞLU, 2017). Time management techniques have great implication for learning in pre-school and if implemented well, can go a long way to optimize time spent on instruction (SELİMHOCALOĞLU, 2017). The school should provide space and appropriate periods for children to experience a holistic learning through play to sustain interest and development of languages skills. In many early childhood programs across the country, time for play is dwindling away as pre-school teachers tend to spend time stressing on academic performance; however, this inhibits communication among learners that is enhanced through play. Almost every adult you have met can recall a pleasurable childhood play experience often in rich and vivid detail. Many remember endless delicious time spent in secret places enjoying various play activities, yet most teachers in Kenya do not integrate play in curriculum leading to poor performance by children while teaching and learning of children should be entirely based on adequate playtime.

A policy framework is the most important instrument for advocacy, for ensuring provision of quality services and for harnessing resources and other support for young children (Ngecha, 2011). When legalized, a policy framework becomes the legal instrument that all those providing services for young children must adhere. The framework guides the government in its commitment of resources to programs for young children. A policy framework is therefore extremely important for addressing the total well-being of young children. In order to provide services for children, pre-school teachers are expected to be guided by the use of ECD policy framework as a

foundation for improved service delivery to pre-school children. Quality of ECE is determined by facilities that are child friendly for example, school infrastructure, playground and play facilities (Sitati, Ndirangu, Kennedy & Rapongo, 2016). In order for pre-school teachers to provide these facilities, a framework that provides appropriate play facilities for all children should guide them. According to pre-school guideline, play activity is acknowledged as a vital activity and thus it is allocated much time in the timetable. The general objective of ECE states that allocation of time to play enables children to enjoy living and learning through play since it develops the children's self-awareness and self-esteem (Whitebread et. al., 2012).

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 is the perceived framework for influence of play on development of language skills among pre-school children.

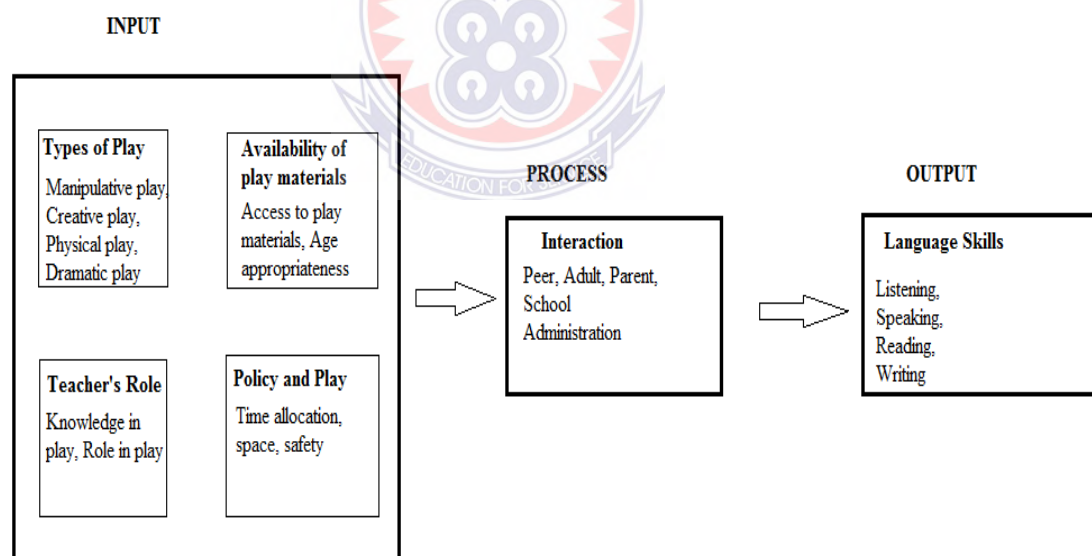


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

The independent variable in this research is influence of play, which includes types of play, availability of play materials, and teachers' role on play and policy on play. These factors function with the interaction among learner's peers, adults, parents and

administration involvement. The successful management of games and play in early childhood schools should lead to effective acquisition of language skills.

2.7 Knowledge Gap

Most studies that examined the language skill development of pre-schoolers did not include play pedagogy (Gleason & Ratner, 2022; Ewing, Callow & Rushton, 2016; Boyd, 2012). That is, while play is known to have a positive impact on language development in pre-schoolers, many studies in this field tends to focus on more structured approaches to teaching language skills, such as direct instruction or specific curricula. As such, there was a need for research that specifically examines the impact of play pedagogy on language skill development in pre-schoolers. This study demonstrates that there is a decline in the language skills development of pre-schoolers as a result of lack of play. The study involved examining the effects of different types of play-based activities on specific aspects of language development, such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and narrative skills. It investigate how incorporating playful activities into language instruction sessions could enhance engagement and motivation, leading to better language outcomes for pre-schoolers. This study addresses this research gap to help gain a better understanding of how play pedagogy can be effectively utilized to support language skill development in pre-schoolers and it provides valuable insights into the potential benefits of play-based interventions and contributes to the development of evidence-based practices for promoting language development among pre-schoolers.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, validity research instruments and reliability of instruments, data collection methods and data analysis.

3.2 Research Method and Design

Qualitative, quantitative, and Sequential explanatory design methods were considered for this research, however, the sequential explanatory design was used since it allowed the researcher to collect and analyse both numerical and narrative data. Wisdom, Cavaleri, Onwuegbuzie, and Green (2012) explained that qualitative method helps to comprehend how individuals think, feel, act, and it uses non-numerical data. Apuke (2017) also explained that, quantitative research is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data through issuing of questionnaires or conducting surveys. Finally, Wipulanusat et al. (2020) pointed out that the sequential explanatory design is easy to design and implement, and it uses both qualitative and quantitative data, even though the data are collected over time in two consecutive phases. That is, the researcher first collects and analyses the quantitative data and then in the second phase of the study, she collects the qualitative data and compare to the quantitative results.

The study's research design was a descriptive survey design with secondary data sources. According to Denscombe (2017), the descriptive survey design is very effective and it allows for easy access to information. It uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The descriptive data was gathered through survey

research. This research design was chosen because it involved quantitative and qualitative analysis that allows the researcher to gather information through questionnaire and large amount of information from observation (Ponto, 2015). The researcher collects primary data using the questionnaire and interview guide. The information gathered provides a more accurate picture of the general population as more people respond to the survey. It does take a lot of time, effort, and money, but there is a high likelihood that the information gathered will be highly accurate, current, and topic-relevant.

Secondary sources such as books, journals, reports, newspapers, and the internet were used to support the primary information obtained through the survey method. Secondary data allows researchers to build on previous research, resulting in better results while saving time and money (Clark, 2013).

3.3 The Study Area Population

The study population comprised 25 public Early Childhood Education schools in Kumasi Metropolis. This study took into consideration three sampling techniques, that is, simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and voluntary response sampling. However, purposive sampling was used since it involves recruiting participants based on their specific knowledge and/or experience with the subject of empirical investigation (Gilbert & Stoneman, 2015), compared to simple random sampling which involves simply giving every member of the population an equal chance of being chosen, requiring the researcher to include the entire population in his sampling frame, and voluntary response sampling which also involves the situation where people willingly come out to partake in the research rather than the researcher selecting and contacting them. In purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally

selects participants whom they think they have the relevant knowledge and experience concerning the research topic or its objectives and are willing to share them, rather than just giving the chance to anybody to participate regardless of experience.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

The target population of the study comprised 60 Early Childhood Education teachers and 140 learners from the 25 selected pre-schools in the Metropolis. The study had a sample size of 133, comprising of 40 teachers and 93 learners. A purposive sampling technique will be used to select the 40 teachers and 93 learners to answer the questionnaires or answer partake in the interview sessions as it will practically allow the researcher to wilfully and non-randomly select participants based on who she believes is suitable for the study or can produce the perfect data necessary to accomplish the study's objectives (Veziari, Kumar & Leach, 2018).

Yamane's formula was used to calculate sample size.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \quad (\text{Lohr, 2021}) \quad \text{Where: } n = \text{Sample size, } N = \text{Total population} = 200, \text{ and } e = \text{Margin of error} = 0.05$$

$$\text{Therefore, } n = \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{200}{1 + 200(0.0025)} = 133, \text{ therefore the sample size that will be used for this study is 133.}$$

The teachers and the learners from the 25 selected schools in Kumasi Metropolis were apportioned as follows:

Table 1: Population for the Study

Target population	Apportionment	Sample Size
Teachers	$\frac{60}{200} * 133$	40
Learners	$\frac{140}{200} * 133$	93

Source: Field Survey, 2023

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed for the study which involves the researcher intentionally visiting individuals who, according to her opinion, have the relevant information and are ready to share it.

When selecting the participants to partake in the study, I identified and contacted some teachers and learners and thoroughly explained the study's goals to them. Following the explanation, I ensured that the participants were recruited in a trustworthy manner, by selecting individuals who could provide the best data necessary to achieve the study's objectives. That is, the teachers and learners were carefully chosen and recruited who, in my opinion, had the necessary information and experience, and were willing to share it.

3.6 Research Instruments

Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from teachers in selected Kumasi Metropolis schools, while pre-schoolers were interviewed. The questionnaires contained both closed-ended and open-ended questions, allowing for quick and simple responses. The questionnaire as well as the interview was used to collect data on how the different types of play influence the development of preschool children's language skills, how the availability of play materials influences the development of preschool children's language skills, the role of teachers in play and their influence on the development of preschool children's language skills, and how school policies on play influence the development of preschool children's language skills.

The questionnaires and the interview guide were designed to provide responses to the research questions. The questionnaires provided an instructive section on how the

respondents will answer those questions. This made it easier to compare and contrast the teachers' perspectives.

3.7 Validity of Research Instruments

According to Lakshmi and Mohideen (2013), validity is the degree to which the research instruments measures what it is intended to measure. The validity of the instruments to be used was assessed prior to the start of the study. During the pre-testing, I was able to go over all of the difficult questions on the instruments. The instruments were pre-tested before the actual data collection began. In addition, the items in the questionnaire were cross-checked against the four research objectives. Validity in research has two components: internal (credibility) and external (transferability). Internal validity refers to whether or not the study's findings are genuine as a result of how the groups were chosen, data was collected, or analyses were carried out. (Mohajan, 2017). External validity, on the other hand, refers to whether the study's findings can be applied to other groups of people (Yilmaz, 2013). The instrument employed were dependable since it sought to collect data on how the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills, how the availability of play materials influences the development of preschool children language skills, the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills, and how the school policy on play and its influence the development of preschool children language skills. The findings can be used by other interest groups to undertake additional research.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data was gathered through the distribution of questionnaires to teachers and learners from the carefully chosen schools. Secondary sources were also drawn from books,

journals, reports, newspapers, and other databases to supplement the primary information obtained through the questionnaire administration. This assisted in achieving better findings, saved money and time, and enhanced the study's credibility.

As the researcher, I first of all explained verbally the objectives of the study to the respondents, providing all necessary details (purpose, risks, benefits, etc.) and gave them an opportunity to ask questions, after which I provided them with study information on the topic and gave adequate time to decide if they will participate. After deciding, I then answered any extra questions they had to ensure that they have acquired the best understanding to answer the questionnaires.

No information obtained was released to a third party without the permission of the respondent. Any collected data was utilized only for academic purposes and not for commercial gain. Paying careful attention to record handling and trying to conceal identifying information will decrease the risk of confidentiality. Data collected were kept in a locked location, and soft copies have been password-protected. 40 people completed the questionnaires, and their responses were included in the analysis, while 93 pre-schoolers were engaged in an interview session. Interview guide was prepared to solicit responses from the pre-schoolers to make it easier to assess every pre-schooler in the same way and give the freedom to ask follow-up questions, and this exercise was carried out within a week. The questionnaires were made up of self-created close and open-ended questions with title "Using play as a teaching strategy for pre-schoolers". Four sections were created for the instrument (Section A, B, C, D, and E). Section "A" included background information on the respondents, Section "B" elicited information on the types of play, Section "C" elicited information on the availability of play materials, Section "D" included information on the role of teachers

on play, and section” E” ascertained the school policy on play. To protect confidentiality, anonymity, and truthful responses, no name or ID were permitted on the forms. Before filling out the questionnaires, the instructions were read out loud, and respondents were allowed to ask questions to ensure that they know what is required of them. The collection of data lasted for a week. The questionnaires were given out on the same day, and responses were collected within one week before being analysed and collated.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process of bringing meaning to the raw data collected (Graue, 2015). Descriptive statistics, frequencies, and percentages were used to analyse the data for this study. Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) were used to collect, code, and filter the research instrument to ensure that each participant responded to all of the items on each instrument (Questionnaire). Tables were used to present the quantitative data that had been analysed. The qualitative data was also thematically analysed based on significant emergent themes. Thematic analysis aids in the analysis of qualitative data by searching across a data set to identify, analyse, and report on repeated patterns (Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher made certain that the privacy and confidentiality of the participants were respected and maintained. Participants were not allowed to write their names on the questionnaires. Respondents were also assured that the information gathered from the questionnaire would only be used for academic purposes and would not be used for any other purpose without their permission.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This study was designed using a descriptive survey approach and secondary data sources. Furthermore, qualitative, quantitative, and sequential explanatory design approaches were considered of which the Sequential explanatory design method was actually used. The study population was made up of teachers and learners from 25 carefully selected schools in Kumasi Metropolis. Purposive sampling was used in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers while the learners were interviewed. Statistical Product and Service Solutions was used to collect, code, and filter the research instrument (questionnaire) to ensure that each respondent has answered all of the items on each instrument.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of analysis of data, presentation, interpretation and discussion. The study was on influence of play on the development of pre-school children's language skills development. The data analysis and interpretation of the findings are presented in this chapter. It also provides a detailed discussion of the study's findings, laying the groundwork for recommendations and conclusions. The findings were presented in accordance with the research objectives, which were to establish how the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills, to assess how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills, to examine the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills, and to determine how the school policy on play influence the development of preschool children language skills. Respondents in this research were drawn from 25 public Early Childhood Education schools in Kumasi Metropolis. A total of 133 people were considered for the study which comprised of 40 teachers and 93 learners. Closed and open-ended questionnaires, as well as interviews, were used to collect data from these participants, and the results were analysed qualitatively, quantitatively, and thematically, based on significant emergent themes.

4.2 Characteristics of Respondents

The biographic data of the respondents who were purposively selected from the 25 Kumasi Metropolis' public pre-schools were presented in tables one and two. Indeed, they made a significant and effective contribution to the research process.

Table 2: Background Information on Learners

		N	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	62	66.7
	Female	31	33.3
	Total	93	100
Age	1-3	40	43
	4 Above	53	57
	Total	93	100
Class	Nursery	10	10.8
	Kg 1	28	30.1
	Kg 2	55	59.1
	Total	93	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 2 shows that 62(66.7%) of the learners who were interviewed were males, while 31(33.3%) were females. The majority of respondents who were deliberately selected to participate in the research were aged 4 and up, making their views more objective and valuable for the research. More students from the KG2 class were chosen, 55 (59.1%), because they were deemed mature and capable of providing more valid, precise, and reliable answers.

Table 3: Background Information on Teachers

		N	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	15	37.5
	Female	25	62.5
	Total	40	100
Age	18-40	22	55
	41-50	14	35
	50 above	4	10
	Total	40	100
Minimum Qualification	Diploma	25	70
	First degree	12	35
	Post graduate	0	0
	Other	0	0
	Total	40	100
Work Experience	Below 4 years	0	0
	4-10 years	27	67.5
	Above 10 years	13	32.5
	Total	40	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 3 shows that 15 (37.5%) were males and 25 (62.5%) were females. This demonstrates that the majority of teachers at the various public ECE schools are female dominated, as women are more interested in pursuing Early Childhood Education at the tertiary level than men. The majority of respondents (22(55%)) are between the ages of 18 and 40. The majority of the respondents who were selected intentionally had a diploma qualification, accounting for 28(70%), because a diploma is the minimum academic qualification required to teach in public pre-schools. Only teachers with more than four years of experience were deliberately chosen for this study, making their opinions more trustworthy and reliable enough for this study.

4.3 Objective 1: To investigate how the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills in Kumasi Metropolitan

This objective aims at investigating how the types of play influence the development of preschool children language skills. The results of the teachers were quantitatively analysed. The results were analysed indicating the Response, Frequency, and the Percentage. The frequency tables represent the findings

Table 4: At your school, there are various types of play

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	23	57.5
Strongly Agree	12	30.0
Disagree	3	7.5
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The statement that “at your school, there are various types of play” was accepted and agreed by high percentage of 35 (87.5%) respondents as shown in table 4. Majority believed that there are different types of play available in the schools which include physical play, social play, constructive play, creative play, among others. However, a small percentage of 5 (12.5%) responded negatively to the statement because they believe there aren't enough play materials available in school, which prevents students from engaging in certain types of play.

Table 5: Language Skill Development of Learners can be enhanced by Manipulative Play

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	17	42.5
Strongly Agree	14	35.0
Disagree	4	10.0
Strongly Disagree	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The respondents agreed that language skill development of learners can be enhanced by manipulative play. That is, 31 (77.5%) of the total of 40 respondents agreed with the statement, while 9 (22.5%) disagreed. The respondents believed that manipulative play involves using objects, such as toys or blocks, to create and build things and this type of play can stimulate a child's imagination and creativity while also helping to develop their fine motor skills. During manipulative play, children may naturally engage in conversations with their peers or caregivers, which can facilitate the development of their language skills. By playing and interacting with others, children are exposed to a variety of language structures and vocabulary words that they may not have encountered otherwise (Bjorklund, 2013).

Table 6: Play enhances the development of gross motor skills of pre-schoolers

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	21	52.5
Strongly Agree	10	25.0
Disagree	7	17.5
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 6 indicates that 31 (77.5%) of the respondents supported the belief play enhances the development of gross motor skills of pre-schoolers since they perceived that the development of gross motor skills of pre-schoolers is ideally important in the development of writing and speaking skills in language while 9 (22.5%) did not agree to the statement.

Table 7: Learners are able to practice the language skills they learn through play

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	15	37.5
Strongly Agree	19	47.5
Disagree	3	7.5
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The statement that learners are able to practice the language skills they learn through play attracted a high percentage of 34 (85.0%) as shown in table 7. This implies that the statement was accepted by the respondents as they believed through play, children can learn nouns (the names of things), verbs (what objects do or action words) and how to describe. They learn to explore objects and see how they feel, where you can put them and how big or small they are. However, a small percentage of 6 (15.0%) responded negative to the statement.

Table 8: Creative play is not the best way to improve one's speaking, reading, and writing abilities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	2	5.0
Strongly Agree	1	2.5
Disagree	25	62.5
Strongly Disagree	12	30.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 8 also shows that only 3 (7.5%) of the respondents agreed that creative play is not the best way to improve one's speaking, reading, and writing abilities while 37 (92.5%) did not agree to the statement. This implies that the respondents did not accept the statement since they believed creative play rather serve as a great tool to enhance the speaking, reading and writing of pre-schoolers. Creative play provides an opportunity for children to have fun, but develop intellectually at the same time. It also enables pre-schoolers to gain skills that are essential to academic learning and development of language skills.

Table 9: The children learn to interact and express themselves through play

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	19	47.5
Strongly Agree	17	42.5
Disagree	3	7.5
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 9 shows that 36 (90.0%) of the respondents indicated that the children learn to interact and express themselves through play while 4(10.0%) responded negative. This implies that the statement was accepted and agreed by the respondents as they believed play is an essential part of a child's development, and it serves as a way for children to learn and practice important social, emotional, cognitive, and physical skills. When children play, they have the opportunity to explore and experiment with different ideas, roles, and scenarios. This allows them to develop their creativity, problem-solving skills, and imagination. Additionally, playing with others helps children learn important social skills, such as taking turns, cooperating, and communicating with others. Through play, children also learn to express themselves and their emotions. They may use play to act out different situations or feelings, which helps them process and understand their emotions in a safe and supportive environment.

Table 10: Play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	8	20.0
Strongly Agree	27	67.5
Disagree	2	5.0
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 10 indicates that 35 (87.5%) of the respondents supported the statement that play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers. However, 5(12.5%) of the respondents disagreed to the statement. The majority believed that during play, kids direct their own activities and are not bound by schedules or activities directed by

adults which practically helps a child's brain develop in positive ways. It strengthens and increases neural connections in the brain

Table 11: Physical play improves listening and speaking abilities

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	20	50.0
Strongly Agree	15	37.5
Disagree	2	5.0
Strongly Disagree	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The statement that physical play improves listening and speaking abilities of preschoolers attracted a high percentage of 35(87.5%). However, a small percentage of 5(12.5%) responded negative to the statement. The majority believed that when children engage in physical play, they often have to communicate with others, which can help to develop their language skills. For example, when children play a game of tag, they need to communicate with each other to understand the rules of the game and coordinate their movements. This can help to improve their listening skills as they need to pay attention to what others are saying in order to understand the game. Similarly, they believed physical play can also help to improve a child's speaking abilities. When children engage in pretend play, they often take on different roles and engage in conversations with others. This can help to develop their vocabulary, as they may use new words and phrases that they have learned in their conversations.

Table 12: Dramatic play fosters the development of all language, reading, and writing skills

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	17	42.5
Strongly Agree	20	50.0
Disagree	2	5.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The statement that dramatic play fosters the development of all language, reading, and writing skills of learners was agreed by a high percentage of 37 (92.5%) since they believed dramatic play is a valuable tool for fostering the development of language, reading, and writing skills in preschool learners. It provides a fun and engaging way for children to learn and explore the world around them. It enhances the narrative skills of learners, vocabulary, comprehension and creativity (Ihmeideh, 2015). However, 3(7.5%) disagreed to the statement.

Table 13: Students can use constructive play to experiment with drawing, music, and building things

Response	Frequency	Percent
Agree	15	37.5
Strongly Agree	19	47.5
Disagree	4	10.0
Strongly Disagree	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 13 shows that large percentage of the respondents 34 (85.0%) agreed to the statement that students can use constructive play to experiment with drawing, music, and building things. 6(15.0%) however disagreed to the statement. Constructive play

is when children manipulate their environment to create things and this type of play occurs when children build towers and cities with blocks, play in the sand, construct contraptions on the woodworking bench, and draw murals with chalk on the sidewalk in line with a study by Forman (2021).

4.4 Objective 2: To determine how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills

This section looks into how the availability of play materials influences the development of preschool children language skills. The questionnaire responses of the teachers from the purposively selected public Early Childhood Education schools in Kumasi Metropolis were quantitatively analysed. Table 14 shows the quantitative results.

Respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with the various statements. A Likert scale was used, with 1 indicating agreement, 2 indicating strong agreement, 3 indicating disagreement, and 4 indicating strong disagreement. This means that a respondent's minimum response is one (Agree), and their maximum response is four (Strongly Disagree). Each statement specifies the minimum and maximum response it received. The descriptive statistics means were used to convert the Likert scale to a mean score. 1-2.99 indicates that respondents agreed with the statements, while 3-3.99 indicates that respondents disagreed with the statements.

Table 14: To determine how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills

Statements	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Rank
There are numerous play materials available for children to use while playing	40	1	4	2.04	7
The school's play materials are age-appropriate for the students	40	1	4	2.89	9
In your school, learners have access to appropriate play materials	40	1	4	2.12	8
The availability of play materials allows children to learn language effectively	40	1	4	1.74	3
When play materials are available, learners develop fewer listening skills and fewer new vocabularies	40	1	4	3.04	10
Children can learn words to describe concepts as well as words that allow them to discuss activities and events in the field	40	1	4	1.77	4
A playground, for example, maximizes opportunities for learners to engage in more play with peers	40	1	4	1.97	6
The availability of play materials aids in the development of students' creativity and imagination	40	1	4	1.91	5
Educational toys, for example, can assist students in developing problem-solving skills	40	1	4	1.44	2
Play materials assist students in developing social skills	40	1	4	1.17	1
Valid N (listwise)	39			20.09	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

From table 14, the mean mark of the statements: There are numerous play materials available for children to use while playing is 2.04. The school's play materials are age-appropriate for the student is 2.89. In your school, learners have access to appropriate play materials is 2.12. The availability of play materials allows children to learn language effectively is 1.74. Children can learn words to describe concepts as well as words that allow them to discuss activities and events in the field are 1.77. A playground, for example, maximizes opportunities for learners to engage in more play with peers is 1.97. The availability of play materials aids in the development of students' creativity and imagination is 1.91. Educational toys, for example, can assist students in developing problem-solving skills is 1.44, and Play materials assist students in developing social skills is 1.17. This implies that the respondents agreed and accepted all the above statements which clearly indicate how the availability of play materials influences the development of preschool children language skills.

However, the respondents disagreed and rejected the fact that learners develop less listening skills and low new vocabularies when play materials are available. This is due to the majority's perception that play materials can be a valuable tool for developing language skills, including vocabulary development and listening skills. Teachers can support this development by providing a variety of age-appropriate play materials, encouraging learners to engage in imaginative play, and facilitating conversations and interactions during play activities. They believe teachers can use songs to describe daily routines, periodically adding new verses that include new vocabulary words and this in turns build their listening skills.

Meanwhile, the respondents ranked the statement that play materials enable the learners to develop social skills first, believing that play materials can be a valuable tool for developing social skills in learners which enable pre-schoolers to notice social cues, listen, and take another person's perspective. It also enables children to share ideas and express feelings while negotiating and reaching compromises. Teachers can support this development by providing a variety of age-appropriate play materials, encouraging learners to engage in cooperative and collaborative play activities, and facilitating positive social interactions during play. All of these statements had a minimum of one (Agree) and a maximum of four responses (Strongly Disagree).

4.5 Objective 3: To find out the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills

The objective aims to find out the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills. The views and opinions from the respondents gathered through the issue of questionnaires were analysed quantitatively. Table 15 represent the findings.

Table 15: To find out the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills

Statements	Responses				N	ΣFX	Mean	Remark
	A 1	SA 2	D 3	SD 4				
The teacher must facilitate play and develop rules for appropriate indoor and outdoor play environment	18	12	6	4	40	76	1.90	Accepted
Teachers must model play and introduce children to new play opportunities.	12	23	3	2	40	55	1.38	Accepted
Teachers must ensure that play materials and activities is based on the children's interest, age and skill level	14	18	4	4	40	78	1.95	Accepted
The teachers must ensure the play focus on language and cognitive development of the learner	22	12	4	2	40	66	1.65	Accepted
Teachers must portray less concentration in ensuring that the play material is appropriate and flexible to the children	2	1	27	10	40	125	3.13	Rejected
The teacher must select activities in such a way that creates a language rich environment	21	14	3	2	40	69	1.73	Accepted
The teacher should establish an environment where language exploration and usage is encouraged	17	12	5	6	40	80	2.00	Accepted
Teachers must present the content of the play to the level the learners will understand	26	8	5	1	40	61	1.53	Accepted
The teacher should have a daily schedule, which is essential to the basic structure of each day.	14	10	7	9	40	91	2.28	Accepted
Teachers must not necessarily assist in the provision of materials for play	4	1	20	15	40	126	3.15	Rejected
Total Mean							20.70	
Grand Mean							2.07	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As revealed in table 15, question 21 indicates that the respondents accepted the view that the teacher must facilitate play and develop rules for appropriate indoor and outdoor play environment. They believed that the teacher is the facilitator of play and that he must develop appropriate rules to ensure safe play. The teacher must ensure that the playground is designed in such a way that the teachers can keep an eye on the children from whatever position they are in. by collaborating with children to create appropriate indoor and outdoor play environments. The issue of appropriate material use, as well as age and developmental levels, must be carefully considered in the design and selection of materials. From the same table, question 22 indicates that the respondents accepted the statement that one of the teacher's role is to model play and introduce children to new play opportunities. That is, they believed the teacher must demonstrate the concepts and ideas to make the learning more effective and enable the learners to have a meaningful experience.

Children learn a lot from observing the behaviour of adults around them, and teachers can model appropriate play behaviour by engaging in play themselves. Therefore, modelling play and introducing new play opportunities can help children develop a love of play and learn new skills and ideas. Question 23 indicates that one of the roles is to ensure that play materials and activities is based on the children's interest, age and skill level, and that was accepted and agreed by the respondents as they believed there exist individual differences among the learners, therefore, teachers must ensure to select materials to suit the individual differences of all learners. From the same table, the respondents accepted and agreed that the teachers must ensure the play focus on language and cognitive development of the learner. The majority believed play can be a powerful tool for supporting the language and cognitive development of learners, while also promoting social interaction, creativity, and imagination.

Question 26 indicates that the respondents agreed to that statement that the teacher must select activities in such a way that creates a language rich environment. This safe environment will encourage children to freely use the play materials while also assisting in the development of their oral, listening, and speaking skills. The same table shows that the respondents agreed with the statement that the teacher should create an environment that encourages language exploration and usage. According to question 28, teachers must present the content of the play to the level the learners will understand was agreed by the respondents. They believed learners have different developmental levels, interests, and abilities, and teachers must take these factors into account when planning and presenting play activities. Presenting play content at the appropriate level for learners is essential for engaging and challenging them, promoting learning, and fostering a love of play. The same table showed that the teacher should have a daily schedule, which is necessary for the basic structure of each day, and the respondents accepted and agreed on that. They believed that by doing so, the teacher would become a keen observer of children's characteristics and behaviour.

However, the respondents clearly rejected the statement that teachers must portray less concentration in ensuring that the play material is appropriate and flexible to the children since they perceived the teachers must ensure that the play material is appropriate and flexible to the children as part of their responsibility to create a safe and engaging play environment that supports learning and development. In the same vein, the statement that teachers must not necessarily assist in the provision of materials for play was also rejected by the respondents since they believed teachers play a vital role in providing materials for play, as it is an essential component of creating a conducive and engaging play environment that supports learning and

development. Providing play materials is an essential part of creating a positive and engaging play environment that supports learning and development. Teachers should play an active role in selecting, providing, and organizing play materials to ensure that they are appropriate, safe, and diverse.

4.6 Objective 4: To ascertain how the school policy on play influence the development of preschool children language skills

This objective aims at ascertaining how the school policy on play influences the development of preschool children language skills. The results of the teachers were analysed quantitatively from the questionnaires and table 16 represent the findings.

Table 16: How the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills

Statements	Agree %	Strongly Agree %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %	Total %
Your school recognizes play as a great too to enhance the language skill development for pre-schoolers	36.0	31.5	21.0	11.5	100
Learners are provided with adequate time to play in your school	38.5	39.5	17.0	5.0	100
There is enough space provided for the children to play	42.0	36.0	10.5	11.5	100
Play has been integrated into the ECE curriculum	34.5	41.5	14.5	9.5	100
Pre-school teachers are guided by the use of ECD policy framework	47.5	37.0	9.0	6.5	100
The curriculum and play materials and activities are based on the children's interest, age and skill level	42.5	35.0	14.5	8.0	100
School administration and teachers ensure physical facilities maintenance	10.0	28.5	45.0	16.5	100
There are adequate safety measures put in play by the school to ensure safe play	45.5	33.0	12.5	9.0	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

As revealed in table 16, the statement that your school recognizes play as a great tool to enhance the language skill development for pre-schoolers indicated that 67.5% of the respondents agreed to the statement. Majority believed that play is far more powerful for children and it improves their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being. However, a percentage of 32.5% responded negatively to the statement because to them, play is not always the best approach to ensuring the language skills development of pre-schoolers and it may not lead to learning. High percentage of the respondents, 78.0% agreed to the statement that learners are provided with adequate time to play in their school whilst only 22.0% disagreed. The majority claimed their school normally gives 30 to 60 minutes of outdoor play time per day, which is important to the child's development of social and emotional skills, such as the ability to develop positive relationships with peers.

Closely related is the statement that there is enough space provided for the children to play which was also agreed by 78% of the respondents while 22% rejected the statement. This explains that the statement was accepted and agreed by the respondents. The schools have a playground which is safe for playing. This helps the children to develop coordination, strength and motor skills in the playground. The statement that play has been integrated into the ECE curriculum attracted a high percentage of 76% agreeing to the statement while 24% of the respondents disagreed. This indicates the statement was agreed by the respondents since they agreed that play is recognized as an essential component of early childhood education, and it is now widely accepted that children learn best through play. Pre-school teachers are guided by the use of ECD policy framework was agreed by 84.5% of the respondent since they believed ECD policies provide a framework for early childhood education and development, outlining goals, objectives, and strategies for promoting

the well-being and development of young children. The statement that the curriculum and play materials and activities are based on the children's interest, age and skill level was also accepted by the respondents, representing 77.5% of the total respondents and the statement that there are adequate safety measures put in play by the school to ensure safe play attracted 78.5% of the respondents agreeing to the statement while 21.5% disagreed which implies that the statement was accepted by the respondents. They believed that ensuring the safety of the learners during playtime is a crucial responsibility for any school and indeed their school put in place adequate safety measures to prevent accidents and injuries, and to create a safe and secure environment for children to play and learn.

However, the statement that school administration and teachers ensure physical facilities maintenance attracted only 38.5% agreeing to the statement whilst a high percentage of 61.5% disagreed which implies that the respondents did not accept the statement since the teachers as well as the school management generally overlook physical facilities maintenance in agreement with the statement by Osibo (2019) which states that school managers and teachers constantly use play facilities but ignored facilities maintenance. Repairs take place only when problems arise.

On the other hand, the results of the responses received through open ended questions were also analysed qualitatively. The responses were thematically analysed with a view to finding out the types of play, availability of play materials, the role of teachers on play, and the school policy on play. Play, according to the respondents through the open ended questions is an excellent teaching strategy for pre-schoolers, as it is a natural and effective way for young learners to explore, discover, and learn about the world around them. It was discovered that play improves communication

and social skills, teaches self-awareness, and it supports holistic learning, as it can involve cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and creative aspects of development. Pre-schoolers can learn important skills and concepts through play, such as problem-solving, social skills, language and literacy, math and science, and creative expression. Some respondents also stated that play can be highly motivating for pre-schoolers, as it is fun, engaging, and enjoyable.

Pre-schoolers are more likely to be motivated and engaged in learning when they are having fun and enjoying themselves. The respondents stated that different types of play are available in their schools, such as manipulative play, in which a child uses their hands to manipulate toys and objects to learn how to use them, creative play, which includes playing musical instruments (percussion), painting, singing nursery rhymes and action songs, story-telling, and dancing to the beat, physical play, which helps children with coordination, balance, motor skills, and spending their natural energy, and dramatic play, in which children take on roles and act them out as a way of exploring themselves and their surroundings, among other types. They went on to say that manipulative play is important in the development of language writing and speaking skills, that creative play develops valuable language and communication skills that learners need in everyday life, that physical play increases a child's attention span and capitalizes on verbal, visual, and kinaesthetic learning, and that dramatic play teaches and encourages expressive language and the use of new vocabulary.

According to the respondents, some of the roles teachers play that affect the development of preschool children's language skills include modelling whereby the teachers serve as role models for preschool children, and they can influence language

development by modelling appropriate language use. By using correct grammar, varied vocabulary, and clear enunciation, teachers can provide children with examples of effective language use and help them to develop their own language skills. Another role teachers play is by providing rich language experiences. That is, teachers can provide preschool children with rich language experiences by using storytelling, songs, and rhymes. By exposing children to a variety of language-rich activities, teachers can help to build their vocabulary, develop their understanding of grammar, and encourage their love of language.

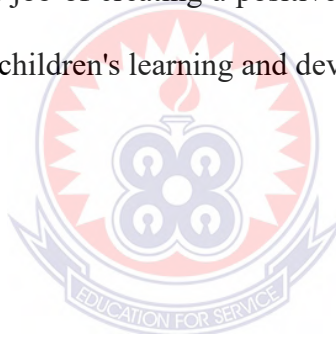
Again, teachers must create a language-rich environment. That is, teachers can create a language-rich environment by providing a print-rich classroom with labels, charts, and books. By exposing preschool children to written language, teachers can help them to develop print awareness, phonological awareness, and reading readiness. Teachers can also create opportunities for language development by encouraging conversations, asking open-ended questions, and providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas. The respondents pointed out that policies that schools may implement to promote language development through play include incorporating language-rich activities such as storytelling, singing, and dramatic play. These activities can help preschool children develop their vocabulary, grammar, and storytelling skills, while also encouraging them to express themselves creatively.

The school can also provide diverse and inclusive play materials such as dolls with different skin tones or books featuring characters from different cultures. By offering materials that reflect the diversity of their students, schools can help children learn about and appreciate different cultures and perspectives, while also promoting language development through exposure to new vocabulary and language structures.

Again the respondents explained that the school must encourage child-directed play. That is the school may implement policies that encourage child-directed play, where children are given the freedom to choose their own play activities and materials. This type of play can encourage children to take risks, explore their interests, and develop their creativity and problem-solving skills, all of which can support language development.

The responses from the learners using the interview guide revealed that they indeed like playing a lot since play is an essential aspect of their learning and development, and it is a natural way for them to explore, discover, and make sense of the world around them. None of the learners who were purposively selected denied the fact that plays is the best experience they could ever have. They explained that sometimes they engage in pretend play which allows them to use their imagination and creativity. They may play games such as house, doctor, or restaurant, where they take on roles and act out different scenarios. They also mostly engage in construction play which involves building and creating with materials such as blocks, Legos, or Play-Doh. According to them, they enjoy this type of play because it allows them to experiment with shapes, sizes, and colours, while also developing their fine motor skills and spatial awareness. Indeed the pre-schoolers through the interview pointed out that they also enjoy playing outside, where they can run, jump, climb, and explore their surroundings. They may play games such as tag, hide and seek, or soccer, which can help them to develop their gross motor skills, coordination, and social skills. The learners explained that, while their teachers allow them to go outside and play every day, the playtime is practically insufficient for them. According to them, there are play materials available at school, but they are not enough to allow them to participate in most play activities which make it challenging for them to engage in a variety of

play experiences. They mentioned a lack of play materials such as dress-up clothes, pretend food to engage in imaginative play and act out different. They also lack art supplies like crayons, markers, paint, and play dough to enhance their creativity and develop fine motor skills. Most learners again pointed out that they lack musical instruments like tambourines, maracas, and xylophones which will allow them to explore sound and rhythm and develop a sense of musicality. The students also claimed that the school has a playground where they can play safely which offer a range of play opportunities that can help the learners to develop physically, socially, and emotionally. Finally, they stated that their teachers always allow them to play and that they have no issues or problems with their play time. This suggests that the teachers are doing a good job of creating a positive and supportive play environment that is contributing to the children's learning and development.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reported, analysed, and discussed the data collected for this study. This chapter, on the other hand, provides a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study was able to investigate how the types of play influence development of preschool children language skills, how the availability of play materials influence the development of preschool children language skills, the role of teachers on play and their influence on the development of preschool children language skills, and how the school policy on play influence the development of preschool children language skills. A descriptive survey approach and secondary data sources were used to design this study. In addition, qualitative, quantitative, and sequential explanatory design approaches were considered of which the Sequential explanatory design method was actually used. The survey was completed by 133 people. The sample size for teachers was 40, while the sample size for students was 93. Closed and open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from the teachers, and the results were analysed qualitatively and quantitatively while an interview session was held for the learners using an interview guide and their responses were analysed qualitatively.

The findings of the study were:

1. The study revealed that play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers
2. The study also portrayed that play materials enable the learners to develop social skills.

3. The study again disclosed that teachers must ensure that play materials and activities is based on the children's interest, age and skill level.
4. Based on the study, the statement that the school administration and teachers ensure physical facilities maintenance was rejected by the respondents.

5.3 Conclusion

The following conclusions are drawn from the study.

The study revealed that play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers. Play is essential for the cognitive growth and development of preschool children (Spencer, 2010). It provides opportunities for children to engage in hands-on, interactive experiences that help them to explore and understand the world around them. Through play, pre-schoolers can develop a range of cognitive skills, such as problem-solving, creativity, as well as providing opportunities for pre-schoolers to practice their language and communication skills, among others. They might engage in conversations with peers, describe what they are doing, or use language to negotiate and problem-solve which support their cognitive growth and development and to develop the cognitive skills they need to succeed in school and beyond.

Play materials help students develop social skills was accepted by the respondents. This portrays that play materials can help preschool children develop important social skills. When children engage in play, they have opportunities to interact with others, take turns, share materials, negotiate, and cooperate. Through these interactions, children can develop a range of social skills, such as communication, social interaction, cooperation, and promoting problem-solving skills by providing opportunities for children to work together to overcome challenges and obstacles.

Teachers must ensure that play materials and activities are appropriate for the children's age, interests, and skill level. This will practically assist the learners in achieving the best results and developing their language skills. Play materials and activities that are not appropriate for a child's developmental level may not be engaging or may be too challenging, leading to frustration and disinterest. When play is based on the learner's interest, age, and skill level, it practically helps to improve the learners' cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being.

The respondents rejected that school administration and teachers ensure physical facility maintenance. The upkeep of physical facilities contributes to the continued use of those play materials. However, the school administration and teachers are only concerned with the use of these facilities, ignoring repairs and effective maintenance. Unfortunately, the school administration and teachers only pay attention to physical facility maintenance when there is a problem and the facility is no longer usable.

5.4 Recommendation

To enable preschool learners to develop cognitive skills, it is recommended that the school administration and teachers provide opportunities for open-ended play to encourage the learners to use their imagination and creativity, and supports their cognitive growth by allowing them to problem-solve and explore different possibilities. Teachers must incorporate hands-on learning activities such as science experiments and cooking to support cognitive growth by allowing children to explore concepts in a concrete way.

To allow pre-schoolers to solve problems and develop social skills, the school must provide age-appropriate play materials. Children can be encouraged to play with others, share, and take turns by using materials. Toys and materials that encourage

preschool children to move and promote physical development are also required. Teachers should be encouraged to participate actively in the planning and organization of play activities. This ensures that preschool children have access to a diverse range of play materials that are appropriate for their age, interest, and skill level.

Preschool teachers must ensure that play materials and activities are appropriate for the children's age and skill level. The teachers must help to promote children's development in a variety of areas, including cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development. For example, providing age-appropriate puzzles, building blocks, and art materials can help to develop children's cognitive skills, while providing opportunities for outdoor play can promote physical development. In addition, teachers must ensure play materials and activities are inclusive and reflect the diversity of the children in the classroom. They should strive to provide a range of materials and activities that are culturally responsive and inclusive, promoting children's understanding and appreciation of diversity. Teachers must consult with colleagues and experts to ensure that play materials and activities are appropriate and inclusive and must involve the learners in the process of selecting play materials.

To ensure physical facility maintenance, the school administration and teachers must develop a maintenance plan for regular maintenance and repairs of the physical facilities, including schedules for inspections and repairs, allocate sufficient resources such as budget, staff, and materials, to carry out maintenance and repairs, prioritize safety in all maintenance and repair activities, and ensure that all safety standards and regulations are met and must involve the school community including students, staff,

and parents, in the maintenance and repair process. This can include forming a maintenance committee or task force.

It is suggested that a cross-cultural study that examines whether the relationship between play and language development is consistent across different cultures be conducted in future. This could help researchers determine whether play is a universal tool for language development or whether there are cultural differences in how play affects language development. Comparative study to examine whether certain types of play are more beneficial for language development than others is also highly encouraged. For example, researchers could compare the language development of pre-schoolers who engage in structured play (e.g., following rules, specific tasks) versus unstructured play (e.g., free play, imaginative play).



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

USING PLAY AS A TEACHING STRATEGY FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. It is related to a study titled "using play as a teaching strategy for pre-schoolers". This questionnaire's information will only be used for academic research purposes. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire because your identity will not be revealed in any way in the report. Thank you.

SECTION A: BACKGROUD INFORMATION ON TEACHERS

Tick [] the boxes that best explain your answer.

1. Gender?

Male []

Female []

2. Age

18-40 years []

41-50 years []

51 years and above []

3. Minimum Academic Qualification

Diploma []

First Degree []

Post Graduate []

Other.....

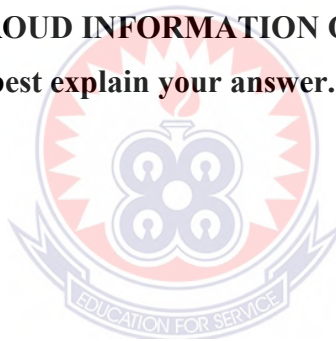
4. Work Experience

Below 4 Years []

4-10 years []

Above 10 years []

Specific



SECTION B: THE TYPES OF PLAY

Please tick [] the appropriate column to show either agreement or disagreement to the statement

No.	STATEMENTS	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	At your school, there are various types of play.				
2.	Language skill development of learners can be enhanced by manipulative play				
3	Play enhances the development of gross motor skills of pre-schoolers.				
4.	Learners are able to practice the language skills they learn through play.				
5.	Creative play is not the best way to improve one's speaking, reading, and writing abilities.				
6.	The children learn to interact and express themselves through play.				
7.	Play helps in the cognitive growth of pre-schoolers				
8.	Physical play improves listening and speaking abilities.				
9.	Dramatic play fosters the development of all language, reading, and writing skills.				
10.	Students can use constructive play to experiment with drawing, music, and building things.				

SECTION C: THE AVAILABILITY OF PLAY MATERIALS

Please tick [] the appropriate column to show either agreement or disagreement to the statement

No.	STATEMENTS	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11.	There are numerous play materials available for children to use while playing.				
12.	The school's play materials are age-appropriate for the students.				
13.	In your school, learners have access to appropriate play materials.				
14.	The availability of play materials allows children to learn language effectively.				
15.	When play materials are available, learners develop fewer listening skills and fewer new vocabularies.				
16.	Children can learn words to describe concepts as well as words that allow them to discuss activities and events in the field.				
17.	A playground, for example, maximizes opportunities for learners to engage in more play with peers.				
18.	The availability of play materials aids in the development of students' creativity and imagination.				
19.	Educational toys, for example, can assist students in developing problem-solving skills.				
20.	Play materials assist students in developing social skills.				

SECTION D: THE ROLE OF TEACHERS ON PLAY

Please tick [✓] the appropriate column to show either agreement or disagreement to the statement

No.	Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21.	The teacher must facilitate play and develop rules for appropriate indoor and outdoor play environment				
22.	Teachers must model play and introduce children to new play opportunities.				
23.	Teachers must ensure that play materials and activities is based on the children's interest, age and skill level				
24.	The teachers must ensure the play focus on language and cognitive development of the learner				
25	Teachers must portray less concentration in ensuring that the play material is appropriate and flexible to the children				
26	The teacher must select activities in such a way that creates a language rich environment				
27	The teacher should establish an environment where language exploration and usage is encouraged				
28.	Teachers must present the content of the play to the level the learners will understand				
29.	The teacher should have a daily schedule, which is essential to the basic structure of each day.				
30	Teachers must not necessarily assist in the provision of materials for play				

SECTION E: THE SCHOOL POLICY ON PLAY

Please tick [] the appropriate column to show either agreement or disagreement to the statement

No.	Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31.	Your school recognizes play as a great too to enhance the language skill development for pre-schoolers				
32.	Learners are provided with adequate time to play in your school				
33.	There is enough space provided for the children to play				
34.	Play has been integrated into the ECE curriculum				
35.	Pre-school teachers are guided by the use of ECD policy framework				
36.	The curriculum and play materials and activities are based on the children's interest, age and skill level				
37	School administration and teachers ensure physical facilities maintenance				
38.	There are adequate safety measures put in play by the school to ensure safe play				

SECTION F

Please provide short answers to the questions below

1. Is play a good teaching strategy for pre-schoolers? If you agree or disagree, state the reasons.

.....
.....
.....

2. List any four types of play available in your school

- i.....
- ii.....
- iii.....
- iv.....

3. Briefly explain how any two of the above listed types influence pre-schoolers' language skill development

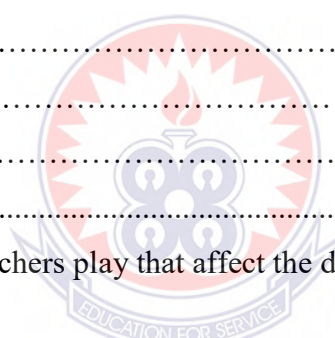
i.....
.....
ii.....
.....

4. Mention three roles teachers play that affect the development of preschool children language skills.

- i.....
- ii.....
- iii.....

5. Point out two policies you think your school has implemented on play that influence the development of preschool children language skills

.....
.....



APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

USING PLAY AS A TEACHING STRATEGY FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. It is related to a study titled "using play as a teaching strategy for pre-schoolers". This questionnaire's information will only be used for academic research purposes. Please do not write your name on this questionnaire because your identity will not be revealed in any way in the report.

Thank you.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON LEARNERS

Tick [] the boxes that best explain your answer.

1. Gender?

Male []

Female []

2. Age

1-3 years []

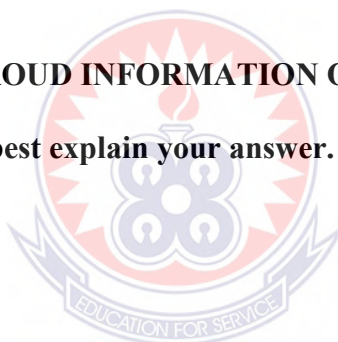
4 years above []

3. What Class?

Nursery []

KG1 []

KG2 []



SECTION B: GIVE APPROPRIATE RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.

1. Do you enjoy playing?

Yes []

No []

2. If NO, explain why you dislike playing

.....
.....

3. Which games do you play most?

.....
.....

4. Do you have enough time to play?

Yes []

No []

5. Do you have enough play materials to play with?

Yes []

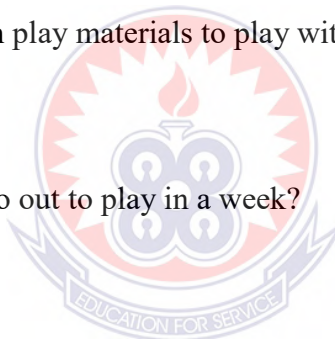
No []

6. How often do you go out to play in a week?

a. Once

b. Twice

c. Everyday



7. Do you have playground in the school?

Yes []

No []

8. If YES, is the playground safe for playing?

Yes []

No []

9. Do you ever stay in class when you should be playing outside?

Yes []

No []

10. If YES, in what instances does this occur?

.....
.....