

# Management of Teaching Experience at School Level and Linkage with Knowledge Perceptions in Basic Language Constructs among Early Childhood Education Pre-Service Teachers

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## Abstract

*This study is an establishment of how policy on management of teaching experience at school level impacts on early childhood education pre-service teacher's knowledge levels in basic language constructs. Teaching experience exposes pre-service teachers to their first formative experiences to their teaching careers, hence the need to have mentors who know their roles in this pertinent process. During their training, teachers are exposed to pedagogical content knowledge and content knowledge. The research took a survey approach among fourth year early childhood pre-service teachers. The cohort had 24 pre-service teachers and their experiences were solicited. The students were grouped into groups of three depending on the type of school they had undertaken their teaching experiences. These groups were those who went to public, private and grant aided in particular catholic schools. The findings of the study showed that pre-service teacher's pedagogical practices in teaching of basic language constructs can be improved if there is focused coordination between teacher training colleges and early childhood education centers. In schools mentors should be well endowed with what is expected, and they should be models to the trainee teachers and provide guidance. Based on the content to be taught, pre-service teachers should be encouraged to be reflective and more importantly thrive on peer networks and school communities.*

**Key words:** *Teaching Experience, Early childhood, Language teacher training*

## Background and Context

### Literature, theory and Problem

The importance of teachers and teacher training has substantially increased in the past decade owing to the international focus as reflected in ratifications like Educating Our Future (EFA) goals, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) which are meant to foster quality education and generally improved quality of life for children. The other important realisation is the significance of well-trained teachers in the provision of quality education and that teachers are the most important resource in provision of education. According to Acedo (2012), policy makers are trying to pursue long term goals were teachers will have a Bachelor's degree as a minimum qualification. This policy direction will provide endless opportunities for classroom quality and increase children's academic gains as no education system can rise above the level of its teachers. The highest educational investment is at the early age because it produces stable and better benefits than any investment at other education levels, hence the importance of Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers (Masaiti, Njobvu and Kakupa, 2018).

Ogah (2007), indicates that ‘the teacher is without controversy, the fulcrum upon which the planned curriculum implementation revolves’. Additionally, Mulenga and Mwanza (2019:37) clearly explain that ‘teachers are familiar with the classroom situations, their role is deemed central for discovering the gaps and bringing about change and improvement’. The quality of teacher preparation at Early Childhood Education (ECE) has the capacity to influence learning outcomes at primary school as well as the secondary level, so if ECE teachers are properly trained and do their duties professionally, the products of ECE schools will be of high quality. The reverse in this case, is poor preparation of teachers whose effects will be transferred step by step to the highest level. The pre-school years are filled with rich possibilities for language development and it is the foundation for continued literacy learning. Sadly, not all children are provided with the same opportunities for literacy development during the early year (Ogan, 2007).

ECE teachers are placed in a unique position to provide opportunities in providing a foundation for fundamental skills and knowledge needed for the transition into the first years of formal schooling where reading and writing are necessary for children. As indicated by Cunningham *et al.*, 2009; Acedo, 2012; Okeke, 2012 ECE teachers have the potential to make an invaluable contribution to the literacy development of children. It is this important responsibility that teacher educators have that gives them a huge task of ensuring that pre-service teachers receive the necessary training with relevant skills. These different aspects of training are cardinal for teacher competence that affects learners’ progress. In Zambia, the language policy encourages the use of familiar languages in the formative learning experiences. This has a bearing on teacher training and pedagogical approaches. Therefore, this research tries to establish what practices can be implemented in order to enhance pre-service pedagogical skills during teaching experience. This acknowledgement has influenced policy implementation discourses on children’s literacy outcomes and teacher preparation with a focus on professional knowledge. The need to pay attention to these important variables arises due to the potential they have in determining future academic achievement. Zambia’s educational policies (1977, 1992 and 1996) have committed themselves to providing quality teacher training through provision of relevant skills as provided for by the national curriculum. Teacher preparation is the foundation upon which successful educational institutions at all levels hinge hence special interest should be developed in training teachers who solidify this bedrock. Scholars have noted that there has been increased awareness on the intricate relationship between early literacy and later academic success, very little attention has been directed towards understanding the knowledge base of ECE pre-service teachers. Realising policy statements and realities of teacher training have been a daunting task due to the complexities of implementation and the demands placed on teachers. The biggest puzzle has been how and who determines what teachers need to know, under what circumstances, and how they need to know it to be masterful and responsive to

ECE classrooms. Answers to these important questions will equip policymakers with the necessary information pertaining to the content knowledge teachers need to acquire and how they can apply it to boost student achievement.

### **Theoretical Assumptions**

In a teacher education era of policy, policy practice is observed at different levels such as the classroom and training institutions. In order to understand the teacher training and teaching and learning relationship that exists between education policy, teacher training institutions and schools, this study took into consideration the institutional theory perspective (Meyer, 1977) which analyses how local actions are influenced by organisational structures from wider environments. Dubois (2014) quoting Meyer (1977), alludes to the fact that the macro levels tend to contain the micro levels, yet the micro levels can influence the macro levels. Within each level are structures and actions that affect each other and in the process, change occurs (Wiseman and Baker, 2006). The institutional theory adopts an idea of a world culture of education which brings out commonalities in curriculum and educational practices, Davies and Aurini (2006) in Dubois(2014). As much as local policies interact with the legitimate blueprint of curricular, implementation of national policy is not homogenous and takes a complex interaction of groups. In this study, institutional theory enlightened us on how macro (national), meso (university) and micro (classroom) policy structures influences pre-service teachers knowledge and practice. The premise is that, at the macro level, policy discourse for beginning teacher competencies influences curriculum documents and teacher education institutions at the meso level, and ultimately classroom policies at the micro level. Within this thread are similar discourses stating what it is pre-service teachers are expected to know and do.

Bjorn (2015), endears researchers' interest in teachers' knowledge relevant to early reading acquisition and instruction in the past twenty years. A significant gap in teacher education is the lack of voice of the pre-service teacher Jegede *et al.* (2000). In Zambia, research has focused on teacher training in relation to primary and secondary levels and curriculum implementation (Mulenga and Luangala, 2015; Manchishi and Masaiti, 2011; Manchishi and Mwanza, 2013). As much as teacher education details a number of learning theory models and methods of knowledge acquisition, the importance of pedagogical practice, the development of professional values and perceptions, rarely is the pre-service teachers' perspective sought, (Bransford et al, 2000; Butler, 1992; Duffy, 2009; Sheridan, 2011; Solomon et al, 2004).

It is pertinent for policymakers and teacher educators to understand how the teaching experience at school level impacts on knowledge perceptions of ECE pre-service teachers. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to explore how pre-service teachers perceive themselves in basic language constructs relevant for literacy acquisition, which included phonics, phonology, morphology and

phonemic knowledge. The study further went on to investigate how the pre-service teachers' perceptions were impacted by the management of teaching experience at school level.

### **Literature on Literacy Levels among Zambian Children**

According to Maynard, 2007; Williams, 1998; and Banda, 2012, reading is a skill which every child must develop at a very early age reason being that it equips them with the ability to understand the world and it is an important determiner for future succession in various aspects of school. Medium of instruction policies have had to swing between approval of first language and English as the official language. This has had pedagogical consequences. A child who is able to read is advantaged when it comes to academic performance. Sadly, Zambian children grapple with poor reading skills in schools. This situation has a historical grounding. During the colonial years, policy dictated that in the early grades, the mother tongue be used for two years then a dominant vernacular introduced at standard three, then English was introduced at standard five (Banda, 2012, Banda and Simwinga, 2018). After independence, following recommendations from a review conducted by UNESCO, English was adopted as the medium of instruction UNESCO (1964:105). Realisation of this policy direction led to the New Zambia Primary Course which required teachers to be imbued with the appropriate skills in language teaching. Between 1965 and 1995, efforts were made to reverse this in the 1977 Educational Reforms and 1992 Focus on Learning. In 1977, the multilingual environment prevailing in Zambia saw English being favoured with the policy allowing teachers to explain concepts in seven official languages. In 1992, it was agreed that from grades 1-4, the major Zambian languages would be used. This was at a point when lapses in reading became more pronounced among Zambian learners UNESCO (2004). Examining findings from a research conducted by Overseas Development Administration (1993) in Zambian schools in both English and Zambian languages at grades 3,4 and 6, pupils could not read texts two levels below their own grade level. Comparatively in Malawi, where children were taught in Chichewa from grades 1-4, there reading was of acceptable standards. In 1995, the Ministry of Education in conjunction with Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) examined reading capacities among grade 6 children and only 25 per cent could read at defined minimum levels and only 3 per cent could read at defined levels.

### **Methodology and Design**

The research design was a sequential explanatory mixed method. It followed a case study design, gathering data from a sequential development of both quantitative and qualitative data. This design was favoured due to its ability to gain insight on knowledge levels and self-perception of the pre-service teachers. It was a variant of an explanatory design coupled with participant selection model, which allowed

the researcher to generate quantitative information later used to purposively select the participants to provide the qualitative data (Creswell and Plano Clark: 2007).

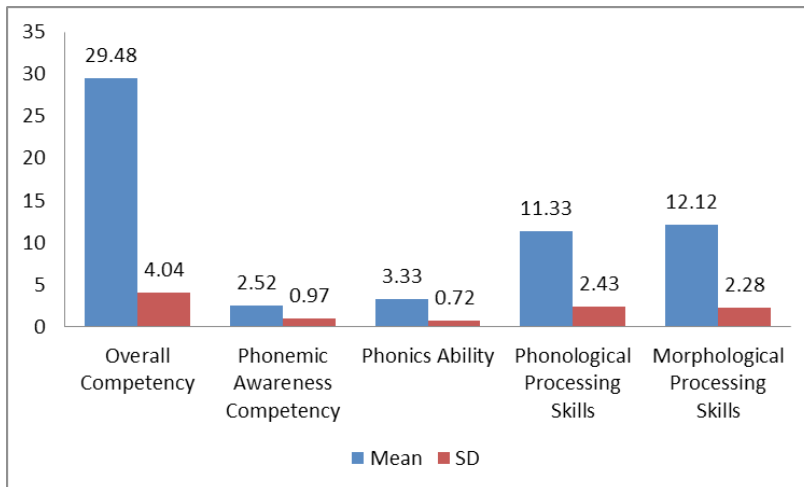
The case study allowed for the ‘exploration of a bounded system or case through a detailed in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context’ (Creswell, 1998:61). In addition, he pointed out that ‘bounded systems’ are bounded by time and place, and identifies a case as a programme, event or activity or individual. Within the teacher education environment at Chalimbana University, the ECE degree programme was identified and qualified to be a bounded programme to be investigated. The participants were forty-two pre-service trainee teachers in the early childhood department. There were two groups comprising of 20 from the second-year group and twenty-two were third year students. All the students had undertaken their trainee teaching school experience awarding them an opportunity to link the theoretical expertise into practice.

The first set of data collected was through surveys which solicited for student teachers’ self perception and knowledge of basic language constructs. The second part consisted of FGDs and individual interviews were conducted in the second term after the students came from their field experience

## **Results**

The results are presented in both quantitative and qualitative forms as can be seen from Table 1 which captured the overall scores for competency in all the language constructs which included phonemic awareness, phonics ability, phonological processing skills and morphological processing skills and the highest score was 37.00 with 19.00 as the lowest. The mean score was 29.4 with a standard deviation of 4.04. Phonemic awareness had the lowest mean with morphological processing skills with the highest mean.

In order to get a comprehensive picture about the participants’ experiences, the pre-service teachers were grouped according to the type of school they had undertaken their practicum from. This was necessitated by the observed commonalities especially among those from the same types of school. The findings were discussed using these identified groups which were public schools, grant-aided (Catholic Schools) and private schools.



**Figure 1: Overall Competency against the four language skills**

The four language skills assessed included phonology, phonemics, phonics and morphology and against the four, phonics had the lowest Standard Deviation of .72 signifying difficulties for the pre-service teachers which were confirmed in the post interviews conducted.

**Table 1: Overall competency against the four language skills**

	Max	Mean	SD
Overall Competency	37.00	29.4762	4.04
Phonemic Awareness Competency	6.00	2.5238	.97
Phonics Ability	4.00	3.3333	.72
Phonological Processing Skills	16.00	11.3333	2.43
Morphological Processing Skills	16.00	12.1190	2.28

### **Pre-service teachers' perceptions on basic language construct**

The pre-service teachers, as observed from the descriptive statistics, perceived themselves highly. The revelations pointed to the fact that 90 per cent highly rated themselves. In the FGDs conducted after their Teaching Experience (TE), the students contact with reality made them reassess themselves. During the post TE discussions, the students stated that they perceived themselves differently in terms of perceptions on basic language constructs. The Responses from Teachers who went to Public Schools and the pre-service teachers had the following to say:

- A1 : *I have always had challenges distinguishing sounds ‘p’ and ‘b’ in the English language and it proved to be difficult to get help from the in-service teacher I served under and realized that she also had the same difficulty”*
- A2: *‘The in-service teacher directed me to teach letters and not sounds, so I had difficulties in identifying the differences”*
- A3: *‘In order to engage with the children I had to do a lot of code-switching and in the process my problem of distinguishing the two sounds ‘b’ ‘ba’ and ‘c’ ‘chi’ was real”.*
- A4: *‘I only knew a few sounds, but in due course I learnt a lot more as well as place of Articulation”*
- A5: *‘in our time we never learnt about sounds until we reached grade five, so am still learning and it has not been an easy task”*

Pre-service teachers, who attended public schools, faced a lot of challenges as was seen from their verbatim. The teaching experience was not coordinated as required and there was little or no mentoring thereby creating a situation where the pre-service teachers had difficulties in linking their theoretical knowledge to experience. This made it difficult for them to consolidate their theory with practice.

### **Responses from Pre-Service Teachers at Private Schools**

Teachers who attended private schools had arrays of experiences as can be seen from the verbatim below:

- B1: *‘The class teacher was not helpful, and when planning for lessons she used weekly forecasts and schemes of work. She never used lesson plans and in my state of confusion, when I asked for help, she would tell me that ‘you are very young, you should have started with a certificate programme and not a degree.’*
- B2: *‘The class teacher was not very helpful and she didn’t write any lesson plans. She did not use the integrated lesson plan and never used any recommended curriculum. She said she had enough experience.’*
- B3: *‘I was at a trust school and the classroom teacher was very hostile. She told me never to use any familiar language and I noticed that some children had problems understanding. So, in her absence, I would use the familiar language in order to help the children.’*
- B4: *‘Teaching language was complicated because, the teacher was more intent on teaching the vowels and not the alphabet and there were few learning corners. The biggest challenge came in with the medium of instruction, most children conversed in Nyanja and I was encouraged to teach and prepare*

*my lesson plans in the local language. I faced a number of challenges especially that I didn't know the language enough to teach the phonics or phonological awareness.'*

B5: *'I just couldn't teach or organise any activities for children in language in Tonga. Worse still not even prepare a lesson plan. I had problems with the local language that I felt so inadequate. My self perception on basic language constructs was negatively affected. The situation was made worse because the classroom teacher only had a certificate qualification therefore, she provided little guidance.'*

### **Responses from teachers who went to grant aided schools**

The following verbatim were recorded from pre-service teachers who went to grant aided schools:

C1: *The classroom experience different from the peer teaching undertaken thereby making me have a more realistic measure the way I perceived my knowledge levels, the school had strong supervisory systems which I benefited from. I had problems with distinguishing 'p' and 'b' and to help in house workshops were organized'*

C2: *"I initially perceived myself highly in terms of knowledge levels but challenges set in at classroom level. The classroom teacher was able to guide me in areas where I had problems"*

C3: *'Language teaching was challenging for me and the experience was different from peer teaching. My classroom teacher monitored all my work and took time to discuss my progress with other colleagues in the department and at such meetings I was able to get help. My initial self-perception just fell off.'*

### **Discussion**

The issue of language was a factor when pre-service teachers were on their TE and it also affected their self-perception on basic language constructs. These experiences echo sentiments expressed by Renzaglia *et al.* (1997) who pointed out how influential certain aspects of TE are to the point of how pre-service teachers perceive themselves and their training. They further pointed out that cooperating teachers who had trained in supervision were found to provide more feedback to the students participating in their classrooms than the untrained teachers.

The four language skills assessed included phonology, phonemics, phonics and morphology. The responses were grouped and the first were the pre-service teachers who attended public schools as the majority and the least guided found the teaching of phonics to be very challenging. The average number of children in their classes ranged between twenty-two and ninety-six as the biggest class recorded. The age



range was four to seven years old, and they were all placed in one class due to lack of space. This was further compounded by the issue of language where they were expected to use the familiar language and with very large classes, pre-service teachers had challenges in identifying the appropriate language to use. They had challenges in differentiating some of the sounds as pointed out by pre-teachers who had undertaken their Teaching Practice (TP) at public schools. Some teachers alluded their failure to grasp the art of teaching letter sound correspondences to their poor foundation. The majority of pre-service teachers who undertook their practicum in public schools received minimal guidance and were expected to conduct much of the teaching activities. In cases where they took time to consult, some responses were negative hence making it difficult to deal with some of the challenges faced in teaching phonics. There were no adequate structures to support the transit from theoretical aspects to practice hence making it difficult to sustain their initial knowledge perception on basic language constructs.

The second group consisted of pre-service teachers, who undertook their Teaching Experience (TE) in grant-aided schools run by the Catholics, had more fulfilling experiences in terms of guidance. The average class size ranged between twenty and thirty, with two teachers per class to coordinate the teaching activities. In the first weeks of reporting for their TE, the pre-service teachers were oriented through all the ECE classes which ranged from baby class to reception. They were oriented on how to write lesson plans and every time they had lessons the sister took time to observe them. The guidance was conducted until completion of the practicum. The learning environment created for the teacher proved to be helpful in the teaching of phonics to children more especially that they were encouraged to use “letter land”. This involved the use of letter land characters where children are taught how to say names for the correct letter sound. They introduced children to the 44-letter land phonics in the English language and were encouraged to prepare concrete object and play related to the language objective of the lesson.

### **Knowledge on Basic Language Constructs**

The pre-service teachers acknowledged the importance of the ECE degree programme and emphasised its importance in improving future academic pursuits of Zambian children. The programme was timely especially that it came at a time when ECE provision had expanded due to its roll out in public schools. The majority of the pre-service teachers perceived themselves highly in terms of knowledge in basic language constructs and ability to relate the university curriculum content to school level curriculum. This was important for the teachers as other scholars such as Mwimba and Mulenga (2019:160) have rightly observed that ‘the negative attitudes held by teachers about changes in the curriculum may negatively affect the use of instructional strategies which may in turn compromise the quality of teaching and learners’ academic performance in literacy’. They had so much confidence in their ability to teach, boosted by the drills of peer teaching lessons

they had as part of their coursework. In the questionnaires administered before they went for their teaching experience, the pre-service teachers rated themselves very highly in all the areas of basic language constructs apart from phonics which had the standard deviation. During the post TE interviews conducted, their perception on knowledge of basic language constructs was different. Actual classroom experience with children proved to be more challenging unlike peer teaching where they were surrounded by familiar people hence making them confident in knowledge perception.

In order to help the pre-service teachers deal with some of the challenges encountered in teaching language constructs such as phonics, workshops were held and they were encouraged to make charts for children. The pre-service teachers, who undertook their TE in a well managed environment, had minimal challenges in teaching basic language constructs and their individual knowledge perception was consolidated and boosted due to the adequate guidance received. The institution was able to acknowledge their need to build on their learning experiences as students and the importance of relating their theoretical knowledge base into practice.

The third group of pre-service teachers consisted of those who had undertaken their TE from privately owned schools. The average number of children in the classes ranged between twenty-one to thirty-five as the largest. The majority of pre-service teachers who were placed in private schools had a spectra of experiences due to diversity in the types of educational services provided and to a large extent the area in which the school was located played a part in the teaching and learning expectations of the administrators. Those in low density areas placed a high bar in terms of demands on teaching. The pre-service teachers were expected to perform and received guidance from the teacher but with little flexibility from the in-service teacher in terms of accommodating the knowledge as learnt from the university. This made it difficult for the pre-service teacher to uphold what they had learnt and to blend with what they were expected to learn from their practical experience. Even in cases where children with difficulties in learning in English language were identified, the in-service teacher was denied efforts to relate with children in the familiar language. She stated that “ the in-service teacher castigated me for using Nyanja in class as it was not allowed in the school”. Such an environment made it very difficult to hold on to the initial high perception on knowledge in basic language concepts.

### **Guidance during Teaching Experience**

The three groups of pre-service teachers perceived experiences during the TE had an undeniable impact on their perceptions on knowledge about basic language constructs. The type of guidance received were observed on a continuum. The continuum was derived from the experiences of the three groups of pre-service teachers who were classified. These groups were formed during the second part of data collection when the FGDs were conducted in groups based on the kind of

school one conducted their TE. The three groups were classified under the public, private and grant aided schools.

It was identified that the group which received the most guidance performed very well when it came to curriculum implementation and were able to relate the theoretical concepts to practice in the classroom. This was also captured during the post FGDs conducted. Based on the discussions conducted with the groups, it was established that the level of guidance a pre-service teacher received during their TE had a direct bearing on how they perceived themselves in terms of knowledge in basic language constructs. According to the findings, the pre-service teachers who went to the grant aided schools, run by the Catholics, rated highly in the post discussions and were constant with the rating conducted during the initial survey. They rated themselves highly and stated that the challenges encountered during their initial interactions with their classes were dealt with very well because they were able to consult and had a forum where, they could bring out challenges. Among all the teachers at ECE level, these professional interactions created a unity of purpose with the pre-service teachers being the greatest beneficiaries. The guidance that was provided ranged from lessons on how to write lesson plans, schemes of work and how to engage with pupils in a meaningful manner. This coordinated guidance they received instilled the level of confidence in the pre-service teachers and they were able to rate themselves highly in terms of knowledge even in the midst of challenges with teaching of phonics.

The pre-service teachers posted to private schools received a measure of guidance in the midst of uncoordinated curriculum content. The students had difficulties in engaging with the class teachers due to the high levels of rigidity. The guidance they received was in the form of directives. There was little or very little room to fully engage with the in-service teacher. This made the pre-service teachers feel inadequate in the way they perceived themselves in terms of knowledge in basic language constructs. The pre-service teachers had problems teaching and this compounded the challenges faced during the teaching of phonics. The poor guidance was attributed to the tendency of employing poorly qualified ECE teachers in private schools who did not understand and appreciate the significance of TE for pre-service teachers. The in-service teachers didn't have a comprehensive understanding of what their role was in the guiding of the pre-service teachers.

The pre-service teachers had no relief points, where they could consult within the schools and since they were expected to be in the know-how, it was difficult to know if they were doing the right thing. The little guide they got came from their peers through the networks they had created. The students would consult one another and detail their experiences through social media and exchanged notes on aspects of the TE. In so doing, they were able to get help on how to teach phonics. The poor guidance from the in-service teachers, compromised their confidence and brought in the aspect of doubt when it came to drawing the line between theory and practice thereby forfeiting the whole essence of TE.

The final group consisted of the pre-service teachers who had been sent to public schools and apparently identified as the majority. Their experiences ranged across bad and good. On the aspect of guidance, most of them reported positively, and this came from the deputy head teachers and senior teachers. As for the teachers, they were open for consultation and were ready to ride on new and relevant practices that the pre-service teachers had come with. It was noticed that the in-service teachers managing ECE classes in public schools had primary teaching diploma thereby seeing the need to engage and learn from their pre-service counterparts who were training in ECE. On another front, most of the classes in public schools proved to be very big in the range of twenty-two to ninety-six pupils, hence creating a need for an extra hand. The coming of pre-service teachers provided this opportunity. The in-service teachers had a willingness to help but due to lack of knowledge on children's learning about basic language concepts they left much to the pre-service teachers. This scenario created a vacuum for the pre-service teachers thereby turning to their peers for guidance.

These experiences identified with the post perceptions and discussions on basic language constructs because some pre-service teachers were able to take advantage of the poor understanding of in-service teachers on needs of language learning for children. They took charge of the classes and consulted with their friends through social media, based on what they learnt and what was happening in the different schools, they managed the TE. For some, the poor guidance they received from the in-service teachers posed as a deterrent to a meaningful TE. Their confidence in teaching language constructs was affected. They felt poorly prepared with their knowledge level such that during the post discussions, they pointed out that the TE left them even more confused. It is for this reason that Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019:36) stressed that 'teachers should be the focus in any curriculum reform as they play a critical role in the effective implementation of the curriculum'.

### **Implications**

The poor supervision at the micro level, as experienced in public schools and private schools, had a bearing on the low perception observed among pre-service teachers and the low score for phonics in the statistical data was observed at the classroom level. The mentors in most cases were unable to provide guidance further worsening the situation for the students. It is for this reason that head teachers must take a lot of interest about happenings in the classroom when pre-service teachers are undertaking their teaching experience. The schools must make it a point that those who mentor and guide the pre-service students are experienced and have a close partnerships with the university's guidelines must be provided.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The findings of the research suggest that perception on basic language constructs does not affect the pre-service teacher's performance in the classroom. Perception

on basic language constructs is affected by the level of supervision pre-service teachers get during their teaching experiences. At university, during their peer teaching exercises the majority of students rated themselves highly but this changed after their teaching experience, they became more realistic and pointed out areas that needed more attention as they were undertaking their training. Those who were adequately supervised by knowledgeable and experienced mentors were able to rate themselves highly, unlike those who did not get the required guidance.

Teaching experience is a defining period for trainee teachers as it bridges the theoretical aspects of their training with practice as well as their perception on basic language constructs. It is, therefore, paramount that the relevant guidance is provided at school level by mentors who are knowledgeable and know their role in the process of making a teacher become competent. At school level, pre-service teachers must be provided with all the necessary support in order for them to appreciate their classroom training.

Therefore, it is recommended that strong links must be propagated so that proper guidelines are provided for mentors and relevant feedback must be provided by the mentors at school level as this will help college lecturers to strengthen and focus on the necessary skills required by pre-service teachers in basic language constructs. In fostering these strong linkages, it is necessary that mentors are orientated on their roles.

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