

Effectiveness of Teachers' Adherence to English Language Guidebooks on the Development of Pupils' Writing Skills

Gladness Haule

Ruaha Catholic University, Iringa- Tanzania

Email: gladnesshaule84@gmail.com

And

Makungu Bulayi

Ruaha Catholic University, Iringa- Tanzania

Email: bscit113@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper examines the effectiveness of teachers' adherence to English language guidebooks on the development of pupils' writing skills. This study employed a qualitative approach using a cross-sectional research design. The data were collected from fifteen English language teachers at public primary schools in Iringa Municipality who were purposively selected. Data collection methods included classroom observations, structured interviews, and documentary reviews. Thematic analysis was used to identify key themes within the data, revealing insights into how guidebook adherence influenced teaching practices and writing skills. The study findings revealed that English language teachers effectively used guidebooks for writing schemes of work, lesson plans, and teaching writing skills. Teachers consistently adhered to the recommended guidebooks, incorporating key writing skills such as spelling, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The study recommends implementing structured training sessions to enhance teachers' understanding of English language guidebooks and introducing feedback mechanisms to help teachers gather student input on writing instruction.

Keywords: English, adherence, language, guidebooks, writing, skills, development

1.0 Introduction

A guidebook is a comprehensive instructional tool designed to provide teachers with structured lesson plans, teaching strategies, and assessment methods to help deliver content effectively and ensure that students achieve learning objectives (Mogashoa, 2021). In English language instruction, adherence to these guidebooks is crucial for ensuring consistency in teaching practices and fostering the development of pupils' writing skills, which is an essential component of overall language proficiency (Hulukati& Rahim, 2018).

According to Adeyemi (2022), teachers who closely follow structured guidebooks or curriculum frameworks tend to produce more consistent and measurable learning outcomes among students.

These frameworks provide a clear pathway for instruction, ensuring that all necessary topics are covered in a logical and progressive order. In language education, where skill development is cumulative, the importance of consistent adherence to these guidebooks cannot be overstated (Adejumo, 2022). As Jones (2018) highlights, by following these curriculum frameworks, teachers can ensure that students are gradually building the writing proficiency needed for more complex tasks, such as critical analysis and creative expression. This method not only standardizes learning but also helps to identify gaps in students' understanding, allowing for targeted interventions that support individualized growth.

Guidebooks are invaluable resources; however, their effectiveness largely depends on the consistency with which teachers follow them. Writing is a critical skill that enables students to communicate effectively, and its development is paramount in a country where English serves as the medium of instruction in many schools (Wardani, 2020). When teachers deviate from these guidebooks, several challenges can arise (Cicek, 2022). According to Raphael (2023) inconsistent instruction may lead to gaps in learning, preventing certain writing skills from being adequately covered or reinforced. He further argued that, if teachers bypass essential grammar lessons or writing exercises, pupils may struggle with sentence construction, organization, or coherence in their writing. Sanga and Mrema (2021) pointed out that there is a growing concern that teachers are not fully leveraging these resources, which could negatively affect students' writing proficiency.

Several studies highlight varying levels of adherence to English language guidebooks across different educational settings, shedding light on the complex relationship between teachers' adherence to these instructional materials (Kakuma, 2022; Çakmak, Akgün, & Kaçar, 2022; Brown, 2019). For instance Kakuma (2022) argues that guidebooks assist teachers in presenting lessons in a logical sequence, making it easier for students to grasp essential writing techniques.

Research conducted by Çakmak et al. (2022) indicates that novice teachers who closely adhere to guidebooks often produce more effective teaching outcomes, as they rely on these materials to structure their lessons and build confidence. This reliance allows them to implement best practices and instructional strategies effectively. In contrast, while experienced teachers may have the flexibility to adapt their lessons based on their judgment, their deviation from

guidebooks can lead to inconsistent teaching quality. This inconsistency may hinder the effectiveness of instruction, as critical writing skills and concepts may not be adequately covered, resulting in gaps in student learning.

Brown (2019) found that teachers who closely adhered to guidebooks delivered lessons that effectively built upon students' prior knowledge, resulting in stronger foundational skills. In language education, adherence to guidebooks was shown to enhance the progressive teaching of grammar, vocabulary, and writing exercises, enabling students to gradually improve their communication skills.

In Tanzania, a study conducted by Mrisho (2021) indicated that when teachers adapt lessons to fit student interests without following guidebook recommendations, essential writing skills may be neglected, leading to ineffective instruction. The findings suggest that when teachers prioritize adapting lessons to fit the specific interests and needs of their students often to enhance engagement they may inadvertently overlook important components of the curriculum outlined in guidebooks.

According to Zavier (2020) understanding the role of the guidebook in shaping teaching practices is essential for improving educational outcomes. Guidebooks not only standardize the approach to teaching but also act as a tool for teacher development, especially in contexts where continuous professional training is limited. By ensuring that teachers adhere to the guidebook, educational authorities can promote uniformity in teaching strategies, ensuring that students across different regions and schools receive similar levels of instruction (Jepkemei&King, 2018). This is particularly important in Tanzania, where disparities in educational resources and teacher training can lead to inconsistencies in student performance, especially in critical skills like writing (Mrisho, 2021).

Despite the availability of English language guidebooks, which provide structured teaching methodologies for developing writing skills, there is growing concern that the extent to which teachers adhere to these guidebooks may not be leading to significant improvement in pupils' writing abilities, while the guidebooks are intended to standardize and enhance instructional practices, many schools continue to report low proficiency levels in pupils' writing skills

(Abdallah, 2021). This raises questions about whether teachers are effectively following the guidebooks, whether the guidebooks themselves are sufficient in addressing the diverse needs of students, and what gaps exist between guidebook adherence and pupils' actual writing development.

This study assessed the effectiveness of teachers' adherence to guidebooks and its impact on the development of writing skills among Tanzanian pupils.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This section outlines the materials and methods used in the study to investigate the effectiveness of teachers' adherence to English language guidebooks on the development of pupils' writing skills.

2.1 Research Approach and Design

This study employed a qualitative research approach, which explores phenomena by examining individuals' subjective experiences, perspectives, and meanings (Kothari & Gaurav, 2023). This method allowed for in-depth data collection in a natural context without predetermined hypotheses, focusing on how teachers adhered to guidebooks and how this influenced pupils' writing skills development. To complement this approach, the study used a cross-sectional research design, which collects data from participants at a single point in time (Onchiri, 2013). This design aligned with the constructivism paradigm, as both prioritize understanding participants' subjective experiences within specific contexts (Kothari, 2023). Additionally, the cross-sectional design was chosen for its efficiency in gathering diverse data within a shorter timeframe and with limited resources, making it ideal for the study's objectives (Onchiri, 2013).

2.2 Participants

The target population for this study comprised English language teachers from public primary schools in the Iringa Municipality, as these educators are primary practitioners who utilize English language guidebooks and possess valuable insights into the study's topic (Bougie&Sekaran, 2019). A sample of fifteen participants was selected from three primary schools. To ensure a rich data set, the sample included teachers with diverse educational backgrounds and teaching experiences. The study employed criterion purposive sampling,

selecting participants based on specific criteria related to their teaching experience and education levels (Bougie&Sekaran, 2019). The participants in this study, specifically the English language teachers, were selected based on their teaching experience and educational background.

2.3 Data Collection Methods

Structured interviews, observation and documentary review were used to gather qualitative data in this study. The researcher engaged in participant observation, actively taking part in classroom sessions. All fifteen English language teachers were observed during their sessions, which lasted between 40 and 80 minutes, focusing on their teaching methods, strategies, and techniques in relation to the guidebooks. A structured observation schedule was used to investigate how teachers introduced lessons, employed teaching methods, interacted with students, demonstrated content mastery, and provided feedback. These observations were crucial for gathering data on effectiveness of teachers' adherence to the guidebooks and their practical use in enhancing students' writing skills.

Structured interviews were conducted with English language teachers from selected public primary schools to gather their opinions and insights on the effectiveness of their adherence to teachers' guidebooks in enhancing pupils' writing skills development. The interviews aimed to explore how teachers utilized the guidebooks in the classroom to enhance students' writing skills. Each of the fifteen teachers participated in interviews lasting between 30 and 40 minutes. This method provided in-depth data and allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions for clarification, deepening the understanding of the subject matter.

Additionally, the secondary data for this study were collected using documentary review in which the researcher reviewed different documents including the English language subject Syllabus (MoEST, 2016) that is currently in use, English language teachers' guidebooks (STD IV & VI), English language teachers' schemes of works, lesson plans, and pupils' English language exercise books. The method was mainly used to study if the English language teachers adhere to the recommended English language teachers' guidebooks.

2.4 Data Analysis and Ethical Considerations

The data collected from the field underwent a thorough analysis using thematic analysis. This method facilitated the identification and examination of patterns within the data, aligning the

findings with the study's objectives. The analysis process began with an extensive review of the data collection forms to gain familiarity with the content. This was followed by systematic coding, where relevant aspects of the data were labeled, enabling the identification of key themes. Once themes were established, they were carefully analyzed, defined, and labeled to ensure clarity and coherence.

Moreover, the analysis included an editing phase, where data collection forms were checked for clarity and consistency. The identified themes were then interpreted, summarized, and contextualized within the real-life settings of the study. To enhance the confirmability of the findings, direct quotes from participants were incorporated in italics. The researcher adhered to the ethical principles by first obtaining a clearance letter from the office of the Director of Postgraduate studies at Ruaha Catholic University, which was then submitted to the Iringa Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) for permission to conduct research in the region. To ensure anonymity, the researcher took precautions to prevent the linkage of participant responses to their identities or the schools involved, which encouraged honest and candid feedback. Additionally, confidentiality was maintained by securely storing data collected from the schools and teachers, ensuring access only to the researcher for research purposes. Finally, free participation was emphasized, as participants were informed that they could choose whether to take part without intimidation or pressure, ensuring that their involvement was based on genuine interest and willingness.

3.0 Findings and Discussion

The data collected from the field revealed that English language teachers in the selected schools effectively utilized the guidance provided by English language teachers' guidebooks in their instruction of writing skills. Their adherence to the guidebooks was evident in several key aspects:

3.1 The Use of Guidebook When Writing Scheme of Work

The documentary review revealed that English language teachers in the studied schools effectively utilized guidebooks in preparing their schemes of work. For instance, one teacher incorporated key writing skills such as spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and sentence structure,

as recommended in the English Standard VI teacher's guidebook. The findings also revealed that teacher integrated various teaching methods outlined in the guidebook, including group discussions and dictation. This alignment ensured that lessons effectively covered different topics. Additionally, one teacher focused on enhancing pupils' writing skills through activities such as group discussions on parts of speech, in line with the English Standard V teacher's guidebook. Interviews confirmed teachers' adherence to guidebooks when preparing schemes of work. One teacher highlighted the importance of using the guidebook for developing the scheme of work, stating that "It helps in selecting relevant content and identifying appropriate teaching and learning methods tailored to the specific class. This reliance on the guidebook enhances the planning process and ensures effective instruction".

This demonstrates how guidebooks enable teachers to tailor their instruction to students' needs. The findings align with a study conducted by Fred (2019), which found that a well-structured scheme of work allows teachers to organize assessments more effectively, ensuring they are integrated seamlessly with the curriculum. Similarly, Khalidi (2018) contends that schemes of work enable teachers to better track students' progress, allowing for timely interventions and adjustments to enhance learning outcomes. By adhering to this structure, teachers can strategically schedule tests and assignments, ensuring comprehensive evaluation and support throughout the academic year.

The use of guidebooks by teachers when writing schemes of work is significant when writing their schemes of work. In a one to one interview one teacher argued that:

Absolutely, the guidebook plays a crucial role when I'm writing my scheme of work. It provides a clear framework for what needs to be covered in each term, breaking down the key writing skills and learning objectives that I need to focus on. I use the guidebook to align my lessons with the curriculum and ensure that I'm covering the necessary content in a logical sequence. It helps me to map out the learning outcomes for each week or month, ensuring that

the students are building on their knowledge progressively
(Interview, T4SC, STD IV, 10th April, 2024).

The findings align closely with the research conducted by Othman (2020), which revealed that teachers who adhere to structured guidebooks are better equipped to create cohesive and effective lesson plans. This consistency in utilizing guidebooks underscores the importance of having a clear framework for instructional practices, allowing teachers to effectively align their lessons with curriculum standards. This implies that by following guidebooks, educators not only enhance their planning process but also ensure that students progressively build upon their writing skills and knowledge over time.

3.2 The Use of Guidebook When Writing Lesson Plans

Through the documentary review revealed that English language teachers in the studied schools effectively utilized the teachers' guidebooks in their lesson planning. Respondents incorporated essential writing skills such as vocabulary, parts of speech, and synonyms. For instance, one respondent set an objective for students to correctly write the comparative degree of adjectives, while another aimed for pupils to identify synonyms for "intelligent," like "smart" and "clever."

Additionally, teachers followed the guidebooks to outline specific teaching and learning activities. For example, one respondent planned group activities for identifying punctuation marks, and another focused on listing tools for cleaning the school environment, both in line with the English Standard III guidebook. Respondents also included objectives to guide pupils in identifying the main parts of the human body as outlined in the guidebook.

Interviews supported these findings as participants indicated that they adhere to the guidebook by following its guidelines when writing lesson plans. This practice allows teachers to clearly identify the competencies that pupils are expected to demonstrate after each lesson, ensuring a structured and effective learning experience. This practice allowed teachers to choose relevant brainstorming activities and instructional strategies tailored to specific competencies. One teacher responded as follows;

Using a guidebook for writing lesson plans has been
beneficial for me. I typically refer to a specific guidebook

designed for our curriculum, which provides structured templates and examples that align with our educational standards. One of the key advantages of using the guidebook is that it offers a clear framework for developing my lesson objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment methods. This structure not only saves me time but also ensures that I'm covering all necessary components, such as differentiating instruction for diverse learners (Interview, T3SB, STD IV, 10th April, 2024).

The findings are in line with the study of Morris (2021) which indicated that use of guidebook is crucial when writing lesson plans as they provide a structured framework that enables the efficient distribution of syllabus content throughout the academic year. Eric (2020) asserts that by mapping out topics in advance, teachers can organize their lessons strategically, ensuring that each subject is covered in a timely manner. This not only prevents last-minute cramming but also promotes thorough coverage of material, helping students to absorb the content more effectively.

The study by Lukwago (2023) also highlights the significant benefits of utilizing guidebooks in writing lesson plans for English language instruction. From his study it was indicated that guidebooks provide a structured framework that helps teachers systematically organize their lessons, ensuring that all essential components such as objectives, materials, activities, and assessments are effectively addressed.

3.3 The Use of Guidebook When Teaching Writing Skills

The documentary review revealed that English language teachers in the studied schools consistently adhered to the teachers' guidebooks, which serve as essential resources for teaching writing skills to primary school pupils. These guidebooks outline various critical writing skills, including vocabulary, spelling, parts of speech, punctuation marks, cohesive markers, grammatical structures, sentence structures, and tenses.

Teachers incorporated these writing skills into their instructional planning documents, such as schemes of work and lesson plans. For example, one respondent included skills like tense, sentence structure, and parts of speech in their scheme of work, while another highlighted

different sentence structures, including conditional sentences, in accordance with the respective guidebooks for Standards V and VI.

Interviews with the teachers further emphasized the importance of the guidebooks in their teaching practice. Respondents noted that a thorough understanding of the guidebook's structure, content, and underlying principles was crucial. For instance one teacher explained:

The importance of teacher's guidebook is seen when it is read thoroughly in order to understand its structure, content and underlying principles in order to familiarize with it. The systematic reading of the guidebook helps me to identify the writing skills to teach and the instructional strategies recommended in the guidebook for teaching the identified writing skills (Interview, T5SB, STD IV, 10th April, 2024).

This systematic approach enables teachers to employ instructional strategies such as the writing process and grammar integration effectively.

In addition, respondents highlighted that the guidebooks provide a framework for identifying relevant writing skills and instructional strategies. One teacher remarked:

I benefit many things by adhering to the guidebook. It offers me with different writing skills to teach the pupils. By reading it carefully, I identify and understand the proposed techniques for teaching, which are from simple to complex. This approach not only enhances my lesson planning but also ensures that my students build a solid foundation in writing before moving on to more advanced concepts (Interview, T2SC, STD V, 15th April, 2024).

Classroom observations corroborated the data from the documentary review and interviews, showing that teachers were actively teaching the writing skills specified in the guidebooks. For instance, one teacher guided students in identifying punctuation marks and describing their uses, while another facilitated discussions on family relations and sentence composition using the simple past tense, as prescribed in the English Standard III and VII guidebooks, respectively.

These findings concur with those of Martin (2020) and Lazaro (2019), who also observed that guidebooks play a vital role in teaching writing skills by providing a structured and systematic approach. Martin (2020) highlighted the importance of clear instructions and examples, which help teachers, introduce writing concepts in an organized way, while Lazaro (2019) found that guidebooks serve as a reliable reference for students, aiding them in understanding essential elements like grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and various writing styles. Both studies emphasized that guidebooks offer practical tips to enhance clarity and coherence in student writing.

Smith's (2019) research supports this, showing that a well-structured guidebook breaks the writing process into manageable steps, from brainstorming to drafting, revising, and editing. This systematic approach not only improves students' grasp of the technical aspects of writing but also fosters critical thinking and organizational skills. Furthermore, guidebooks help maintain consistency in teaching, ensuring that all students receive the same high-quality instructions, which Martin (2020) noted as especially beneficial in diverse or larger classrooms.

4.0 Conclusions

The findings from this study highlight the significant role that English language teachers' guidebooks play in the instruction of writing skills in primary schools. The data collected demonstrates that teachers effectively utilize these guidebooks to enhance their teaching practices across various aspects, including the preparation of schemes of work and lesson plans, as well as the direct instruction of writing skills. The systematic approach outlined in the guidebooks allows teachers to select relevant content and appropriate teaching methods tailored to their students' needs, ensuring a comprehensive and structured learning experience.

Teachers' adherence to the guidebooks is evidenced by their incorporation of essential writing skills such as vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure into their instructional plans. Furthermore, the integration of diverse teaching strategies, such as group discussions and practical activities, reinforces the effectiveness of the lessons delivered. This alignment with the guidebooks not only facilitates the organized distribution of syllabus content but also enables teachers to monitor and assess students' progress systematically.

A thorough understanding of the guidebooks enhances teachers' ability to convey complex writing concepts progressively, from simple to advanced levels. By doing so, English teachers can foster a solid foundation in writing for their students, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of guidebooks as essential resources for English language instruction, serving as a framework for effective teaching and learning in writing skills

5.0 Recommendations

To enhance the effective use of English language teachers' guidebooks in teaching writing skills, the study recommends that educational stakeholders, including school administrators, curriculum developers, and government education bodies, collaboratively implement training programs by designing targeted workshops and interactive sessions. Training programs such as Comprehensive Orientation Workshops, Mentorship and Coaching Programs or the Curriculum Integration Workshops should begin with comprehensive orientation sessions to familiarize teachers with the guidebook's structure, content, and principles, ensuring they understand how to effectively integrate its recommendations into their teaching practices.

The study recommends that School administrators, in collaboration with educational stakeholders to establish a centralized resource repository that includes both physical and digital access to teachers' guidebooks. This repository should be designed to support teachers in their instructional practices by providing easy access to up-to-date resources and teaching materials.

References

- Abdallah, P. (2021). Helping the Good get better through teachers guided books in primary schools. *Journal of Education in social science*. Pp. 103-143
- Adejumo, M. (2022). *Teachers' awareness, knowledge and use of communicative language teaching approach and students' oral communicative competence in English in Ibadan North Local Government area*. Unpublished B.A.Ed. Dissertation. University of Ibadan, Nigeria.
- Adeyemi, T. (2022). The role of professional development in English language teachers' engagement with curriculum guidebooks in Africa. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 123, 101-112.

- Bougie, R. & Sekaran, U. (2019). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach* (8th ed). John Wiley & Sons.
- Brown, K. (2019). *The status of teacher's awareness on guidebook usage research project*: Open University Press.
- Çakmak, Z., Akgün, İ. H. & Kaçar, T. (2022). English language teachers' views on the 7th grade English language teacher guidebook and its removal: *Education and Science*, 47(210), 217-238.
- Cicek, V. (2022). Effective use of lesson plans to enhance education in U.S. and Turkish kindergarten through 12th grade public school system: A comparative study. *International Journal of Teaching and Education*, II (2), 10-20.
- Fred, I. (2019). The role of teacher's guidebooks in teaching English as a second language in Kenyan primary schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 7(3), 112-127.
- Hulukati, W. & Rahim, M. (2018). The effectiveness of guidebooks to improve teachers' competency in teaching Gorontalo local language learning for early childhood. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 1(78), 191-196.
- Jepkemei, E., & King, S. (2018). Identifying the essential ingredients to literacy and numeracy improvement: Teacher professional development and coaching, student textbooks, and structured teachers' guides. *World Development*, 106, 324–336.
- Jones, R. (2018). *The impact of guided book in instruction on teachers to students learning English language*. *Issues in Teacher Education*, 21(1), 71–87
- Kakuma, D. (2022). The role of teacher's guidebooks in facilitating English language instruction in Nigerian primary schools. *International Journal of Education and Social Science Research*, 4(2), 110-123.
- Khalid, J. (2018). Challenges faced by English language teachers in Zimbabwe regarding guidebook usage. *Journal of Language and Education in Africa*, 10(2), 125-139.
- Kothari, C., R. & Gaurav, G. (2023). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques* (5th ed.). New Age International Publishers.
- Lazaro, M. (2019). Exploring the use of teacher's guidebooks among English language teachers' in Dodoma, Tanzania. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(3), 455-467.
- Lukwago, E. (2023). Assessing the role of teacher's guidebooks in improving English language teaching in Rwandan primary schools. *African Journal of Language and Education Studies*, 9(1), 45-60.

- Martin, P. (2020). Primary school leavers' English skills and their adequacy for knowledge acquisition at secondary school: the case of Iringa municipality. *Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education*, 9(2), 60-72.
- Mogashoa, T. (2021). The impact of collaborative practices on adherence of curriculum guides among English language teachers in South Africa. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 12(4), 567-578.
- Mrisho, A.(2021). Transforming School Teaching Modules into a Tool for Enhancing Students' Writing Skills.*Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education*, 60-72.
- Morris, L. (2021). Factors constraining purchasing of teaching and learning materials in public primary schools in Dar es Salaam-Tanzania.*International Journal of Social Science Research and Review*, 6(7)
- Onchiri S. (2013). Conceptual Model on Application of Chi-Square Test in Education and Social Sciences.*Educational Research and Reviews*, 8(15), 121-124.
- Othman, R. (2020). Teachers perceptions on the relevance their guidebooks in English language instruction in Kenya.*Journal of Linguistics and Language in Education*, 60-72.
- Raphael, M. (2023).*How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better in guided book usage*. London: McKinsey & Company
- Sanga, C. A., &Mrema, G. J. (2021). Teachers' experience experiences in the use of English language teacher guides in improving writing skills in secondary schools in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(2), 78-89.
- Smith, E. (2019). Assessing the role of teacher's guidebooks in improving English language teaching in Rwandan primary schools.*African Journal of Language and Education Studies*, 9(1), 45-60.
- Wardani, D. (2020). Creating props: Improving writing skills of teaching materials of elementary teacher education students through project-based learning model. *MimbarSekolahDasar*, 7(2), 216-234.