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PRESCHOOL EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON DIALOGIC LITERACY IN PRESCHOOLERS

Abstract. *This research delves into the perceptions and expressions of dialogic literacy among preschool teachers, seeking to explore dimensions such as its definition, significance, strategies, assessment methods, and parental involvement. The study engaged a cohort of 15 educators, comprising 10 females and 5 males, selected based on their experience and qualifications in early childhood education. Through semi-structured interviews, these teachers provided rich and detailed insights, forming the basis for a thorough examination of dialogic literacy in the preschool setting. Intentionally diverse, the participant pool included educators from various preschool environments, both public and private, aiming to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives and approaches. This deliberate variation facilitated the exploration of potential disparities in understanding and implementing dialogic literacy across different contexts. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study emphasized semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. The interview questions covered key aspects, including definitions, teacher strategies, classroom activities, assessment methods, and parental engagement. The design aimed to extract comprehensive responses, allowing participants to share their unique perspectives, experiences, and practices related to communicative proficiency in early childhood education. Thematic analysis was applied to categorize and organize the interview data, unveiling common patterns and themes. To enhance the study's reliability, methodologies such as member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation were employed. The research maintained a strong ethical foundation, prioritizing participant privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary involvement throughout the entire process. The findings present a holistic understanding of dialogic literacy implementation in diverse preschool settings, enriched by the inclusion of educators with a minimum of two years of teaching experience. This study contributes valuable insights to the field of early childhood education, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of dialogic literacy and its versatile application across different educational contexts.*

Key words: *dialogue, young children, literacy, preschool, educators*

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Literature Review on Dialogic Literacy

Scientific evidence suggests that dialogic literacy is effective in constructing knowledge and benefiting society. Researchers including Wegerif, Mercer & Major (2019), Caviglia et al. (2017), and Lefstein & Snell (2013) have provided this supporting data. The set of abilities, techniques, and proficiencies that contribute to successful communication and influence the receiver are encompassed within it. The concept of dialogic literacy has been explored from different angles and given different labels, highlighting its function as both a tool for creating knowledge and a goal in its own right.

The concept of dialogic literacy pertains to the establishment of areas for discourse that encourage conversation and extensive engagement. Learners participate in discussions that lead to the creation

of knowledge within these areas, as observed by Scardamalia (2005) and Matusov (2009). The progression of the process is continuous and lacks a specific conclusion. Hence, it is crucial to promote areas for discussion to stimulate conversational methods, as highlighted by Caviglia et al. (2017) and Wegerif, Mercer, and Major (2019).

Studies have shown that participating in interactive conversations in academic environments can promote the growth of social, emotional, and cognitive skills in young individuals. Several research works have shown this, including studies by García-Carrión and Villardón-Gallego (2016), Van der Veen, Dobber, and van Oers (2018), and Al-Adeimi and O'Connor (2021). It varies from monologic talk, which concentrates on the educator and aims to replicate factual knowledge (Femke,

Renske & Veen, 2020). The method of teaching known as dialogic talk entails engaging learners as active contributors in the process of constructing knowledge. According to Alexander (2018) and Van der Veen, de Mey, et al. (2017), this method has been discovered to improve speaking abilities, communication skills, and social aptitude.

To ensure the successful execution of dialogic literacy, it is essential for educators to have expertise in dialogic teaching methods and foster favorable connections with their pupils (De Bruin, 2018; Creech & Hallam, 2011). According to De Bruin (2018), dialogic pedagogy goes beyond simple knowledge acquisition by encouraging original thought and accepting a range of viewpoints. Creech and Hallam (2011) have observed that the existence of favorable relationships between educators and students is conducive to the implementation of dialogic practices.

In brief, it can be stated that dialogic literacy possesses significant potential in terms of knowledge creation and societal transformation. The procedure includes generating spaces for dialogue, which involves encouraging learners to have fruitful discussions that result in knowledge creation. By utilizing dialogic literacy, educators have the opportunity to enhance their teaching methods and promote student involvement, analytical reasoning, and favorable academic achievements.

Educators' Role in Promoting Dialogic Competencies

Educators have a significant impact on the enhancement of conversational abilities in young children. A conducive atmosphere can be established to promote not just conversation but also enhance communication abilities and encourage participation. Based on studies, educators have access to different approaches that can encourage the development of dialogic skills in young children.

A crucial tactic to encourage efficient communication is by exemplifying dialogic interactions. According to Wegerif, Mercer & Major (2019), educators can exhibit attentive listening, pose open-ended inquiries, and offer reflective answers by participating in meaningful dialogues with children. This method of instruction supports kids in comprehending the mechanics of conversation and, consequently, motivates them to emulate it.

Furthermore, it is essential to create a classroom atmosphere that encourages dialogue. Educators have the ability to create an environment in their classroom that prioritizes and encourages communication by organizing the physical layout to foster teamwork. As an illustration, it is possible to establish compact zones for group discussions. Furthermore, they can set standards for courteous interaction and enthusiastic involvement, as highlighted by García-Carrión and Villardón-Gallego (2016).

Facilitating chances for conversation is essential in fostering dialogue skills. To facilitate the expression of children's ideas and encourage learning from each other, it is suggested that educators include daily routines such as group discussions, think-pair-share activities, and partner work (Van der Veen, de Mey, et al., 2017).

One other successful tactic involves posing questions that do not have a specific answer. Questions that do not have a specific answer can be useful in promoting analytical skills and motivating elaborate replies. According to Michaels, O'Connor, and Resnick (2008), children are encouraged to contemplate, evaluate, and express their thoughts, resulting in more comprehensive conversations.

Furthermore, educators have the ability to assist and encourage conversation by furnishing cues, introductory phrases, and language assistance. According to Alexander's (2017) explanation, they have the ability to lead conversations, assist in taking turns, and support children in expressing their thoughts more efficiently, despite their language abilities still being in the developmental stage.

Recognizing diverse perspectives is crucial in creating an inclusive environment where children can express their ideas and perspectives without any hesitation. According to Lefstein and Snell (2013), educators have the ability to foster a conversational atmosphere by promoting empathy, understanding, and respect for diverse perspectives.

The amalgamation of literary and narrative components can significantly enhance conversational exchanges (Papadopoulos, 2020; Papadopoulos, 2021; Papadopoulos & Shin, 2021; Papadopoulos, 2022). Educators can encourage young people to share their opinions, ask questions, and connect with their personal experiences by engaging them in discussions about stories, characters, and ideas. One possible way to achieve this is by utilizing different techniques like asking questions that have no definite answers, allowing chances for collaborative conversations, and establishing a secure and encouraging atmosphere for kids to communicate their viewpoints and concepts. As per the findings of Wasik and colleagues (2016), conversing about such topics can prove to be extremely advantageous for the cognitive and socio-emotional growth of kids.

The ability to listen actively is a crucial aptitude that facilitates productive communication. Educators have the ability to educate students on the techniques of active listening, such as the maintenance of eye contact, the art of paraphrasing, and the appropriate response to others' opinions. According to Phillipson & Wegerif (2016), promoting meaningful dialogue and teaching children to value others' contributions can be achieved by giving significance to active listening.

Ultimately, it should be mentioned that educators possess the capacity to promote introspection

regarding the caliber of discourse and aid youngsters in identifying successful communication tactics. According to Caviglia et al. (2017), metacognitive skills and self-evaluation of communication can be improved through reflective discussions on dialogue, which can be beneficial for children.

By encouraging and aiding in the development of dialogic skills, educators can aid young children in enhancing their communication abilities, promoting their critical thinking skills, and fostering a positive attitude towards collaborative learning (Van der Veen, Dobber, & van Oers, 2018). These skills act as a base, which will aid them in attaining forthcoming educational and communal triumph.

Research Methodology

Research Purpose and Research Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand how preschool educators perceive and express their views on dialogic literacy in preschoolers. The specific objectives of the research were:

- To examine the definition and understanding of dialogic literacy among preschool educators.
- To explore the importance and benefits of dialogic literacy according to preschool educators.
- To identify the strategies and activities employed by educators to promote dialogic literacy.
- To investigate the assessment and evaluation methods used by educators to measure dialogic literacy.
- To examine the involvement of parents in promoting dialogic literacy at home.

Participants

The study involved 15 educators (10 females, 5 males) who work in preschools. The selection criteria were based on their experience and qualifications in early childhood education. To guarantee that the participants were knowledgeable about early childhood pedagogy and familiar with dialogic literacy, the minimum requirement for inclusion was two years of teaching experience. The group of educators chosen for the study was deliberately varied, encompassing both public and private preschool environments, in order to obtain a wide array of viewpoints and approaches to implementing dialogic literacy.

The study aimed to gain a thorough comprehension of the implementation and approach of dialogic literacy in diverse educational contexts by involving educators from multiple preschool settings. Preschools that are open to the public and those that are privately owned usually exhibit unique features and methods for educating young children. These dissimilarities may include variations in the syllabus, materials, and financial support. Hence, the inclusion of educators from both categories of environments facilitated a more extensive investigation of communicative literacy techniques and approaches.

The variety of the sample made it easier to analyze possible differences in the comprehension and

execution of dialogic literacy in various preschool settings. The impact of educators' personal histories, education, and past encounters can shape their teaching methods and convictions. The study's objective was to obtain a broad spectrum of viewpoints, tactics, and difficulties concerning dialogic literacy by incorporating educators from various environments.

To guarantee that the participants had a basic comprehension of early childhood education and had probably experienced chances to communicate with preschoolers, it was made sure that only educators with at least two years of teaching experience were included. The threshold of experience enabled the researchers to obtain perspectives from educators who had already acquired hands-on expertise and familiarity with dialogic literacy in their work.

In general, the study's findings were made more valid and generalizable by choosing a varied sample of preschool educators who had taught for at least two years in various preschool environments. The incorporation of diverse viewpoints and methods enhanced the comprehension of communicative literacy in the early childhood education environment and offered a broader overview of its execution in various academic backgrounds.

Research Design and Instruments

In order to obtain a thorough comprehension of preschool educators' viewpoints on dialogic literacy, a qualitative research approach was selected. Research of a qualitative nature enables the exploration of intricate phenomena, capturing subjective experiences, and obtaining data that is rich and detailed (Creswell, 2013).

The primary method chosen for data collection was semi-structured interviews. Semi-organized discussions provide adaptability while guaranteeing that particular research aims and subjects are addressed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The conversational interviews enabled the researchers to engage with the participants and delve into different aspects of dialogic literacy.

The questions asked during the interview were meticulously crafted to correspond with the research goals and encompassed various aspects of communicative proficiency. The topics covered were dialogic literacy explanations, educator tactics, classroom exercises, evaluation techniques, and parental participation in encouraging dialogic communication outside of school.

The questions asked during the interview were designed to obtain comprehensive answers and motivate educators to discuss their viewpoints, encounters, and methods concerning communicative literacy. The utilization of open-ended inquiries enabled the respondents to provide detailed answers, express individual viewpoints, and share personal experiences. The questionnaire contained exploratory

inquiries to motivate respondents to expand on their answers, furnish precise instances, and remove any vagueness.

A group of preschool educators was used to test the interview protocol for clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions. After receiving feedback during the pilot test, minor adjustments were implemented to enhance the coherence and progression of the interview procedure.

To ensure candid and open conversations, the interviews were held in a private and comfortable location. Before conducting the interviews, the participants were given a guarantee of privacy and their consent was obtained after providing them with all the necessary information. The audio recordings were made during the interviews with the consent of the participants to guarantee precise data collection. Detailed field notes were also taken during the interviews to capture non-verbal cues, contextual information, and the researchers' observations.

Employing semi-structured interviews as the main approach for gathering data facilitated an in-depth investigation into the viewpoints of educators in preschool settings regarding dialogic literacy. The discussions furnished ample and intricate information, allowing the investigators to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the respondents' encounters, convictions, and customs concerning communicative proficiency in the early childhood education milieu.

Data Collection

The data-gathering procedure for this research included many stages. Initially, educators who fulfilled the necessary criteria were selected by purposeful sampling. All subjects provided voluntary permission to participate in the investigation.

The participants were interviewed individually in a confidential and comfortable setting using a semi-structured technique. In order to ensure accurate data collection and maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the conversations were recorded with their consent using audio recording devices.

An extensive questionnaire was developed to guide the interviews, including all aspects related to communication proficiency. The aspects consist of explanations, relevance, benefits, methodologies, assignments, assessment approaches, and involvement of caregivers. The compilation of inquiries established a framework for the discussions, enabling a comprehensive collection of material.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim while ensuring the privacy and anonymity of the participants. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. A methodical approach was used to classify,

group, and arrange the material into coherent subjects. Through the use of this methodology, it became feasible to discern prevalent patterns and themes in the replies offered by the participants.

In order to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the findings, several methodologies were used, including verifying with participants, seeking input from colleagues, and incorporating diverse data sources. Member checking involves presenting the findings to the participants in order to verify the accuracy and comprehension of their responses. The core of peer debriefing is obtaining insights and judgments from skilled qualitative researchers who are colleagues. Triangulation is a method that involves verifying information from many sources, such as surveys, interviews, and observational notes.

Throughout the inquiry, ethical considerations were carefully addressed. The study upheld ethical principles by ensuring the protection of individuals' privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. All individuals provided consent after obtaining ethical approval from the appropriate institutional review board.

Findings: General

Table 1 offers a thorough summary of the primary topics and discoveries concerning dialogic literacy in the context of early childhood education. The table presents an overview of the viewpoints of educators who teach young children about dialogic literacy. It covers different areas such as its meaning, significance, advantages, ways to execute it, sample exercises, ways to evaluate it, criteria for assessment, catering to unique requirements, and parental participation.

By conducting a thematic analysis on qualitative data obtained from seasoned preschool educators, the results provide significant perspectives on the comprehension, importance, and execution of dialogic literacy within the preschool setting. The presented data illustrates the agreement between educators on the importance of dialogic literacy in enhancing language proficiency, critical thinking abilities, and social engagement among young children. The table provides examples of the numerous strategies and activities educators use to promote dialogue as well as the assessment processes used to track students' development in this area. The findings also emphasize the importance of educators paying attention to particular needs and collaborating with parents to promote communication skills in both home and academic contexts. In summary, the table serves as an exhaustive tool for early childhood education professionals who are interested in enhancing their dialogic practices.

Overview of Key Themes and Findings

Thematic Categories	Subcategories	Findings
Understanding Dialogic	Definition	Educators define dialogic literacy as interactive and meaningful conversations that promote language, communication, and critical thinking skills in preschoolers.
Literacy	Importance	Educators agree that dialogic literacy is crucial for preschoolers as it enhances language development, vocabulary acquisition, listening and speaking skills, cognitive abilities, and social interaction.
	Benefits	Educators observe that engaging in dialogic literacy activities leads to improved language fluency, enhanced comprehension skills, increased confidence in expressing thoughts and ideas, and greater engagement and participation in classroom discussions.
Implementation	Daily Activities	Educators incorporate dialogic literacy by encouraging open-ended questions, promoting discussions during storytime, and providing opportunities for children to express thoughts and opinions.
Dialogic Literacy	Strategies	Educators use strategies like turn-taking, active listening, providing wait time, and modeling effective communication skills to foster dialogic interactions among preschoolers.
	Examples of Activities	Educators implement activities such as group storytelling sessions, collaborative projects, and guided discussions on topics of interest or books read aloud to promote dialogic literacy in the classroom.
Assessment and	Assessment Methods	Educators assess dialogic literacy through observations during conversations, individual and group discussions, and anecdotal records.
Evaluation	Indicators	Educators look for indicators such as increased participation, expanded vocabulary, ability to ask and answer questions, and the depth and quality of conversations to determine progress in dialogic literacy.
	Addressing Individual Needs	Educators provide targeted interventions, one-on-one discussions, and scaffolded questioning techniques to support children who require additional assistance in developing dialogic literacy skills.
Collaboration and	Involvement of Parents	Educators involve parents by providing resources, book recommendations, and conversation starters to promote dialogic literacy at home.

Findings: Conceptualizing Dialogic Literacy

With regard to the thematic strand of “Understanding Dialogic Literacy”, the responses of educators were coded and summarized in the following table (Table 2), which focused on the educators’ attempts to conceptualize dialogic literacy. Educators conceptualize dialogic literacy as the creation of a space for meaningful conversations, fostering an environment where children freely express thoughts and engage in exchanges. It nurtures effective communication, active engagement, and critical thinking skills. Dialogic literacy empowers children as active participants in their learning, encouraging them to ask questions, make predictions, and engage in discussions. It also values and respects children’s ideas, develops their voice, and enhances their confidence in expressing themselves. Overall, dialogic literacy is student-centred, focusing on collaboration and the construction of understanding.

Indicatively, educator A mentioned that “*Dialogic literacy is all about creating a space where children can engage in meaningful conversations that help them develop their language skills and critical thinking abilities.*”, while Educator B supported that “*For me, dialogic literacy means fostering a classroom environment where children can express their thoughts and ideas freely, engaging in back-and-forth exchanges that promote communication and understanding.*” Within the same context, Educator G mentioned that “*Through dialogic literacy, we empower children to become active participants in their own learning. They learn to ask questions, make predictions, and engage in discussions that deepen their understanding.*”. Meanwhile, “*Dialogic literacy creates an environment where children feel valued and respected for their ideas. It helps them develop their own voice and the ability to express themselves confidently.*” (Educator L).

Findings: Conceptualizing Dialogic Literacy

Thematic Category	Findings
Definition	Dialogic literacy is about creating a space for meaningful conversations that develop language skills and critical thinking.
Classroom Environment	Dialogic literacy fosters an environment where children freely express their thoughts, engage in exchanges, and promote communication.
Communication Skills	Dialogic literacy nurtures effective communication, questioning, and self-expression.
Active Engagement	Dialogic literacy activities promote active listening, responding, and interaction for language development.
Learning Tools	Dialogic literacy uses conversations as powerful tools for constructing meaning, building vocabulary, and developing comprehension.
Critical Thinking	Dialogic literacy enables the exploration of perspectives, critical thinking, and connections to personal experiences and the world.
Empowerment	Dialogic literacy empowers children as active participants in learning through questioning, prediction, and deep discussions.
Collaboration	Dialogic literacy creates a collaborative learning environment where children learn from each other, build on ideas, and develop social skills.
Confidence	Dialogic literacy enhances children's confidence in expressing thoughts, sharing opinions, and attentive listening.
Inclusivity	Dialogic literacy encourages critical analysis, respectful and inclusive expression of unique perspectives.
Skills Development	Dialogic literacy equips children with effective communication, active listening, and lifelong learning skills.
Value and Respect	Dialogic literacy values and respects children's ideas, develops their voice, and enhances self-expression.
Love for Language	Dialogic literacy fosters a love for language and communication, making children enthusiastic participants in conversations and discussions.
Critical Thinkers	Dialogic literacy encourages deep thinking, meaningful questions, and active engagement with texts and ideas.
Student-Centered	Dialogic literacy focuses on student contribution, collaboration, and construction of understanding.

Findings: Importance of Dialogic Literacy

Focusing on the importance of dialogic literacy and its impact on children, the following table (Table 3) outlines the findings derived from educators' responses in a coded manner. In particular, the key findings include improvements in language fluency, boosted confidence, increased engagement in classroom discussions, cognitive development, social interaction skills, and the establishment of a strong foundation for future literacy. Additionally, dialogic literacy contributes to active learning, vocabulary acquisition, and provides meaningful experiences that foster a lifelong love for learning and effective communication, as highlighted by educators' perspectives.

Individually, Educator C mentioned "One of the significant benefits of dialogic literacy is that it boosts preschoolers' confidence in expressing their thoughts and ideas. It gives them a safe space to share their opinions and engage in meaningful conversations with their peers and educators", while Educator F claimed that "By engaging in dialogic literacy, preschoolers develop important social interaction skills. They learn how to take turns, listen attentively, and respect different perspectives, which is essential for their overall social-emotional development." It is also worth mentioning the perspective of Educator J "Engaging in dialogic literacy activities provides preschoolers with authentic and meaningful language experiences. It sparks their curiosity, ignites their imagination, and instills a lifelong love for learning and communicating effectively."

Findings: Importance of Dialogic Literacy

Thematic Category	Findings
Importance	Dialogic literacy is crucial for preschoolers as it lays the foundation for their language development and enhances overall communication abilities.
Language Fluency	Dialogic literacy activities have a profound impact on preschoolers' language fluency, improving oral expression and comprehension skills.
Confidence	Dialogic literacy boosts preschoolers' confidence in expressing thoughts and ideas, providing a safe space for sharing opinions and engaging in conversations.
Engagement	Dialogic literacy increases engagement and participation in classroom discussions among preschoolers, fostering active listening and contribution.
Cognitive Development	Dialogic literacy promotes cognitive abilities in preschoolers, encouraging critical thinking, problem-solving, and making connections between concepts.
Social Interaction	Dialogic literacy develops social interaction skills in preschoolers, teaching turn-taking, attentive listening, and respect for different perspectives.
Foundation for Literacy	Dialogic literacy sets a strong foundation for future literacy skills, nurturing a love for language and a deep understanding of communication.
Active Learning	Dialogic literacy makes preschoolers active participants in their learning, fostering curiosity, question-asking, and deepening understanding.
Vocabulary Acquisition	Dialogic literacy plays a crucial role in vocabulary acquisition, exposing preschoolers to a rich range of words and language structures.
Meaningful Experiences	Dialogic literacy provides preschoolers with authentic and meaningful language experiences, igniting curiosity and instilling a lifelong love for learning and effective communication.

Findings: Fostering Dialogic Literacy

Concerning the ways and context within which dialogic literacy is fostered, the following table provides a summarised outline of the teaching behaviour. More specifically, it depicts strategies used to foster dialogic literacy such as open-ended questions, promoting discussions during storytime, providing various opportunities for expression throughout the day,

incorporating art and creativity, encouraging science exploration, integrating dialogic literacy during snack time, facilitating dramatic play, encouraging outdoor play, leveraging technology, and implementing project-based learning. Educators emphasize the importance of creating an environment that stimulates curiosity, critical thinking, and meaningful interactions in various aspects of daily activities.

Table 4

Findings: Fostering Dialogic Literacy

Thematic Category	Findings
Open-Ended Questions	Daily activities encourage open-ended questions that spark children's curiosity, critical thinking, and free expression of thoughts and opinions.
Storytime Discussions	Storytime promotes discussions through thought-provoking questions, allowing children to share interpretations, make connections, and engage in meaningful conversations.
Opportunities to Express	Various opportunities are provided for children to express thoughts and opinions throughout the day, promoting communication and engagement with peers and educators.
Art and Creativity	Art and creative activities encourage children to describe their work, explain choices, and discuss the creative process, enhancing language development and self-expression.
Science Exploration	Science experiments and nature walks encourage children to ask questions, make predictions, and discuss observations, fostering curiosity and critical thinking skills.
Snack Time Conversations	Dialogic literacy is incorporated during snack time, where children talk about food choices, share favourites, and discuss healthy eating habits, promoting self-expression and meaningful conversations about nutrition.

Thematic Category	Findings
Dramatic Play	The dramatic play area provides props and materials that encourage dialogue, negotiation, and collaborative problem-solving among children, fostering social skills and communication.
Outdoor Play	Outdoor play facilitates dialogic interactions, encouraging teamwork, effective communication, and problem-solving as a team, promoting cooperation and social interaction.
Technology Integration	Technology is incorporated to support dialogic literacy, enabling children to record thoughts, engage in virtual discussions, and share ideas with classmates, leveraging digital platforms and interactive apps.
Project-Based Learning	Project-based learning activities create opportunities for group discussions, idea brainstorming, and collaboration, fostering teamwork, communication, and critical thinking skills.

More specifically, Educator A mentioned that *“In our daily activities, we encourage open-ended questions that spark children’s curiosity and invite them to think critically. It allows them to express their thoughts and opinions freely”*, while Educator C claimed that *“We provide various opportunities throughout the day for children to express their thoughts and opinions. Whether it’s during group activities, circle time, or playtime, we encourage them to communicate their ideas and engage in conversations with peers and educators”*. In parallel, it is worth mentioning that according to Educator F *“We incorporate dialogic literacy during snack time by encouraging children to talk about their food choices, share their favourite snacks, and discuss healthy eating habits. It creates an environment where they can express their preferences and engage in meaningful conversations about nutrition.”*

Findings: Assessment of Dialogic Literacy

When it comes to the assessment of dialogic literacy competencies of preschoolers, educators positioned themselves and the following table offers an overview of the findings derived from their responses. Educators use diverse assessment methods to evaluate dialogic literacy competencies in preschoolers. The assessment includes observations during conversations, individual and group discussions focusing on language fluency and engagement, anecdotal records to track participation and growth over time, checklists

for specific aspects of dialogic literacy, peer and self-assessment opportunities, rubrics for evaluating meaningful conversations, educator-student conferences for one-on-one assessments, formative assessments during dialogic activities, and portfolios that compile samples of children’s work, including recordings and reflections, providing a comprehensive overview of progress and growth in communication skills. These assessment strategies aim to capture the multifaceted aspects of dialogic literacy development among preschoolers.

Indicatively, Educator A mentioned *“We assess dialogic literacy through observations during conversations and discussions. We observe how children actively listen, respond to others, and engage in meaningful exchanges that promote language and critical thinking skills”*, while Educator B stated that *“Individual and group discussions provide valuable assessment opportunities. We assess children’s ability to express their thoughts, ask questions, and contribute to the conversation, considering their language fluency, vocabulary usage, and depth of engagement”*. Meanwhile, *“Portfolios are another assessment method we use for dialogic literacy. We collect samples of children’s work, including recordings of their discussions, transcripts, and reflections, which provide a comprehensive view of their progress and growth in communication skills.”* — Educator I

Table 5

Findings: Assessment of Dialogic Literacy

Thematic Category	Findings
Observations	Dialogic literacy is assessed through observations during conversations and discussions, focusing on active listening, responding, and critical thinking skills.
Discussions	Individual and group discussions provide valuable assessment opportunities for children’s ability to express thoughts, ask questions, and contribute, considering language fluency, vocabulary usage, and engagement.
Anecdotal Records	Anecdotal records are effective for assessing dialogic literacy, noting children’s participation, contributions, and growth in language skills and communication abilities over time.
Checklists	Checklists are used to assess specific aspects of dialogic literacy, such as turn-taking, active listening, using appropriate language, tracking progress and identifying areas for support and development.

Thematic Category	Findings
Peer and Self-Assessment	Peer and self-assessment opportunities allow children to reflect on their own participation in dialogic interactions, assess listening skills, and communication effectiveness, and identify areas for improvement.
Rubrics	Rubrics are used to assess dialogic literacy, evaluate children's ability to engage in meaningful conversations, use evidence to support ideas, and respond respectfully, providing a holistic view of their communication skills.
Educator-Student Conferences	Educator-student conferences serve as valuable assessment moments, allowing one-on-one discussions to assess language fluency, comprehension, and the ability to express thoughts clearly and effectively.
Formative Assessments	Formative assessments are incorporated during dialogic activities through probing questions, feedback, and guided thinking to assess understanding, encourage critical thinking, and scaffold learning.
Portfolios	Portfolios are used for assessing dialogic literacy, collecting samples of children's work including recordings of discussions, transcripts, and reflections, providing a comprehensive view of progress and growth in

Findings: Evaluation Criteria

Focusing more on the assessment of dialogic literacy competencies development of preschoolers, the following table outlines the indicators educators make use of in order to detect progress in the development of dialogic literacy in correlation with the individual needs of the children. Educators employ various indicators to assess the progress of dialogic literacy competencies in preschoolers. These evaluation criteria include increased participation, expanded vocabulary usage, the ability to ask and answer questions, the

depth and quality of conversations, and the capacity to build on others' ideas. Targeted interventions, such as one-on-one discussions and scaffolded questioning techniques, are implemented to address individual needs. The assessment also considers the growth in conversational skills, including turn-taking and adaptability based on context and audience. Overall, these evaluation criteria offer a comprehensive understanding of children's development in dialogic literacy, emphasizing active engagement, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills.

Table 6

Findings: Evaluation Criteria

Thematic Category	Findings
Increased Participation	Increased participation is an indicator of progress in dialogic literacy. Evaluation focuses on whether children actively engage in discussions, share ideas, and contribute to conversations.
Expanded Vocabulary	Expanded vocabulary is an important indicator of progress in dialogic literacy. Assessment involves evaluating whether children are using a wider range of words, and demonstrating growth in language skills and expressive ability.
Asking and Answering Questions	The ability to ask and answer questions is a key indicator in assessing dialogic literacy. Evaluation includes children's capacity to initiate meaningful questions and provide thoughtful responses during discussions, reflecting comprehension and critical thinking skills.
Depth and Quality of Conversations	The depth and quality of conversations serve as indicators of progress in dialogic literacy. Assessment involves evaluating whether children engage in meaningful exchanges, build upon each other's ideas, and demonstrate a deeper understanding of the topics discussed.
Targeted Interventions	Addressing individual needs in dialogic literacy involves providing targeted interventions such as additional practice opportunities, tailored questioning techniques, and specific language supports to scaffold children's participation and comprehension.
One-on-One Discussions	One-on-one discussions are effective in addressing individual needs in dialogic literacy. They allow for focused support, concept clarification, and the development of communication skills at the child's own pace.
Scaffolded Questioning Techniques	Scaffolded questioning techniques support children who require additional assistance in dialogic literacy. They involve gradually increasing the complexity of questions, providing prompts, and offering guidance to help them engage in meaningful dialogic interactions.

Thematic Category	Findings
Building on Others' Ideas	Evaluating dialogic literacy includes assessing children's ability to build on others' ideas. Observation focuses on whether they actively listen, respond respectfully, and make connections between their own thoughts and those shared by their peers.
Conversational Skills	Growth in conversational skills is considered in evaluating dialogic literacy. Assessment includes children's ability to engage in turn-taking, maintain a dialogue, and adapt their language and communication style based on the context and audience.

Indeed, interviewed educators supported that *“One of the indicators we look for in evaluating dialogic literacy is increased participation. We observe whether children are actively engaged in discussions, sharing their ideas, and contributing to conversations.”* (Educator D) while *“Expanded vocabulary is another important indicator of progress in dialogic literacy. We assess whether children are using a wider range of words, demonstrating growth in their language skills and ability to express themselves.”* (Educator B). At the same time, *“The ability to ask and answer questions is a key indicator we look for. We assess children's capacity to initiate meaningful questions and provide thoughtful responses during discussions, which reflects their comprehension and critical thinking skills.”* (Educator C)

Findings: Collaboration with Parents

With regards to parental involvement in the attempts to foster dialogic literacy to preschoolers, the table presents a summarized overview of the findings derived from the interviews conducted. Fostering dialogic literacy in preschoolers involves collaborative efforts with parents. Educators provide resources and materials for home use, offer regular updates share strategies with parents, and encourage the creation of a language-rich environment. Collaborative activities include parent-educator conferences, workshops, and inviting parents to classroom events. Valuing cultural stories, establishing open

communication, and utilizing digital platforms enhance parental involvement. Take-home activities and promoting engagement through diverse methods contribute to the overall goal of supporting dialogic literacy. This collaborative approach ensures a strong partnership between home and school in nurturing children's language development.

Indicatively, Educator E stated *“We involve parents in promoting dialogic literacy by providing them with resources and materials that they can use at home. This includes book recommendations, conversation starters, and suggestions for engaging activities”*, while educator C claimed that *“Collaboration with parents is essential in fostering dialogic literacy. We provide regular updates on the importance of dialogic interactions and share strategies that parents can use to promote meaningful conversations with their children at home.”* It is also worth mentioning that educators stated *“We establish open lines of communication with parents, encouraging them to share observations, questions, and ideas related to their child's language development. It creates a collaborative partnership between home and school in supporting dialogic literacy.”* (Educator I) and *“We use digital platforms or communication tools to engage parents in dialogic literacy. We share resources, tips, and examples of dialogic interactions through newsletters, online forums, or dedicated parent-educator communication channels.”* (Educator J)

Table 7

Findings: Collaboration with Parents

Thematic Category	Findings
Providing Resources and Materials	Involving parents in promoting dialogic literacy includes providing them with resources and materials that they can use at home. This may involve book recommendations, conversation starters, and suggestions for engaging activities.
Regular Updates and Sharing Strategies	Collaboration with parents is essential in fostering dialogic literacy. Educators provide regular updates on the importance of dialogic interactions and share strategies that parents can use to promote meaningful conversations with their children at home.
Creating a Language-Rich Environment	Educators encourage parents to create a language-rich environment at home. This includes providing ideas for incorporating dialogic literacy into daily routines, such as during mealtime conversations, bedtime stories, or family discussions.
Collaboration through Conferences	Parent-educator conferences serve as opportunities to discuss the importance of dialogic literacy and provide specific feedback on children's progress. Educators collaborate with parents to set goals and develop strategies to support their child's communication skills at home.

Thematic Category	Findings
Workshops or Parent Education Sessions	Organizing workshops or parent education sessions focused on dialogic literacy provides parents with practical tips, techniques, and demonstrations on how to engage in meaningful conversations and promote language development with their children.
Inviting Parents to Classroom Events	Involving parents in dialogic literacy includes inviting them to classroom events or special reading activities. This provides opportunities for parents to observe and engage in dialogic interactions alongside their children.
Valuing Cultural Stories and Experiences	Educators encourage parents to share their own cultural stories, traditions, and experiences with their children. By valuing and incorporating diverse perspectives, dialogic literacy is fostered, celebrating different backgrounds and promoting understanding.
Take-Home Activities	Creating take-home activities that involve parents and children in dialogic literacy fosters engagement. These activities may include discussion prompts, storytelling kits, or collaborative projects that families can work on together.
Establishing Open Communication	Educators establish open lines of communication with parents, encouraging them to share observations, questions, and ideas related to their child's language development. This creates a collaborative partnership between home and school in supporting dialogic literacy.
Digital Platforms and Communication Tools	Involving parents in dialogic literacy can be done through digital platforms or communication tools. Educators use newsletters, online forums, or dedicated parent-educator communication channels to share resources, tips, and examples of dialogic interactions with parents.

Conclusion

This study delved into the perspectives of preschool educators on dialogic literacy in preschoolers. Through in-depth interviews, valuable insights were obtained regarding how educators define dialogic literacy, understand its importance, employ strategies and activities, assess progress, and involve parents in promoting dialogic interactions at home.

The findings of this study align with previous research that emphasizes the role of dialogic literacy in enhancing language development, communication skills, critical thinking, and social interaction in young children (Gardner-Neblett & Gallagher, 2020; Rowe, 2012). Educators in this study acknowledged the significance of dialogic literacy in fostering language fluency, comprehension skills, confidence, and active engagement in classroom discussions (Hall et al., 2018; Pianta et al., 2009).

It seemed that they implemented a range of strategies such as turn-taking, active listening, wait time, and modelling effective communication to facilitate dialogic interactions among preschoolers (Fleer, 2015; Neuman & Wright, 2014). The incorporation of activities like group storytelling sessions, collaborative projects, and guided discussions aligned with the literature on promoting dialogic literacy in early childhood education (Bodrova & Leong, 2006; Yaden et al., 2016).

Assessment methods used by educators in this study, including observations, individual and group discussions, and anecdotal records, were consistent with existing literature on assessing dialogic literacy (Snow, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). These methods provide valuable insights into children's participation, vocabulary growth, and depth of conversations

(Justice et al., 2005; Wellman et al., 2009).

Collaborating with guardians to encourage dialogic literacy is a vital component of preschool education (Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). Utilizing electronic platforms, communication devices, bulletins, internet discussion boards, and exclusive communication pathways to involve guardians is consistent with studies that underscore the significance of collaborations between schools and households (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Sarama & Diener, 2005).

These research discoveries add to the current comprehension of communicative proficiency in early childhood education. Insights offered by them can be useful for improving dialogic practices in early childhood settings for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers. By acknowledging the importance of interactive literacy and utilizing efficient techniques, educators have the ability to generate captivating and enhancing educational opportunities that encourage linguistic advancement, analytical reasoning, and socio-emotional maturation in young children.

It is suggested that further investigation be conducted to examine the lasting impacts of dialogic literacy on the academic success, social abilities, and general growth of children. Furthermore, further investigations into the viewpoints and encounters of caregivers in encouraging dialogic exchanges within their households would offer more comprehension into successful collaborations between schools and homes. In the end, through promoting communication skills in early childhood education and collaborating with parents, we can establish a solid base for children's language development, ability to communicate, and enduring passion for education.

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