THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF POETRY IN ENGLISH IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF TWO SCHOOLS IN VOI DIVISION

BY

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Mwawasi, Mwandoe
The teaching and learning of poetry in...
DECLARATION

This Thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved and real unsung heroes;

My Father - Shingira Vita Mwawasi and
My Mother - Khasungu Mwawasi for educating me at great financial cost, their unending love and teaching me the virtue of hard work.

And

Mukulah Anyika, my love and companion along life’s way. You shared in my joys and sorrows during the course of this work.
Concern over teaching and learning in Kenya’s education history was first voiced by Binn’s Report (1952). In post independent Kenya, the same concern was taken up by the Ominde Commission of 1964 and lately the Koech Commission of 1998. Available literature on poetry reveals that many students in secondary schools find poetry difficult and mysterious. According to Amateshe (1988), many students in our secondary schools have in fact tended to shy away from any discussion related to written poetry. Poetry is usually described as the most difficult genre to understand (Alembi 1998). Teachers and pupils alike experience fear of poetry and this makes it inaccessible, dry and difficult. In many Kenyan schools, love for, appreciation and popularity of poetry continue to wane (Ministry of Education 1992 (b), Hargreaves and Robin 1981).

The main objective of this study therefore was to investigate into the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English in Kenya. This is an ethnographic study of two schools in Voi division of Taita-Taveta district, Coast province. Being an ethnographic study, the two secondary schools were purposively selected for the study to obtain qualitative data from two (2) poetry teachers and sixty four (64) form three students of the selected schools. Information on the teaching and learning of poetry in schools was obtained through observation, interviews for teachers and a questionnaire for students. Observational data and information obtained by interviews was analyzed descriptively. Simple descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages were employed to analyze information obtained by means of students’ questionnaire. The analyzed data was then presented in narrative form.

The study revealed that although the two teachers studied were generally of sound academic and professional qualifications, they were found lacking in classroom preparedness. Another finding was that, poetry was not taught and learnt well. At the same time both teachers and students faced a number of problems during the teaching and learning of poetry. This study thus concluded that there were various factors that hinder the teaching and learning of poetry in English in Voi division. The study therefore recommends continuous supervision and in-service training for all teachers of poetry. The study also recommends collaborative teaching in schools as a means of sharing experiences by teachers among other recommendations.

Among other suggestions, the researcher suggests that further research be conducted with a larger sample in geographical regions other than Voi to determine the extent to which poetry teaching and learning objectives have been achieved in Kenya secondary schools.
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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

(a) KNEC – Kenya National Examinations Council.
(b) K.C.S.E - Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
(c) K.I.E - Kenya Institute of Education
(d) A.E.O. – Area Education Officer.
(e) D.E.O – District Education Officer.
(f) I.E.A. - International Association of Evaluation of Educational Achievement.

(g) 3P Model – Is a model that stresses the interdependence of learning and teaching. The model draws attention to three stages; presage – process-product, hence 3P.

(h) TIQET - Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training.
(i) G.E.P- Global Education Partnership.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt is made to look at poetry as a genre of literature and the objectives of teaching poetry in the secondary school curriculum in Kenya. All this forms the background to the study. The chapter also includes the theoretical framework, statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Assumptions of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study and definition of key terms used in the study are also in this chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Poetry

Different people have different definitions of poetry. Amateshe (1988) for instance defines poetry as a form of expression usually elevated to the realm of figurative language. Hornby (1992) on the other hand says that poetry is a piece of creative writing in verse especially one expressing deep feelings or noble thoughts in beautiful language. According to Miruka (1994) and Lo Liyong (1986), poetry is simply song and it forms part and parcel of a people’s total way of life. Miruka for instance says people sing when they fight, work, when a child is born and when death takes a toll. According to Miruka, all this is poetry. Poetry is therefore, the expression of powerful human feelings, thoughts and ideas using words and sounds arranged in the best manner possible.

In this study, poetry was defined according to Simpson (1989). He says that poetry refers to composition in verse or metrical language or in some equivalent patterned arrangement
of language usually also with choice of elevated words and figurative uses with the
option of a syntactical order differing more or less from those of ordinary speech or prose
writing. This definition is thought to be most suitable in this study because it explicitly
defines poetry as it is studied in schools. The above definition also avoids the confusion
the term song may cause considering that there is also music as a subject of study in
schools.

1.1.2 Role of Poetry in Society

In the past, poetry was often seen as the voice of society. According to Thompson (1978),
poetry has an important role to play in society. Thompson argues that in England, up to
the time of Elizabeth I for instance, poetry was used to celebrate and comment on nearly
every event in life from birth to death. He continues to say that in Wales and Scotland,
poetry was used to support authority and an ordered state of affairs. Thompson also says
that poetry makes a contribution to the health and growth of language. The poetry of a
people takes its life from the people’s speech and in turn gives life to it.

Aduda (1996) holds the same view as Thompson’s by saying that poetry expresses what
goes on in the society. Reeves (1972) argues that poetry provides supreme expression of
the human spirit and it is the medium for expressing everyday thoughts and feelings such
as anger, love and death.

According to Miruka (1994), poetry has certain ends to meet. These ends include the
following; firstly, poetry can socialize one in the ways of the society. Socialization is a
way of fitting one into the social fabric of society. Through poetry, good is praised while
vice is castigated. Secondly, poetry acts as a form of social commentary. Through poetry,
people express their feelings and ideas about life and whether it is a fulfilling or
discouraging experience. Thirdly, since poetry is composed out of experience, history is
recorded in it. There are many poems with historical allusions about people, events, and
places. Poetry therefore can act as a cultural and historical record.

Poetry also provides one with a means of discovering the truth about oneself and about
human experience (Scholl and White 1970). Scholl and White further note that poetry
enables people to externalize some of their emotions, pushing them away to ease
intolerable pressure they may be in.

According to Reeves (1972), poetry can be used to develop intellectual skills and
sensitivity to language. He further says that poetry can be used to expand the learner’s
imagination and for the learners to experience aesthetic pleasure. This study sought to
find out how the teachers and students responded to works of poetry in a classroom
situation.

From the earliest times, poetry has been regarded as a healing agent. Thompson (1978)
notes that when Saul, King of Israel was morbidly depressed, his staff advised him to
take the music cure. The magical influence of poetry came later to be associated with the
singing of Psalms. The role or uses of poetry in society therefore cannot be over-
emphasized. From the aforesaid, it can be noted that poetry plays several important roles
in society such as education, as a means of language enrichment, and providing a
cathartic effect to the ailing and the depressed among others. Because of the central role
poetry plays in society, it should be well taught and learnt in schools.
Poetry is also the most common form of literary expression in Africa having its origin in the oral tradition of song and chant (Alembi 1998). Poetry recitals have been the core medium of expression in Africa for generations. According to Aduda (1996), songs and chants were common in African communities. Finnegan (1970) notes how topical songs have enabled Africans to express what would not otherwise be said, supplied a means of relaxing tensions that would have been retained and repressed, and acted as a vehicle for resigned comment and an attitude of detachment.

Amateshe (1979) argues that from time immemorial, poetry in Africa has been performed at funerals, marriages, child-naming and other ceremonies. This enabled members of a particular society to share their experiences as emotionally as the occasion allowed. From the aforesaid, poetry thus formed the core of African indigenous cultural life. This study attempted to find out whether or not the students and teachers recited or performed poetry in the classrooms.

1.1.3 Place of Poetry in the Curriculum Before and After 1985.

The year 1985 is an important date in the history of Kenya's education since it marked the inception of the 8-4-4 system of education. Before 1985, we had the 7-4-2-3 system of education in Kenya. In this system, a student took seven years in primary school, four in secondary school, two in higher school and a minimum of three at the university. According to the now defunct East Africa Examinations Council (1978), poetry was being taught within the high school curriculum even before the inception of the 8-4-4 education system. Kibera (1986) asserts that the secondary school syllabus then, remained foreign oriented, despite much lobbying for change. She says that the poetry
that was being taught was English by orientation as most of the poems studied were from Britain.

The 8-4-4 system of education is characterized by changes in the structure of education and in the curriculum. In the 8-4-4 system, a student takes eight years in primary school, four in secondary school and at least four at the university. As regards the curriculum changes of the 8-4-4, one of the changes was the introduction of the integrated English course in secondary schools. Within the integrated English course, English language and literature in English (within which poetry is taught) were integrated. Poetry, together with the other genres of literature namely: drama, oral literature, the novel and the short stories were thus integrated with English language. In curriculum studies, integration has to do with horizontal relationships of experiences. It is the blending or fusion of disciplines especially those that have close similarities to form one composite whole. Under the 8-4-4 integrated English curriculum, poetry was made a compulsory and examinable genre of literature within the secondary school curriculum. The integrated English course runs in secondary schools to date.

At the secondary school level (that is forms 1-4) poetry as a genre of literature is an innovation. Initially the subject was offered in what was referred to as “higher school” or advanced level (forms five and six). With the 8-4-4, poetry was brought lower down the secondary school cycle. In addition, poetry was fused with other aspects of the English language programme. This means that poetry is an innovation within an innovation. Poetry is regarded as a section of English. However, the 1998 Republic of Kenya Commission of Inquiry into the Education System led by Dr. Davy Koech recommended
that English language and literature be taught as separate subjects. The (Koech Report) Republic of Kenya (1998) also recommends that literature in English within which poetry is taught be an elective subject in the secondary school curriculum.

Amateshe (1988) argues that, with regard to the revised 8-4-4 literature syllabuses, emphasis is now being laid more and more on language aspects. He says by learning poetry the students are given the necessary skills in language expression. This is because, educationists strongly believe that a student who has a strong command of the language of instruction inevitably learns other aspects of the school curriculum more easily.

The 8-4-4 poetry content, unlike the one preceding it, which was foreign oriented is localized (Kibera 1986). Much stress is put on Kenyan poetry although poetry from other parts of the world is also taught. According to the Ministry of Education (1985), the poetry content after 1985 is so arranged that it starts with poetry from Kenya, then East Africa and then finally the rest of the world.

1.1.4 Objectives of, Performance in and Attitudes Towards Poetry

1.1.4.1 Objectives of Teaching and Learning Poetry under 8-4-4 Curriculum

According to the Kenya Institute of Education (1987), the teaching and learning of poetry aims at meeting the following objectives:

(i) Provide opportunities for the learners to acquire the creative use of English.
(ii) Enhance the learners’ acquisition of oral skills through recitation of poems.
(iii) Promote writing skills through written exercises based on poetry.
(iv) Contribute to the learners’ development of cognitive skills through the interpretation and analysis of poems.
(v) Provide experiences to help the learners enjoy poetry.

In addition to the objectives, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (K.C.S.E.) syllabus and regulations of 1996 point out that the learners will need to have the kind of knowledge required of them in their final examinations.

1.1.4.2 Performance in Poetry

In the K.C.S.E. examinations, the integrated English course has three examination papers namely: Paper 101/1A (composition) which examines composition writing, Paper 101/1B (Grammar) that tests summary, comprehension and grammar and Paper 101/2 (Literature) which examines drama, the novel, poetry, oral literature and short stories (Ministry of Education 1985).

Over the years, performance in literature has been dismal. A survey of KNEC examination reports pinpoints where the weaknesses lie. The KNEC report of 1990 for instance identifies poetry as an area that requires urgent attention in the English language papers. The report reveals that nationally, candidates had difficulties tackling poetry questions in paper 101/2. The report goes on to say that many students scored zero in this section. Since poetry marks are normally compounded with those from other literary genres, the low scoring adversely affected students’ grades in the English paper 101/2. This in the long run also affected the students’ final grade in English language as a whole. An analysis of students’ achievement at KCSE in English in all the seven schools in Voi Division over a period of five years (1994 –1998) provides a picture of weak performance by students in the subject as shown in Table 1.1.
Table 1.1 K.C.S.E English Mean Scores per School in Voi Division, 1994 – 1998

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<tr>
<td>SCHOOL A</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL B</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL C</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL D</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL E</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL F</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL G</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>3.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Voi Division Education Office (1999).

KNEC has a 12 point scale by which students’ performance is graded (see appendix H on KNEC examinations grading scale). Attainment in the examination is indicated by a grade of which grade “A” is the highest with 12 points and grade “E” is the lowest with one point. From the table above, the students’ average performance at K.C.S.E. averaged at three points for the five-year period which is a very low grade. In the KCSE grading system three points on the 12 point scale represent Grade “D”.

Table 1.1 therefore shows that performance in integrated English course in Voi Division secondary schools has been weak over the years 1994 – 1998. This, as already indicated, could be the result of students’ poor performance in poetry among other factors.

1.1.4.3 Students’ and Teachers’ Attitudes Towards Poetry

There is the question of many students finding the learning of poetry difficult hence shying away from it. The problem of many students feeling in need of specialized instruction when it comes to reading and learning of poetry has in fact been there. Many students in the secondary schools have tended to shy away from any discussions related to written poetry (Kanja 1985, Maley and Duff 1989 and Amateshe 1988). The situation
at the university has not been any better (Williams 1985, Amateshe 1988). According to Hargreaves and Robin (1981), many high school students in Kenya have read little poetry. This unfamiliarity with poetry gives rise to what seems almost a fear of it. The Ministry of Education (1992 b) points out that teachers and pupils alike experience fear of poetry and this leads to their finding poetry inaccessible, dry and difficult. According to Alembi (1998), poetry is usually described as the most difficult genre of literature to understand and many students of literature shy away from studying it. In many Kenyan schools, love for, appreciation and popularity of poetry continues to wane (Ministry of Education 1992 b). This in effect becomes a hindrance to teaching and learning of poetry in schools and its enjoyment by students. The students’ performance in poetry in higher examinations is also adversely affected (Ministry of Education 1987).

According to the Ministry of Education (1987) one cause of the students’ fear of poetry is that, from the beginning, teachers have tended to encourage the idea that all poems are written in a mystical manner. This had the effect of making the students fear poetry right from form one, which becomes a hindrance to their good performance in higher examinations.

Despite poetry being the most problematic genre of literature in the integrated English course, there has not been much information on its teaching and learning in secondary schools. Little is known about how poetry is taught and learnt in a classroom setting. More so, there has not been any study conducted in Voi division on the poetry course. This study hence attempted to investigate the teaching and learning of poetry in English in Voi secondary schools in an attempt to unveil what actually takes place during the
implementation of the poetry curriculum. The study provided some insights on the implementation of the poetry curriculum at the classroom level; information which I used to make recommendations for the improvement of the poetry curriculum in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study stems from the observation that there is poor performance by students in the integrated English course in Voi Division secondary schools (see Table 1.1 in the background to the study pg. 3). From the table, it can be noted that the students’ English average performance at K.C.S.E level examination for the five-year period was grade “D”. As already argued, this could be the result of students’ weak performance in poetry among other factors.

KNEC also considers poetry problematic and further points out that students perform poorly in it. Arising from the fact that KNEC reports point out that students nationally found it difficult tackling the poetry section of the English paper 101/2 in K.C.S.E. hence most of them scoring zero in this section and from the observation that poetry has for a long time been on its own and not part of English in the secondary school curriculum and also because of my interest in doing research in poetry, I therefore was out to find out the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English in some selected schools in Voi Division of Taita-Taveta district of Coast province.

Despite being an important genre of literature in secondary schools, there is not much information on how poetry is taught and learnt in actual classrooms. The present study therefore sought to fill this gap by providing data on the teaching and learning of poetry in Voi Division for the purpose of attempting to explain what actually takes place during
poetry lessons. Such data would help in coming up with a prognosis of the possible impacts of what goes on in the teaching and learning of poetry and performance in it. This study sought to investigate the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the implementation of poetry in English curriculum in Kenya secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

(i) How well the teachers were prepared to teach poetry.
(ii) The teaching-learning methods which teachers employ in teaching poetry.
(iii) The students' perceptions of the teaching-learning methods adopted viz. their ability to learn poetry.
(iv) The problems which teachers and students encountered in the teaching and learning of poetry respectively.
(v) How teachers and students utilize the available resources in the teaching and learning of poetry.
(vi) The amount of time allocated to poetry teaching and learning and how it was utilized.
(vii) Whether or not the poetry course textbooks used are well sequenced to allow for easy teaching and learning of poetry.

1.4 Research Questions

To provide information that may be used to improve students' learning of poetry the research problem was investigated based on the following research questions:

(i) How well are the teachers prepared to teach poetry during pre-service training?
(ii) How well do teachers prepare lessons for teaching poetry?
(iii) What teaching-learning methods do teachers employ in teaching poetry?

(iv) What are the students’ perceptions of the teaching-learning methods adopted viz. their ability to learn poetry?

(v) What problems do teachers and students respectively encounter in the teaching and learning of poetry?

(vi) How do teachers and students utilize the available resources in the teaching and learning of poetry?

(vii) How much time is allocated to poetry and how is it utilized?

(viii) Why do teachers use the poetry course textbooks that they use?

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by a combination of Husén and Neville (1995) theory of meaningful learning and Entwistle (1990) model of teaching and learning. According to Husén and Neville’s (1995) theory, the teacher plays an important role by ensuring that the learner is engaged appropriately in the teaching/learning process. The five characteristics of meaningful learning are:

(i) Active learning - the learner must carry out various cognitive operations on the information being learned for it to be acquired in a meaningful way.

(ii) Constructive learning - Each learner perceives and interprets information in a unique manner based on factors such as prior knowledge, interest and motivation, and then elaborates this information by relating it to existing knowledge and other aspects learned.

(iii) Cumulative learning – new knowledge or learning builds upon the individuals’ prior knowledge and mental models although prior knowledge can inhibit as well as facilitate new learning.

(iv) Self-regulated learning – as learning progresses, the learner must make decisions
about what to do next for example seek an answer to a question that comes to
mind, look for similarities among various pieces of information. Effective
learners also monitor the learning process by making periodic checks of how well
the material is understood.

(v) Goal oriented learning – meaningful learning is more likely to be successful if the
learner has at least a general idea of the goal being pursued and holds appropriate
expectations for achieving the desired understanding. This then calls for learner’s
activity in the learning venture.

Husen and Neville’s theory of meaningful learning suggests that active participation of
learners in the teaching-learning process is central. For learners to achieve desired
outcomes in poetry learning and for them to enjoy poetry, the five characteristics of
meaningful learning all of which depend on the learner’s active engagement should be
taken into consideration in the teaching and learning process. In this study, poetry lesson
observations were conducted to gather data on how actively students participated in their
learning.

Husen and Neville’s theory was combined with Entwistle’s (1990) model of teaching and
learning. According to Anderson (1995), models specify the major concepts that we use
to understand our worlds along with the relationships among these concepts. Entwistle’s
model draws attention to three stages: - presage, process and product, hence he refers to it
as the 3P model. The following is a diagrammatic representation of Entwistle’s (1990) 3P
model.
Presage refers to those factors that are established before the learning event takes place. Presage factors set the scene for learning and are of two kinds: those brought in by the students and those brought in by the teacher. The presage stage of the model was important as it guided me on the kind of information (such as teaching methods, time for learning and students' perceptions of the teaching-learning methods adopted by their teachers) to seek from respondents. It identified what to look for during the research work.

Process factors are those learning processes that the teacher and the students collectively set in place. How each may relate to the particular set of processes involved during any
given lesson depends on the context set by the teacher (Entwistle 1990). Teaching methods lead to a variety of learning – related reactions on the part of the students. The role of the teacher is to see that these actions lead to desired outcomes.

In the case of this study, the desired outcomes are to see the students getting good grades in English. Amateshe (1988) also says that one of the main objectives of teaching and learning of poetry is enjoyment. Therefore another desired outcome expected was to see the students enjoying the learning of poetry. According to Noar (1963) teaching and learning deals with how teachers and students perform their tasks and carry out their responsibilities. It deals with the methods the teachers use in setting up many and varied student learning experiences. The process stage was the focus of this study. The study set out to document those learning processes that teachers and students set in place in order to obtain desired learning outcomes.

**PRODUCT**

According to Entwistle (1990), product refers to the outcome of learning, which can be evaluated quantitatively (how much was learned), qualitatively (how well it was learned) and institutionally (what grades or public recognition it earns). This study was prompted by learning outcomes in poetry at secondary school level as reported in the KNEC reports.

**1.6 Significance of the study**

The researcher expects the findings of the study to be significant in the following ways:

(a) Given that there are few studies on the poetry course in Kenya (and none that I could find on Voi Division), this study provides information that could lead to
better teaching and learning of the course. The study may also be useful in a way that will enable other teachers of poetry to recognize problems and possibly to seek ways of solving similar problems in their own schools.

(b) The findings from the analyzed data will contribute to the improvement in students' achievement in the integrated English course since poetry forms a section of the integrated English course. The recommendations arising from the findings of the study will be invaluable towards improvement on the teaching and learning of poetry in secondary schools. Even if literature was made an elective genre as recommended by the Koech Commission (1998), the findings will still be useful because some students will still be taking poetry.

(c) This study provides some information on the factors underlying the teaching and learning of poetry at secondary school level and makes recommendations that may be useful to teachers, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and curriculum developers in setting up remedies for poor teaching and learning of the course. It has also come up with suggestions that may lead to the improvement of the present poetry curriculum or the development of a completely new poetry syllabus in Kenya.

(d) It is also hoped that the study will serve as a springboard from which further research will be conducted in the area of secondary school poetry curriculum.

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The assumptions underlying the study were:

(i) All the teachers in Voi Division teach the poetry content approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology.
(ii) The respondents would give honest responses.

(iii) Poetry is a worthwhile area of learning in the secondary school curriculum.

(iv) If poetry is well taught and learned, there would be improved performance in integrated English examinations.

(v) All secondary schools in Voi Division offer poetry as a genre of literature.

(vi) Teachers are aware and familiar with curriculum innovations or changes in the secondary school poetry curriculum.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

There are many factors that influence the teaching and learning of poetry in secondary schools for example teaching-learning resources and teacher and student attitudes towards the subject. This study focussed on the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English in Voi Division of Taita-Taveta District.

The study also focussed on the use of an ethnographic research design and the use of observation, interviews and a student's questionnaire as the procedures and instruments for data collection.

The study was conducted in only one division in a district with five divisions. My limitation of the study to Voi Division was due to financial and time considerations. Limitation of the study to Voi Division reduces the generalizability of the findings to the other five divisions in Taita-Taveta District, Coast Province, and the rest of Kenya despite the fact that the same poetry syllabus is in use. This is because Voi Division may be influenced by unique teaching-learning factors that may not necessarily be found in
the rest of the country.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms.

For the purposes of this study, the following terms were used as defined on this page.

(i) School curriculum: it was taken to refer to all the subjects that a school offered to learners.

(ii) Teaching learning methods: these are the strategies employed by teachers in the teaching-learning process.

(iii) Genre: genre refers to particular kinds of works of art or literature for example poetry, oral literature grouped according to their form or subject matter. (Hornby 1992)

(iv) Integrated English Course: refers to the teaching of English language and literature as one subject “ENGLISH” (Kenya Institute of Education 1987).

(v) Ethnography: can be defined as an in-depth analytical description of a phenomena in an intact cultural scene and as it naturally occurs (Borg, W. and Gall, M. 1971).

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter dealing with the background to the study, statement of the problem, theoretical framework and the purpose of the study. The chapter also deals with research questions, assumptions of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and limitations of the study and definitions of key terms. Chapter two reviews literature related to the present study. Chapter three presents the methodology adopted in conducting the research. This included such details as the research design, study locale, target population, sampling procedures, research instruments and the procedures for data collection and analysis. In
Chapter four, data is presented, analyzed and discussed. Chapter five presents a summary of research findings, conclusion, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research.

1.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter one dealt with the background to the problem in which the place of poetry in the 8-4-4-school curriculum was highlighted. The importance of poetry as genre of literature and as part of the language-training programme of the integrated English course was also discussed. The same chapter described in detail the theoretical framework that guided the study. It also noted that there was no known or particular study done on poetry teaching and learning hence the need for the present study. Chapter two of the thesis reviews literature related to the study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, literature related to the problem is reviewed under the following headings: teaching-learning methods in general, techniques recommended for poetry teaching and learning, recommended poetry teaching and learning activities, teaching-learning resources and time and poetry teaching and learning. There is also literature on poetry studies conducted in Kenya and organization and structure of poetry content and learning.

2.2 Teaching – Learning Methods in General

In the history of education, a great deal of research has focused on the practice of teaching as opposed to learning, on methods used and on the problems that hinder teacher effectiveness (Entwistle 1990). This study on the other hand focussed on both the practice of teaching and learning in a classroom situation.

Philosophers such as Dewey, Pestallozzi, Montessori and Froebel argue that the effectiveness of teaching and learning is determined by the type of teaching methods applied (Goddard 1974). Though these Philosophers were talking about the teaching and learning of young children, the same applies to secondary school students. According to Hayman (1970) to teach a curriculum content, a particular way of teaching has to be chosen and that way has a significant effect on the entire teaching and learning situation.

This study attempted to find out the teaching and learning methods teachers used in the teaching of poetry.

Many educators such as Dewey, Montessori and Holt among others emphasize the child -
Many educators such as Dewey, Montessori and Holt among others emphasize the child-centred approach to education. Shwebel and Ralph (1974) say that passivity is the enemy of intellectual and social development. The effort against it, they say must be energetic and unrelenting.

Williams (1985) laments that the problem of many students feeling in need of specialized instruction when it comes to reading and learning of poetry has in fact been in the making for some two hundred years. So there was need to carry out a study to investigate why this was the case. Craig (1989) also says that teaching-learning methods are related to the role of the class teacher as a powerful organizer of curriculum strategy. Apart from the need for specialized instruction in poetry, other things that could be problematic include: the language used by poets (Kanja 1985), learner and teacher attitudes towards poetry (Kamau 1986) and meaningful use of resources in poetry teaching (Karanga 1986).

In Kenya’s post-independent education history, concern over teaching-learning methodology was first voiced by the Kenya Education Commission of 1964. The Commission report blamed the drill method of teaching and neglect of activity and pupil participatory methods for low achievement in education. The report recommended that teachers adjust their instruction to the needs of particular learners and use activity methods so as to make education child-centred.

More recently, the Republic of Kenya (1998) (Koech Commission) expressed the same concern over teaching-learning methods. The Koech Report alludes to the same question of teaching and learning. The report says that the new system of education to be called Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET) aims at an approach that
places the learning needs of students at the centre of all education and training activities. This study therefore made an attempt to find out whether secondary school poetry teachers followed the recommended child-centred methods of teaching and learning.

2.3 Techniques Recommended for Poetry Teaching and Learning

The role of teaching-learning techniques in relation to student learning and achievement cannot be overstated. Schmuck and Mark (1966) argue that learner-centred teaching-learning methods lead to improved learning atmosphere in the classroom. According to Anderson (1995), teachers through their teaching techniques influence the learning of students while Briault (1974) says that when talking about learning, it is always in the light that teaching techniques play an important part in it. Because of the central role teaching techniques play in any learning venture this study therefore attempted to look at the methods teachers used in their teaching of poetry.

According to De Haven (1983), teaching poetry involves a delicate balance between leading students to their own interpretations of poems and guiding them towards knowledge that enhances their poetry experiences. Scholars the world over have advanced several techniques that could be used to teach poetry. De Haven (1983) and Kohl (1977) argue that as one of the ways of teaching poetry, the teachers need to read poetry aloud because the rhythm and sound of poetry is important. The ability to read out well to others and to tell stories, they say, is an invaluable skill in any poetry teaching situation. The teachers should also provide a warm and rich environment that encourages learners to read and write poetry. According to Mutero (2001) among the most important variables in teaching and learning of any subject identified as early as the 1960’s, is the
ability of the teacher to create a warm democratic atmosphere for learning. Teachers are central figures in curriculum implementation as they are the ones who receive, interpret and implement the objectives of any learning activity (Rombo 1989). Other curriculum writers such as Bishop (1985), Hawes (1979) and (1978), Okech and Asiachi (1992) and Howson (1973) among others support the view. This study sought to find out how teachers taught poetry in the classroom. It also attempted to find out whether teachers in the classroom provided an environment that encouraged children to read and write poetry.

Davies and Stratton (1984) also say that plenty of opportunities for students to express their reactions to the poems they read should be provided. This, he says, will not only help them refine and clarify their responses but also give them practice in using language to express themselves precisely. Teachers should also use a teaching/learning approach to poetry that would both encourage the students to see appreciation as a personal exploration of poems and help them develop the intellectual skills and abilities necessary for such exploration. Teaching-learning techniques that are learner-centred are more likely to lead to this.

Davies and Stratton (1984) say that in addition to providing plenty of opportunities for learners to express their reactions to the poems they read, if our teaching techniques are to be successful, the activities we design should be within the capabilities of the students and should appeal to their interests at that particular stage of development. The present study hence sought to find out whether the activities teachers designed were within the capabilities and interests of students at form three level. This information was sought by
observing how the students responded to the activities so designed by the teachers.

Reeves (1972) on the other hand observes that poetry should be taught such that a poem is the centre of an active and pleasurable experience. A poetry lesson should be lively and teaching-learning techniques should be constantly varied. Above all, the teacher must keep the lesson moving, avoid monotony and preserve the elements of surprise, wonder and enjoyment. Amateshe (1988) points out that in poetry teaching and learning, the emphasis in all cases should be on enjoyment.

Newton and Handley (1971) views are in agreement with Davies and Stratton (1984) and Reeves (1972) views on teaching poetry. They say that activities should be provided for learners to learn poetry, and teachers should use their own experiences and materials available to teach poetry. Brownjohn (1981) says that the teacher should be interested in and enthusiastic about poetry, otherwise the learners will be indifferent towards it. It should be noted that the way a teacher teaches a subject may reflect whether or not he or she is interested in teaching it.

Harste (1984) and Fly (1992) suggest that student-led discussions can be useful and successful in poetry teaching and learning especially when the teacher has made the interpretive process explicit at an earlier point in time. Claessen (1994) on the other hand says that poetry aims at students achieving communicative or speaking competence. He therefore suggests that teachers follow communicative approaches in their teaching of poetry. The main objective of teaching and learning of poetry is to show that students enjoy this type of literature, identify and appreciate cultural aspects expressed through poetry, discover their relevance to life and finally find in the poems a stimulus for
creative language use by students (Claessen 1994). Though Claessen, a Kenyan author could have been writing for a broader audience, his suggestions are also true for the Kenyan situation.

Educationists generally agree that learning is a result of good and effective teaching-learning techniques that should produce observable positive changes in pupil behaviour. Craig (1987) points out that the one undisputed requirement of good results is good teaching and that performance in the classroom lies at the heart of the teacher’s professional skills. Nacino-Brown (1994) argues that the curriculum is not so much what is found in the printed guide (syllabus or schemes of work) as what the teacher makes of it in the classroom. It is the teachers’ adaptation of the curriculum that really counts. The success of any curriculum depends on adequate supply of qualified and dedicated teachers to oversee the country’s schools (Fagbongbe 1971). Walwenda (1986) adds that the more qualified and better trained teachers are, the easier it is to effect curriculum implementation. To a majority of students, how poetry is taught will make all the difference in their attitudes towards it (Reeves 1972). This study thus sought to find out the poetry teacher’s academic and professional qualifications.

Newton and Handley (1971) argue that sometimes the student may find a distinct hostility exhibited by the students’ aversion against the reading of a poem, a this-is-a-waste-of-time attitude particularly at the secondary school stage. Other times little attempt is made to help the students go beyond the answering of questions to a discovery of what is in poetry (Maley and Duff 1989). This study thus attempted to find out how the teachers helped the students in discovering what was in poetry. The study sought to
find out whether the teachers helped the students to go beyond mere answering of questions to enjoying the totality of poetry teaching and learning. The study also attempted to find out how the teachers kept the poetry lessons moving and hence making them enjoyable. It attempted to find out whether the students arranged for and used student-led discussions and whether they interpreted the poems they taught in class.

2.3.1 Recommended Poetry Teaching-Learning Activities

Various authors suggest several activities that could be used to teach and learn poetry. Davies and Stratton (1984), Reeves (1972), Newton and Handley (1971) and Kenya Institute of Education (1987) for instance recommend the following poetry teaching and learning activities.

(i) Discussions:
Discussions are recommended for poetry teaching and learning because they are somewhat less structured and less teacher-directed. Discussions encourage genuine intellectual exchange and thus foster intellectual growth. Discussions that evolve into debate in classrooms are one of the clearest indications that learning is taking place.

(ii) Choral Reading – Is a teaching-learning technique used in poetry teaching whereby part or the entire poem is read by a group or all the students in a class at a go. It is an ideal way of enjoying a poem and a useful way of getting into a poem. Reading poems aloud gives students practise in articulation.

(iii) Dramatization – Dramatization is not only fun, it also gives the students an opportunity to demonstrate their attitudes to a particular character and the situation in which the character finds himself/herself and to react to the events as if they were actually experiencing them. This study therefore attempted to find out whether poetry
teachers planned for and used discussions, choral reading and dramatization in poetry teaching and learning in their schools.

The Kenya secondary school poetry teacher does not require techniques other than the universally recommended ones discussed above. Various documents have outlined recommended methods for poetry teaching in secondary schools in Kenya. A brief review of this literature follows below. The recommendations have been made by the Kenya Institute of Education (Kenya’s main curriculum developing body), the Kenya National Examinations Council and Kenyan authors of poetry textbooks whose books most teachers use.

Kenya Institute of Education (1987) recommends the following teaching-learning techniques for use in teaching poetry:

1. Reading the poem – the teacher should ensure that every member of the class has access to the written poem. The poem could be written on the blackboard or copied in their books before hand.

2. The teacher should read the poem right through and in a natural voice but making sure that the right words are being emphasized and pauses are being made in appropriate places. An effort should be made to convey the beauty and mood of the poem.

3. The teacher should use the good readers to enliven the poetry lesson. However, the teacher should use such readers sparingly to avoid the rest of the class thinking that poetry is meant for the gifted.

4. The teacher should draw out responses to the poem from students using already
prepared series of leading questions designed in such a manner as to bring out the fuller meaning of the poem. Teachers should make sure that the students are free to attach different meanings to a poem as long as their responses are based on genuine reaction to the text of the poem.

(5) Assessment/Evaluation – Evaluation should be seen as an integral part of teaching-learning activities. When the teacher is using the question/answer approach in class, he/she is assessing, evaluating and reinforcing. According to KNEC (1995) (K.C.S.E Regulations and Syllabuses 1996-1997), the learners also need to have the kind of knowledge required of them in the final poetry examinations. An attempt was made by this study to find out whether teachers used these techniques when teaching poetry.

Claessen (1994) observes that poetry teaching and learning techniques which should be used in Kenya include active involvement of the students in reciting, singing, dancing, miming, dramatizing and discussing (in pairs, small groups or class). This study was an exploratory study attempting to find what techniques (among other things) were used in poetry teaching and learning.

2.4 Teaching-Learning Resources and Poetry

Teaching and learning resources are considered as basic requirements in any instructional process. Konchar (1992) vividly describes the value of teaching and learning resources in the statement that the foundation of all learning consists in representing clearly to the senses, sensible objects so that they can be appreciated easily. Similarly, many educationists consider teaching and learning resources such as books as being among the
most important requirements for improving learning outcomes.

Scholars and educators maintain that instructional resources facilitate the understanding of difficult concepts and ideas. They make learning an interesting and fulfilling experience, and make it easier for learners to follow, understand, respond to and retain the content of the lesson (Gamble 1984). Resources that are required in poetry teaching and learning include textbooks on poetry, charts and pictures about the poems under study, among other resources.

Unwin and McALeese (1987) clearly outline the advantages of using varied resources in the teaching and learning process. According to the two educators:

(i) Greater learning results are realized when varied instructional resources are integrated into the traditional learning process.

(ii) Equal amount of learning is often accomplished in less time using the resources.

(iii) Learning that involves interaction with various instructional resources is preferred by students.

The assertion that the use of varieties of resources in the process of teaching and learning increases interest, comprehension and retention, is based on the presumption that the more abstract the content of a message, the more difficult it is for the learner to comprehend it (Unwin and McAlase 1987). Thus, teaching resources serve a useful purpose in promoting understanding of concepts and principles. Correct and proper use of such teaching resources can often give concrete representation to abstract ideas and thus make their meaning clear. This study sought to find out whether there were available resources for poetry teaching and learning and also find out how the available resources
were used by both teachers and students in the learning of poetry. This study also sought to find out how teaching-learning resources were utilized by both teachers and students in poetry learning because many people think poetry is too complex and abstract a genre of literature to be easily understood. Brown (1964) defines the use of teaching-learning resources as a combination of human and non-human resources to bring about learning.

2.5 Time and Poetry Teaching and Learning

Time set aside for the purpose of teaching and learning is an important asset in the teaching-learning venture. Summarizing a series of studies conducted under the auspices of the International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievement (I.E.A.), Husén and Postlethwaite (1989) found that there was a relationship between time spent studying a specific subject matter and learning in that subject matter. Proper utilization of time for instructional purposes would thus enhance learning in a particular subject. The present study attempted to find out the amount of time spent in poetry teaching and learning and to assess whether that time was adequate. This is in cognisance of the fact that the poetry content is wide. According to Kenya National Examinations Council (1995) the poetry content covers in detail such aspects as:

- Appreciation of poems for meaning, analysis of the poems, language use and style.

Those aspects covered under style include personification, imagery, alliteration, tone, mode, rhythm, assonance and any other literary devices used in poetry.

World Bank (1990) states that maintaining instruction time requires that teachers are present and teaching during the official instruction periods. In addition, temporary distractions such as administrative or visitor interruptions are avoided and that schools are open during official hours and that children are in attendance.
2.6 Studies on Poetry in Kenya

Much of the research done in the field of poetry is in other aspects other than poetry teaching and learning. Kanja (1985) however conducted a study on why poetry is unpopular in secondary schools. Kanja found out that secondary schools do not have the necessary books to teach poetry. He also says that teachers’ and students’ attitude towards poetry hinders student learning in it. According to Kanja (1985), the teachers’ beliefs that the students would not understand poetry as it was too complicated made the students score dismally in poetry in the national examination. He also cited unavailability of resources in secondary schools as some of the factors that make poetry unpopular. Kanja’s (1985) research was a descriptive study, which employed the questionnaire and interview as data collection instruments. This study is an ethnographic study whose primary data collection procedure/s was observation and interviews for teachers. Data from the students was however collected using a questionnaire.

Kamau (1986) conducted a study in Kiambu district of central Kenya. Kamau studied the teaching and study of literature in general in secondary schools. He found that students manifested a marked aversion to poetry. He shows that 35% of the students he studied indicated that out of the four literary genres namely: the novel, short stories and the play, poetry gave students most difficulties. This then presented a serious handicap in the effective study and teaching of poetry. This study therefore sought to find how available poetry teaching and learning resources were put into use by both the teachers and students. It also sought to find out whether the students still faced the problems identified by Kamau (1986) above.
Apart from those few studies conducted on the teaching and learning of poetry, other researchers have dealt with other aspects of poetry. Amateshe (1979) studied the social function of poetry in underdeveloped societies of East Africa. He identified various individual limitations by the East African poets such as: the poetry tended to exclude a majority of African masses since they were unable to read and understand poetic works and that the poets may have much more concerned with the forms of poetry for their own personal satisfaction. His general conclusion was that the poets should transcend the limitations in order to reinforce the impact of a poem as an artistic work to the African masses.

Chacha (1987) on the other hand studied meaning and interpretation of Swahili poetry as it portrayed a changing society. Chacha’s study gives detailed descriptions on how people compose poetry. He notes how at times the social cultural restrictions and political constraints can condition the poets to employ a large number of metaphors that poets use can give us a picture of the nature of their society. Chacha (1987) concludes that these metaphors are used to reconcile ambiguities and complexities that are found in Swahili poetry.

Another study on poetry was done by Okhoba (1995) who conducted a study on style and meaning of the Abamarachi Children’s poetry. Okhoba’s findings indicate that many children’s oral poems are actually adaptations from adult poetry and reflect the experiences of the general community. The study demonstrated that children are capable of making significant contribution to their own creative literature by adopting and modifying what already exists in their communities and giving it new meaning. All these
are studies on other aspects of poetry other than teaching and learning hence the need to conduct a study on the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English.

2.7 Organization and Structure of Poetry Content and Learning

Organization of curriculum content is an important aspect in curriculum planning. A well-organized curriculum leads to enhanced learning as experiences build one on to another. In his study already cited, Kamau (1986) argues that curriculum content should be accommodating and sensitive to the learners. He says that attention should be paid to the pupil’s level of maturation.

According to Kamau (1986), at the organizational level, content should be carefully planned to include the theoretical aspects of the discipline from which the subject of literature borrows. Organization of the content into thematic categories would not only give it some direction, but it would also allow broader coverage of many types of topics. This study sought to find out from the poetry teachers whether the content of the poetry books they used were sequenced according to themes or any other reasonable ways for example from simple to complex for easy teaching and learning.

The study attempted to investigate into what goes on in a poetry classroom. This included the problems if any, that students and teachers encountered while learning and teaching poetry and the students' perception of the entire poetry teaching and learning process. This was the core of the study since as Bellack (1970) once observed the classroom is the major arena of interaction between the teachers and the child. Here, he says, the curriculum is implemented through specific methods and directly affects the child. It should be noted that since no set books for poetry were indicated in the syllabus,
the study also attempted to find out why the teachers used the poetry books and how they structured or organized the poetry curriculum for its easy teaching and learning by students.

2.8 Chapter Summary

Chapter two dealt with literature related to the problem. It noted how the various teaching-learning approaches adopted by teachers and students were vital to learning. The same chapter also highlighted the important role played by resources in the process of teaching and learning poetry. The organization and structure of curriculum content as an important aspect in curriculum planning was also stated. Chapter three examines the research design and methodology of the study.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
In this chapter, an attempt is made to describe the research design, the study locale, the population, the sample and sampling procedures. The description of data collection instruments, the procedures of data collection and plan for data analysis are also presented.

3.2 Research Design
This was an ethnographic study. Wiersma (1995) argues that within the past two or three decades, ethnographic research in educational context has been receiving increased attention. Undoubtedly, this is in part due to increased acceptance of, and increased interest in, qualitative research. Wiersma further argues that there may be problems in education that can best be tackled, and possibly only can be tackled, through an ethnographic research approach. Also according to Goetz and LeComte (1984), ethnographic research method provides a complete picture of the environment being studied. Ethnographic research emphasizes context, and since so many educational phenomena appear to be context specific, ethnographic research has many applications in educational research.

Wiersma (1995) points out that if we relate the aforegiven definition of ethnography into educational research, we can describe the ethnographic research process as the process of providing holistic descriptions of educational systems, processes and phenomena within their specific contexts. In ethnographic research the researcher observes what is happening as it occurs naturally. In the course of this study the researcher observed what
was happening as the teachers taught poetry in the selected schools.

This study collected information from members of a group of students and teachers about poetry teaching and learning. Then an analysis of the information was made to illuminate the factors influencing the teaching and learning of poetry in secondary schools.

3.3 The Study Locale

The study was carried out in Voi Division of Taita-Taveta District, Coast Province. Singleton (1993) observes that the ideal setting for any study is one that is directly related to the researcher's interests. Having taught in Voi Division, I had a professional interest to do research in the division. At the same time, and most importantly no research had been carried out on the poetry curriculum in Voi Division. There was need therefore, to carry out research on the teaching and learning of poetry in English in secondary schools in the division.

Singleton (1993) further argues that the ideal setting for any study should be easily accessible to the researcher. This was an important consideration given the limited time and finances at my disposal. Voi Division was accessible and convenient to me.

The division was also purposively selected for the study due to poor student achievement in integrated English language at K.C.S.E. Level (See table 1.1 in the background to the study). The KNEC attributes the poor student achievement in English nationally to poor student performance in the poetry section of the English examination.

3.4 Target Population.

The target population for the study was all the seven secondary schools in Voi Division.
According to the Voi Area Education Officer's (A.E.O.'s) Report of 1999, Voi division has a total of fifteen English teachers. The fifteen (15) teachers formed the teachers' population of the study. The English language teachers were chosen for the study because they were directly involved with the teaching and learning of poetry. They were in direct contact with the students and it was their responsibility to effectively implement the content of the poetry syllabus in the classroom. All the form three students (approximately 560 students) comprised the population for the study.

The form one students were not chosen for the study because they had only been introduced to poetry hence had not been so much exposed to the secondary school poetry syllabus for long. The form two students were also not chosen for study even though these students had already had one year of the poetry course unlike their form one counterparts. Involving these students for study meant that the researcher would not have had adequate time to establish rapport with the students and observe all the poetry lessons across two classes that is in form two and three. This would have made the lesson observations unmanageable.

Form three students were targeted because they were deemed to have stayed in school long enough to be familiar with the teaching and learning of poetry so that they could be observed and interviewed from a position of knowledge. Form four students, on the other hand were left out since they were an examination class and the school authorities would not have allowed this class to be used for research purposes since the study was undertaken during the third school term when the students were sitting for their final examinations.
3.5 The Sample

The sample for the study consisted of two purposively selected schools. The two secondary schools that were purposively selected, were enough if manageable observations were to be conducted. Genderwise, Voi Division has two types of schools: mixed sex and girls’ only schools. The girls’ only secondary school was purposively selected for the study. This enabled me to have a gender representative sample from the two types of schools for the study.

Out of the fifteen (15) English language teachers (five male and ten (10) female), two of them participated in the research study. At least a male and a female teacher were studied.

The study sample also consisted of 64 form three students. The total sample was therefore sixty six (66). The small sample for the study was as a result of involving only two schools, two teachers and two classes in the research. This was however, a sufficient number from which data for the study could be drawn since this was an ethnographic study.

3.5.1 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was used to select the two secondary schools for the study. According to Peil (1995), in purposive sampling sample elements are chosen because they fulfil certain criteria with which the research is concerned. For this study, out of the six mixed secondary schools in the division and depending on the gender of the poetry teacher in the only girls’ school, one mixed secondary school was purposively selected. Since the only girls’ school in the division which was purposively selected for the study
had a male poetry teacher, the mixed secondary school selected had to have at least a female poetry teacher.

Since the mixed school was double streamed the class taught by a female teacher was purposively selected for study. The female teacher selected was one among the 10 female English/literature teachers in Voi division.

3.6 Description of Data Collection Instruments and Procedures.

The major data collection procedure used in this study was classroom observation of the poetry lessons (see appendices A and B). Wiersma (1995) says that the mainstay of data collection in ethnographic research is observation and a basic form of data is field notes. In addition, the English language teachers were interviewed as a means of following up on what was observed in the classrooms. The form three students on the other hand completed a questionnaire from which information on their perceptions of poetry teaching and learning was obtained (see appendices C and D).

3.6.1 Classroom Observation Procedures

Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) argue that classroom observation is an important data collection procedure because of the range and reliability of information it provides. Classroom observation produces a broad description of the class teacher's practices and methods. It is also one of the primary research data collection procedures (Cohen 1976, Prasad and Reddy (1983).

Peil (1995) explains that observation includes listening, asking questions and often participating in activities of the group to get first hand experience of what daily life
involves. According to Peil (1995) observation involves establishing oneself in the community (such as the school), active data collection and writing up the results. Peil says that observation is an invaluable technique for acquiring a rounded view of a situation. Observation as a data collection procedure has several advantages. Ghosh (1992) and Peil (1995) provide the following advantages:

(a) Much can be learned by observing what people actually do and how they do it. This provides a range of reliable data.
(b) Observation is flexible in that events can be examined as they happen. The researcher can see what people actually do in various circumstances, hear their comments and ask for explanations on the spot. Observation is therefore much wider in scope and can be carried out for all possible cases.

In order to derive worthwhile information from the data, I adopted a structured approach and I devised some form of recording in order to identify aspects of behaviour which was identified before hand as being of likely relevance to the research. This was because the objectives of the study had been identified. According to Wiersma (1995) observation in ethnographic research may be more or less structured depending on the problem being studied.

The observation data collection procedure was used in this study, to observe form three poetry lessons. The two teachers selected for the study were observed in actual classroom teaching. They also participated in the research by being interviewed. During the observations, I focussed on; the teaching-learning methods used by the teachers, whether poetry teaching-learning resources were available, the way the available resources were used in the teaching and learning of poetry, pupil’s enjoyment of or
disinterest in the poetry lessons and the problems encountered in actual classroom
teaching and learning. Many different facets of the problem under study were observed
as and when they arose and came to my notice.

The lesson observations took two months. A total of sixteen lessons (two lessons per
teacher per fortnight) were observed. I considered this duration of time sufficient for the
purposes of the study. Serious teaching and learning in schools also only took two of the
three months of the school term. The two months observational period also allowed for a
deeper understanding of how poetry was taught and learnt in the secondary schools
studied. There is no designated time period for ethnographic observation. The length of
time for a specific study depends on the extent and complexity of the phenomena being
investigated (Wiersma 1995).

Before going to the field, I visited the schools to find out when the teachers taught poetry.
The visits unveiled how teachers scheduled poetry teaching within an integrated English
approach. I prepared a flexible observation guide in advance to guide me on what was to
be observed as the lesson progressed. The lesson observation guide was also used as a
data analysis guide after observation had been completed and full observation notes had
been written down. This was because the observation guide had been sub-divided into
sections related to the problem under study.

According to Ghosh (1992) however, observation as a data collection procedure has its
own problems. He says that observation data may be distorted by a number of factors for
instance prejudice, haste, and conservatism among other factors. In order to have good
observation data, I tried as much as possible to guard against these by having an open
mind on what was to be observed. Ghosh (1992) further says that the selection of relevant facts for the purposes of observation was also an important condition for making sound observations.

Peil (1995) and Bunyi (1996) argue that the presence of an observer will have some effect on the observed. Peil (1995) however says that the problems associated with classroom observation can be minimized by establishing casual friendly contacts as they help build a sense of shared interests. I heeded Peil’s advice by establishing casual friendly contacts with the respondents concerned during the research period. I established rapport with the respondents by visiting the schools and meeting respondents before hand and even as the research work progressed.

This enabled teachers and students to be more comfortable with my presence in their classes hence they were able to carry on with their usual activities fairly normally.

To ensure that all those selected to be observed fully participated in the study, I adopted Anderson and Burns (1989) strategy. I took time to convince the teachers concerned that the study was well planned and capable of contributing important knowledge that would help improve the teaching and learning of poetry in the classrooms. Using such a strategy, Anderson and Burns (1989) say that the teachers would whole-heatedly co-operate. I was also as candid as possible about the records to be made and how they would be used. This resulted into an assured teacher support. I also assured the participating teachers that they would remain anonymous.

3.6.1.1. Data Recording

Note taking as a means of recording data has been used by researchers with great success
In this study, I employed note taking in order to get valid and reliable data. I put down a few key words on a small notebook on what was observed as the lesson progressed.

Peil (1995) provides the advantages of this data recording procedure as that: the very act of writing notes helps to separate the researcher from events, hence retaining objectivity. It also helps focus further observation. The notes included what was said and done, by whom and the reaction of others. Immediately following observation, I expanded on the sketchy notes written in class during observations. Notes were written in narrative form after the sketchy notes written during observations were expanded. Full notes included a detailed description of what was observed, what happened and any reasons that could be given for the impression. They also contained inferences and ideas for analysis. I then synthesized and summarized the field notes and included any interpretations that came to mind.

Interview data was recorded by audio tape and or field notes as necessary. Tape recordings were useful to check the wording of any statement that I might have wished to quote and to check that the notes were accurate. The tape recordings also enabled me to do some content analysis of the information I had gathered in relation to the study under research.

3.7 Interview

According to Satyanarayana, Sharma and Prasad (1983), interviewing is an appropriate technique in any study because it helps the interviewer to cover all the dimensions of the investigation through probing of the respondents. Ghosh (1992) says that an interview is
done to secure information from the person who alone knows the subject or the matter.

Kerlinger (1973) also notes that more people are willing to communicate orally than in writing and therefore provide data more readily in an interview. Prasad (1983) argues that it is possible for the researcher to encourage the respondents to express themselves more freely through an interview. The researcher is also able to probe the respondents and to seek explanations and clarifications where necessary as regards the problem under study. In the present study, I used interviews to encourage the teachers to express themselves as freely as possible about the teaching and learning of poetry.

Ghosh (1992) says that interviewing as a data collection procedure has the following advantages:- An interview is a means of getting direct knowledge personally, and therefore the information is reliable. Through interviewing, it is possible to study those phenomena, which are not open to observation. It is also possible to study abstract factors such as feelings, opinions, reactions and so on and since the method is highly flexible, new questions can be framed and cross-checking can be done under this method.

I used the interviewing technique to gather information on how teachers were trained and how they themselves prepared for the teaching and learning of the poetry course and followed up any issues that arose from classroom observation.

A semi-structured individual interview guide was used to collect data from the teachers. In this interview, the interviewer does not follow a pre-planned list of questions. Wiersma (1995) argues that formal structured interviews with a predefined set of questions may be conducted in ethnographic studies.
To reduce the limitations (such as not getting the cooperation of the potential respondents) of the interview as a data collection technique, I endeavoured to establish a friendly atmosphere and created a positive attitude towards the respondents. Establishment of rapport between the researcher and the respondents is a prerequisite for successful interview (Ghosh 1992). I trust that the interview yielded data that filled gaps in the observational data. I used the data collection procedures/instruments as guides to the information that I sought.

3.8 Students' Questionnaire

In order to obtain information from students, a questionnaire was used. According to Kothari (1993), a questionnaire gives the respondents adequate time to give well thought out answers. All the sixty four (64) students completed a questionnaire about the teaching and learning of poetry in their schools after lesson observations them. The questionnaire was used to elicit information on the students' perception of the teaching-learning methods adopted by the teachers vis-a-vis their ability to learn poetry. The instrument also sought information about the problems encountered, if any, as they learnt poetry and what they thought should be done to solve the problems.

The instrument had both open and closed-ended items. Open-ended items were supposed to give the respondents more freedom to express their opinions and also make suggestions. The closed-ended questions guided the respondents to give specific responses required by the researcher.
(Wiersma 1995) says that pilot run feedback can be very useful for finalizing the research instruments. The purpose of the pilot run is to check for ambiguity, confusion and poorly prepared items. Through piloting of the research procedures/instruments, deficiencies may be uncovered that were not apparent by simply reviewing the items. Additional items may also be suggested and mechanical difficulties in such matters as tabulation may be identified (Wiersma 1995). Since in this study I administered a questionnaire to the students and conducted a fairly formal interview with the poetry teachers after the end of the observation period, piloting of these instruments was necessary.

Piloting was carried out in one school before the actual collection of data for the study. The school so selected was not among those that took part in the study. Based on the pilot run results, necessary revisions such as addition of extra items on the students’ questionnaire and teachers’ interview schedules were made for the final form of the data collection instruments. Bell (1993) says that piloting is one way of checking reliability of research instruments. So there was need to carry out piloting of the research instruments to the study.

3.9.1 Validity and Reliability

It is important to note that, reliability and validity in ethnographic and indeed qualitative research are difficult concepts. According to Wiersma (1995), to ensure validity and reliability in such studies requires application of a good methodology. Wiersma says that the researcher must develop a relationship with the respondents who enable him/her to gain access to data, should use multiple data collection procedures and triangulation and
that the data that the researcher collects must be adequate in quantity in order to confirm assertions with confidence.

Wiersma (1995) further points out that the extensive description used in ethnographic research is a plus in terms of internal reliability. He says that the naturalness of the data collected enhances validity. Validity was also established through actual poetry lesson observation. All these factors were taken into consideration in this study. Through the use of a combination of observation, interview and students' questionnaire, I ended up with very extensive and comprehensive database that enabled me to adequately address the issues under study.

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Permission and authority to carry out the research was sought from the Office of the President. Having acquired a research permit, I informed the Taita/Taveta D.E.O.'s and Voi A.E.O's offices of the intended research project. I then visited the selected schools and with the respective school heads arranged to meet the potential respondents.

With the head teachers' permission, I met the English teachers and the form three students in the selected schools for familiarization purposes before the data collection was started. The teachers were informed of the purpose and significance of the study. During such meetings, arrangements were also made regarding when the observation of lessons and interviews would be done in the two sampled schools. I conducted the observations and interviews in person.

The observation of poetry lessons being the main procedure of data collection and also
considering that observation requires considerable amount of time was conducted first. Observation and note-taking as the lesson progressed went hand in hand. Each of the two schools had poetry lessons observed for two months. During all the lessons that I observed, both Miss Mwang’ombe and Mr. Macharia (these are pseudonyms) who were the poetry teachers in the selected schools arranged to have a chair and a table at the back of the class for me. This provided me some vantage point to see all that was happening in the class.

When necessary, after classroom observation a few minutes of discussion with the teacher followed. Sometimes I asked questions in an attempt to clarify what had happened or in an attempt to capture the feelings of those observed. Towards the end of the data collection period, a fairly formal interview with the teachers concerned was conducted. This provided information on aspects of the study that did not require observation for example information on the teachers’ pre and in-service training. The subject teachers were asked to arrange for an appropriate time for the interview after the end of observation period for the convenience of all parties involved. I then administered the students’ questionnaire towards the end of the observation period.

3.11 Data Analysis

After the fieldwork, data collected from lesson observation, interviews and students’ questionnaire was carefully organized. Kerlinger (1973) defines analysis of data as categorizing, ordering, manipulating and summarizing data to obtain answers to research questions. Data analysis consisted of synthesizing the information from lesson observations, interviews and students’ questionnaire. Patton (1990) argues that massive
qualitative data collected from lesson observation and interviews need to be organized into significant patterns to reveal the essence of the data. In this study, the data was organized according to the research questions that guided the study.

Observation data, interview responses and responses to the open-ended items in the student’s questionnaire were analyzed (by use of descriptions) qualitatively. Full descriptions of what was observed were finally provided. For the closed-ended items in the students’ questionnaire, analysis was done using simple descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Thereafter, the findings of the study were discussed based on the research questions they sought to answer. Research findings and conclusions of the study were drawn with the help of information obtained from lesson observations, interviews and students’ questionnaire. Recommendations were finally made based on the research findings and conclusions of the study.

It is worth noting that related to ethnographic research is the characteristic of contextualization, which requires that all data be interpreted only in the context of the situation, or environment in which they are collected. This has implications for the generalizability of research results. Ethnographic research often is not concerned about generalizability. It is concerned about accuracy and adequate description of the situation being studied. As for the findings yielding information to improve on poetry teaching and learning, they can only be restricted to the population from which the study was carried out.

3.12 Justification for Use of First Person Point of View

Although most research reports are written from the third person point of view, my report
sometimes adopts the first-person point of view. Winkler and McCuen (1989) point out that in the past, most instructors insisted that students write papers only from third person point of view, which was thought to stress the objectivity of the writer. Lately however, many prestigious journals have relaxed their rules. Authors are now allowed to use the "I" or "we" point of view when reporting data or when drawing attention to their findings. The use of the first person point of view in writing reports is supported by Bunyi (1996), Winkler and McCuen (1989) and Magoma (1999). Bunyi (1996) argues that the use of the first person point of view in writing reports enables the researcher to take responsibility of his or her report.

3.13 Chapter Summary

Chapter three discussed the research design and methodology used in the study. It described ethnographic research and gave reasons as to why it was chosen as the research design for this study. In this chapter, effort was also made to describe the study locale, the target population, the sample and sampling procedure. The chapter noted the characteristic of contextualization of ethnographic research in which all data is interpreted only in the context of the situation in which they are collected. The implication for the generalizability of research results is also provided.
4.1 Introduction

This was an ethnographic study of two schools in Voi Division of Taita-Taveta District-Coast Province. The study aimed at finding out the effectiveness of teaching and learning of poetry in English in Kenya secondary schools. The analysis of data focused on the research questions that were formulated at the beginning of the study and articulated in Chapter One. In this chapter, data was presented, analyzed and discussed. The content of this chapter was organized according to the eight research questions of the study. To keep the identity of the schools and teachers who participated in this study confidential, pseudonyms were used in the report. The mixed sex secondary school was referred to as school A while the girls’ school was referred to as school B. The poetry teacher in school A was referred to as Miss Mwango’mbe while the poetry teacher in school B is referred to as Mr. Macharia.

4.2 Teachers’ Initial Training for the Teaching and learning of Poetry.

One of the research questions that the study sought to answer was:

How well are the teachers prepared in terms of their pre-service training and classroom preparedness for the teaching and learning of the poetry course?

4.2.1 Teachers’ Academic and Professional Preparedness to Teach the Poetry Course.

The teachers’ academic and professional preparedness are very important in the teaching process. This is because academic and professional training are believed to be factors that influence the implementation of any curriculum.
Nacino-Brown (1994) for instance argues that the curriculum is not so much what is found in the printed guide (syllabus or scheme of work) as what the teacher makes of it in the classroom. It is the teachers’ interpretation of the curriculum that really counts.

This then implies that a curriculum can be a success or a dismal failure depending on the teachers. Well-trained teachers can therefore enliven what would otherwise be dull and lifeless in the classroom.

4.2.2 Teachers’ Academic Qualifications

According to Husen (1967), the more academic attainment a teacher has, the better will be the achievement of his/her teaching. This suggests that the higher the degree of academic attainment or achievement the teacher has, the better the teacher he/she might be.

I thus sought to find out the teacher’s individual academic qualifications through interviews with the teachers. When asked about her academic qualifications, Miss Mwang’ombe the co-educational secondary school poetry teacher said she was a graduate teacher holding a Bachelor of Education (Arts) degree. Mr. Macharia of the only girls’ secondary school in Voi division also said he was a graduate teacher.

I found out that both teachers were graduate teachers holding Bachelor of Education degrees. In Kenya secondary schools, university graduate teachers are the most highly academically qualified. The two teachers who participated in this study were therefore academically qualified.
4.2.3 Teachers' Professional Qualifications

Learning effectiveness to a large extent depends on training of the teacher who is the facilitator of learning and transmitter of knowledge. (Groenewegen 1993). Thus, quality teacher training is a crucial point in effecting or implementing any curriculum. According to Okech and Asiachi (1992), quality training in a subject area is of paramount importance in teaching and learning hence achievement of curriculum objectives.

During the study, I asked the teachers about their professional qualifications as regards to teaching and learning of poetry. Miss Mwang’ombe said she was trained to teach English language and Literature in English. She also said that while at university, she was trained to teach poetry.

Mr. Macharia also said that he was equally trained. He said that during his training, he specialized in English language and Literature in English and also trained to teach poetry in secondary schools. The teachers were thus professionally qualified.

However, both Miss Mwang’ombe and Mr. Macharia said there was a shortcoming in their training in that English language and literature were taught independently at the university while it is expected that these subjects are taught integratively at the secondary level.

Probably due to their academic and professional qualifications, I noted that the two teachers in the sample schools understood professional matters regarding the content, teaching methods and the learners in particular. The teachers would talk with ease about many aspects related to poetry teaching and learning. Indeed, teachers who have had
good professional training and adequate experience have been known to make good
instructors and produce better achievement with students (Calloids and Postelthwaite,
1989). The weak students’ achievement in the sample schools should therefore not be
attributed to the teachers’ academic and professional qualifications.

This is because, although not always the case, teachers of poetry who are adequately
trained on how to implement the poetry course in secondary schools will be receptive and
flexible regarding the implementation of the course in the classroom situation. They will
also be able to adapt their curriculum to cater for the emerging situations in the field as
they teach. The opposite will probably be true when teachers of poetry are not well
trained to implement the course in a classroom situation. There were other problems that
affected the teaching and learning of poetry at the classroom level.

The poetry teachers were asked to comment about the pre-service preparation they
underwent in relation to the teaching of poetry. Miss Mwang’ombe said the following
about her initial training:

It is good to be trained since lack of training would have
made the teaching of poetry difficult even for the teacher,
making the student fear poetry even more. I would say the
preparation was adequate because so far the training enables
me to be more comfortable in teaching since I acquired the
methodology to teach poetry.

Mr. Macharia’s views were similar to Miss Mwang’ombe’s. He stated that:

The training was adequate to a great extent. However,
there is some inadequacy especially when we talk about
literature part of it. At the university, we looked at very
high level ideas in poetry for instance- ideas that cannot be
applicable to the secondary school situation sometimes
Although Mr. Macharia said that training was not adequately handled especially when it came to the literature part of it, his views were in agreement with those of Miss Mwang’ombe that is, to a great extent, the training was adequate. The inadequacy in training Mr. Macharia talked about was that, at the university, the teacher trainers sometimes tackled high level ideas that would not have any application in secondary school poetry teaching set up. In my opinion however, the high level ideas tackled at university level are in preparation for greater understanding of the poetry genre hence better teaching of the same in secondary schools.

Because of the inadequacies in training, I observed that Mr. Macharia did not teach his poetry lessons well. He employed teacher-centred methods which were disadvantageous to the learners.

Hawes (1978) observes that initial training alone does not provide graduate teachers with all the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for effective curriculum implementation. Thus, the students’ performance in poetry may not be solely determined by the teachers’ preparation while at college or university. Teachers learn quite a lot through experience in the field. Through interviews with the teachers, I learnt that both teachers had been teaching poetry for the past three years. This meant that they had some experience as poetry teachers. Mr. Macharia’s views confirmed this statement when he said:

I have been teaching since 1997. I have gained a lot of experience while in the field. Basically, what was given in college is not necessarily what I have to give to my students. Sometimes I find myself picking some materials even as I go by. So, I am gaining experience even as I teach in the field.

Talb’oid (1979) points out that a teacher should be a constant student always in search of
more and new knowledge. I found out that the teachers discovered more on their own through experience gained in the field.

During classroom observations, I noted that the teachers guided the students during poetry lessons without much constraint. This could be because of the experience they had gathered over the years hence were able to utilize the very limited resources at their disposal and employ the most appropriate methodologies as they guided the students through enriching poetry experiences.

4.2.4 Attendance of In-service Courses in Poetry.

Pre-service and in-service training are essential in acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective curriculum implementation at whatever level (Hawes 1979). According to Waihenya (2001), lack of regular in-service courses for teachers contribute to ineffective teaching and ultimately poor performance in subjects by their students. In-service provisions thus ensure that teachers become acquainted with new methods and new teaching and learning resources. In-service courses also ensure that teachers keep up-to-date with changes in the knowledge content of the subject matter with which they are concerned (Stenhouse 1975).

When the two teachers were asked to indicate whether they had attended any in-service courses in poetry, they both answered in the affirmative.

I interviewed the teachers in November 2000. It was therefore disappointing to observe that though the teachers had attended in-service courses on poetry, Miss Mwang’ombe last attended such a course in 1998, some two years ago. She pointed out the school
administration’s unwillingness to sponsor her for such courses due to financial difficulties as the reason for her not attending in-service courses frequently. The school also could not conduct intra-departmental in-service since she was the only poetry teacher in the school. Mr. Macharia on the other hand had attended at least three in-service courses on poetry by the end of that year. Since I was conducting the research in the last quarter of the same year 2000, it can be deduced that Mr. Macharia was more abreast with new happenings in poetry teaching and learning in schools than Miss. Mwang’ombe was. I deduced this by finding what the in-service courses he attended were about. However, Mr. Macharia employed teacher-centred methods in his teaching of poetry acting the poor quality of his students as the reason for his choice of the method.

When asked to state the value of attending in-service courses on poetry teaching and learning Miss Mwang’ombe argued that:

In-service courses are necessary because with time you keep losing track of what you trained in. Attending in-service courses therefore keeps one informed of the new happenings in the subjects that they teach.

Mr. Macharia on the other hand had the following to say:

We need in-service courses to update ourselves with new happenings in the field. Some things learnt during pre-service training sometimes cannot be applied to all students in the field. There are some methodologies you really cannot apply especially to the weak students. Through in-service we learn the best methods that would cater for all the categories of students.

Through interviews the teachers were asked to provide information on their experiences of in-service courses they attended. Miss Mwang’ombe said she learnt a lot during the in-service course she attended in 1998. She said:
I attended an in-service course in 1998 on methodology of poetry teaching. During the course, I learnt several skills of poetry teaching. Some of the skills I learnt were:- Reciting of poems to create interest among students in class, the use of simple class discussions when teaching poetry and the use of small group discussions and question and answer methods.

On the other hand, Mr. Macharia said

I attended in-service training where such skills as interactive teaching and student-centred methods of teaching poetry were recommended. Other methods or techniques that I learnt were; the use of discursive and lecturing methods of teaching poetry, and a method which recommended the using of a student to teach others depending on the selected students' level of confidence.

The teachers argued that through in-service courses, they learnt the best methods of teaching poetry. By attending the in-service courses, the teachers said that they were kept informed of what was happening in the poetry curriculum. The teachers argued strongly for in-service courses for the sake of professional guidance within the teaching profession. Asked whether they were ever inspected while teaching poetry in class, both Miss Mwang'ombe and Mr. Macharia said they were not.

4.3 Poetry teachers' lesson Preparedness.

The second research question was:

How well do teachers prepare lessons for the teaching and learning of poetry?

Anderson (1995) points out that teacher lesson preparation does influence opportunity to learn, content coverage, grouping for instruction and general focus of classroom processes. Lesson preparation requires that teachers know their subject matter well, preferred teaching styles and provision of material resources for teaching and learning.
In addition, teachers should have lesson plans defining specific objectives, learning activities, organization of learning activities and specific evaluation procedures (Tyler 1950, Popham and Baker 1970).

While conducting my observations in school A which was co-educational, I found that Miss Mwang’ombe had well prepared schemes of work for the entire term. The schemes guided her on which poems she would tackle during that term. I however noted that she did not prepare lesson plans for the poetry lessons taught. When I asked her why, she said that after writing several lesson plans previously, she saw no need for preparing any. Furthermore, she said that even if she wanted to, she lacked the time to do so. When I asked her whether or not she thought such lack of lesson plans affected the way she organized her lessons she argued:

I don’t think so because I have always achieved my objective and the means to achieve my lesson objectives without using lesson plans has never proved challenging.

When asked to state how she prepared for the lessons, Miss Mwang’ombe said:

Before I go to class, I usually review what I will do and how I will do it mentally and jot down a few points to jog my memory in case I require to.

During my observation, I confirmed that actually before Miss Mwang’ombe went to class for her poetry lessons, she would be in the staffroom early to prepare for the lesson. She would go through the poem while still in the staffroom and would set a few questions about it. She would ask the students these questions as she taught the poem in class.

Teaching and learning resources are considered as basic requirements in any instructional process (Gamble 1984). I observed that except for the pieces of chalk, and the teachers’
copy of poetry textbooks no other materials and resources for example teaching aids were prepared by the teacher. Hence Miss Mwango’imbe had nothing to assist her to more easily deliver abstract poetry concepts.

I also conducted some observations in Mr. Macharia’s class. Before I started observing Mr. Macharia teaching poetry in class, I asked him to let me see his schemes of work. I noted that like Miss Mwang’ombe he too had prepared the whole term’s schemes of work. However, like Miss Mwan’gombe, Mr. Macharia did not prepare lesson plans for the poetry lessons he taught. He gave the reasons for not preparing lesson plans as that, in times past, he used to plan for the lessons using such plans but owing to the slow pace of learning by learners, it was difficult to follow them. He argued that most of the times it would take more time than allocated to discuss a certain aspect and this often rendered the plans ineffective.

When I asked him whether he thought such lack of lesson plans affected the way he organized his lessons, Mr. Macharia said:

Not really. Not much difference would come off it. In times past when I used them the pace was always the same.

When I then asked him how he prepared for the lessons, he said that notes come in handy in preparation. During my fieldwork observations, I noted that Mr. Macharia prepared notes for the lessons he taught just before he went to class. I however observed that Mr. Macharia did not prepare teaching-learning resources that he would have used to teach poetry. Given the central role that such resources play in the teaching-learning process, Mr. Macharia then was lacking in his classroom preparedness.
In conclusion therefore, both Miss Mwang'ombe and Mr. Macharia's poetry lesson preparations and planning were found to be inadequate: Inadequate lesson preparation as portrayed by the teachers lack of lesson plans and teaching and learning resources and aids all of which are vital in the process of learning affected the poetry teaching and learning process. Such lack of preparation affected the teachers teaching since they went to class late something which Miss Mwang'ombe blamed on poor planning. Both Miss Mwang'ombe and Mr. Macharia also said that lack of poetry teaching and learning resources and teaching aids was the greatest hindrance to the effective teaching of poetry in schools. Classroom observations confirmed lack of poetry teaching and learning resources. The students lacked poetry course textbooks and they only relied on the teacher's course books. This hampered effective teaching and learning of poetry.

Lack of adequate lesson preparedness is in fact inconsistent with good teaching (Claessen, Gitau and Groenewegen 1995). If the poetry course is to be effectively implemented in the secondary schools, then the poetry teachers should adequately prepare for the lessons they are to teach.


This study also sought to answer the following research question:

What teaching-learning methods do teachers employ in teaching poetry?

The core activities in a classroom is teaching and learning. Quality teaching is affected by the teaching approaches used by teachers. Concerning teaching methods to be used by teachers in the classroom, Hayman (1970) points out that the particular way of teaching
selected to teach a curriculum content has a significant effect on the entire teaching and learning situation.

During the fieldwork, I observed that Miss Mwang’ombe and Mr. Macharia employed different methods to teach poetry. The following is an example of what I observed during one lesson taught by Miss Mwang’ombe in school A. During the first lesson that I observed Miss Mwang’ombe teach poetry, the lesson was scheduled to start at 8.30 am and end at 9.20 am. The lesson started at exactly 8.30 am. Miss Mwango’mbe introduced me to the students. After that, she started the lesson. She had given the students a poem entitled “The Vodoo Drum” with instructions that they write it down in their notebooks prior to the lesson. She started the lesson by asking the students questions about the poem for example: (i) *What is a vodoo drum? Can any student remember a traditional ceremony in which drums were played?* (ii) *What is the leopard doing to the village?* (iii) *What is the meaning of the line (a) “Sound of the shadow” (b) “The echo of the tell-tale bird”*. Miss Mwango’mbe then asked one student to read the poem aloud as other students listened and followed attentively. Miss Mwang’ombe read the poem yet again as the students listened. Miss Mwango’mbe asked the students to discuss the poem in pairs. She then explained to the students the message the poem carried while at the same time relating the message to what actually happens in the society in which the school stood. As if to mimic how the Vodoo drum was played, Miss Mwango’mbe asked the students to drum their desks. She also dramatized the drumming, then asked the students to orally answer some questions about the poem and the students answered them. Examples of
questions asked were: (i) what was the poem about? (ii) What social (themes) concerns does it raise? (iii) What stylistic features does the poet employ in the poem? Miss Mwang’ombe gave the students extra questions and asked the students to discuss them in pairs. As the students went on with their discussions, Miss Mwang’ombe moved about in the classroom observing what the students were doing. As she did this, she commended them for their involvement in doing the assignment. She finally asked the students to do the rest of the questions as their homework and the lesson ended with the ringing of the bell at 9.20 am; the time it was scheduled to end. I noted that Miss Mwang’ombe always meaningfully involved the students in the process of learning. In every poetry lesson that I observed, Miss Mwang’ombe encouraged the students to discuss the poems under study. The students discussed the poems in groups hence there was that active participation in the process of learning. Her role was more often than not that of guiding the students to realizing greater understanding of the subject under study.

During classroom observation, I actually witnessed the teacher using class discussions, groupwork and question and answer methods of teaching which were learner-centered. Miss Mwang’ombe for instance asked the students to be in pairs and sometimes to group themselves in fours and discuss the questions she had given. She would sometimes randomly ask the students general questions about the poems under study. The teacher also encouraged teacher-student discussions during the poetry lesson. One thing that struck me about Miss Mwang’ombe as opposed to Mr. Macharia was that she often reinforced her students whenever they were right on concepts concerning poetry. Whenever she asked a student about the poem she taught and the student answered it correctly, Miss Mwang’ombe would positively compliment the students with such words
as; very good, excellent, a good trial and good respectively. This reinforcement invited the students to attempt to answer questions more readily.

I observed that the students taught by Miss Mwang’ombe enjoyed the learning of poetry throughout the lessons I observed. The enjoyment was reflected by the students’ readiness to read the poems aloud, dramatize the poem and readily attempt to answer questions asked by the teacher. In subsequent lessons that followed the first poetry lesson that I observed, I noted that Miss Mwang’ombe still employed learner-centred methods of teaching poetry.

On the other hand, Mr. Macharia, who was the poetry teacher in school B employed different poetry teaching-learning methods. I observed the following in one of his lessons. During the first of his lessons that I observed, Mr. Macharia introduced me to the class and urged the students not to perceive me as a stranger but as one of them. Though the lesson was to start at 2.40 p.m., it started a bit late (2.45 pm). Before the teacher wrote the poem “Building the Nation” on the blackboard, he introduced it by talking about inefficiency in government departments in general. After talking about inefficiency in government departments, he joked by telling the students that:

I know your fathers, mothers or siblings head these departments, please ask them to be efficient in the task of nation building.

This had a good stimulus effect because the poem was about inefficiency. The teacher then wrote down the poem “Building the Nation” on the blackboard. As the teacher wrote the poem, he also talked about it. Mr. Macharia then asked the students to copy the poem in their notebooks.
At exactly 3.00 p.m. the teacher had finished writing the poem on the blackboard. The writing of the poem took fifteen minutes since it was a long poem. Mr. Macharia talked about the poem generally as the students listened and sometimes responded by laughing and murmuring. The teacher then read the poem aloud as the students listened and followed attentively. Mr. Macharia then started analyzing the poem stanza by stanza. He discussed the theme of the poem which was governments’ inefficiency in service provision and then asked the students questions on the themes of the poem. Mr. Macharia for instance asked the students: (i) what important urgent function was the permanent Secretary attending? (ii) Who was the driver addressing? (iii) How serious is the occasion as it is described in the poem? The students attempted the questions. Towards the end of the lesson, Mr. Macharia dictated assignment questions to the students. The questions included the following: (i) Choose words from the poem that tell us that the occasion was neither important nor urgent (ii) Why do you think the PS is “yawning” at the back of the car? (iii) The driver tells us that he is “amused” (line 20) by all that the PS says to him. What are his real feelings towards his boss? (Consider the last two stanzas especially).

From the above description of a lesson taught by Mr. Macharia it can be seen that Mr. Macharia engaged in active participation and that the student’s were passive in the process of learning poetry. Mr. Macharia gave the reason for the students’ lack of participation as the school’s policy of admitting weak students since his school was a fairly new school. However, Mr. Macharia did not encourage students’ discussions of the poetry work in the classroom. In fact Mr. Macharia did not put into practise what he said he had learnt during the in-service courses. Instead, he kept to teacher-centered
techniques even when the in-service courses recommended learner-centred techniques. Mr. Macharia employed teacher-centred methods of teaching and learning poetry throughout the lessons that I subsequently observed.

In conclusion, while Miss Mwang’ombe employed learner-centred methods of teaching and learning poetry, Mr. Macharia was more of teacher-centred. When the teachers were asked to state the poetry teaching-learning methods that were advocated for during in-service courses they attended, the information in table 4.1 came forth.

Table 4.1 Teaching–Learning Methods Advocated for During In-Service Courses the Teachers Attended.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching-learning methods advocated for during Miss Mwang’ombe’s inservice</th>
<th>Teaching-learning methods advocated for during Mr. Macharia’s inservice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recitation of poems</td>
<td>Interactive teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group discussions</td>
<td>A student teaching other students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General class discussions</td>
<td>Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-answer method</td>
<td>Lecture method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.1, it can be noted that the advocated for methods were recitation of poems, group discussions, general class discussions, question-answer method and individual instruction. Other methods that were advocated for during the in-service courses that the teachers attended were interactive teaching, using a student to teach other students and the lecture method. Except for the lecture method of teaching, all the other methods were learner-centred meaning that those who conducted those courses expected poetry teaching and learning to be learner-centred rather than teacher-centred.
During classroom observations, I confirmed that class discussions, groupwork and question-answer method as well as individual instruction to the very weak students were used by Miss Mwang'ombe. I noted that she ably employed the techniques she learnt during the in-service course. She would for instance recite a poem already written on the blackboard and other times ask students to discuss it. She also would ask students questions about the poem under study (Question-Answer method). However, if the school administration continues to be adamant about not allowing Miss Mwang’ombe to attend in-service courses, then this would probably affect her teaching of poetry in the near future.

Except for the question-answer method, all other methods enumerated (see Table 4.1) were not seen in use during classroom observations of Mr. Macharia. In fact, learner-centred methods were hardly put to use in the lessons observed. Instead, Mr. Macharia played a central role in the teaching-learning process and the learners were just passive participants in the learning process.

Asked why she preferred using learner-centred methods of teaching such as class discussions and groupwork, Miss Mwang’ombe said:

The learner-centred methods of teaching generate ideas from the students themselves. They thus find joy in the learning process.

An example of such ideas from the lessons I observed was that the students were able to ask the teacher questions about the difficult aspects of the poem which they did not understand.
Though Mr. Macharia did not use learner-centred methods of teaching during the poetry lessons that I observed him teach, he added that:

Such methods help make the teaching and learning experience interesting to the students. This is because the involvement enables the learners to understand and contribute fully to the learning process. They also make the students to discover things on their own and even to study independently.

These views held by the teachers of poetry regarding learner-centred teaching methods are in agreement with those held by Shwebel and Ralph (1974) and Ministry of Education (1992). Though he fully understood the concept of learner-centred methods of teaching as judged by what he told me, Mr. Macharia said he preferred teacher-centred methods because they were also less time consuming hence assisted him in covering the overloaded English curriculum among other factors that he previously listed.

The two teachers were asked to state which teaching-learning methods they rarely used in the classroom. Miss Mwang’ombe had this to say:

I rarely use question-answer method of teaching because it scares the students since my students are a bit weak in poetry.

She added:

I also rarely use individual instruction as a method of teaching. Given that I am the only teacher of poetry and my classes are very big, it is unrealistic to go from one student to the other while you have to take English from form one to form four throughout the two streamed school.

This statement confirmed what I observed during observations. It also confirmed what the students stated in section 4.5 of this thesis about teaching-learning methods that their teachers used to implement the poetry curriculum. Individual instruction as a method of
teaching and learning poetry was particularly rarely used during actual teaching in the classroom.

Asked about which methods of teaching and learning he rarely used, Mr. Macharia said the following:

Lecture method. I have had a feeling that lecturing students on poetry is losing them altogether. I actually tried using it when I was new in the teaching profession. I found that on using such a method, the students could not make head or tail of what I was talking about. The students just left the class thinking poetry is difficult.

However, Mr. Macharia's assertion contradicts what I observed in the classroom. More often than not, Mr. Macharia employed the lecture method of teaching while occasionally asking the students some questions (question-answer method). While Mr. Macharia had given the reason for not using teacher-centred methods in class, his continued use of such methods could probably explain the fact that the teacher lacked the resourcefulness required to actively involve the students in the learning process hence opted for teacher-centred approach whereby he just handed down the poetry content to passive students.

4.4.1 Poetry Learning Methods the Teachers Recommended

The teachers were asked to recommend the poetry teaching and learning methods they thought would best enhance its (poetry) learning in the classroom.

Responding to the question, Miss Mwang'ombe had the following to say:

Considering the students that we have, mostly in coast province, we discovered that our students are usually below average. Our students also do not like English and the fact that Kiswahili is allowed to be spoken in school makes English become a bit unfavourable to them. So what happens is that English becomes very new to them when they come to school and when you shift to poetry itself, then there is even that much
fear of it (poetry) because the language there is a bit heightened.

Because of this, she argued that:

The teaching-learning methods for poetry teaching and learning that I recommend will depend on the quality of students. If you have below average students, I would suggest that the teacher starts with reciting. That way, you create interest on the part of the student. From there the teacher can go on to discussion, then proceed to question and answer method after which he/she can go to individual instruction if there is time.

On the other hand, Mr. Macharia suggested that the students be given opportunities to teach others. He said the following in support of his recommendation:

Ask a student to teach other students. Just give her a piece of poetry and tell her/him now lets see how you do it. Of course, you must pick a student depending on their level of confidence and such methods are really beneficial sometimes. A student can bring out the poem to her/his peers better than the teacher would have done it in a century.

It can be noted that both teachers advocated for the learner-centred methods of teaching and learning of poetry. The same learner-centred methods of teaching and learning were recommended during in-service courses the teachers had attended. It can therefore be said that the teachers knew the numerous benefits accruing as a result of the use of such methods during classroom instruction.

However, during classroom observations, I only observed class discussions, question-answer and groupwork (sometimes in pairs) methods of teaching and learning being employed by Miss Mwang’ombe. However, although Mr. Macharia (school B poetry teacher) recommended learner-centred approaches to teaching and learning poetry in
practice he employed a teacher-centred approach as observed during class observations. He however gave reason for his using the methodology in poetry and learning.

4.5 Students' Perception of the Teaching-Learning Methods Contribution to or Hindrance of Their Learning Poetry

This study also sought to answer the following research question:

What are the students' perceptions of the teaching-learning methods adopted viz their ability to learn poetry?

The result of the students' responses on an item that required them to identify the poetry teaching-learning methods their teachers adopted in relation to their ability to learn poetry are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Students' Views on the Teaching-Learning Methods Teachers Commonly Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A students' views</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>School B students' views</th>
<th>(f)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Class discussion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question-Answer method</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Question-Answer method</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Group work</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual instruction</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Individual instruction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the students, the most commonly used methods of teaching poetry in school A were: groupwork 22 (58%), class discussions 16 (42%), Question-Answer method 7 (18%) and individual instruction 2 (5%). Two students 2 (5%) did not respond to the item
that required them to identify the teacher’s teaching methods as regards their ability to learn poetry. These students probably did not know which methods their teachers used to teach poetry despite the methods having been listed in the students’ questionnaire. During classroom observation, I confirmed that groupwork (mostly in pairs), class discussions, Question-Answer method and individual instruction (occasionally used to assist weaker students) were most commonly used by Miss Mwang’ombe to teach poetry in school A. The occasional use of individual instruction by Miss Mwang’ombe gave each student personal attention on difficult areas making it possible for each one of them to learn at their own pace.

Table 4.2 also shows that the most commonly used methods of teaching poetry in school B were; class discussions 14 (54%), question-answer method 11 (42%), individual instruction 4 (15%) and groupwork 2 (8%). However, during classroom observations, class discussions, individual instruction and groupwork as methods of teaching and learning poetry were not seen in use in school B. Instead Mr. Macharia used the lecture method and the question-answer method. When asked to state why there was a contradiction between what the students said about the methods he used to teach poetry in class and what I actually observed, Mr. Macharia said:

Group discussions were tedious and difficult to use under the arrangement we had made since it was hard to organize the students who had wide learning disparities.

Mr. Macharia said that prior to my going to the field, he had been giving the students a poem three days in advance so that the students master it. During such poetry lessons, he also encouraged the students to recite and discuss the poems in groups. Mr. Macharia said that he used teacher-centred methods of teaching during the time that I was observing
him because he thought such methods allowed him to teach poetry in a manner he thought was best. Mr. Macharia said he was in fact amazed that the students were able to identify the methods that he had been using all along. It is more likely that the students in this school understood what was meant by a teaching method. This explains why a majority 14 (54%) indicated that their teacher used class discussions in teaching poetry. I also did not see them discuss the assignments as they said they did during their own free time.

It was thus the students’ perceptions’ that the most commonly used methods of poetry teaching and learning employed by poetry teachers were classroom discussions, groupwork, question-answer and individual instruction respectively. It is interesting to note that all the methods cited in Table 4.2 were also advocated for during the in-service courses the teachers attended.

The students were also asked to rate their teachers’ teaching of poetry on a scale of very good, good, average and poor. The information in Table 4.3 reveals what the students said.
Table 4.3 Students’ Views on How Teachers Taught Poetry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School A Students’ responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>School B Students’ responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 38  N = 26

According to Table 4.3, it can be realized that 13 (34%) of the students in school A found the way Miss Mwang’ombe taught poetry to be very good. On the other hand 10 (26%) and 15 (40%) of the students felt the way their teacher taught poetry was good and average respectively. None of the students in school A said the teachers teaching of poetry was poor.

Table 4.3 also reveals that 8 (31%) and 16 (62%) of the students in school B said the way their teachers taught poetry was very good and good respectively. Only 2 (7%) of the students said it was average. Again, none of the students in school B said their teacher poorly taught poetry in class.

A majority of the students; 23 (60%) in school A and 24 (93%) in school B thus found the way their teachers taught them to be either good or very good. This then meant that teaching-learning methods employed by the teachers of poetry in class were not the only factor that either hindered or enhanced the learners’ ability to learn poetry.
During classroom observations, I noted that the teachers involved the students in one way or another in the poetry teaching and learning process. Teaching-learning methods that involve learners are thought to arouse learner’s interest in a subject. Even the teacher who employed the teacher-centred approach to teaching also occasionally involved students in the learning process by asking and requiring them to answer questions in class. I also noted that the teacher (Mr. Macharia) had a very good mastery of poetry. Though this mastery could just have carried the students away without any learning of poetry taking place, it aroused interest in poetry, hence rating the way the teacher taught highly.

When asked to state whether the teaching-learning methods used by the teachers affected either positively or negatively their ability to learn poetry, the students gave the information recorded in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Students’ Views on Whether Teaching Learning Methods Adopted by the Teachers Affected Their Ability To Learn Poetry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ responses (School A)</th>
<th>Students’ responses (School B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response (f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 38  N = 26
If a student responded YES, it meant that the method employed by the teachers positively affected their ability to learn poetry while, a NO meant that the teaching methods used did not affect their ability to learn it.

From Table 4.4, it can be noted that 22 (58%) of the poetry students in school A said that teaching-learning methods employed by their teachers enhanced their ability to learn poetry. The students said that the methods teachers used enabled them to learn poetry. 14 (37%) of the students in the same school said that the teaching methods were of no consequence in their ability to learn poetry. On the other hand, students responses from school B indicated that 6 (23%) said the methods the teachers employed in the teaching and learning of poetry enhanced their ability to learn poetry. A great many of the students 20 (77%) pointed out that the methods did not enhance positively their ability to learn poetry in class.

One can learn from the trend in Table 4.4 that though the teaching-learning methods employed by the teachers during classroom instruction (58%) in school A and (23%) in school B were in my view central in the teaching and learning process, they were not the only factors that affected the students' ability to learn poetry. This is reflected by the fact that (37%) of the students' in school A and (77%) in school B indicated that teaching methods employed by the teachers did not affect their ability to learn poetry. Arising from this finding, it can be said that there were other factors that affected students' ability to learn poetry besides the methods teachers used to teach the subject.

When the students were asked to state what made the learning of poetry enjoyable, they pointed out what follows in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5 Students’ Views on what makes Learning of Poetry Enjoyable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School A</th>
<th></th>
<th>School B</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Individual interests</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How poetry is taught</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning resources</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetic language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher assignments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.5, it can be noted that 14 (44%) of the students in school A enjoy poetry because of their interest in the subject. 21 (66%) of the students in the same school said that they enjoyed poetry because of the way poetry is taught by the teacher, with 3 (9%) saying that they enjoyed learning poetry because of the availability of teaching-learning resources.

According to the same Table 4.5, it can be noted that 13 (65%) and 6 (30%) of the students in school B enjoy learning poetry because of their interest in poetry and how poetry is taught by the teacher respectively. It can also be noted that 6 (30%) of the students in the same school said that they enjoyed learning poetry because of availability of teaching-learning resources.

From the findings above, it can be noted that, in school A where Miss Mwang’ombe employed learner-centred methods of poetry teaching and learning, a majority of students
(66%) enjoyed learning poetry because of the way it is taught in class as opposed to only (30%) in school B where Mr. Macharia was more teacher-centred. It should also be noted that individual student’s interest in poetry played a major role in students’ enjoyment of poetry in both schools. The students’ enjoyment in learning poetry at the secondary school could therefore be explained by the following reasons:

- One of the reasons I found out was that the students had by now familiarized with poetry teaching and learning processes in their schools. They thus no longer found the teaching and learning of poetry new. This is especially so because the classes observed were form three classes.

- The students also enjoyed poetry teaching and learning because of the way their teachers taught them the subject (see tables 4.3 and 4.5). It is believed that the way a teacher teaches a subject can either excite interest and enjoyment on the learner or make the learner shun the subject in question altogether. Data from Table 4.5 also reveals that individual interest in poetry as a subject was of paramount importance towards the enjoyment by the students. Indeed, the students had earlier indicated that they enjoyed the learning of poetry in school because of their individual interest in the subject among other reasons that they cited.
Arising from the above findings, it can thus be confirmed that apart from the teaching methods teachers employed to teach poetry, the factors noted above also played a significant role in the learning of poetry in the classroom.

4.6 Problems Encountered In the Teaching and Learning of Poetry.

The task of curriculum implementation is never easy. The study sought to find out the problems experienced by teachers and students in the teaching and learning of poetry in secondary school.

When asked to state the problems she encountered while teaching poetry, Miss Mwang’ombe said:

The biggest problem in poetry is attitude. Students have a pre-conceived idea that poetry is very difficult. So the minute you go to class and write the word poetry on the blackboard, by the time you turn back and face the students most of them will have switched off. They do not want to hear anything on poetry because they think it is hard.

However, I did not see the students switching off from poetry lessons that I observed Miss Mwang’ombe teach poetry. When I sought clarification on the issue, Miss Mwang’ombe said that though the students thought poetry was hard, after a long duration she had managed to at least win a few of them. She had convinced a few of the students that poetry was not that tough. Miss Mwang’ombe also argued that:

Language is also another problem. My students do not have the language to use. I have tried at least to emphasize on the need to use English as a medium of communication but Kiswahili seems to be winning always.

During observations, I actually noted the students had a big problem using English language to communicate both verbally and in writing. The students found it difficult to
answer questions in grammatically correct English. I confirmed the problem when I asked them to complete the questionnaires I had given them and most of them completed them in ungrammatical English. In the classroom I always heard them talk in either Kiswahili or mother tongue and not in English. Given that most poems are written in heightened English, Miss Mwang’ombe’s students with such a shallow grounding in English language would find poetry difficult.

Miss Mwang’ombe also pointed out that lack of resources for poetry teaching and learning in her school was another of the problems she encountered. She said:

The next biggest problem is lack of resources. We have no books in poetry for the students neither for the teacher. Even our neighboring secondary school does not have them either. I go looking for the books from my own sources. I then use the borrowed copy in class. I copy a selected poem on the blackboard from the textbook for the students to copy in their notebooks.

Lack of books was confirmed through classroom observations. Throughout the observations, I noted that only the poetry teacher had a poetry textbook. As earlier stated in this chapter, some students had said that they enjoyed the learning of poetry in primary school because of the availability of poetry textbooks, lack of the same in secondary school must have hampered effective poetry teaching and learning. Teaching and learning resources serve a useful purpose in promoting understanding of concepts and principles (Unwin and McAlease 1987). Evident lack of these resources in the schools under study therefore adversely affected the teaching and learning of poetry.

Another problem that Miss Mwang’ombe said she encountered was inadequate time. She said the following about time:
The syllabus does not specify the time to be spent on poetry. It only specifies the time to be spent on literature teaching and learning. I feel that we should be allocated more time to teach poetry. Poetry requires a lot of time because we have to copy the poems on the blackboard and the students also need time to copy the poems in their notebooks. This is something that really takes a lot of the teachers’ and students’ time.

During classroom observations however, I noted that knowing the problem of time, Miss Mwang’ombe always gave the students the poems to be taught a day or two prior to the lesson. She asked the prefect to write the poems on the blackboard for the benefit of all students. So by the time the teacher came to class the following day, all the students had the poems under study in their notebooks. However, despite giving the poems to the students early enough Miss Mwang’ombe still complained of inadequate time to teach poetry.

On the other hand, Mr. Macharia school B’s poetry teacher cited the following as the problems he encountered while teaching poetry. He said:

The problems are many ranging from the inability of the students to understand a poem to their level of English vocabulary. But I think what is important to note here is that the major hindrance is usually the failure of the students to understand a poem.

Mr. Macharia’s assertion about the students’ inability to understand a poem and consequently their level of English vocabulary concurs with what Miss Mwang’ombe had previously said. This then implies that the students could have had a poor background in English at the primary school level and even in the lower forms of secondary school. Miss Mwang’ombe argued that the students level of English could be improved through enforcement of the English speaking rule in schools. The problem of
poor level of English was the result of the teachers’ inability to enforce English speaking in their schools. Though such enforcement of English speaking in schools would not be a good thing as it is undemocratic and is not respectful of human rights in modern society,

Miss Mwang’ombe said that lack of such enforcement impacted negatively on teaching and learning of any subject because English is the language of instruction in Kenyan schools (except for Kiswahili lessons) and all subjects except Kiswahili are in English. In my view, language learning is a matter of practice rather than otherwise. Without the enforcement of English speaking rules in the schools not much benefit would come of it in terms of the students building their English language vocabulary.

Failure of this enforcement was confirmed during an interview with Miss Mwang’ombe when she admitted that she tried in vain to urge students to be communicating in English. Kiswahili therefore always won. It should be noted here, that students in both school A and B had earlier stated that they did not enjoy the learning of poetry in school because of their inability to understand poems, something which Mr. Macharia now points out.

The poor level of students’ English as noted during poetry lesson observations was the source of their inability to understand poems in class. The students’ level of English language was confirmed during the interviews with the teachers as a problem that teachers and students encountered. Mr. Macharia said the following regarding his students level of language acquisition:

> The second problem that really I encounter is the students lack of competence in the English language. You find that just a single word in a poem is enough to put a student off. They get a single lexical item they do not understand and they say my! I have just given up on this. You realize they will just be put off by such simple elements in poetry.
The problem about students being put off by simple lexical items in poetry was as a result of the students' incompetence in English language and not reading widely. I found out that students in both schools did not read widely when they recommended reading magazines and novels as ways of improving their English. Reading widely exposes a student to a wide repertoire of vocabulary in use, such that simple lexical items in poetry would not distract them. As to confirm what Mr. Macharia said above, below are some examples of poems that were taught to the students as I observed them. Miss Mwangombe taught poem one to students in school A while poem two was taught in school B by Mr. Macharia.

POEM ONE (1)

Grass Will Grow -by J. Kariara

If you should take my child lord
Give my hands strength to dig his grave
Cover him with earth
Lord send little rain
For grass will grow

If my house should burn down
So that the ashes sting the nostrils
Making the eyes weep
Then Lord send little rain
For grass will grow

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

NB. The poem has three stanza's (Third stanza left out since two stanzas will be sufficient for illustration purposes).

POEM TWO (2)

Building the Nation-by Henry Barlow

Today, I did my share
In building the nation
I drove the Permanent Secretary
To an important urgent function
In fact to a luncheon at the Vic.
The menu reflected its importance
Cold Bell beer with small talk
Then fried chicken with niceties
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs
Ice cream to cover the stereotype jokes
Coffee to keep the PS awake on return journey

NB. The poem has six stanzas (only two have been written down for illustration purposes)

From the poems, it can be noted that poem one was simple in wording. It for instance was without any difficult terms by form three students standard. Poem two on the other hand had some vocabularies such as Luncheon, vic, niceties, and stereotypes among others though the students did not indicate that they had any problems with them. Most of the other poems that were taught were equally of simple wording. However, it should be noted that some poems contain many difficult to understand lexical items (see poem one (1) in appendix E pg. 128) hence rendering them inaccessible even to the teachers let alone the students. Sometimes the poems were structured in a way that was confusing. Mr. Macharia for instance said the structure of some poems can sometimes put the students off.

The teacher was also cited as being one of the problems to teaching and learning of poetry in schools. Mr. Macharia stated that:

The teacher is himself a problem. Some of us actually have a problem. We go to a classroom with a poetry book and a piece of chalk and tell students that today we are learning poetry. When we talk poetry, we talk ideas. So immediately you tell students you are going to discuss ideas and you look cowardly, then who won’t be? How many students see a teacher teaching poetry once
in a term. Thus, you find the students saying that if the teacher is avoiding poetry who says I am capable of doing it?

So teachers' lack of confidence to teach and lack of attendance of poetry lessons, sometimes even for a whole term were cited as problems encountered in the teaching and learning of poetry. Sometimes the teachers used the time they were supposed to be teaching poetry to teach something else. Though Mr. Macharia pointed out that the teachers could be problems themselves, through observations I noted that the two teachers attended their poetry lessons throughout the period I observed them. Both the teachers also exhibited a high level of confidence when teaching poetry in the classroom.

I also learnt from Mr. Macharia that the tendency of the students to search for a deeper meaning in every poem was yet another problem. Mr. Macharia argued that:

The major problem that I experience is the tendency of my students to look for the deeper meaning to every word in a poem. They want to see something deeper in every aspect of the poem.

During my fieldwork, I noted that the teachers had been emphasizing on the aspect of deeper meaning in poetry without teaching the students on how to arrive at the deeper meaning. The teachers also did not inform the students that not all poems had a deeper meaning without which information the students kept on searching for an elusive deeper meaning in poetry. Mr. Macharia also cited lack of poetry teaching and learning resources as a problem he faced something which hampered effective teaching and learning of poetry. He said:

We require things like radios. We also require tapes for audio teaching. We require even visuals, things which would have motivated the students to like poetry but they are never there.
Audio and Visual teaching aids are considered very important by educationists thus I noted that such lack of poetry teaching and learning resources hampered effective teaching and learning of poetry in Mr. Macharia's school.

The students were also asked to enumerate the problems they faced when learning poetry in school. Table 4.6 reveals what they pointed out.

Table 4.6 Problems Students Face While Learning Poetry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems students identified</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of deeper meaning</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in understanding poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to answer poetry questions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of learning resources</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Styles used in poetry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult vocabulary</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language used by poets</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher related factors</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate time for poetry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest in poetry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the above table, problems the students identified have been summarized in the thematic statements that appear in the table. According to Table 4.6, it can be noted that the greatest problem that students in school A faced when learning poetry was difficulty in understanding the vocabulary used in poems. 13 (34%) of the students found the
vocabulary to be difficult. Other problems that the students faced were; lack of resources 8 (21%), interpretation of deeper meaning 7 (16%), styles and language used by poets 6 (16%) respectively, teacher related factors such as harsh or a fast teacher 5 (13%), inadequate time for poetry learning 4 (11%) and difficulty in understanding poetry 3 (8%). From the students' responses, I noted that some of the problems they cited such as lack of resources for learning and inadequate time for poetry had also been cited by Miss Mwang’ombe their teacher as among the problems she faced in the teaching and learning of poetry in secondary school.

From the same table on the other hand, 10 (38%) of the students in school B stated that they faced the problem of interpretation of deeper meaning in poetry. They also pointed out other problems they face as; difficulty in understanding poetry 9 (35%), difficult vocabulary used in poems 7 (27%), how to answer poetry questions 6 (23%) and styles used in poetry 3 (12%). Mr. Macharia had earlier on also cited such factors as the students’ difficulty in understanding poetry and interpreting the deeper meaning in poems as the problems he faces in the teaching and learning of poetry in his school. The students thus confirmed the existence of the problems in their school. The different responses by students from the two schools point out to the fact that the problems teachers and students in the schools face are school (context) specific.

From the students’ responses therefore, I learnt that some of the problems that teachers faced while teaching poetry were the same ones faced by the students while learning it. From the data above it can be concluded that, the problems that were stated by the
teachers and those enumerated by the students were of particular concern in the teaching and learning of the poetry course.

Lastly the teachers and the students were asked to provide suggestions or recommendations about what they thought should be done to assist solve the problems they faced. From school A, Miss Mwang’ombe cited the following problems; lack of adequate time to teach poetry, students negative attitude towards poetry, the problem of students language being weak and lack of poetry teaching and learning resources.

Concerning the inadequacy of time to teach poetry, Miss Mwang’ombe argued that:

Poetry should be allocated more time. I feel that poetry should in fact be separated from English. It should be a subject on its own so that now it is allocated adequate time.

On student’s negative attitude towards poetry learning, Miss Mwang’ombe suggested that poetry teachers be aggressive in their quest to win students to poetry. She said:

Poetry teachers should try as much as possible to convince the students that poetry is not all that tough. In their endeavour to do this, they should use poetry recitations as a means. Through reciting poems, the students’ interest is aroused hence they start liking poetry.

Miss Mwang’ombe also argued strongly for the enforcement of English speaking in school as a language policy. This, she argued would improve the students’ competence in English language and hence their ability to learn poetry. To alleviate the problems of lack of poetry teaching and learning resources the teacher argued that:

The school administration should liase with the parents and donors such as the Global Education Partnership (G.E.P.) to provide the schools with teaching learning resources. Through such provisions, the teaching and learning of poetry would be enhanced.
I found that Miss Mwang’ombe had on her part tried by looking for teaching resources for poetry from her own other sources something which was commendable. However, from the words of the same teacher, it was very hard to convince the school administrators to invest in such resources.

Mr. Macharia on the other hand had cited the following as the problems he faced while teaching poetry in class. He cited inability of students to understand poems, students’ low level of language acquisition, the tendency of the students to look for a deeper meaning in every word of a poem and the teacher himself as the problems teachers face in the teaching and learning of poetry. Because of the problems, he suggested the following as recommendations to reduce the problems.

On the problem of students’ inability to understand poems and their low level of English acquisition, he argued that:

To improve on their English language acquisition, and consequently their ability to understand poetry, students should be encouraged to read literature widely. They should also read newspapers daily. To make it more practical for the students to understand poems, teachers should also use students to teach others. As I said earlier, a student can bring out a poem to her peers better than a teacher would have done it in a century.

Mr. Macharia suggested that the problem of the students’ tendency to look for a deeper meaning in every word of a poem could be solved by teaching the students that not all poems contain deeper meaning, while that on the teacher being the problem by:

The teacher should always have confidence in himself or herself. The teacher should also be confident in the subject he/she is teaching. The teacher should always resist the temptation of looking cowardly before students. Above all else, they must attend all their poetry lessons.
The students on the other hand pointed out what is shown in Table 4.7 as their recommendations or suggestions about how to solve the problems they encountered. The students had pointed out that they found the interpretation of deeper meaning in poetry, difficulty in understanding poetry, lack of resources, difficult vocabulary used in poetry and teacher related factors among other factors as the problems they faced (see Table 4.6) in the learning of poetry.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' recommendations</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th></th>
<th>School B</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>(f)</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of teaching-learning resources</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should give assignments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-student discussions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing practice in poetry</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers should attend all poetry lessons</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading more poetry</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming discussion groups</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher should not be too harsh</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry should be allocated more time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading novels, magazines to improve one’s English</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students interest in poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing more practice by searching questions from past papers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should be taught how to answer poetry questions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students be taught how to get deeper meaning in poetry</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive reinforcement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive attitude towards poetry</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.7, it can be noted that to alleviate the problems that students and teachers faced when teaching and learning poetry, certain things should be done.
22 (58%) of the students in school A and 4 (15%) of those from school B pointed out that teaching and learning resources of poetry should be provided. It should be noted that the teachers also called for the provision of teaching-learning resources such as poetry text books in the schools. During interviews with the teachers and classroom observation, I learnt that lack of poetry teaching and learning resources was critical. In fact both of the teachers interviewed said lack of poetry resources was the greatest hindrance to the teaching of poetry.

It can also be noted that 10 (26%) and 5 (19%) of the students in schools A and B respectively recommended that teachers give assignments on poetry to students. It should be noted however that in both classes observed, teachers usually gave assignments for the students to do after every poetry lesson. The students recommendation that teachers give more assignments on poetry thus implied that the assignments the teachers gave out to the students were too few to warrant any good learning practice in poetry. It should be remembered that teachers taught poetry fortnightly hence lack of enough assignments for students’ to learn poetry well.

From the same Table 4.7, it can be noted that 6 (16%) of the students in school A and 5 (19%) of those in school B recommended that emphasis be put on practise in poetry. This meant that through such practise the students would be in a position to understand poetry better and even be able to derive deeper meaning of the poems under study. The students’ recommendation also meant that the lessons allocated to poetry teaching and learning were inadequate as confirmed by 4 (11%) of the students who said that poetry lessons should be allocated more time.
According to Table 4.7, it can also be noted that 4 (11%) of the students in school A and 2 (8%) of those in school B suggested that reading of poetry could assist in solving the problems they faced. However, evident lack of poetry textbooks in the schools I observed hampered the students' desire to read more poetry. School administrators should probably be more sensitive to the needs of their teachers and students by providing the requisite aids to teaching and learning such books. The inability to provide adequate teaching-learning resources and materials therefore affected the quality of the instructional process hence attainment of the poetry teaching and learning objectives.

It should be noted that 4 (11%) and 6 (23%) of the students in schools A and B respectively suggested the use of groupwork discussions with 8 (21%) and 12 (46%) of the students in the schools advocating for teacher-student discussions. From the observations I made, I found that only Miss Mwang'ombe employed this method of learning. Mr. Macharia used teacher-centred approaches to learning. This could probably be the reason why some 12 (46%) of the students in his school suggested the use of teacher-student discussions as a method of teaching and learning poetry.

Attitude was also cited as a problem that teachers and students encountered while teaching or learning poetry. In that connection, 3 (8%) of the students in school A argued that those teaching or learning poetry should develop a positive attitude towards it if they are to meaningfully gain from and do better in poetry examinations. In a classroom situation, a positive attitude could be created by the teacher positively rewarding students whenever they successfully attempted assignments on poetry. The teacher on his or her part should believe in himself or herself as they teach poetry.
Another finding was that 3 (8%) of the students in school A and 3 (12%) of those in school B recommended the reading of novels and magazines for the purposes of improving their English. The teachers in both schools had indicated that their students' language was poor and their language acquisition capabilities wanting. Through such wide reading of literature, their English would probably improve. Other recommendations that were made by the students were that, the students be taught how to get deeper meaning in poetry 4 (15%) and how to answer poetry questions 5 (19%).

When it came to answering poetry questions, the students suggested that teachers should assist them by teaching the students the question answering techniques. It was also the students recommendation that teachers be using positive reinforcement in class with 1 (3%) of the students in school A and 3 (12%) of those in school B advocating for it. 3 (8%) of the students in school A and 4 (15%) of the students in B also recommended that students develop interest in poetry as a subject if they are to do well in it.

The students also recommended that teachers attend all their poetry lessons. This recommendation seemed to be inferring to what Mr. Macharia had said about attendance of poetry lessons. The teacher had argued that some teachers only attended one poetry lesson per term. Others did not attend such lessons at all. Asked to state what they were doing with the solutions to the problems they encountered, all of which seemed to be within their realm of activities, the teachers said the following:

Miss Mwango’mba argued that:

I try within the prevailing circumstances to achieve my objective which is changing the students attitude to enable them enjoy learning poetry but it is slow.
I noted that Miss Mwango’mbe tried to achieve her objectives by personally searching for the poetry teaching and learning resources of which she used. She said that because of her effort, not only do students answer poetry questions in their examinations, but they also look for poems for reciting. So she was headed somewhere. Mr. Macharia on the other hand said that he always tried to solve problems that he could and there seemed to be changing attitudes towards poetry by his students.

4.7 Utilization of Resources in Teaching and Learning Poetry.

The K.C.S.E syllabuses and Regulations of 1996 state that there are no set books for poetry. The syllabus reveals that unlike with the novel, play and short stories sections of literature, the poetry section has no set books. This then could have a negative effect on the teaching and learning of poetry in the sense that the teachers and students have no guidance on what poetry textbooks to depend on.

This study therefore sought to find out how the teachers and students utilized the available resources in the teaching and learning of poetry.

Teaching-learning resources are considered as basic requirements in any instructional process. Gamble (1984) argues that teaching and learning resources make learning an interesting and fulfilling experience. During the fieldwork, I found out that in school A, Miss Mwang’ombe used the following textbooks.

1. Understanding Poetry by E. Alembi (Acasia Publishers)

2. Poems from East Africa edited by D. Cook and D. Rubadiri (E.A.E.P.).

In school B on the other hand, Mr. Macharia used the following textbooks to teach poetry.
Though the Ministry of Education Science and Technology lacked guidance on selecting the poetry teaching and learning textbooks, the teachers used the textbook copies mentioned above. During classroom observation of the poetry lessons, it was noted that except for the teacher’s copies of poetry textbooks, poetry teaching and learning resources were lacking. The students did not have copies to even share among themselves.

Concerning the utilization of the teachers' copies of the poetry textbooks, it was noted that in school A, Miss Mwang’ombe gave the prefect her textbook a day or two before the actual lesson. The prefect then wrote the poem on the blackboard well before the lesson for the other students to copy down in their notebooks. So during the actual lesson time, I always found that the students had already had the poem. The teacher then proceeded with the analysis of the poem from there.

On the other hand, in school B, Mr. Macharia came to class with the textbook and selected a poem from it, which he copied on the blackboard. As the teacher copied the poem on the blackboard, the students also copied the same in their notebooks. After such copying of the poem on the blackboard, the teacher then started analyzing the poem as the students listened attentively. After the analysis of the poem, Mr. Macharia then gave
out assignments to the students. He dictated the questions to the students and expected the students to hand in the work by a particular time. I noted that the students always did the assignments given by the teacher and they also handed in their work within the agreed time frame.

In terms of resource utilization in the two schools, the few that were there were under the custody of the teachers who picked the poems for study and brought them to class. So, the available books were put to relatively good use. However, their being few in the secondary school in which I conducted lesson observations hampered efficient poetry teaching and learning.

In conclusion, provision and efficient utilization of textbooks and other recourses does lead to enhanced poetry teaching and learning in class. If there were enough copies for use by the teachers and students in the schools then much time would have been spent in teaching the subject matter rather than on writing the poem on the blackboard.

4.8 Time Allocated to Poetry Teaching and Learning and Its Utilization.

This study sought information on the time allocated to poetry teaching and learning and its utilization.

Anderson (1994) says that, at the most general level, the way in which time is allocated and used in schools and classrooms communicates to students what educators value and influences what and how much they learn. Furthermore, the allocation and use of time has been found to be consistently related to the amount of student learning that occurs in schools (Husén and Postlethwaite 1989).
To elicit the teachers' opinions on the time allocated to poetry teaching and learning, the teachers were asked to state the time they allocated to the poetry course. Both Miss Mwango’ombe and Mr. Macharia pointed out that they allocated 80 minutes to poetry teaching and learning per fortnight. During observations, I confirmed that the teachers taught poetry fortnightly. I also confirmed that they allocated 80 minutes to poetry teaching and learning. In the 80 minutes, which formed a double lesson (since a single lesson in secondary school comprises of 40 minutes) only one poem was covered.

However, though they allocated 80 minutes to poetry, I observed that the teachers wasted quite a lot of time. The teachers went to class as late as twenty minutes after the lesson had begun and left as early as fifteen minutes before the end of the lessons. I found out this phenomenon by recording exact times the teachers were to be in class as guided by the ringing of the bells against the time they actually went there.

Table 4.8 below shows how the teachers utilized the time in actual classroom teaching.

Table 4.8: Teachers’ Utilization of Time while Teaching Poetry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson</th>
<th>Teacher 1 Miss Mwang’ombe (school A)</th>
<th>Teacher 2 Mr. Macharia (school B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schedule time</td>
<td>Started</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.30-9.20 am</td>
<td>8.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.30-9.20 am</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.30-9.20 am</td>
<td>9.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.30-9.20 am</td>
<td>8.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table 4.8, it can be noted that the teachers wasted between 15 - 25 minutes on average in most of the poetry lessons they taught. During observation, I found that the teachers wasted much valuable time throughout the poetry lesson delivery. Looking at Table 4.8, it can be noted that, in most of the poetry lessons that I observed Miss Mwang’ombe teach poetry, she came to class late and did not take the full 80 minutes she was supposed to utilize in teaching poetry. Miss Mwang’ombe’s explanation for not using the 80 minutes in teaching poetry was that she wasted time because of poor planning. In one of the lessons on the other hand, Mr. Macharia started the lesson at 2.45 p.m instead of 2.40 p.m. The lesson ended at 3.40 p.m., twenty minutes before the scheduled time. On the whole, twenty five instructional minutes were put to waste. When I asked him why he wasted so much valuable time, Mr. Macharia said that he left the class early because the time he allocated for discussion was usually not utilized as the students failed to participate fully. I also found out that the teachers wasted a lot of time because of their lack of advance preparation. I noted that they started preparing for teaching just a few minutes to the lesson hence going to class late. Other reasons that made the teachers waste time included; their schools traditions that lacked in time management. In both schools, there were poor policies on time management and the head teachers were not concerned about the supervision of the teachers.

At times the teachers who were in class before the poetry teachers (i.e. the ones in class when the bells rung) did not leave on time hence making the poetry teachers go to class a bit late.
There was also apathy on the side of both the students and their class prefects in the sense that they never asked to be taught throughout the time the teacher was supposed to be in class i.e. the scheduled time. In some schools students through their prefects ask their teachers to teach them throughout the lessons though it is something not common with students. Another reason that I found out made teachers waste time was that they were overloaded, being the only teachers at English in the whole of their schools. Both Miss Mwango’mbe and Mr. Macharia for example were allocated 28 periods to teach against the standard of 15 periods per week set by the Ministry of Education. Thus switching from one lesson to another or one class to the other consumed some of the time for poetry teaching.

When asked to state whether the time she allocated to poetry was adequate, Miss Mwang’ombe said:

"Time is the greatest hindrance to poetry teaching and learning. I teach poetry twice per month. This is too less a time to go through complicated poetry teaching and learning methodologies. I feel we require more time."

Responding to the same question, Mr. Macharia also argued that the time was inadequate. He said:

"The time is not adequate. The reason being that English syllabus is so wide. I would want to allocate more time for poetry lessons but you realize on the other hand I am being pressed to allocate time to cover drama, the novel and short stories. I am also expected to tackle writing, grammar, etc. we are required to cover so much that the time we allocate to poetry is not enough. Sincerely speaking the time is not enough."

However, during classroom observations, I noted that the eighty minutes the teachers allocated to poetry every fortnight were adequate. In all the lessons that I observed, I
realized that the teachers finished whatever they planned to teach before the period ended. They gave out assignments and left the classes before the lessons ended.

In conclusion therefore, in as much as the teachers argued that the time they allocated to poetry was not enough or was inadequate, they should always make deliberate attempts to maximize on the utilization of the time they allocated to the subject. Once decisions concerning allocated time have been made, attention should be turned to using much of the allocated time for instructional purposes as possible. To succeed in proper utilization of allocated time, the teachers should also consider preparing lesson plans for each lesson they are poised to teach.

All the same, it is my opinion that if the time the teachers allocated to poetry teaching and learning is utilized well, then it would be adequate for purposes of learning the subject.

4.9 Why the Teachers used the Poetry Course Textbooks that they Used

The KNEC (1995) states that unlike the novel, play and short stories sections of literature, the poetry section has no set books. This then means that the teacher can use any poetry text book for teaching poetry. It was because of this realization that this study sought to find out why the teachers used the poetry course textbooks that they used. The list of the textbooks that teachers used is provided under the sub-section on utilization of resources in teaching and learning of poetry in this chapter.

When asked to state why they used the books that they used both Miss Mwang’ombe and Mr. Macharia said that those were the books that were available to them. There were no
other poetry textbooks that were at their disposal apart from the ones already listed. Since
the poetry course textbooks that teachers and students used were not written for use in
 teaching a specific poetry curriculum, there was need to find out whether such textbooks
 were sequenced in a way that allowed for easy teaching and learning of poetry.

According to Taba (1962), often the curriculum is ineffective not because it's content is
inadequate, but because it is put together in a way that makes learning difficult.

Based on this fact, it was thus necessary to establish how the poetry course textbooks the
 teachers and students used were sequenced. I asked the teachers to judge the quality of
 the sequencing of the poems in the poetry textbooks they used because it was the teachers
 who were better placed to tell whether the sequencing, allowed for easy teaching and
 learning of poetry. Miss Mwang’ombe stated the following about the textbooks she used
 when teaching poetry:

The textbooks are not specifically sequenced for easy teaching and
learning of poetry. They are just books that have poems. They don’t
have questions, not even ways to approach the poem. So the teacher
has to get the poem, write it on the blackboard, formulate his/her
own questions and the things he/she wants to teach and so on.

However, on the contrary, I found out that only one textbook that she used, that is
“Poems from East Africa” by David Cook and Rubadiri D. was not sequenced according
to the measure she described above which was that a well sequenced poetry textbook
should contain questions and ways to approach each particular poem in the text.

Mr. Macharia on the other hand said the following about the sequence of the textbooks
he used for teaching poetry:

Well, two of the textbooks are sequenced for easy teaching and
consequently it would be assumed easy learning of poetry, and that
is the *Youthful Voices*. This is one of the books that has a very good sequence hence making it easy to communicate with the students. *A poetry course for K.C.S.E.* is another. I would recommend this book to every teacher of poetry.

The teacher argued that he liked the book because it was arranged in terms of the content, themes and also on style. All these were under different sub headings. The teacher thus pointed out that one could not separate the book from actual teaching of poetry in a classroom situation. The following Table 4.9 reveals the salient sequential features of each of the poetry textbooks cited by the teachers as identified by the researcher.
Table 4.9 Salient Sequential Features of the Poetry Course Textbooks

Used by the Teachers of Poetry in the Two Selected Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poetry text books</th>
<th>Salient features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ✦ Understanding Poetry                 | ➝ Sequentially arranged in the sense that  
- Poems arranged according to stylistic features used in poetry  
- Has notes about the poem under study  
- Has questions after every poem  
- Has sample examination questions with answers  |
| ✦ Youthful Voices: Poems from Kenya Secondary Schools | ➝ Content is arranged according to themes  
- Its sequence involved the following  
  - Arranged according to poetry stylistic features.  
  - Has guiding notes  
  - Questions for practice  |
| ✦ A Poetry Course for K.C.S.E.         | ➝ Poems are arranged according to alphabetical order of poets’ names  
- Poets with more than one poem, their poems are arranged in order of increasing complexity or difficulty.  
- Index at the back showing possible categorization of poems according to subject matter.  |
| ✦ Boundless Voices: Poems From Kenya    | ➝ Sequence involves provision of detailed notes about each poem  
- Has sample questions for the readers  |
| ✦ An Introduction to East African Poetry|                                                                                                                                                  |

From Table 4.9, it can be noted that the textbooks that the teachers used were sequenced in some order that allowed for easy teaching and learning of poetry. However, the two
teachers argued that there was need to have the content of the textbooks further re-
arranged. Miss Mwang’ombe for instance said:

I would feel that it is very necessary. This is because if you take the
students from one simple aspect and go to a bit more complex up to
the most complex makes them even like poetry better. They would
feel okay if the teacher builds upon from whatever they already
knew. But the aspect of moving from anywhere like we usually do
makes it become more disinteresting to the students.

It should be noted that Miss Mwang’ombe had earlier said that the students in her school
were weak. This was the reason she advocated for the re-arrangement of the textbooks
she used from simple to complex aspects of poetry and not vice versa.

On the other hand, Mr. Macharia also affirmed that the content of the poetry textbooks
would rather be re-arranged by saying:

I sincerely would rather re-arrange the content. There is no point of
giving the students something in a disorganized manner. My work is
to make it as easy as it is practically possible for the students. This
will enable the students take content from the teacher in the best
manner possible. This will enable me earn more disciples in poetry. I
have to give it in the best way that I possibly could.

Hence, it can be noted that this teacher also advocated for the re-arrangement of the
poetry textbook content. The teachers had their own ideas about sequencing the
textbooks. Given that they had been in field for three years, they could have identified a
more suitable way of arranging the poetry content guided by contextual realities in the
field. The main call for the re-arrangement of the textbooks was driven by the teachers’
desire to see up to it that the texts’ contents were arranged from simple to complex ideas
as earlier indicated.
In conclusion, it can be said that the teachers used the text books because they were the texts available to them and that the poetry textbook content was arranged in some way that allowed for easy teaching and learning of poetry as stated by Mr. Macharia. All except one of the textbooks teachers used were arranged in some ways that I personally felt allowed for easy teaching and learning of poetry. It is my opinion that it is the work or role of the teacher, (the textbook having been arranged in some way) to present the content in the best manner possible as for the students to assimilate guided by the situation in the field. If the realities in the field demand that though the content is sequenced it should be re-arranged, then it is the role of the teachers to do exactly that.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents a summary of research findings, conclusion, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research. The purpose of this study was to investigate into the teaching and learning of secondary school poetry in English in Kenya. This was an ethnographic study of two schools in Voi division. The study employed a questionnaire, interview guide and lesson observation to guide as the main research instruments.

5.2 Summary of Research Findings
The research findings showed that:

1. Both of the teachers had B.Ed (Arts) degree in their respective subject areas.
2. Both teachers of poetry were trained on how to teach poetry at university. However, English language and literature were taught independently. Hence, there was some inadequacy in the teachers' initial professional training considering that poetry is supposed to be taught integratively within English in the 8-4-4 system of education.
3. In respect to the teachers' classroom preparedness, classroom observations showed that the teachers lacked in that aspect. They never prepared lesson plans to guide them in their teaching neither did they have teaching aids prepared to assist them get across complicated poetry concepts.
4. Learner-centred methods were advocated for by the teachers and during in-service courses that the teachers attended. This is because these methods were said to encourage learner-involvement hence enhancing the learners' interest in the subject.
However, classroom observations showed that only one of the two teachers employed learner-centred methods. This teacher most commonly used learner-centred methods such as classroom discussions, teacher-student and group discussions. One of the teachers used only teacher-centred methods i.e lecture and question and answer methods.

5. Most of the students felt that, though the teaching-learning methods teachers employed were central in their ability to learn poetry, there were other factors which were also important. Individual interest in poetry, availability of teaching-learning resources, poetic language and teacher assignments were identified as some of the most important factors in the teaching and learning of poetry, only second to the teaching methods.

6. The study also showed that both teachers and students encountered some problems in the process of teaching and learning of poetry. There were inadequate poetry textbooks and resources in the sample schools. Only the teachers had poetry course textbooks. This made the teaching and learning of poetry difficult. Other problems that were discovered to be common were: students' negative attitude towards poetry, students' language problem leading to inability to understand poems and the tendency of the students to look for the deeper meaning in every word in a poem.

7. In respect to the utilization of the available poetry teaching and learning resources by the teachers and students, classroom observations showed that the teachers copied the poems they wanted to teach on the blackboard from the teachers' copies they had, while the students copied the same in their notebooks. The teachers then analyzed the
poems as they illustrated them on the blackboard. The resources were thus not put to maximum use.

8. Time allocation to the teaching and learning of poetry was discovered to be enough to teach all aspects of the course. The teachers wasted a lot of valuable teaching and learning time. Were it not for the wastage of valuable poetry teaching and learning time, the teachers would not be craving for more time.

9. The study showed that the poetry teachers of the selected schools used particular poetry course textbooks because they were the poetry textbooks available to them. The study also showed that all except one of the poetry textbooks the teachers used in the teaching and learning of poetry were sequenced in some way. This sequencing allowed for easy teaching and learning of poetry. However, it was discovered, through interviews with the teachers that they would rather re-arrange the content in a manner that would best suit their students.

5.3 Conclusion

From the foregoing findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are various factors that influence the teaching and learning of the secondary school poetry in English in Voi Division. These factors include students’ individual interest in poetry, availability of poetry teaching and learning resources, the methods the teachers use to teach poetry student’s negative attitudes towards poetry and the tendency by the students to look for deeper meaning in every word of a poem among other factors. Hence, it is possible also that these factors affect the performance in integrated English course in Voi division.
5.4 Recommendations of the Study

The following are my recommendations based on the findings of this study.

1. The teachers of poetry should have a firm academic and professional training and experience of the poetry course for the programme to succeed in secondary schools. The training will equip the teachers with theoretical and practical understanding of poetry as a course of study in secondary schools. Thus, pre-service and in-service courses should be offered to all teachers of poetry.

2. Since initial training is not adequate for continued professional growth, there is need for regular in-service training for all teachers of poetry to match the dynamic contextual settings in which they operate. Thus, all poetry teachers (experienced, less experienced and inexperienced) should be provided with opportunities to attend in-service courses to improve their quality of teaching. The government should organize and institutionalize in-service training for teachers.

3. The inspectors of schools along with other teacher support professionals such as headteachers and subject heads of departments (HOD’S) should mount regular inspections of schools. They should look for ways and means of monitoring and evaluating teachers of poetry. This inspection will enhance the teaching and learning of poetry in schools since concerned teachers will be guided and counseled regularly. Both Miss Mwang’ombe and Mr. Macharia indicated that they had not ever been inspected while teaching poetry in class. Expecting that they can be inspected any time, their classroom preparedness will be enhanced.

4. Teacher-centred methods that were found to be in common use by one teacher during classroom observations should be discarded in favour of learner-centred methods of
teaching. This is because meaningful learning is enhanced when the learner actively participates in the process of learning.

5. Collaborative teaching should be encouraged. As noted from the findings of the study different teachers have different teaching methodologies. If there could be provisions whereby a teacher from one school could teach in another teachers' school and vice versa during the term, such collaboration would be a good means of sharing experiences among teachers hence improving the quality of teaching and learning.

6. The schools in conjunction with the parents and other willing donors should adequately equip libraries to alleviate the problem of lack of textbooks and other poetry teaching and learning resources. The school administrators should also procure class readers and other general materials for intensive and extensive reading by the students. With such proper provisions of quality resources, the problem of language and hence understanding of poetry will be greatly reduced.

7. The syllabus should specify the amount of time each genre of literature for instance poetry should be allocated instead of just giving a blanket time frame for literature. Otherwise, eighty (80) minutes per fortnight the teachers allocated to poetry should be enough to teach and change students attitude towards poetry. Heads of departments however should have supervisory roles to ensure that the time is well spent in class.

8. Just like the novel, the short stories and play sections of literature the poetry section should also have recommended set books. This will provide both teachers and students with poetry course textbooks that are specifically designed for particular
form levels hence easy teaching and learning of poetry at the secondary school level of education.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

1. This study was limited to secondary schools in Voi Division of Taita-Taveta District, Coast Province. Therefore, further research is recommended to cover a wide area so as to establish the extent to which the findings of this study could be generalized.

2. Further research with a larger sample should be done to determine the extent to which poetry teaching and learning objectives have been effective in Kenya secondary schools.

3. Other areas that would require further research include the poetry subject teachers' training effectiveness in colleges and higher institutions of learning and the problem encountered. This is important because teacher training in higher educational ranks necessarily influence the teachers' teaching of a subject at secondary school level.

4. Research related to the nature of the present study should be conducted to cover secondary schools in different geographical areas of Kenya in order to discover other problems that impede the implementation of the poetry syllabus.
REFERENCES


Fagbongbe, E. (1971). *Reform in the Professional Education of Teachers in Africa; Conference Report, Association for Teacher Education in Africa*.


APPENDIX A
POETRY LESSON OBSERVATION GUIDE

To be used in observing activities that go on during the Poetry lesson in a classroom.

Detailed description of such activities will be recorded during and after the observation.

General Information

School: _____________________  Class: _____________________

Subject: _____________________  Topic being taught: __________

Date: _________________________

No. of students present in class: _________________________

Teacher  (a) Male ( ) (b) Female ( )

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Lesson Introduction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What method is used to introduce the lesson?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group-work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher checks students work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students carry out exercises</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Lesson Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the lesson progress?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the teacher lead students to their own interpretation of poems?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exercises (at what level is this given and how is it administered – does the teacher mark the exercises or does he/she ask the students to do it?)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Students read out texts e.g. in Poetry.

NB: Is the lesson student or teacher-centred?

II STUDENT PARTICIPATION
Who initiates the interaction in class and what form does it take?
• Teacher asks individual students questions
• Students ask questions
• How often do students seek clarification of ideas.
• How does the teacher reach when students ask questions – are student’s attempts to ask questions acknowledged?
• What are the student interests in the lesson?

III INCENTIVES
What kinds of rewards (positive or negative) are given to students to encourage learning?
• Teacher expounds on correct answers given by students.
• Teacher praises verbally
• What is the response when a wrong answer is given?
• Are students encouraged to speak when ideas do not appear to be clear?

IV TEACHING-LEARNING RESOURCES
• Have the teaching-learning resources been prepared to suit the lesson?
• Are the teaching learning resources sufficient in number?
• Are the resources indicated in the scheme of work?
• How are the students using the learning resources?
  (a) In pairs (b) In groups (c) as a class

V EVALUATION
• Does the teacher find out whether students have learnt?
• How does he or she do this?
• Does the teacher mark and correct student assignments?

OTHER OBSERVATIONS
• Does the teacher have a scheme of work for the term?
• Are the objectives of the syllabus clearly defined?
• Does the teacher cover the syllabus?
• What problems does the teacher encounter in the course of the lesson?
• Are the students enthusiastic about learning poetry?
## APPENDIX B
### POETRY LESSON OBSERVATION NOTES GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category:</td>
<td>No. of pupils:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher:</td>
<td>Topic:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers' Activities</th>
<th>Students Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR POETRY TEACHERS

1. School: ___________________ Teacher's sex: ___________________
   Type: ___________________

2. What is your highest academic qualification? _____________________________

3. (a) Are you a professionally trained teacher?
    (b) If yes, what is your highest professional qualification?

4. What subjects did you specialize in during your pre-service training?
   ________________________________________________________________

5. Was the training (pre-service) adequate and does it assist you teach poetry better?

6. What do you think about the training received as far as language and literature are concerned?
   ________________________________________________________________

7. Kindly give your comment in relation to the pre-service training of teachers to teach poetry in Secondary schools?
   ________________________________________________________________

8. Have you attended in-service courses related to teaching and learning of poetry?

9. When did you last attend such an In-service course?

10. Was the course attended on methodology, content or both?

11. (a) What new skills on teaching and learning of poetry did you learn?
    (b) State the value of attending in-service courses on poetry.
    (c) Were you ever inspected while teaching poetry in class?

12. (a) Are you aware of any recommended poetry teaching and learning methods?
    (b) List them ______________________________________________________

13. What are some of the recommended methods that you rarely use?
14 What are the reasons why you rarely use them?

15. (a) Would you suggest a change in the teaching methods for the poetry syllabus?

(b) If yes, which methods would you recommend to be used by teachers for improved student learning?

16. What hinders you from using the said methods?

17. If you have ever attended an in-service course on poetry methodology, list all the techniques recommended for the teaching and learning of the poetry syllabus?

18. Give any difficulties you encounter in the teaching of the poetry in the classroom.

19. (a) Apart from these difficulties, are there any other problems you have experienced concerning the teaching and learning of the poetry course?

(b) Kindly give suggestions on how the problems can be alleviated.

20. (a) Do the problems affect the students’ grades in English at K.C.S.E. level?

(b) Could these problems be the cause of the dismal student achievement in integrated English at K.C.S.E. level?

21. (a) Which text books do you use in teaching poetry?

(b) Why do you use the poetry course textbooks that you use?

22. What would you say about the resources for teaching and learning poetry in terms of availability?

23. Are poetry teaching and learning resources in your school adequate for effective teaching and learning?

24. (a) How many poetry lessons do you teach per week?

(b) What amount of time is allocated to poetry teaching and learning per class per
25. Is the time allocated for poetry teaching and learning adequate?

26. (a) Are the poetry textbooks that you use specifically structured or written for easy teaching and learning?

(b) Explain ________________________________

27. Do you prefer using them in the forms they are arranged or would you rather re-arrange the content?

NB: Questions other than the above may be asked depending on the class observations made in class during the poetry lessons.
APPENDIX D
STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE.

The following questionnaire aims at getting information on the methods of teaching and learning poetry in your school and your perceptions or views on poetry teaching and learning with regard to your ability to learn poetry. The data collected will be treated with strict confidence.

Please answer all the questions by putting a tick (3) in the brackets [ ] or writing your response in the space provided.

1. Name of your school ____________________________________________________________

2. Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

3. When were you first introduced to poetry?
   (a) Primary school [ ]
   (b) Secondary school [ ] (tick the right answer)

4. (a) Did you enjoy learning poetry in primary school?
       Yes [ ] No [ ]
   (b) Can you give reasons? _______________________________________________________
       ____________________________________________________________

5. What aspects of poetry did your teachers stress at the primary school level? Was it content or style; that is, the organization of lines, rhythm, rhyme, imagery etc.
   Content/subject matter [ ] Style [ ]

6. How do you find the learning of poetry at secondary school level?
7. (a) If you find learning poetry enjoyable, what particularly makes you enjoy the learning of poetry?

(i) The way the teachers teach poetry

(ii) My interest in poetry as a subject

(iii) Availability of poetry teaching and learning resources such as books

(iv) Any other reason

(b) If you find poetry boring and difficult, give reasons to explain why you find the subject to be so

8. What poetry teaching and learning methods and activities do your teachers employ when teaching you poetry?

(a) Class discussion

(b) Question – answer method

(c) Group work

(d) Individual instruction

(e) Others (specify)

9. (a) How do you find the way teachers teach poetry?

   (a) Very good
   (c) Average

   (b) Good
   (d) Poor

(b) If poor suggest ways for improvement
10. Do you think the methods teachers use to teach you poetry affect your ability to learn poetry? Yes [ ] No [ ]
    (b) If yes, give reasons

11. What problems do you encounter or face when learning poetry?

12. Do you think the problems you encounter when learning poetry are the cause of your poor performance in English?

13. What would you suggest should be done in order to do away with the problems you encounter in the learning of poetry?

14. In your opinion, what could be done so that you enjoy learning of poetry?

Thank you for your co-operation.
APPENDIX E
SAMPLE OF POEMS TAUGHT DURING POETRY LESSON OBSERVATIONS

POEM ONE
The Voodoo Drum -by Ommar A. Nassar

The black leopard
Has jumped
Out of its skin,
And is now roaming
The villages,
Terrorising and robbing
The innocent ones
Their peaceful nights
And it’s all
The voodoo drum,
Sound of the shadows,
The echo
Of the tell-tale bird.
Vibrating loud and wide,
Tunes sad and gloomy,
Tunes summoning
Tunes sending
Thuds to plague the flesh
The drum yowls,
The drum trembles
It beats, it vibrates into
The labyrinth of darkness
And then,
Loudly and quietly
It echoes back
Moaning in pain
Of incarnate tears,
And it sounds
Gloomy and sad
Like it is tortured
By the chord
Of its curling smoke
Kissing from it’s own heat,
Louder, louder its rocks
Now flowing
Like orchestral music
Then wild
Then sharp
Like thunder-clap
And then............what?
Building the Nation - by Henry Barlow

Today, I did my share
In building the nation
I drove the Permanent Secretary
To an important urgent function
In fact to a luncheon at the Vic.

The menu reflected it's importance
Cold Bell beer with small talk
Then fried chicken with niceties
Wine to fill the hollowness of the laughs
Ice cream to cover the stereotype jokes
Coffee to keep the PS awake on return journey

I drove the Permanent Secretary back
He yawned many times in the back of the car
Then to keep awake, he suddenly asked
Did you have any lunch, friend?
I replied, looking straight ahead
And secretly smiling at his belated concern
That I had not, but was slimming!

Upon which he said with seriousness
That amused more than annoyed me
Mwananchi, I too had none!
I attended to matters of state
Highly delicate diplomatic duties, you know
And fried, it goes against my grain
Causes me stomach ulcers and wind
Ah, he continued yawning again
The Paris we suffer in building the nation!

So the Ps had ulcers too!
My ulcers I think are equally painful
Only they are caused by hunger
Not sumptuous lunches!

So two nation builders
Arrived home this evening
With terrible stomach pains
The result of building the nation
Different ways.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source: KNEC (1999)

NB: Attainment is indicated by a grade of which grade “A” is the highest and grade “E” is the lowest.