A Comparison of Descriptive English Compositions of Visually Impaired and Sighted Students in Kenyan Secondary Schools.

By

OMBATI JANE MONYANGI

C50/10120/2007

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in English and Linguistics, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

November, 2009
DECLARATION

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

Signature ___________________________ Date __3/11/09________________________

Ombati Jane Monyangi

C50/10120/2007

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

Signature ___________________________ Date __7/12/09________________________

Dr. Phyllis Mwangi

Department of English and Linguistics.

Kenyatta University.

Signature ___________________________ Date __7/12/09________________________

Dr. Hilda Kebeya

Department of English and Linguistics

Kenyatta University.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Ombati, mother Alice, and husband Evans, children Sharon, Melody and Sweney whose constant prayers and encouragement made an immense contribution to the success of this work.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to my supervisors Dr. Phyllis Mwangi and Dr. Hilda Kebeya for their immeasurable assistance throughout the course of this study. They worked tirelessly with total devotion giving continuous, invaluable insights, constructive guidance and informed criticisms throughout the course of this study. They complemented each other very well and helped me shape my work. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. Njoroge, Dr. Nyamasyo, Dr. Maroko, Dr. Ogutu and all members of staff of the English Department under the chairmanship of Dr. Wangia for their interest and encouragement in this study which was a motivating factor for me to work harder.

Many thanks also go to my postgraduate colleagues in both Kiswahili and English departments for their special interest in the study. I also wish to register my gratitude to the principals of Thika High School for the Visually Challenged persons and Broadway High Schools for allowing me to collect data from their schools. Special mention also goes to the respondents in the two schools who were form three teachers of English and their students. Gratitude also goes to Wanjiru and Ken who typed and proofread the final work.

I would like to thank my family: my husband Evans, Children Sharon, Melody and Sweney; my father Ombati, Mother Alice and siblings. They have all been patient, prayerful and encouraging throughout the course of this study.

Finally, I am grateful to my Lord God for giving me the strength and knowledge to carry out this study. It has been a difficult journey but by His grace it has come to a successful completion.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ................................................................. ii
DEDICATION ................................................................ iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ......................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS ........................................................ v
LIST OF TABLES ................................................................ vii
DEFINITION OF TERMS ....................................................... viii
ABSTRACT ........................................................................ x

CHAPTER ONE ........................................................................ 1
1.0 Introduction ................................................................. 1
1.1 Background to the Study ............................................... 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................. 7
1.3 Research Questions...................................................... 8
1.4 Research Objectives ..................................................... 8
1.5 Research Assumptions .................................................. 9
1.6 Rationale of the Study .................................................. 9
1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study ...................... 10

CHAPTER TWO ...................................................................... 12
2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .. 12
2.1 Introduction .................................................................. 12
2.2 Studies on Descriptive Writing ..................................... 12
2.3 Studies on Visual Impairment ....................................... 16
2.4 Studies on the Linguistic Abilities of Visually Impaired Children .... 21
2.5 Conceptual Framework ............................................... 23

CHAPTER THREE .................................................................. 26
3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY ................. 26
3.1 Introduction .................................................................. 26
3.2 Research Design ........................................................ 26
3.3 Area of Study ............................................................. 27
3.4 Study Population ........................................................ 27
3.5 Sampling ....................................................................... 27
3.6 Data Collection Procedures ......................................... 30
3.7 Data Analysis .............................................................. 31

CHAPTER FOUR .................................................................... 32
4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION .................... 32
4.1 Introduction .................................................................. 32
4.2 Descriptive Lexical Items in the Students' Compositions ....... 33
4.3 Lexical Density of Lexical Items of Both the Visually Impaired and Sighted Students ................................................. 35
4.4 Figurative Language in the Students' Composition ........... 39
4.5 Lexical Density of figures of speech of both the Visually Impaired and Sighted
Students............................................................................................................................................................................ 41
4.6 The Descriptive Characteristics in the Compositions of the Students................................................................. 45
4.6.1 Lexical items in the compositions of the visually impaired students .......................................................... 45
4.6.2 Lexical Items in the Compositions of the Sighted Students ......................................................................... 53
4.6.3 Figurative Language in the Compositions of the Visually Impaired Students ............................................. 57
4.6.4 Figurative Language in the Compositions of Sighted Students ....................................................................... 60

CHAPTER FIVE ........................................................................................................................................................................... 63
5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .......................................................................................................................... 63
5.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................. 63
5.2 Summary of the Findings ....................................................................................................................................... 63
5.3 Conclusion ................................................................................................................................................................. 66
5.4 Recommendations .................................................................................................................................................... 66
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research .............................................................................................................................. 68

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................................................................................... 69

APPENDICES .................................................................................................................................................................................... 73
Appendix 1: A Descriptive Composition .......................................................................................................................... 73
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Form Three Teachers of English .................................................................................. 74
Appendix 3: An Interview Schedule for Form Three Teachers of English of the Visually Impaired Students .............. 75
Appendix 4: A List of Lexical Items by Visually Impaired Students ............................................................................. 76
Appendix 5: A List of Lexical Items by Sighted Students .............................................................................................. 77
Appendix 6: Figures of Speech for Sighted Students .................................................................................................... 80
Appendix 7: Figures Of Speech for Visually Impaired Students .................................................................................. 82
Appendix 8: A Sample Of a Descriptive Composition of Visually Impaired Students’ Shifted to a Narration .......... 83
Appendix 9: KNEC Composition ........................................................................................................................................ 86
Appendix 10: Samples for Visually Impaired Students ................................................................................................. 88
Appendix 11: Samples of Composition for sighted students .......................................................................................... 98
LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Interpretation of snellen measures ................................................................. 16

Table 4.1: Descriptive lexical items in the compositions of the Visually Impaired Students ................................................................................................................. 33

Table 4.2: Descriptive lexical items in the compositions of the sighted students .......... 34

Table 4.3: Descriptive lexical items in the composition of both visually impaired and sighted students ........................................................................................................ 34

Table 4.4: Figurative Language in the compositions of the visually impaired students ................................................................................................................. 39

Table 4.5: Figurative Language in the compositions of the sighted students ............... 40

Table 4.6: Figurative Language in the compositions of both visually impaired and sighted students ........................................................................................................ 40
DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Special education: it is a subsystem of education whose purpose is to provide appropriate experiences to exceptional students in some way. The various components of special education are specially trained professional educators, special curriculum content, special methodology and special instruction materials and equipment.

2. Visual impairment: it is impairment in vision that describes people who cannot see well even with correction.

3. Vision: is the ability to see and recognize.

4. Legal blindness: is a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correction or, a visual field that is not greater than 20 degrees (Reddy et al, 2004).

5. Visual acuity: the ability to visually perceive details of near or distant vision.

6. Exceptional children: refers to children whose needs are very different from those of the majority of children in society.

7. The blind: are those children who cannot be educated through visual methods and hence have to be educated through channels other than vision.

8. Visual perception: is the making of meaningful interpretation of what one sees.

9. Braille: it is a system designed to facilitate the use of written language by blind people.

10. Handicap: a disadvantage for a given individual resulting from impairment or a disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is considered normal.

11. Descriptive power: it is the linguistic ability to describe.

12. Description: is a way of telling someone about the physical characteristics of a
person, place or thing. It relies on the five senses- sight, hearing, taste, touch and smell.

13. **A descriptive composition:** it is a type of writing that aims at describing a person, place, object or event. It gives their physical characteristics.

14. **A child:** In this study, a child is one who is below eighteen years of age.
ABSTRACT
The purpose of this study was to compare descriptive English compositions written by visually impaired and sighted students. The study specifically investigated the descriptive characteristics found in the students’ English compositions. Further, it also sought to establish the descriptive characteristics that were likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students. The study was carried out in S.A Thika High school for the visually challenged persons and Broadway high school. Both schools are in Thika district in central province, Kenya.

Both qualitative and quantitative research designs were used. The population of the study comprised visually impaired and sighted students all of form three, and their teachers of English. The students were asked to write a descriptive composition on a given topic and these compositions formed linguistic data for this study. Additional data was collected from purposively sampled teachers using questionnaires to elicit data on the descriptive features in the students’ compositions, and an interview schedule to obtain data on the descriptive characteristics that were likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students.

The study findings revealed that visually impaired students used less descriptive terms in total and in all the senses than their sighted counterparts. The study therefore concluded that there is a true correlation between sightedness and descriptive writing. It was recommended that the teachers should provide concrete experiences and additional stimulation to the students. The school should also consider admitting sighted students to learn together with the visually impaired for more linguistic input. KNEC should also consider revising their mode of setting compositions in order not to disadvantage the visually impaired students especially in descriptive writing.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the following subsections: background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, research assumptions, rationale of the study and finally the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study.

English plays a key role in the curriculum of Kenya's education system. According to the language policy in Kenya, English is taught as a subject throughout the educational tiers such as from standard one to eight in primary school, form one to form four in secondary school and university. In primary and secondary schools, Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination are offered respectively after completion of each course of study. English is also used as the language of instruction of other school subjects such as science, history and biology and geography from standard four to higher levels of education. Thus, the language becomes a service subject in that fluency, proficiency and competence in all aspects of English will make the learner do better in most of the subjects. Krashen (1988) observes that English is used as a language "across the curriculum". As a language, English is also used in international circles in the following areas: trade, research matters, commonwealth activities and official communication (Quirk, 1988).

At the end of the secondary school English course, one of the broad goals of teaching English is the acquisition of communicative competence and not simply the passing of
examinations (Secondary School Syllabus, 2002). Therefore, English should be practically used in schools. The students should be given sufficient opportunities in the practical usage of the language through exposure, especially in writing and speaking skills. They should be motivated in making generalizations, sharing ideas and hypothesizing about common experiences which occur naturally. This should be done across the curriculum. One of the ways of achieving this is by using English in writing and speaking.

Crystal (1988) defines writing as a form of communication that uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. Writing is a complex process, a skill that is learned and requires patience, persistence and concentration. The skills people acquire in writing are not only for college courses but also for everyday use.

Writers use the writing system to express what they can already say in speech. They string words together to make a coherent whole. Crystal (1988) observes that good writers have such a good command of language that they can vary their stylistic choices at will and develop a personal voice. As the writers encounter the need to produce different kinds of writing for different audiences and situations, written work becomes fuller and more diverse. One's ability to compose is a key requirement in most pieces of written work.

According to Murray et al (1983), composition means putting together a whole by combining parts. Writers compose by joining words, sentences and paragraphs. An essay, which is synonymous to composition, is an attempt to communicate information,
opinions or emotions (Norton et al, 2003). According to one’s purpose of writing, compositions may be classified as narrative, descriptive, discursive or expository. The purpose of a descriptive composition is to describe people, places, objects or events. An expository essay explains a topic, a discursive essay involves handling a topic from one or more different points of view in writing and a narrative essay tells a story about an individual. Descriptive writing is the focus in this study because of the important role played by the sense of sight.

Descriptive writing is sometimes called showing writing because it describes a particular person, place, object or event in great detail. It involves the use of elaborate sensory language, specific details, concrete words and figurative language. Writers often use words to create a mental word picture of what they describe (Kinneavy et al, 1993). No matter what the writer’s intention is, all good description forms pictures and images in the reader’s mind. To achieve this, writers are expected to avoid vague and general words. Instead, they are expected to choose precise nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Sight is one of the most important senses in a precise description.

Reddy et al (2004) points out that vision is crucial to normal language acquisition. This is because it is responsible for a great deal of human communication. The absence of this sense can lead to significant changes in language patterns due to insufficient input and reinforcement from visual feedback. Language acquisition depends on discovering and identifying objects and actions. This is difficult for children who cannot see such objects and actions. Visual impairment may therefore affect one’s ability to give a good description since description entails vision as the dominant sensory input. It is the most
exploited in any description as illustrated in a descriptive paragraph below.

"A broad expanse of the river was turned to blood; in the middle distance the red hue brightened into gold, through which a solitary log came floating, black and conspicuous; in one place a long slanting mark lay sparkling upon the water: in another the surface was broken by boiling tumbling rings, that were as many-tinted as on opal; where the ruddy flush was faintest, was a smooth spot that was covered with graceful circles and radiating lines, ever so delicately traced; the shore on our left was densely wooded, and the somber shadow that fell from this forest was broken in one place by a long, ruffled trail that shone like silver; and high above the forest wall, a clean-stemmed dead tree waved a single leafy bough that glowed like a flame." (Inman et al, 1979:36).

Besides, descriptive composition writing is tested in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination by the Kenya National Examinations Council. For instance the national examination of the years 2000, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007 all had descriptive topics – they were not compulsory. "Describe your favourite game or sport, giving details that would be helpful to a person" (KCSE, 2005); "He walked towards me with a broad warm smile, but as we shook hands I noticed he was avoiding eye contact" (KCSE, 2000). Such topics call for a great deal of visual details. Visually impaired children were most likely disadvantaged in descriptive writing during these examinations.

Visual problems create difficulties in exploring and interacting with the world, linking words with objects and tying concepts and categories to the environments which they represent (Dean, 1996). According to Cruinkshank (1971), visually impaired students differ from sighted students in the way they describe their environment. Both have different approaches in their descriptions. The language of space, colour and movements may have different associations for the visually impaired children.
Visual impairment refers to either total or partial loss of vision. However, this study focused on only totally visually impaired students. It adopted the term ‘visual impairment’ because it is more polite than the term ‘blindness’. Crystal (1988) observes that for many disabled people unable to make use of normal modes of communication, alternative systems have been devised. Braille, which is a system designed to facilitate the use of written language for visually impaired people, in this case replaces conventional writing.

The Salvation Army and the Catholic Church in collaboration with the Kenya Society for the Blind have contributed significantly in starting schools for the visually impaired in Kenya. There are two secondary schools for the visually impaired which are Thika school for the visually challenged persons henceforth we will use the short form of S.A Thika in Thika and St. Lucy High School in Meru. The primary schools are Kibos in Kisumu, Likoni in Mombasa, Oda in Maseno, S.A Thika in Thika, St. Lucy in Meru and St. Francis in Kapenguria. Others are Machakos Technical Training Institute in Machakos, Kajiado Unit in Kajiado and Sikri Agricultural Centre in Oyugis. There are also integrated units for visually impaired children in some selected primary and secondary schools and Teacher Training Colleges (Kenya Disability Directory, 2004).

Only Thika School for the Blind, currently known as the Salvation Army Thika High School for the Visually Challenged Persons was sampled (see sub-section 3.4 for details on sampling procedures). At the time of the study, it was the only full -fledged secondary
school running up to form four in Kenya which catered for students with visual impairments. It was started in 1967 by the Salvation Army. It draws its students from all parts of Kenya and sometimes from outside Kenya. It is a mixed and full boarding high school with a total population of two hundred and seventy students (School Brief, 2009).

Broadway Secondary school in Thika was the other school sampled. At the time of the study, it had a total population of four hundred and ten students. It is also a mixed (boys and girls) but day high school. Both schools are within Thika Municipality in Central Province, Kenya.

Since language is common to both visually impaired and sighted students, it brings the two groups together. They use language to communicate ideas, feelings, and emotions and above all to describe their worlds. Since English is one of the unifying languages among Kenyan students, it is used in their daily interactions either in the spoken or written form. Everyday, the students are involved in a description of one form or another. Blass et al (1990) points out that description is part of every kind of writing.

To the best of our knowledge, there is scanty literature on the differences between how visually impaired and sighted students describe. By comparing the descriptive abilities of visually impaired and sighted students in English compositions, this study hoped to fill that gap.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many of the studies that have been done on English compositions have focused largely on sighted students and are mainly on error analysis (Mwaki, 2006; Maina, 1991; and Njoroge, 1996). Although some studies have been done on children with visual impairments, there is scanty literature that is linguistic and specifically on descriptive composition writing. For instance, Ndirangu (1996) focuses on peer acceptance of the visually impaired child, Kabue (1984) on integration of visually handicapped children and Njoroge (1991) on successful mainstream of the visually impaired child.

Despite the importance of descriptive writing in essay writing, there have been few attempts to compare and analyze the descriptive English compositions of visually impaired and sighted students. This is a serious issue particularly when it is put into consideration that descriptive composition writing is tested in the two Kenyan National Examinations namely Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (hereafter KCPE) and the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (hereafter KCSE) by the Kenya National Examination Council (hereafter KNEC). Moreover both visually impaired and sighted learners are expected to sit the same examinations and assessed using the same marking scheme. The topics given in the exam (see appendix 9 for samples) students are expected to provide a lot of visual details. There is therefore need for information on the descriptive characteristics of such students with a view to determine whether the visually impaired learners are disadvantaged in any way.

To bridge this gap, therefore, the study sought to investigate descriptive English compositions from two groups of Form Three students in Thika district, Kenya. One group comprised visually impaired students and the other of sighted students.
Compositions collected from the two groups were analysed to establish specifically the nature of descriptive features used by the students and to determine if and to what extent visually impaired students were disadvantaged.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the descriptive characteristics of the English compositions of form three visually impaired students?

2. What are the descriptive characteristics of the English compositions of form three sighted students?

3. What descriptive characteristics are likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To establish the descriptive characteristics of the English compositions of form three visually impaired students.

2. To investigate the descriptive characteristics of the English compositions of form three sighted students.

3. To find out the descriptive characteristics that are likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students in English compositions.
1.5 Research Assumptions

1. The visually impaired form three students are likely to have a limited set of descriptive features in their English compositions.

2. The sighted form three students will display a wide range of descriptive features in their English compositions.

3. Visually impaired students are likely to be disadvantaged in descriptive English compositions.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

It is hoped that this study will shed light on the descriptive characteristics of visually impaired and sighted students’ English compositions. This will help us to determine whether the visually impaired students are disadvantaged in descriptive writing because of their disability.

The information acquired will be useful particularly to teachers of English handling visually impaired students. This is because they will be made aware on how they describe as compared to sighted students. As a result this will enable them improve on their teaching techniques.

The curriculum developers may therefore design the syllabus that addresses the learners’ descriptive needs. They will also be sensitized on what specific teaching methods and instructional techniques are appropriate for the visually impaired learners.
Developers of educational materials will benefit because the study will give insights on which materials are needed for visually challenged students. KNEC will be informed on what kind of essays to examine in order not to disadvantage any group.

Above all, since there is scanty literature on descriptive compositions of the visually impaired students, the study will give an insight. It will serve as a springboard for related studies. Moreover, English being a world language the study will be based on English and not any other language.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on the written English and not spoken English of visually impaired and sighted students. The study limited itself to written language because descriptive compositions are in written form. There are different kinds of writing but descriptive writing was investigated because of the important role played by the sense of sight. Besides, it is found to some degree in other forms of writing such as the narrative compositions. The study was based on secondary schools and not primary schools because secondary school students are more mature in their language use and hence they were assumed to give much data for analysis.

The study focused on descriptive writing in English and not any other languages. This is due to the fact that English is a global language and the important role it plays in the curriculum as it is used as a language across the curriculum.
Geographically, the study was based in Thika District of Central Province because S.A Thika High School is presently the only secondary school for the visually impaired students in Kenya. In order to compare the descriptive features in their English compositions, we sampled Broadway secondary school. This is because it is located in the same vicinity as S.A. Thika and also it comes closest to S.A Thika in academic performance.

**Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, we have looked at the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, research assumptions, rationale of the study and scope and limitations of the study. The following chapter is on literature review and conceptual framework.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with literature review and conceptual framework. Some of the subsections of the chapter are on literature review and others on conceptual framework. In the Literature review, we first look at the significance of sensory details in descriptive writing. The next one is on literature on visual impairment. Finally, there is a section on studies done on the linguistic abilities of visually impaired children.

2.2 Studies on Descriptive Writing

Kinneavy et al (1993) observes that writers write for different reasons. They might write to express feelings, to be creative, to persuade or to provide information. All these can be achieved through the use of composition. Depending on the purpose for writing and the audience, compositions can be classified as expository, narrative, discursive or argumentative and descriptive (Murray et al, 1983). According to Nunan (1965), all good descriptive writing creates an impression on the reader. Writers use description whenever they want to tell the readers about the physical characteristics of a person, a place or an event or a thing.

Description is fundamental to many writing situations. Before people make judgments about the world, before they compare, contrast or classify their experiences, they describe. Kirszner (2001) notes that people use description in many different kinds of assignments. He further says that through description, they communicate their view of the
world to their readers and if they come to understand or share their (writers') views, they are likely to accept the writers' observations, judgments and conclusion.

According to Kirszner (2001), description can either be subjective or objective, giving writers a wide choice of tone, diction and attitude. The writers' purpose for writing and audience helps to decide whether to write an objective or a subjective description. But neither objective nor subjective description exists independently. Objective description usually has some subjective elements and the reverse is true. Therefore, skilful writers should strike a balance between subjectivity and objectivity to suit the topic, purpose, audience and occasion of a composition. Both kinds depend on specific and concrete words which appeal to the readers' senses. As they describe their subject, writers should look for different kinds of specific details. These include sensory, specific, factual and realistic details.

Nunan (1965) observes that sensory details are used to convey the sights, the sounds and the smells of a person, place, object or event to the readers. It all depends on the writers' choice of words. The sensory data enable writers to create a scene for their audience. Description can make the characters more vivid. For instance, one can write that the girl cried pleadingly (sound) and that she had soft silky hair (touch) and a faint 'perfumy' scent (smell) after her bath.

Inman et al (1979) emphasizes this by saying that sensory details are the basic ingredients of all descriptions. These factual and realistic details create an exact image that cannot be
misunderstood and can be tested or checked for accuracy by one's readers (Kinneavy et al, 1993). The study investigated whether these sensory details manifested themselves in the students' descriptive English compositions.

Inman et al (1979) says using concrete and specific words is a writer's best assurance of writing not only vivid but also fully developed descriptions. This is not necessarily expressed explicitly in a direct statement but it is often revealed indirectly through the writer's choice of words and phrases (Kirszner, 2001).

One of the ways of making the details specific is by using precise nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs (Inman et al, 1979 and Kinneavy et al, 1993). All good descriptive writing whether objective or subjective, relies on specific details. The writer's aim is not simply to tell readers what something looks like but to show them. Every person, place or thing has its special characteristics and a writer should use his power of observation to detect them. Then the writer needs to select the concrete words that will convey his dominant impression. The only focus should be quality and appropriateness to his purpose of writing. This study sought to investigate if the students used specific details in their compositions.

The details of description can also be arranged for emphasis. A writer may wish to do more than simply present an image of what he sees (Inman et al, 1979). He may wish to arrange inferences and value judgments, ideas and feelings in his reader's mind indirectly (Inman et al, 1979). Through the arrangement as well as selection of details, objective
description may create a mood or emotion or suggest a value judgment. This is achieved by the use of cumulative sentences in description. The structure of such sentences encourages the adding of descriptive details. The main idea is stated first and other details are added after it to make clear the description. The added details are modifiers like adjectives, adverbs, nonfinite verbs and nouns. The study intended to establish whether both visually impaired and sighted students used modifiers in their descriptive English compositions.

Authors of a descriptive composition must carefully select details to support their dominant impression. The details should be consistent with the dominant impression. According to Kirszner (2001), authors should be certain that a subjective description conveys an attitude since it often relies on emotion to convey its point. Because of this, verbs, adverbs and adjectives convey more to the readers than do the nouns. This study intended to find out if this was the case in the compositions sampled.

Figures of speech like similes, metaphors and personification may also be used (Tichy, 1988). In addition to these figures of speech, writers also use allusion to enrich their writing. The study sought to find out if these figures of speech and allusions were evident in the students' descriptive English composition.

This study therefore investigated if all these descriptive characteristics were evident in English composition of both the visually impaired and sighted students'.
2.3 Studies on Visual Impairment

Visual impairment is an umbrella term that includes all levels of visual loss from total blindness to correctable visual limitations. A number of terms are used interchangeably to describe children whose vision is impaired. These terms include: visually handicapped, visually disabled, visually impaired, blind, sightless, partially sighted and low vision (Smith et al, 2001). The study adopted the term “visually impaired” because it is more polite than the rest of the terms.

Generally, there are two extremes of visual loss; blindness on one extreme and partial sightedness at another extreme (Reddy et al, 2004). He further says that people from a legal stand point are considered blind if they have a visual acuity of 20/200 or less. Most of the visual handicaps can be identified through routine medical and community healthy screenings. Vision can also be ascertained by using the snellen charts to identify the visual acuity of an individual. The following is an interpretation of snellen measures as noted by Reddy et al (2004).

Table 2.1 Interpretation of snellen measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snellen measures (Visual acuity fraction)</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/6</td>
<td>Normal distance vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/9</td>
<td>Mild loss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/12</td>
<td>Child needs to sit near a visual display</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/18</td>
<td>Lowest acuity for blackboard vivid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/36</td>
<td>Considered partially sighted and will require low vision aids and special texts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/60</td>
<td>Very limited vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/60</td>
<td>Registered blind- sighted methods inappropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus in table 2.1, learners with 6/6 acuity are considered sighted (normal distant vision) while those with 3/60 are considered blind.

Bala (2004) suggests that blindness is regarded as the most severe and traumatic physical handicap. This is due to the fact that more impressions are conveyed to the brain through the eyes. Since, as Heward (1996) says, the basic function of the eye is to collect visual information from the environment, the anomalies may influence the life of the individual in physical, linguistic, mental, social, vocational and educational aspects. Bala further observes that visually impaired individuals have poor academic achievements even if they use large types of Braille. Researches done show that visual impairment is the main factor for slower acquisition of information by observation. Afflicted children have a slower reading rate and lack concreteness in instructional procedures.

Cognition is very useful in the learning process and more so in descriptive writing. It is the ability to think and learn. It takes place when the brain interprets and integrates sensory inputs. Any sensory input has to be organized and processed from sensory organs through several stages in the brain (KISE, 2007). Sensory inputs enable children to form concepts of objects, colour, temperature, weight, shape, size, texture and direction. Inman et al (1979) notes that human vision is such that a person with normal vision cannot help perceiving mass, colour and general outline when eyes are open and there is sufficient light. Since these sensory inputs are necessary in descriptive writing, the study sought to determine whether they featured in the students’ English composition.
According to Gargiulo (2006), vision is considered as the primary sense. This is because of all the senses it provides the most information to the brain. Vision collects and integrates both near and distant information in terms of shape, colour, form, size, texture, movement, spatial location and relationships. According to Bishop et al (1996), it is only vision which is capable of perceiving a large number of bits of information and giving the brain a wide variety of it instantly and all at once. He further notes that even the combined senses of hearing, touch, taste and smell do not provide the rich variety of information that vision does. This implies that if the sense of sight is impaired or lost, it is difficult to compensate for the reduction in information through the other senses. We use eyes in every activity we perform (Gargiulo, 2006).

Heward (1996) says that many concepts that children with normal vision seem to acquire effortlessly may not be learned at all by visually impaired children. Alternatively, they may be learned incorrectly unless someone deliberately teaches them. It is necessary to plan and present a great many first-hand experiences to enable children with visual impairment to learn to do things independently. However, even when a concept is deliberately presented to visually impaired children, they may not learn it exactly the same way that children with normal vision would. This is because the other senses may not totally make up for loss of vision. The sensory input data to the brain by other sensory channels does not have the same motivational power as vision does as Bishop et al (1996) asserts.
The sense of vision gives children the ability to explore, organize and make connections between different experiences. These connections help them make the most out of those experiences. Children who are visually impaired perform more poorly than sighted children on cognitive skills requiring comprehension or relating different items of information. Lack of vision makes it difficult to literally and cognitively see the connections between experiences. This makes learning of even simple language concepts difficult (http://www and UNESCO, 1979).

Descriptive writing involves all the senses. This is because as noted by Reinking et al (2002) sensory impressions reflecting sights, sound, taste, smell and touch form the backbone of descriptive writing. He further says they often build toward one dominant impression that the writers want to evoke. Sighted students may have the advantage of using all the senses in their descriptions but congenitally visually impaired children are restricted in this respect.

Heward (1996) emphasizes this by asserting that some things are inaccessible to touch such as distant views and colour, making them difficult to describe. Dunn et al (1973) also agrees that some items such as the sun, moon and stars are inaccessible. Some items are too large to be observed with understanding by touch; others are too small to touch. Some are too fragile, some move fast and others are difficult to touch because they are contained behind glasses such as liquids in thermometers. He further argues that it is not possible to teach space and time to congenitally visually handicapped children. Gulliford (1973) notes that, important ideas such as shape, number and size have to depend on
tactile experiences. So the visually impaired individual’s world is limited compared to that of a sighted one.

Language acquisition depends on discovering and identifying objects and activities. This becomes difficult for children who cannot see those objects, gestures and the activities (Beech et al, 1993). This forces them to depend on what they can touch or hear which reduces their learning opportunities (Allen et al 2001). KISE 2007 observes that the most important senses through which we learn is sight, hearing and touch in that order. The study wanted to find out if this proportion was reflected in the students’ compositions.

It has also been noted by Bishop et al (1996) that children with normal vision without other disabilities learn constantly from their experiences and interaction with the environment. The sense of sight provides a variety of detailed information about the environment and relationships between things in that environment as they move about. This enables sighted children to produce enormous useful knowledge from everyday experiences. Visual impairment however affects most of such incidental learning.

According to Heward (1996) vision is thought to be a coordinating sense, and approximately 80% of information received by a normally sighted person comes from the visual channel. Visually impaired children must obtain anonymous amount of information by listening. It is a misconception that visually impaired individuals have a super sense of hearing or listen better than sighted peers. It is through proper instruction and experience that they will be able to use their hearing more efficiently (Harley, 2001). Listening involves being aware of sounds, discriminating differences in sounds, identifying the sources of sounds and attaching meanings to sounds.
These ideas contributed significantly towards this study that sought to investigate a range of descriptive characteristics of visually impaired and sighted students in their English compositions for comparative purposes.

2.4 Studies on the Linguistic Abilities of Visually Impaired Children

Reddy et al (2004) observes that many visually impaired children may show delays in acquiring language skills. This is with regard to writing and especially descriptive writing. There is also empirical evidence from the research findings of Mills (1983) that children who cannot see have fewer words than normal children and take longer to acquire sentence structures. There may be delays in the child’s development of meaning also. Reddy continues to note that clearly distinct objects such as birds, rooftops, aeroplanes and ceilings together with the language of space, colour and movements may have different associations for the visually impaired. It was the intention of the study to find out the truth of this claim.

Self-image and self-concept are often difficult to establish in visually impaired children. It is difficult for them to distinguish the pronoun use of the ‘me’ from the ‘not me’ or the “I”-“you” distinction in self-identity. Some visually impaired children may show pronoun reversal. Indeed, some studies have found late acquisition of pronouns with the visually impaired children according to Harley (2001).

Other areas of language difficulty for visually impaired children are adjectives and adverbs that are visual concepts. Also according to Heward (1996), idiomatic expressions and other figures of speech may also pose problems to children who cannot see. This is because the children are unable to see the objects, people or actions in order for them to
make the right comparisons. The study established if this was the case in the English compositions of the visually impaired learners.

According to Molloy (1965), language is the production of meaningful gestures and sounds which is supported by the seeing, hearing and understanding of them; it is the entire give and take of ideas of meaningful gestures and sounds. Sighted children have the opportunity to imitate adults and interpret non-verbal cues and sounds appropriately. In descriptive compositions, one sometimes has to include gestures and facial expressions. Visually impaired children may be disadvantaged. The study found out the descriptive characteristics that were likely to disadvantage them.

Although Syntax develops in a similar manner in both visually impaired and sighted children, the visually impaired child and sighted listener may experience difficulty in understanding each others' referents according to Harley (2001). Syntactic development in visually impaired students is marked by repetition especially of phrases. Furthermore, they do not ask the questions of the type “what is that?” or “what?” Equally they do not use modifiers such as “quite” or “very”, which is common among sighted children. This could be partly due to their parents adapting their own language to the needs of their children to provide more spontaneous labeling.

A delay is also noted in the acquisition of auxiliary verbs such as “will” and “can” as Landau and Gleitman, (1985) says. Again this is attributed to the speech of caregivers. Mothers of visually disadvantaged children use more direct commands “take the cup” than questions involving auxiliaries “Can you take the cup?” when speaking to the
children. Harley (2001) also found out that function words which are very useful in the grammar of a language are less commonly used by visually impaired children.

This study sought to investigate whether the linguistic abilities of visually impaired students as far as descriptive compositions were concerned were different from those of sighted students.

2.5 Conceptual Framework


The following principles guide this study:

**Principle 1: Using descriptive writing to create a mental picture**

The main concern of a writer in a description according to Kinneavy et al (1993) is to create a mental picture of a person, a place, event or object in the reader. This is achieved through the use of elaborate sensory details and figurative language.

**Principle 2: Using sensory details as basic ingredients in descriptive writing**

Inman et al (1979) observes that sensory details are the basic ingredients of all descriptions. These sensory details comprise both concrete and specific words such as
precise nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. According to Nunan (1965) sensory details are used to convey the sights, the sounds and the smells of a person, a place, an object or an event to the readers.

**Principle 3: The importance of vision in descriptive writing**

Bishop et al (1996) and Gargiulo (2006) observe that vision is capable of giving the brain a variety of information instantly and all at once. This is not possible for visually impaired children. Cruinkshank (1971), Dunn et al (1973), Heward (1996) and Reddy et al (2004) note that things such as the sun, the moon, colour, space, movement and time are not accessible to touch or hearing for visually impaired children and may therefore be difficult to describe. As a result, this makes the visually impaired child’s world limited. The absence of vision, according to Bishop et al (1996), forces other sensory channels to provide initial sensory input data to the brain. This however, will never have the same motivational power as sight does. This study sought to find out if visually impaired learners unlike their sighted counterparts had difficult in describing such phenomena as the sun, moon, colour and space. The visually impaired children are also restricted in learning from facial expressions and gestures. There is a possibility that descriptive concepts may not have the same meaning to them as for the sighted children.

**Principle 4: The relationship between vision and the development of figurative language**

According to Heward (1996) figurative language also poses problems to visually impaired children. As a result, children without sight have limited vocabulary, take longer to acquire sentence structures, and may show a delay in the development of meaning than sighted children (Mills, 1993).
Principle 5: The relationship between descriptive writing and other factors

According to Ellis, 1989; Chaudron, 1995; Krashen, 1981 and 1988, apart from the sensory details, other factors that may bring a difference between the descriptive writing of the visually impaired and the sighted students include: linguistic environment and learner motivation, teacher input, linguistic role models, and feedback.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has looked at the literature review and conceptual framework. The literature review has the following subsections: literature on descriptive writing, literature on visual impairment and studies on the linguistic abilities of visually impaired children. The next chapter is on research design and methodology.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This is a chapter for research design and methodology. The following are the subsections in this chapter: research design, area of study, study population, sampling, data collection procedures and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed both qualitative and quantitative research designs. This was because the focus was on data from the students' English compositions. The qualitative design is concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally, without the intervention of an experiment or manipulation of any form. It is heuristic in nature. According to Seliger et al (1989), the study begins with a general notion about some aspect of the study and gathers data in various ways to learn more about the phenomena under study. In this study, data was gathered to learn more about the visually impaired and sighted students' English compositions to establish their descriptive characteristics.

According to Mugenda et al (2003) quantitative design is one that produces discreet numerical data. She further says that the first step in data analysis is to describe or summarize the data using descriptive statistics. In this study the purpose of using descriptive statistics was to enable the study to meaningfully describe distribution of scores using a few statistics.
3.3 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Salvation Army (S.A) Thika High School for the Visually Challenged Persons and Broadway High School. The two schools are within Thika Municipality in Thika District, Central Province in Kenya. Thika municipality is approximately forty kilometres from the city of Nairobi, Kenya. Both schools are public secondary schools. The students are of mixed sex. Students come from different ethnic communities. The school has adopted the 8-4-4 education syllabus. And English is used across the curriculum in all subjects except Kiswahili.

3.4 Study Population

The study population mainly comprised Form Three teachers of English and Form Three students from S.A Thika and Broadway High Schools from whom we obtained written compositions. S.A. Thika is for the visually impaired students and Broadway High School for the sighted.

3.5 Sampling

S.A Thika High School was purposively sampled because, at the time of the study, it was the only fully established secondary school in Kenya that admitted students with visual impairments from form one to four. The other school, St. Lucy, had only Form One's and it was not yet fully established. Broadway high school was also purposively sampled because it was within the same district as S.A Thika and it was also nearly at par with S.A Thika in terms of academic performance. Teachers were purposively sampled because they handled the Form Three classes.
According to Kombo et al (2006) purposive sampling enables studies to use their judgment to select cases that will best enable them to answer their research questions and meet their research objectives. Purposive selection is useful when studies wish to select such cases. Visually impaired students belong to a specialized group, which is not easy to get especially in a secondary school setting. So purposive sampling was useful in selecting such a population, which had the required characteristics.

English compositions written by Form Three students in a classroom setting in each of the two schools formed the data for this study. The topic is provided in Appendix 1. Purposive sampling was used with S.A Thika to select compositions for the study. The students were divided into three streams and taught by three different teachers of English. In each of the streams, both partially sighted and totally visually impaired students learnt in the same class. So, all of them were subjected to composition writing in order to create a natural situation. Then compositions from all the thirty eight congenitally visually impaired students were purposively sampled according to the school enrolment. Compositions of the remaining six students were not sampled because it was assumed that their data would affect the results of the study because the students acquired blindness after they had acquired language. As a result, they would have used the visual images they had learnt and correlated what they heard or touched with it.

Simple random sampling was used to select compositions from Broadway. According to Mugenda et al (2003), simple random sampling is a process of selection from a population that provides every sample of a given size an equal probability of being
selected. The selection of one individual does not affect in any way the selection of any other individual. It involves selecting the sample at random from the sampling frame using either random number tables or a computer. In this study, a table of random numbers was used. All compositions were numbered and the cases were selected until the actual sample size was reached.

Broadway’s Form Three class had two streams which were taught by different teachers. Thus each stream was taught English by a different teacher. Both streams were given compositions so as to create a natural situation once again. Then thirty eight compositions were randomly sampled with each stream providing half of the number for uniformity purposes. S.A Thika was the determining number because it had fewer students than Broadway. The sample for each category was deemed to be representative. So S.A Thika provided thirty eight compositions and Broadway gave thirty eight, totaling seventy six compositions.

Five teachers were purposively sampled to answer a questionnaire (see appendix 2). Three teachers from S.A. Thika because there were three streams taught by three different teachers of English. Two teachers were from Broadway High School because there were two streams taught by two different teachers of English. The three teachers who teach English in Form Three class for the visually impaired students were further purposely sampled for an interview schedule (see appendix 3).
3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The data for the study was in the form of English compositions. The focus was on the lexical and syntactic units, and figurative language of sighted and visually impaired students' written essays. One open-ended descriptive composition was given. The choice to use a free composition to elicit data from the students was because it was less restricting and it enabled students to use a variety of descriptive words and figures of speech. From the composition given, linguistic items (words) and figures of speech which describe were isolated.

The teachers of English in each class in the two schools assisted in administering the compositions in a normal classroom setting. This was purposeful because it triggered the students' spontaneous response in writing which a stranger like a researcher would probably not have achieved.

A questionnaire was given to the teachers of English in the classes investigated (see sample in appendix 2). The questionnaire augmented information on whether visually impaired students were disadvantaged in descriptive writing. The teachers of English of the visually impaired students were subjected to an interview schedule (see appendix 3) to elicit data on the challenges their learners encountered in writing descriptive compositions. Information on why the students describe the way they do was also obtained using the schedule.
3.7 Data Analysis

Compositions written by visually impaired students were debrailled (transcribed into a form that could be read by sighted people). The compositions were read in order to establish the general trends. Lexical items and figures of speech related to one or more of the five senses were then picked and written on a sheet of paper in order to determine whether they were used in equal measure by both sighted and visually impaired students. Also the usage of specific words that pertained to descriptive writing was extracted. The data was sorted out according to the objectives. The study then examined the categories that emerged in all the compositions. The lexical density in terms of percentage was calculated and presented in tables. A discussion of emerging patterns was then made.

Summary of the chapter

This chapter has dealt with research design and methodology. The next chapter is on data analysis and presentation
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis and presentation. The emerging patterns are presented based on the descriptive features that formed the linguistic variables of the study. There were two categories of compositions in this study: those from the visually impaired students and those from the sighted ones. In each category, thirty eight descriptive English compositions were read and analyzed, giving a total of seventy six compositions. Both descriptive lexical items and figurative language from each of the categories were obtained and classified according to the sensory channels of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste. Then the lexical density (hereafter LD) for each sensory input in each category of students was calculated and comparisons made among the senses and between the student categories. The lexical densities of all the descriptive lexical items and figures of speech related to the five senses were determined according to Ure 1971’s formula which applies to any text.

\[
LD = \frac{\text{lexical density} \times 100}{\text{Total number of running words}}
\]

Running words in this study were considered to be the total number of descriptive lexical items and figures of speech in the compositions of the two categories of students. Data is presented in tables.
The chapter is divided into subsections. The first four sections will describe the data in terms of sensory proportions. The next four sections will provide explanation of what was observed based on the objectives of this study.

4.2 Descriptive Lexical Items in the Students' Compositions

According to Katamba (1993) a lexical item is a content work listed in the dictionary which has an identifiable meaning and is capable of occurring independently.

Table 4.1: Descriptive lexical items in the compositions of the Visually Impaired Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory input</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen from the table, the total number of descriptive lexical items was 99. In developing table 4.1 data was sourced from appendix 4. Descriptive words from the hearing sensory input dominated the essays with 45.45%. Those appealing to the sense of touch followed with 17.17%. The sensory input from the sense of smell was third with 13.13%. The senses of taste and sight gave the least number with 12.12% each. These scores imply that the visually impaired students use the sense of hearing as their primary input to get information from the environment. Subsequently, they use the same information in their descriptions.
Table 4.2: Descriptive lexical items in the compositions of the sighted students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory input</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>55.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>20.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in table 4.2, there were 293 descriptive words in total. See appendix 5 for data. Descriptive words appealing to the sense of sight were the most frequent with 55.97%. The sensory input of hearing was second providing a 20.82%. Third was the sense of touch with 9.56% and fourth the sense of smell with 7.17%. The sense of taste had the least proportion with 6.48%. These scores indicate that the sense of sight at 55.97% outstrips the other four senses combined since they only amount to 44.03%.

Table 4.3: Descriptive lexical items in the composition of both visually impaired and sighted students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Hearing</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Smell</th>
<th>Taste</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visually impaired</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighted</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above shows the distribution of descriptive lexical items for both visually impaired and sighted students. There were a total of 392 lexical items used in their descriptive compositions. The visually impaired category provided 99 of these, forming 25.26% while their sighted counterparts gave the bulk at 293 which is 74.74%. The difference was a much higher proportion.
4.3 Lexical Density of Lexical Items of Both the Visually Impaired and Sighted Students

Sight input:

The sense of sight had a total number of 176 descriptive words according to the study corpora. Out of this, the visually impaired students used 12 words while their sighted counterparts used 164. The lexical density for each category is shown below:

The visually impaired

\[
LD = \frac{\text{Lexical density}}{\text{Total number of descriptive words}} \times 100
\]

\[
LD = \frac{12}{176} \times 100 = 6.82\%
\]

The sighted students

\[
LD = \frac{164}{176} \times 100 = 93.18\%
\]

From the analysis above, sighted students used more words appealing to the sense of sight with a lexical density of 93.18% as compared to the visually impaired that had only 6.82%. Sight input from sighted students occurred a lot more than the visually impaired. It can be concluded that the visually impaired students are disadvantaged as far as using sight sensory input is concerned.
Hearing input

There were 106 words connected to the sense of hearing in the study corpora. Out of these, the visually impaired students used 45, and sighted students 61. The density for each category was calculated as below.

The visually impaired

\[
\text{LD} = \frac{45 \times 100}{106} = 42.45\%
\]

Sighted students

\[
\text{LD} = \frac{61 \times 100}{106} = 57.55\%
\]

From the above calculation, the sighted students once again scored higher in the hearing sensory data with a 57.55% LD. The visually impaired had 42.45% LD. This indicates that even though the visually impaired students largely depend on the hearing sensory input, they do not use it as much as the sighted students do. Probably because the sighted ones have learnt to associate what they see with certain sounds, they were able to use them more frequently than the visually impaired.

Touch input

In this sensory input, there were 45 descriptive lexical items in the study corpora. From these, the visually impaired students had 17 and the sighted group 28. Their lexical density was as below:
The visually impaired

LD = $\frac{17 \times 100}{45}$
LD = 37.78%

Sighted students

LD = $\frac{28 \times 100}{45}$
LD = 62.22%

The visually impaired category had a lexical density of 37.78% and the sighted category had 62.22%. The sighted group had a higher proportion of this input than their unsighted counterparts.

Smell input

The total number of descriptive words was 34, with the visually impaired category providing 13 and the sighted category 21. The lexical density was:

The visually impaired

LD = $\frac{13 \times 100}{34}$
LD = 38.24%

The sighted students

LD = $\frac{21 \times 100}{34}$
LD = 61.76%
The visually impaired had a lexical density of 38.34% and the sighted category 61.76%.
The sighted category used a lot more of descriptive words than the visually impaired one.

**Taste input**
The total number of descriptive words was 30. The visually impaired used 12 and the sighted 19. The lexical density was as follows:

**The visually impaired**

\[
LD = \frac{12 \times 100}{31} = 38.71\% \\
\]

**The sighted students**

\[
LD = \frac{19 \times 100}{31} = 61.29\% \\
\]

The sighted category used more descriptive lexical items at 61.29% than the visually impaired category that had 38.71% in this sensory input.

From the analysis above, it is evident that the sighted category used more descriptive words than their counterparts in all the senses in their essays.

The outcome of the analysis is also very vital as the information was used to meet objective three of the study which sought to investigate the descriptive characteristics which were likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students.
4.4 Figurative Language in the Students’ Composition

According to Kinneavy et al (1993) figures of speech are imaginative comparisons that create striking images.

Table 4.4: Figurative Language in the compositions of the visually impaired students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in the table above, the total number of figures of speech from the sight sensory impressions dominated the essays with 50%. Those appealing to the sense of hearing followed with 33.33%. Third were images connected to the sense of touch with 6.67% which was at par with the sense of smell. The least proportion came from the sense of taste with 3.33%. The above analysis indicates that the visually impaired students use figures of speech related to the sense of sight more than the rest of the senses.
Table 4.5: Figurative Language in the compositions of the sighted students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>70.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows the frequency of figurative language in the compositions of the sighted students. There were 58 figures of speech. Those appealing to the sense of sight were the most frequent with 70.69%. Images from the hearing sensory input was the second most frequent at 17.24%. 5.17% was recorded for the sense of touch which came third in order of frequency. The sense of smell scored a similar proportion as that of touch. The sense of taste gave the least proportion of 1.74%. This indicates that images from the other four senses combined at 29.31 were fewer than those from the sense of sight at 70.69%.

Table 4.6: Figurative Language in the compositions of both visually impaired and sighted students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sensory input</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visually impaired</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighted</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above indicates the distribution of figures of speech for both visually impaired and sighted students. There were a total of 88 figures of speech used in their
compositions. The visually impaired category provided 30 which is 34.09% while their sighted counterparts used 58 which are 65.97%. Among the sighted group, images connected to the sense of sight dominated their essays with 41. Equally, the visually impaired had sight impressions dominating their compositions at 15. In both groups, figures of speech connected to the sense of taste provided the least number with 1 for each group.

4.5 Lexical Density of figures of speech of both the Visually Impaired and Sighted Students

Sight input

The sense of the sight had 56 figures of speech according to the study corpora. From this total, the visually impaired students used 15 images while their sighted counterparts used 41. The lexical density for each category is as shown below.

The visually impaired

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{15}{56} \times 100 = 26.79\% \]

The sighted students

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{41}{56} \times 100 = 73.21\% \]

From the above analysis, sighted students used more figures of speech appealing to the sense of sight with a lexical density of 73.21% while their visually impaired counterparts
had 26.79%. It can be concluded that the visually impaired students are disadvantaged as far as using sight sensory input is concerned because the sighted category had a much higher proportion than the visually impaired one.

**Hearing input**

There were 20 figures of speech connected to sounds in the study corpora. Out of these, the visually impaired students used 10 the same case with their sighted counterparts. The density for each category is as below.

**The visually impaired**

\[
LD = \frac{10}{20} \times 100 = 50\%
\]

**The sighted students**

\[
LD = \frac{10}{20} \times 100 = 50\%
\]

From the above lexical densities, the two categories of students scored a similar frequency of 50%. This indicates that both the visually impaired and sighted students exploited images connected to hearing equally.

**Touch input**

The total number of figures of speech was 5 in the study corpora. Out of those, the visually impaired students used 2 while the sighted students used 3. The lexical density was:
The visually impaired

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{2}{5} \times 100 \]

LD = 40%

The sighted students

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{3}{5} \times 100 \]

LD = 60%

The visually impaired students had a lexical density of 40% and the sighted category had 60%. The sighted group was advantaged as far as this sensory input is concerned.

Smell input

5 figures of speech were used in the study corpora. The visually impaired group used 2 while their sighted counterparts used 3. The lexical density is calculated as below.

The visually impaired

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{2}{5} \times 100 \]

LD = 40%

The sighted students

\[ \text{LD} = \frac{3}{5} \times 100 \]

LD = 60%
The sighted students had a higher lexical density of 60%. The visually impaired students scored lower with a lexical density of 40%. Once again, the visually impaired students were disadvantaged in this sensory input.

**Taste input**

From the study corpora 2 figures of speech were used. Each category of students provided 1. The lexical density was as follow:

**The visually impaired**

\[
LD = \frac{1}{2} \times 100
\]

LD = 50%

**The sighted students**

\[
LD = \frac{1}{2} \times 100
\]

LD = 50%

The above calculation indicates that both groups were at par with 50% lexical density. However, the number that was used was very minimal when compared to the rest of the senses. This means that images related to the sense of taste are not utilized well in descriptive compositions.
4.6 The Descriptive Characteristics in the Students’ Compositions

This section presents a discussion on the descriptive characteristics of both the visually impaired and sighted students’ compositions. The teachers’ input through an interview schedule (see appendix 3) for only the teachers of English of the visually impaired students and a questionnaire (see appendix 2) for all the teachers in both schools supplements the explanations. Each sensory channel is discussed separately and a full list of descriptive lexical items (see appendix 4 for visually impaired, and appendix 5 for sighted students) and figurative language (see appendix 6 for sighted and appendix 7 for visually impaired students) for all the senses is given.

4.6.1 Lexical items in the compositions of the visually impaired students

Thirty eight compositions on the topic “Describe a wedding ceremony you have attended” were read and analyzed. A total of 99 descriptive words were identified as shown in Table 4.1. From the findings, it was observed that words related to the sense of hearing dominated the students’ compositions with 45.45%. The senses of taste and sight gave the least proportion with 12.12% each.

(a) The sense of sight.

Some descriptive words connected with colour, size, shape, movement, location and directions, which fall under this sensory input, were encountered. This comprised a frequency of 12.12%. Words such as white, red, tall and short were used in the following contexts:

1. “.......all the people were in red garments which really.......”
The words were used to describe the people and objects as well as locate specific places at the wedding. However, some of the descriptive words in this sensory channel were wrongly used. For instance in the colour class, some students decided to dress everybody at the wedding in red garments. This is not realistic and practical in real life situations. People come dressed in different colours depending on an individual’s culture, taste and preference. However, a section of the crowd could be dressed in uniform or observe a certain dress code. Other students did not specify who exactly dressed in what colour or what colour of flowers and ribbons decorated what.

The students were able to use such words in their description because of their teachers’ input, feedback and role models in class. When teachers were interviewed on how they prepare their students to handle descriptive topics, they said they:

1. hold class discussions on descriptions of people, objects and events,
2. read out some samples of descriptive compositions and explain some of the descriptive concepts encountered,
3. Present descriptive concepts such as colour, spatial location, movement, size and shape in class deliberately.

However, according to Bishop et al (1996) as stated in the literature review, even if a concept is deliberately presented in class, the visually impaired students may learn it wrongly, miss it completely, or understand it differently from the way sighted children do.
In most of the descriptions, students used vague and general adjectives of opinion such as beautiful, nice, smart, and wonderful. According to Tichy (1988) such adjectives convey little meaning when used loosely. The visually impaired students made an effort to revivify such adjectives by adding the degree adverbs “very” and “quite” as in:

4 “.... the bride was very beautiful....”

5 “This was a quite interesting day........”

6 “...clothes which were very smart...”

However, in the absence of concrete details such overworked intensifiers not only lost their impact but also weakened the compositions. A specific word has fewer meanings but says more than a general and vague term. According to Tichy (1988) specific details lend vividness and precision to any description.

The use of degree adverbs in the examples above contradicts what literature says to the effect that visually impaired students do not use them in their work (Harley, 2001). 65.79% of the students used ‘very’, 2.63% used ‘quite’ and 31.58% did not use them. However, other degree adverbs such as ‘rather’, ‘so’, ‘most’ and ‘too’ were not encountered. So, ‘very’ was the most prevalent degree adverb among the students.

According to Kinneavy et al (1993) and Hall et al (1994), action verbs are more descriptive than other verbs. Leech (1989) defines action verbs as those that describe something which happens in a limited time, and has a definite beginning and end. Action verbs are used to describe movement in this study. Verbs such as marching, peeping, kissing, waving and smiling denoting actions likely to take place at a wedding were not
present in the students’ compositions. People have to see such actions, the gestures or non-verbal cues in order for them to label them correctly. Obviously, the visually impaired students were disadvantaged in this respect.

The students lacked variety in location and direction words. Words such as **behind, ahead, inside, near and towards** were not encountered. Some students used “**in front**” to indicate every position or direction without a reference point. The following sentence illustrates:

7  “...the couple were made to seat in front beautiful and shiny as gold”.

This was not surprising given the fact that locating one place or direction relative to another requires the sense of sight.

From the foregoing, it is obvious that the visually impaired students were disadvantaged in descriptive lexical items related to colour, size, shape, movement, and location. It was not possible for them to describe such abstract concepts because they were unable to conceptualize them.

**(b) The sense of hearing**

Descriptive words connected with sounds fall under in this sensory channel. These words comprised 45.45% of the descriptive lexical units, forming the highest number as compared to other senses. Words such as **cheering, hooting, shouts, echoes, thunder, silent voice, screaming** and **melodies** were all observed in the students’ compositions. These words were used to describe the sounds made by people and objects during the wedding ceremony. Here are examples:
8 "... all people were excited they were screaming ....."

9 "... people were mercilessly cheering with joy...."

10 "... a choir of singers were singing their sweet melodies"

11 "I heard a hooting of a car............"

However, the lexical density scored is far below the expected input because the sense of hearing is regarded as the primary sense of the visually impaired according to Heward (1996). It is assumed that when the sense of sight is impaired, that of hearing takes over the slot reserved for vision in the brain. As stated earlier in the literature review, vision provides approximately 80% of the information to the brain (Heward, 1996). Accordingly, the sense of hearing should have had a higher incidence than what was observed.

A possible explanation for the above phenomenon is that, in some cases, one needs to see the objects or people in order to associate them with certain sounds. It was impossible for the visually impaired to do so because of their visual status, which restricts their experience of the visual environment.

From this study, it is clear that the sense of hearing cannot fully compensate for the loss of information through vision for the visually impaired students. This is because as stated by Bishop et al (1996), the sense of hearing does not have the same motivational power as the sense of sight does.
(c) The Sense of touch

This sensory input had 17.17 % of the descriptive words. It was also the second most frequent. Words such as bright, nylon, fried by the sun, hot, cold, shade, mud and thick carpet were present in the compositions. The words were used to describe the weather, temperature and texture of people or objects as illustrated in the following examples:

12 "... they were glad to be in shade because it is so hot.

13 "The sun was bright so there was a need of a big sheet of nylon to be spread above to protect the people from the sun...."

14 "There was a thick carpet on the floor...."

However, some of the terms were inappropriately used. For instance, ‘nylon’ was used to mean ‘polythene’ and ‘bright’ to mean ‘hot’ when describing the heat from the sun.

Visually impaired people mainly depend on hearing and touch to describe their environment. Some textures need not be touched in order to be described. For example, one can distinguish between a rough and smooth surface merely by the sense of sight. Indeed, it is not practical for individuals to go round touching every object or entity they encounter in order to describe its texture. Moreover, some things are inaccessible to touch because they are either small or fragile. So, because of their state, the visually impaired students could not augment the sense of touch with the sense of sight.
(d) The sense of smell

This had a lexical density of 13.13% which was the third highest in frequency. Descriptive words such as *aroma, delicious, and sweet smelling* were used in their compositions. The words described the smells in the wedding scene. In context,

15 ".....some beautiful smelling flowers....."

16 ".....were given delicious food"

17 "Sweet smelling food.........."

A possible explanation for the low lexical density is that lack of sight limited their movement in an unfamiliar environment, thus reducing the opportunities to smell a variety of things and people in different places at the wedding. The sense of sight also reinforces this sense; for example, on seeing a carcass, one can imagine a foul smell even before one perceives it.

(e) The sense of taste

A lexical density of 12.12% was obtained and provided the least number of descriptive terms together with that of sight. Descriptive words appealing to the sense of taste such as *tasted sweet, fried, tasted like honey, flavour and delicious* were noted as in:

18 "...we were given cakes which tasted like honey.

19 "...we were given delicious food."

20 "......thing become sweeter towards the sweetness of honey."

A possible explanation is that there are only few things that can be perceived by taste. Again, probably the sense of sight can reinforce the sense of taste. It is possible to see something and say “it looks delicious”. This would explain why they scored low.
From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that visually impaired students used very few descriptive terms - actually some had none. The students had important events in their compositions summarized in one paragraph (see appendix 10 II A paragraph 3 underlined). Again, some of them had sentences that were not meaningful because they left out vital details. A case in point is, "...cold cars which were looking like those cars in the market ready to be sold for one to get ticket to go to heaven."

The majority of them opted to shift from a descriptive essay to a narrative one due to lack of descriptive words (see appendix 8). Their teachers reported that this is common practice. Even though narrative essays have some descriptive features, the focus in these essays is to tell about events in the order that they occurred according to Kinneavy et al, (1993), Langan (1997) and Norton et al (2003). Kirszner (2001) points out that a narration tells a story by presenting events in an orderly logical sequence.

Due to their restricted experience of the world, the visually impaired find it difficult to conceptualize and hence describe certain concepts such as colour, movement, space, size and shape. These concepts cannot be heard, smelt or touched. The teachers interviewed confirmed that conceptualization of abstract things is the key challenge to the students. This explains why they prefer narrative essays to descriptive ones and perform better in them. It was also revealed that they try as much as possible to avoid descriptive topics whenever they encounter them. The teachers also said that the students prefer describing people to events and objects. The reason could be that they are always in contact with people and so they are motivated to describe them and try to acquire as much descriptive
features about them as possible. Again, events and objects are incidental and indefinite and their descriptive features are varied.

The order of senses in terms of frequency in the study data corresponded to what the teachers said they had observed: hearing, touch, smell, taste and sight.

4.6.2 Lexical Items in the Compositions of the Sighted Students

Thirty eight compositions were read and analyzed. A total of 293 descriptive lexical items were identified as shown in table 4.2. From the findings, the study found out that descriptive words appealing to the sense of sight dominated the students’ essay with a frequency of 55.97%. This input came from the adjectives, adverbs, verbs and nouns in that order. Adjectives were the most frequent and nouns the least among the word classes. The taste sensory input had the lowest input at 6.48%. A full list of the descriptive lexical items for all the senses is provided in Appendix 5.

(a) The sense of sight

The study revealed that the students used descriptive words related to colour, size, shape, location and movement, all amounting to 55.97% to appeal to the sense of sight. Examples of words included red, white, glittering, strolled, gorgeous, tall, diamond, behind and peeped as in

21 ".....red and white balloons decorated the church."

22 "...and then we saw their shining and glittering clothes."

23 "Her diamond necklace shone in a bewitching manner."
24 "The bridegroom was tall, slender of about thirtyfive years".

Most descriptive words came from adjectives and actions verbs such as marching, waving, smiling, kissing and screaming. The words were used to describe the people and objects at the wedding. The sighted students were able to use many sight descriptive words because of their ability to see.

Wortman (1992) points out that vision is the richest of the human senses and because of this, peoples’ eyes receive light from the surrounding objects and translate it into nerve impulses. He further says that when they reach their destinations people experience the vast array of shapes, colour, textures and movements that make their visual world.

(b) The sense of hearing

This sensory input provided 20.82% of the sensory repertoire and it was the second in ranking. Descriptive words such as cheering, hooting, ululations, thunderously, bang and murmuring were evident in the students’ essays. They were used to describe the sounds made by people and objects at the wedding. Examples from the students’ compositions included;

25 ...murmurs rented the air...

26 ......the vehicles hooting melodiously

27 ......ululations were sang by old woman.

28 ......putting ring on their fingers......... people cheered to them with joy

Probably because the sighted students have learnt to associate what they see with certain sounds, they were able to use the above lexical items.
(c) The sense of touch

Descriptive words under this sensory channel were 9.56%. It recorded words related to temperature and textures of people, objects and situations at the wedding. Descriptive words such as hot, cool, leather, chilly, smooth, breezy and cotton were noted. See the examples below:

29 I took a cold shower that left me .....  
30 the bride wore a crisp cotton dress.  
31 the morning was chilly.......  

Example 30 was probably aided by the sense of sight.

The frequency was very low most probably because there are few things that are perceived through the sense of touch.

(d) The sense of smell

It gave an input of 7.17%. It was fourth in terms of frequency. Descriptive words in this sensory input included details connected with the smells of food, the air, the drinks and the environment as a whole. Words such as scent, delicious, aroma, fresh, pungent and odour were all evident in the students’ compositions. Here are extracts from the compositions:

32 I could smell the scent of perfumes they had applied.  
33 I took a cold shower that left me as fresh as daisy.  
34 ..........my mother brought for me a delicious breakfast.  
35 ..........sweet aroma that come from the food.......  

Possibly the examples are few because few things can be perceived by smell.
(e) The sense of taste

This contributed 6.48% to the sensory word bank of descriptive lexical units and was the lowest. The words included sweet, mouth-watering food, tasty, pungent, delicious and flavour. Most of the words were the same as for those ones of the sense of smell. In the essays read, examples included:

36 The food tasted delicious

37 .... also the flavour of food which was already packed in hot dishes.

38 ........the food that was tasty

It was also puzzling that sighted students used descriptive words appealing to the sense of taste minimally. A possible explanation is that there are only few things that can be tasted.

Many of the descriptive words the students used were either used singly or as modifiers of other words.

Responses from the teachers confirmed what was observed in this study; that sensory impressions occur in the following order: sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste.

Generally sighted students had the ability to explore and interact with the people, objects and actions at the wedding. This enabled them to link descriptive words with their referents correctly. Conceptualization of concepts of colour, weight, shape, size, space and movement was not much of a problem because they are sighted.
4.6.3 Figurative Language in the Compositions of the Visually Impaired Students

According to Kinneavy et al (1993) figures of speech when used well can make the subject matter alive for the reader. They allow people to compare two dissimilar people, objects, situations or actions. A total of 30 figures of speech appealing to various senses were identified as shown in table 4.4. Findings from the study revealed that images appealing to the sense of sight were the most frequent in the students’ essays with 50%. The least frequent were from taste with 3.33%. The figures of speech included similes, metaphors, idioms, proverbs, allusions, hyperbole and personification. A full list is given in appendix 7.

a) The sense of sight

Figures of speech connected to the sense of sight were the most frequent at 50%. The following are examples from their essays:

39 "... as happy as king" - simile.

40 "My appearance was like that of the ghost from the moon" - simile

It is surprising that sight overtook hearing and other senses because the students do not have sight. Most probably the students learn, they are taught and drilled on the images. So most likely the images were clichés.

b) The sense of hearing

This was the second most frequent with 33.33%. Images connected to sounds were recorded under this sensory input. The following examples were derived from the students’ compositions:

41 "sweet songs which could make the dead awake" – hyperbole
42 “his voice roared like thunder” – simile

It was unexpected that hearing images were overtaken by sight images yet it is understood that hearing is the visually impaired individuals’ primary sense. The percentage scored is far below what was expected. A possible explanation is that people can imagine the sounds of people, objects or actions when aided by sight without necessarily perceiving them (sounds). This was not the case for the visually impaired because of their visual status.

c) The sense of touch

Figures of speech connected to touch came third with 6.67% in the order of frequency. Images connected to textures and temperatures were classified under this sensory channel. The following were examples:

43 “…raining cats and dogs” – metaphor

44 “…where there is smoke there is fire” – proverb

The proportion scored is dismal. If the students had sight it would have probably aided this sense. This is because sight at a glance is capable of revealing the textures of entities without necessarily touching them. Again, the above examples have a close link to the sense of sight. So most likely the students were drilled on figures of speech and as such used them as stock phrases.

d) The senses of smell and taste

The sense of smell had the same proportion as the sense of touch, and taste had the least with 3.33%. See the following examples that appealed to both senses:
These senses scored dismally probably because there are very few objects people perceive through smell and taste.

The teachers interviewed also indicated the following about visually impaired students.

i) Some students used clichés

ii) Others use them vaguely

iii) A few do not bother to use them at all.

All this information was evident from their compositions. Some of the vaguely used figures of speech are as illustrated below:

46 "The bridegroom was wearing like appointed angel as prime angel".

47 "...as happy as the hooves of a cow from state"

As these examples indicate, they are vaguely used and people cannot quite really understand what they were used to mean. It was also puzzling that most of the figures of speech used vaguely had to do with sight. The above examples confirm this. Even in instances where they have been used correctly, they are clichés. Examples of clichés from the compositions are:

48 "...walking slowly like tortoise"

49 "They were many as cluster of stars"

50 "...as happy as king"

There is every possibility that the students have been drilled on the above figures of speech and memorized them. This is because it is obvious that they have never seen the
people, objects or actions in order for them to make accurate connections and comparisons. This explains why the sense of sight surprisingly scored the highest frequency when compared to the other senses.

Generally the visually impaired students were not creative in the use of figurative language because they relied on clichés to a larger extent. Even with the clichés, they were irrelevantly used because they just brought them in because they were drilled on them. The innovative images were rare. The above arguments are consistent with the claim that children who cannot see experience a lot of problems in using figurative language (Heward, 1996).

### 4.6.4 Figurative Language in the Compositions of Sighted Students

A total of 58 figures of speech were identified as shown in table 4.5. From the findings, it was revealed that figures of speech appealing to the sense of sight dominated the students’ essays with a frequency of 70.69%. The taste sensory input had the lowest proportion of 1.74%. A full list is given in appendix 6.

#### a) The sense of sight

This gave the highest input of 70.69% in the figurative language repertoire. Examples of images include:

51. “...with speed that could make the snail a champion” - **hyperbole**

52. “...happiness with that of a barren women who gave birth to two twins” - **hyperbole**
The sighted category was able to score highest in this sensory channel probably because they were able to see the people, objects and actions. Consequently, they were able to make the right comparisons. In other instances, the students were able to coin images to suit their descriptions. The above examples confirmed this creativity. Even though they used clichés in their compositions, they were used in the right contexts.

b) The sense of hearing

This sensory input provided 17.24% of all the senses. It was the second most frequent. These are examples from the compositions:

53 “...with sound that could awaken the dead in sand” – hyperbole
54 ”... heart beating abnormally as if it had ran hundred metres race”
55 “...a deafening cheer threatened to blow the roof off” – hyperbole

Even though the two groups of students scored the same lexical density of 50%, comparatively, the sighted group was more creative than the visually impaired one. This is because they were able to associate certain movements with certain sounds.

c) The sense of touch

This had a frequency of 5.17% and was third in the order of frequency. Here are examples:

56 “a cold shower that left me as fresh as daisy” – simile
57 “... hearts melted with joy like butterflies exposed to heat” – simile

The percentage scored is minimal most likely because the students concentrated much on what they saw and heard than what they could describe by touch.
d) The Sense of Smell

This input had a proportion of 5.17% images. The following were the images from the compositions:

58 "...aroma becoming me" – personification

59 "...as fresh as cucumber" – simile

This sense scored very low because few things exist that can be perceived by smell. However, even when smell scored lower, the sighted group scored comparatively higher because the sense is aided by sight than the visually impaired group.

e) The Sense of Taste

This scored a lexical density of 1.74% and was the least. An example from the essays is

60 As fresh as cucumber.

This had the lowest frequency possibly because again like smell input, there are very few things that can be perceived by taste.

Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, we have looked at data analysis and interpretation. Descriptive lexical items and figurative language of both visually impaired and sighted students were identified and categorized according to the senses of sight, hearing, touch smell and taste. Then the lexical densities for both groups and their differences were identified, discussed and explained. The next chapter is a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings
The purpose of this study was to compare the descriptive English compositions of visually impaired and sighted Form Three students in Kenyan Secondary Schools. The study aimed at investigating the descriptive characteristics in these compositions. It also sought to establish the descriptive characteristics that were likely to disadvantage the visually impaired students. Having adopted both qualitative and quantitative designs, the data was presented in percentages and a descriptive way.

Findings from the study indicated that the visually impaired group used less descriptive features. These descriptive features were of two categories: lexical items and figures of speech. For lexical items, descriptive words denoting colour, shape, size, movement and space were difficult to conceptualize hence difficult to describe. Findings indicated that visually impaired students used only 25.26% while sighted ones used 74.74% of the total descriptive lexical units. In addition, descriptive lexical items from the hearing sense dominated their descriptions at 45.45% though it is scored much below what was expected and the least was provided by the sense of taste and sight at 12.12%. The sense of touch was the second most frequent with 17.17%, third frequent was smell at 13.13%.
This explains why most of them shifted to writing narrative essays. In figures of speech, overall the group scored 34.09%. When the senses were compared, the most frequent number was from the sense of sight at 50%. This was an unexpected observation. A probable reason was that they were drilled on the figures of speech and so used them as stock phrases. The following senses came in the following order: hearing was 33.33%, touch had 6.67% and smell also at 6.67%. Taste was the least with 3.33%. When comparing the lexical items and figurative language, figures of speech scored a relatively higher proportion in relation to the sense of sight because, unlike lexical items where the students were required to be spontaneous in their descriptions, it was not the case for figures of speech.

The sighted students used a wide range of descriptive terms in both lexical items and figurative language. This was possible because describing the people, objects, and actions was spontaneous in both the lexical items and figures of speech. The students used more descriptive lexical items at 74.74% of the total number. In addition, they scored highest in the sense of sight with 55.97% and lowest in the sense of taste with 6.48%. The senses of hearing, touch and smell came in the following order: 20.82%, 9.56%, 7.17% respectively. In addition to descriptive lexical items, the students also used figurative language. Overall as far as figures of speech are concerned, the sighted group scored higher with 65.91% than the visually impaired group who scored only 34.09%. Within their group, the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste had 70.69%, 17.24%, 5.17%, 5.17% and 1.74% respectively. The sighted students were advantaged in using concepts such as colour, shape, movement, space, size and textures. Indeed, as literature
sight, this was confirmed to be the case because 55.97% proved this. Also the other senses scored comparatively higher because the sense of sight appeared to reinforce them. In figurative language, images connected to the sense of sight were the most frequent. The students were very creative and used a whole range of figurative language and in the right contexts.

The lexical densities for the five senses between the two groups showed a great variation in both the lexical items and figurative language. The sighted students had higher numbers of descriptive words than their visually impaired counterparts. Among the sighted category, descriptive lexical units appealing to the senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste came in the following order; 93.81%, 57.55%, 62.22%, 61.76% and 61.29%. In the visually impaired category, sensory impressions reflecting sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste were 6.82%, 45.45%, 37.78%, 38.24% and 38.71% respectively. Therefore, the dispersion was 86.36%, 15.10%, 24.44%, 23.52% and 22.51% for sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste respectively. For the figurative language, the sighted group had 73.21%, 50%, 60%, 60% and 50% for sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste in that order. The visually impaired had 26.79%, 50%, 40%, 40% and 50% in sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste respectively. Therefore, the variation was 46.42% 20%, 20% for sight, touch and smell respectively. However, there was no variation in the lexical densities of hearing and smell. This implies that the visually impaired group was disadvantaged in using both lexical items and figurative languages in their descriptive compositions.
5.3 Conclusion

From the study findings, it was evident that the visually impaired students had fewer descriptive terms in all the sensory channels than their sighted counterparts (see table 4.1 and 4.4). Concepts such as colour, movement, direction, space, shape and size were difficult to conceptualize hence difficult to describe. Thus the assumption that the visually impaired students are restricted in their range of descriptions is justified. On the contrary, sighted students used a range of descriptive words in their compositions (see table 4.2 and 4.5). Because sensory impressions reflecting sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste are the backbone of any description, the study concluded that the visually impaired students are disadvantaged in descriptive writing. This is because, for one to write a good description the brain combines the visual images with the input from the other senses. Thus, given their disability, the majority of visually impaired shifted to writing a narrative essay instead of a descriptive one. The study therefore concluded that there is a true correlation between sightedness and good descriptive writing.

5.4 Recommendations

The findings of this study have several implications for the descriptive writing of visually impaired students. A central feature in this kind of writing is the use of elaborate sensory details. Since the students lack vision they should be enriched with descriptive lexical items and figures of speech related to the sense of sight and other senses in order for them to make good descriptions. This can be done by introducing as many concrete experiences and additional stimulations as possible. Therefore, one of the recommendations made from this study is that teachers of English should offer a variety
of concrete experiences to enable the students gain actual knowledge of the entities and their spatial characteristics, and provide additional stimulation such as study tour, excursions, field trips and audio programmes. This will also enable the learner gain new knowledge. Furthermore, they (teachers) should deliberately present as many opportunities for descriptive writing as possible.

Secondly, the ministry of education should offer specialized training to the teachers of English of the visually impaired students on how to teach visually impaired students. This is because most of the teachers who handle them are specially trained for sighted students only. Also, the ministry should prepare a variety of special materials for both the teacher and students. By so doing, the teachers will gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes of using total communication (communication using one or more than one sensory channel) and other techniques in the classroom.

Third, the school could consider admitting sighted students to learn together with the visually impaired for more linguistic input. The visually impaired may improve their descriptive ability by interacting with their sighted counterparts in formal and informal settings because communication here is natural and spontaneous. The teachers' input may not be enough as they will be targeting to accomplish their planned activities within a specified time.

Fourth, the teachers should advice the students on the choice of topics in the examination. This is especially when they run out of their debts.
Lastly, the Kenya National Examination Council should reconsider the setting of exams especially the compositions. From the study it was revealed that visually impaired students prefer describing people to either objects or situations. So, KNEC should give descriptive topics that do not disadvantage the visually impaired students since both sighted and visually impaired students sit the same examinations and so the visually impaired students are limited in the number of choices. This is because from our analysis, it showed that most of them turned a descriptive composition into a narrative one.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

A comparison of the descriptive English compositions of the visually impaired and sighted students is a fertile area of study as not much has been done. In this study, we concentrated on the descriptive compositions of visually impaired and sighted students. Future studies may consider a study on the other types of compositions like the expository because it explains the procedures which rely heavily on the sense of sight.

This study focused on visually impaired students. A similar study can be done on the descriptive writing of other students with other impairments such as loss of hearing.

Although the study mentions issues related to the usage of functional words, pronouns, types of questions and modal auxiliaries by visually impaired students, they did not fall under the domain of descriptive writing and so were not tackled. A further study is recommended for the syntactic patterns of such students.

Summary of the Chapter

This chapter looked at summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


http://www.intellectual.disability
http://www.personal.psu.edu


Kenya Institute of Special Education. (2007). *Teaching and Learning Strategies*


Wikipedia; Plante and Beeson, (2004).

Wikipedia; The free encyclopedia.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: A Descriptive Composition

Write a composition about;

Describe a wedding ceremony you have attended.

The composition must not exceed 450 words.
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Form Three Teachers of English.

1. Which kind of essay writing do your students prefer?  
   (Narrative, descriptive, discursive or expository)

2. Which kind of essay writing are your students  
   a) Best in?  
   (b) Perform poorly?  
   From this list (Narrative, Descriptive, Discursive or Expository)

3. What challenges do students find in writing descriptive compositions?  

4. Do your students use descriptive words that appeal to all the senses in composition writing?  

5. Please rank the following senses in the order in which they are used starting from the most prevalent to the least used in their compositions. Use numbers 1,2,3,4, and 5 to rank them.  
   Smell [ ]  
   Touch [ ]  
   Taste [ ]  
   Sight [ ]  
   Hear [ ]

6. Which kind of descriptive topics do your students enjoy writing about?  
   (Places, people, events or objects)

7. Which among the following types of compositions do your students try to avoid?  
   (Expository, descriptive, narrative or argumentative)
Appendix 3: An Interview Schedule for Form Three Teachers of English of the Visually Impaired Students.

1. What kind of preparations do you do in order for your students to write descriptive compositions?

2. What challenges do the students encounter in writing descriptive compositions?

3. (a) Do they lack descriptive terms in their compositions?
   (b) If yes, which ones do they lack?

4. How do they compensate for the lack of descriptive terms?

5. Which sensory input tends to dominate the students' descriptive compositions?

6. What weaknesses do you find in the students' descriptive compositions?

7. Do your students tend to avoid descriptive compositions?

8. Please comment on the students' use of figurative language.
Appendix 4: A List of Lexical Items by Visually Impaired Students

**Sight Items**
- Red
- Tall
- Short lady
- Darkness
- In front
- Shiny
- As many as cluster of stars
- Blue sky
- White

**Hearing Items**
- Clapping
- Singing songs
- Cheered/cheering
- Music
- Ali--li--li
- Voices/voice
- Calm (music)
- Rough voices
- A bang
- Roar
- Hearing/hear/heard
- Laugh/laughing
- Shouting/shouting
- Hooting
- Melodies
- Screaming/ed
- Silence/silent/silently
- Echoes
- Smooth voices
- Sounded
- Loud
- Sound system
- Microphone
- Romantic words
- Speeches
- Poems
- Mooing (cows)
- Sweet songs
- Chatting/chatted
- Noisy as industry

**Touch Items**
- Bright (for hot)
- Cold
- Heated
- Cool
- Thick carpet
- Nylon (for polythene)
- Hot
- Light showers
- Heat soaked
- Knock
- Fried (by sun)
- Shade

**Smell Items**
- Aroma
- Sweet
- Smelled nice
- Delicious
- Pouring spray
- Smelling
- Sweet smelling
- Smoke
- Fried
- Salivating
- Scent
- Coffee
- Wine

**Taste Items**
- Tasted sweet
- As sweet as honey
- Delicious
- Sweetness
- Coffee
- Flavour
- Good taste
- Wine
- Tea
- Tasting nice
- Tasting (like honey)
Appendix 5: A List of Lexical Items by Sighted Students

**Sight items**

- Glittering
- Toyota Lenz
- Joy
- Limousine
- Fat
- New
- Inside
- Outside
- Lower
- Well furnished
- Yellow
- Darkness
- Green
- Marching
- Pink
- Smile/smiling
- Huge (church)
- Plump
- Eggshell
- Swayed
- Exchange
- Centre
- Cream
- Slim
- Gazed
- Swinging
- Grey (suit) /grayish
- Brilliantly
- Long (neck)
- Young
- Cloud of smoke
- Majestically
- Kissed/kissing
- Rose (flower)
- Stared
- Gorgeous
- Thin (clips)
- Red
- High heeled
- Behind
- Short (man, hair)
- Joyfully
- In rows

**Sight items**

- Sparkling
- Rushed
- White
- Sharp
- Blue
- Reflect (rim)
- Beckoning
- Dance/dancing
- Acute angle
- Sparkling
- White
- Crisp white
- In front
- Fabulous
- Elegant
- Diamond
- Bewitching
- Silver
- Cloudless
- Eyes twinkled
- Marching uniformly
- Wiping
- Tall
- Packed to capacity
- Round /roundish (face)
- Large
- Knee-length
- Beside
- Vigorously
- Back
- About 35 years
- Attractively
- Scattering
- Smartly
- Boarded
- Shivered
- Slender
- Pacific (eyes)
- Magnificent
- Peeped
- Pearl
- Clean
- Bright/brightly

**Sight items**

- Dazzling
- Tinted glasses
- Elegant black (suit)
- Helter skelter
- Full capacity
- One hundred thousand people
- Shiny ring/shining like a galaxy
- Rooted
- Supersonic speed
- Spectacular long convey
- Iron (posts)
- As white as snow
- Gold medal
- Lovely flowers
- Fury red (eyes)
- Alighted
- Blinking
- Immaculately
- Wide
- Prettier
- Aghast
- Strolled
- Decorate in golden
- Sunny
- Scrubbing (floor)
- Hug
- King-sized bed
- Fidget
- Five metres long
- Overwhelming numbers
- Twelve bedroom mansion
- Fifty metres long
- Waved
- Ravishing (clothes)
- Moving at a snail pace
- Goldish
- Bonquet of flowers
- Filled to the brim
- Cowboy hat
- Hopped
- Polished shoes
- Watched
Shake (head)  Gracefully walked  Leather  Fair complexion  Neck breaking speed  Open shoes  Indigo  Half metre long  A cloud of smoke  Smashed  Kilometre  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hearing items</th>
<th>Touch items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheer ing</td>
<td>Feel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beat hard</td>
<td>Rub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shouted</td>
<td>Golden/gold medal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunderously</td>
<td>Hard knock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom</td>
<td>Shade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool (music)</td>
<td>Squeeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoots/ hooting</td>
<td>Raining cats and dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bang</td>
<td>Light showers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loud knock</td>
<td>A warm shower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different tones</td>
<td>Smoothly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deafened/deafening (cheer)</td>
<td>With sound that could awaken dead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearts beating</td>
<td>Voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piano playing</td>
<td>Cock crew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet melodies/songs</td>
<td>Bubbling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistle</td>
<td>Gosh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatting</td>
<td>Relating (music)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep voice</td>
<td>Ehh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chirping</td>
<td>Slow soothing music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singing</td>
<td>Alii lii...!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ululations</td>
<td>Romantic words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oh!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alas!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deep voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Breeze (the cool morning breeze)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                               | Full capacity                    |
|                               | Broad (smile)                    |
|                               | Horrifying (kitchen)             |
|                               | (Many people) as sand in shores  |
|                               | Clean as inner part of a cassava |
|                               | Painted                          |
|                               | Shock                            |
|                               | Behind                           |
|                               | Joyfully                         |
|                               | Dashed                           |

As cold as ice  Chilly  Breeze (the cool morning breeze)/t-

Squeezed  Four cardinal poles  Long stretched smiles  Angel-like girls  Bewitching  Jumping  A three piece (suit)  Vividly  Strolled  Brown (skin)  Dashed  

Stunning  Quiet as grave  Applauded  Pu!  Scream  Calm (voice)  Smoothly (music)  Melodies  With sound that could awaken dead  Voices  Cock crew  Bubbling  Gosh!  Relating (music)  Ehh!  Slow soothing music  Alii lii...!  Romantic words  Oh!  Alas!  Deep voice  

Squawk  Melodiously  Laughter  Clapped  Pii pii!  Murmuring  Quiet  Loud/ loudly applauded  Wow!  Silently/silent voice  Total silence  Whispered  Sweet beats  Cheers  Murmurs  Relaxing music  Thunder  Echoes  Shouts  Bang  

Cool  Cotton  Breezy  Hot  Feel  Rub  Golden/gold medal  Handle  Polished thick  Sharp  Scattered  mud  

Crisp  Breeze (the cool morning breeze)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smell items</th>
<th>Taste items</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scent</td>
<td>Flavour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfume</td>
<td>Delicious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roasting</td>
<td>Salivating/ed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smell (nicely)</td>
<td>Tasted nice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salivating</td>
<td>Tasty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorgeous smell</td>
<td>Fresh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wafted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delicious</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aroma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Odour</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boiling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Smell of rose flower petal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aromatic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh (air)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>As fresh as cucumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sweet smelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A cloud of smoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit juices</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mouth-watering food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tasted delicious</td>
<td></td>
<td>As fresh as cucumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pungent</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sweet taste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roasted</td>
<td></td>
<td>Towards the sweetness of honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stewed</td>
<td></td>
<td>Steaming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boiled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 6: Figures of Speech for Sighted Students.

The figures of speech are categorized according to the dominant sense(s). Some figures of speech appeal to more than one sensory channel.

1. as beautiful as queen – sight
2. Shinning like stars in the sky – sight
3. As white as milk- sight
4. If one does not have love is just like a day without sunlight- sight
5. beautiful like the proverbial rose- sight
6. Black as charcoal- sight
7. as white as snow- sight
8. as quiet as a grave – hearing
9. Every cloud has a silver lining- sight
10. As busy as ant - sight
11. when the sun was bursting through the trees in full gray - sight
12. The bride looked as gorgeous as sunset – sight
13. as happy as a king – sight
14. Threw spears of light to every corner of the room - sight
15. Hearts melted with joy like butterflies exposed to heat - touch
16. like a caged animal- sight
17. raining cats and dogs - sight/hearing/touch
18. Her eyes twinkled like stars - sight
19. as fresh as a cucumber- smell/taste
20. Aroma beckoning me- smell
21. as sober as judge - sight
22. Do not put all your eggs in one basket- sight
23. Looked as walking rainbows- sight
24. If wishes were horses then beggars could ride on them. - sight
25. Heart beating abnormally as if it had ran a hundred meters race- hearing
26. The sun was kissing kilimambogo- sight
27. thousands of question were cris-crossing my mind like an eight million kilobyte - sight
28. looked disturbed like wounded lions- sight
29. as clean as the inner part of a cassava- sight
30. Shinning like a golden coin dropped in a black well- sight
31. Motional like a dolls eyes which told a tale of melancholy- sight
32. Eucalyptus trees sway side by side welcoming the new day- sight
33. popped our eyes out of their sockets- sight
34. The frog’s palace/ kingdom- sight.
35. with a speed that could make the snail a champion- sight
36. With sound that could awaken the dead in sand- hearing
37. the speed of a chameleon - sight
38. The compound changed into a praising paradise.- hearing
39. the choir sang in a melodious voice that you could even hear the devil being driven way – hearing
40. the bride shining like a galaxy of stars - sight
41. Like a king whose subjects had just been wiped out by a mysterious plague - sight
42. powerless like new born baby - sight
43. a cold shower that left me as fresh as daisy - touch/smell
44. Walked majestically as if I was carrying the whole world - sight
45. Happiness compared with that of barren woman who gave birth to two twins - sight
46. As smart as a young prince who had just been given a crown by the king - sight
47. The place was silent, a pin drop would have echoed all round as she slowly walked... - hearing
48. A deafening cheer threatened to blow the roof off – hearing
49. Shivering like a feeble tree - sight.
50. Singing sweet songs which could extract even a mole in a hole - hearing.
51. The visitors came in overwhelming numbers as if our home was some kind of make shift hospital after a terrorist attack - sight.
52. many people like the sand in the shores – sight
53. The bride was treated like a queen. - sight
54. The choir sang like the early morning birds – hearing
Appendix 7: Figures of Speech for Visually Impaired Students

The figures of speech are categorized according to the dominant sense(s). Some figures of speech appeal to more than one sensory channel.

1. raining cats and dogs – *sight/touch/hearing*
2. as happy as king – *sight*
3. The menacing rays of sun which shone like pieces of mirror – *sight*
4. Sweet songs which could make the dead awake – *hearing*
5. walked slowly like a tortoise – *sight*
6. Shining like morning glory star – *sight*
7. too many such as bees – *sight*
8. I waited anxiously as a man in Sahara desert waiting for a cup of water to quench his thirst. – *sight*
9. My appearance was like that of the ghost from the moon. – *sight*
10. The bridegroom was wearing like an appointed angel as a prime angel. – *sight*
11. People shouted at the top of their voices as if a small microphone was part of their voices. – *hearing*
12. as happy as the hooves of a cow from states – *hearing*
13. I will never forget the day till the Sahara desert will be fertile – *sight*
14. Laughing as the children of a king in a palace – *hearing*
15. Loud voices you could think they were people in heaven celebrating God’s grace – *hearing*
16. flooded with ululations which could vanderlie – *hearing*
17. As proud by a peacock – *sight*
18. they were many as cluster of stars – *sight*
19. where there is smoke there is fire – *smell/ sight/ touch*
20. like the voice of the impending final trumpet that will bring the final judgment – *hearing*
21. the meals would enter to the guineas book of record – *taste / smell/ sight*
22. His voice roared like thunder – *hearing*
23. As noisy has industry – *hearing*
24. As happy as a toothless dog having been given some teeth when the meat is ready. – *sight.*
Appendix 8: A Sample of a Descriptive Composition of Visually Impaired Students’ Shifted to a Narration

Wedding Ceremony

It was 20th on April when I attended my neighbour wedding ceremony. 

That day I selected first because I wanted to be the guest of honor when he wanted to marry a girl from Kiambu who was called Nyambura.

I was very excited because that day you have a good day for me. 

I also invited other guest from far places to come and witnessed his wedding ceremony. This man his name was called Kaman. He invited me to go and celebrate the him. When the day you come on Saturday morning I prepared myself and went to where wedding was taking place, Kanyiiki. Usually I found that the when I reached there at who wanted to be married by Kaman has not yet arrived, we started
sweal for and they were waiting a wedding
shot. After about 15 minutes later
girl arrived followed by many
bikes. But the one that was carrying
yambura it was the first one to arrive
followed by others.

Then at about 9:30 A.M the wedding had
ready started and everybody was listened
started a wedding ceremony. We open it
was word or prayer for them after it
opened the guest to be well coded
introduce themselves to people-
then after they had finished introducing
themselves then the bride and bride
grown to stand up and also
introduce themselves to people.

After that the wedding ceremony started
in usual,
Many activities take place like:
songs, poems. Then after these
activities had some place then
bride and bridegroom were told
to tell each other that now one will who was
And they will live in peace after that, that the cave by cut and they were told to give each other. One guest was invited as a guest of honour. Then one guest was invited to say word and also me for I say for a word. Then after the words of the guest e close the ceremony with a word of prayer and the guest go with their pressure. It was a very good day to me cause I witnessed the ceremony and I was very happy to be invited.
Appendix 9: KNEC Composition

THE KENYA NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL
Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
ENGLISH
Paper 1
1½ hours

Instructions to candidates:

Answer question 1 and one other question from the choices given. Each of your compositions should be between 350 and 450 words long.
Answer question 1 and one other question from the choices given. Each of your compositions should be between 350 and 450 words long.

1 Compulsory

You are the Chairperson of the Drama Club at Rafiki Secondary School. The club has staged a successful dramatization of Chinua Achebe’s *A Man of the People* at the school. You now want to take the performance to three other schools in your district. The Head Teacher is offering the school bus, but he wants you to look for a sponsor who would pay for the fuel and the other expenses.

You then decide to contact the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority. Write a letter to the Director and ask if the agency can sponsor these performances. Briefly explain to the Director why you think *A Man of the People* presents a strong argument against corruption. Remember to write through the Head Teacher.

Choose only one topic from the following:

2 Either:

(a) Write a story that illustrates the wisdom in the saying: “Whoever refuses to be taught by the mother is eventually taught by the world”.

Or:

(b) Write a composition beginning: “For some of us it had been a long day, and to me in particular, the thought of what lay ahead was frightening”.

3 Explain what you as a citizen of this country can do to fight insecurity.

4 Describe your favourite game or sport, giving details that would be helpful to a person who is not familiar with that game or sport.
Appendix 10: Samples of Compositions For Visually Impaired Students

Three selected descriptive compositions written by form three students of S.A. Thika.

Pages 89-97 represent descriptive compositions for the visually impaired students.

They were labelled as IA, IIA, IIIA
A wonderful, foggy morning we woke up with a joy in our hearts. It was a Zeinor from the most God. everybody in our family was so happy, a toothless dog having been given some teeth.

I waited anxiously as a man in Sahara desert waiting for a cup of water. When the sun heated the ground, an expansive car arrived from nowhere. The car was bought by the organizers of that wedding.

I was not ready enough to attend that wedding and I went to take a shower. After that, I dressed my extra ordinary clothes which were as good as new. My appearance was like that of the ghost from the moon, my facial approach was like that of a new born baby. I bleaching myself. After that, I entered the car too together with my family members who were also nicely and purely dressed.

When we reached the church where the party was to be conducted or to happen, we were given a person of green land to guide us. As we knew that the best day of our life in the morning, we met people of substance or clean heart who assisted as the way we didn’t expect.

Within a blink of an eye, the bride and the
bridegroom enter. Silence settled, immediately after
led voice that had filled the room.
The bride was wearing like the head of a certain department
in the Heaven Chambers.

By the other hand the bride groom was wearing like
an appointed angel as a prince angel.

The owner of the language said where there is
smoke there is fire. The pastor who was to join the
couple seemed to be a drunked person because
his eye were as red as blood but his appearance was also
better. He stood suddenly and straight
as a spear and he ejaculated his words:
"you are supposed to be screaming!"

The hall was as noisy as an industry, everybody
saying nonsense you could think is a devil
place. After a moment the Co-operation returned
and everybody started singing wedding song that was led by the
master of ceremony Mr. Laugh.

As the wedding was proceeding thing became more sweeter
towards the sweetness of the money.
The bride and the bride groom were guarded as
King and Queen in a lady.
The pastor seemed to be immoral but he was right
according to the wedding ceremony. The bride was asked
to say romantic words to the bride groom and also
the bride groom too.
some of the words that I quoted from the bride was
"you are my life as you scored the fastest factor
in it. You are my activator and accelerator
of my dying.
After they were telling each other romantic words
they were also showing by actions making the congregation
laugh green and smile.
After that they were given a ring each which was to be
put at the left hand side but in different fingers.
the bride dressed the bride groom at the
finger in the middle of the palm.
the bride groom dressed her at the second
last finger from the thumb.
The congregation was happy and clapped for them.
After that the performing teams went on the stage
where they sang with their tip of their voices as if
the small microphones was part of their voice box.
Their voices were orderly hence they were like the voice
of the impending final trumpet that will bring the kind
judgement.
The ceremony ended at three o'clock when everybody
was surprised to wait for lunch.
If you want marks the meal would refer to the
guineas book & record.
The woman who were cooking they get Cog'jutor
from a profession by nick name called
As the ceremony was terminated, people felt bad at one another, distorted their plates.
The bride and the bride groom went to honey moon.
Because of its beauty it was given as name heaven's party.
My first wedding ceremony to attend. It was not a Friday evening when I got home from school. After a few minutes, I heard a honking of a car outside my house. I went out to see. Whole car it was! I was happy to see it was my uncle living in Mombasa without wasting a minute he revealed to me what he had come for. He told me that tomorrow will be his wedding ceremony and I am invited.

The night seemed to be long with a lot of—

problems because I could not get asleep. But I cannot... how long had I slept before I was awakened by the menacing rays of sun which shone like pieces of mirror. I jumped out of my bed and prepared myself in a spur of time I was ready, I could neither eat nor drink any thing due to the joy I had. Everyone in the family was ready and it was almost time for us to set off.

We boarded vehicles which were decorated with different types of decorations with different colours. We went to the church where we had to make promises to each other. It was not long when we had arrived at the place. The—
The service was started. Sweet songs were sung when the dead arrived. When it was over we bunched our various vehicles went back home where we had many people waiting for bridegroom and bride arrived. They were welcomed for women who sang our traditional song.

The couple were escorted to their seats under a mango tree. They were glad to be in a shade it in so hot. Other people got served and they waited long to serve food to us. We when we had finished eating and drinking my uncle and his companion were given an opportunity to cut and it was distributed to the whole crowd of people.

It tasted as good as honey. Everyone enjoyed the eating of the cake.

It came to time when the couple were requested to be given prizes. Many type of quilts were presented to them. They too seemed to enjoy what was given to them. My uncle smiled when he saw my present I was going to present to them a sofa set. I could read from his face that he was as happy as baby when he saw us presenting.
Before the ceremony was over different groups of people in given a chance to entertain. Music and different styles of dances were performed. Every person who was present felt entertained.

It was getting late the it time for our neighboring people and those who had from different part of the country especially those from Mombasa where my uncle wanted to leave. As the crowd left you could hear them singing and clapping. Actually this was my first wedding ceremony to attend and I will never forget.
A WEDING CEREMONY I ATTENDED

It was on a Saturday morning when the wedding started. The compound was full of people, young and old, and the middle-aged. The compound was beautified for flower of different types, and also there were shiny reasons around the house, there was white wash spread which made the surface very shiny, that sometimes made people's eyes to watch in the glare of honours. The table was a beautiful cover red and white flowers and very comfortable chairs were around the table. There compound really smelled nice and really conducive for a wedding ceremony.

All the people around were in red garments which really signaled a wedding mood. The Sun was bright and so there was a need of a big sheet of nylon to be spread above to protect the people from the Sun that really burned so hard on the ground until you could really about to be fried by the Sun.

It was about one and the meal was served and really nice food of the kind until I admired to dwell in the dynasty. As time went by, the things were already red and right at the
1751 Gikundu. Competition from S.S.

The front of the guest of honor's table was a bit sound system. Connected very was microphones and amplifiers. It was really made and place to look presentable. It was around two o'clock when vehicles started arriving. Surely, I was amazed because the vehicles that accompanied the ride and the bridegroom looked like opened heaven until I thought to marry soon so that I could be done the same. The bride was a short lady with bloodshot eyes but of average shape and her face looked beautiful. The bridegroom was a big and well built. More so who was also very handsome.

After the wedding many people went to their different destinations very happy indeed.

Surely, it was a nice wedding to attend.
Appendix 11: Samples of Compositions For Sighted Students

Four selected descriptive compositions written by form three students of Broadway High school Thika.

Pages 99-107 represent descriptive compositions for the visually impaired students.

They are labelled IB, IIB, IIIB and IVB.
Describe a wedding ceremony you attended (since you were born).

The glittering azure gown was reflective, every one in the church, as the bride walked towards the altar. Her long, designer gown was held by a young, beaming girl, beside the bride was her father, holding her hand. He was dressed in white clothes from head to toe, the yellow tie matched with the handkerchief in the hand. His smile had an acute, stuffy sound. They were moving in a tarry pace. From where I was sitting, I could smell the scent of perfume they had applied, and also the fragrance of the food which was already packed in hot dishes and on the set tables, from a distance, I could see the bridegroom seated ceremoniously on the varnished chairs.

The day was unlike the other days. Everyone was cheering for the bride and the bridegroom as they exchanged their wedding vows. Afterwards, the women in the catering department were now busy, opening the load of the dishes, the pastor who helped them in saying the vows had now ordering the bride and the bridegroom to sit down. For another chair so that they can be served.

The sleeping ballots were turned, and every body was fully taken their food and beverages. The girls who were of the same height, same clothes, and same hair style, almost like maids, were now preceding the bride and the bridegroom as they walked out of the church hall. The church compound was neatly swept and flowers were arranged in a graceful manner at the edges of the fence, and at the pathway at the sides. The path that they were walking was finished by a red carpet, which corresponded to the clothes they wore. The bride was in, this was where the reception was, No sooner had they sat down, than the people started preparing to give out their presents, which were covered by a good paper.
The crowd started to occupy the place, and everybody was fatigued and tired because of how they had spoiled the wedding and shoulders. Young men were busy packing the presents in the vehicles - later all the bride and the bridegroom together with the congregation went to the Twinkle Club where they were to spend the night.
I woke up at a crack of dawn, I opened my navy blue curtain that abruptly threw a spear of light into every corner of the room uprightly. Waxed down the stairs to the sitting room. I first interchanged with my.A profligate uncle and took a cold shower. I wore a snow-white coat and black shoes which twinkled brilliantly like the star in the night sky. We were to my aunt red-letter day. I entered in my smartly-arranged fancy Mercedes Benz my father expertly drove with a neck-breaking speed. After 3 hrs we had arrived at Nairobi town where the two lover birds were marryng. There were many people like the sand in the shores of the lake. The bride walked in the church with a speed that could make the sand a champion.

The smart groom stood uprightly as he anxiously wait to relieve his bride. The bride was accompany by her parent while church's choir who were very happy as king or queen who were in the first inauguration after swearing in ceremony.

The priest preached with a sound that could awaken the dead in sand. The priest was roused about how people should behave to get to for many years in spite of divorces and many problems that affect the marriage. However, he condemned those who go away leaving their wife or husband to live for their own. He said that every person had a right to a bride in their whole life but in order to bear those who depend on them, after that he rise bride and gown who were led by best maid and best man in front of the friend family and relatives.
Now it was six o'clock giving offering to be church while ou choir was singing with their soft music. Then he asked to master of the ceremony to who has given the bride ring and in the time of exchanging the ring I said on my cousins people were happy the church was about to come to end. The priest was now praying for the ring happy. He blessed the ring which was about thirty thousand between them since both ever bird were wearing each other the ring. Both lover birds were said to kiss each other since both were faithful. Both kissed each other will say I asked to my heart is it a must love bird must called other. Every body was cold there should go and great these lover bird but before were started moving from our seats. The big mama appeared and before we started moving out of our seat the big mama appeared at the back of our seats. Then she said that is a dream was her husband she was appeared with one sense.

My parents were surprised than before as well as everybody was in the church. Already many people were have big gifts including wardrobe, table, chair and many other furniture of much higher quality. The wedding was disrupted. Everyone started around what is going on. Now everybody was outside the church waiting to depart on their homes. They were said because groom had been cheated he bride in fact she has been warned by her parent against involved in with a person who she did not trust. I was very disappointed. Are after every body was out waiting for their vehicle to depart to their homes. Without saying good by to each other.
was unbelievable moment in my life. I never watched my cinema. I also not believe because all was me like nightmare. Bride was absent. I was already very hungry and our father said we should go on for a big hotel.

We return home safely without hurry as dad understand, and hurry hurry has no blessing. On the way home my mother said that Brian has done illegal sex with town teacher or some family. We monitored after hearing this.
A WEDDING CEREMONY

It was on Saturday and the occasion was very different from what we had expected. Even before we entered the room, we could hear some noises. Everyone was in jovial mood. Mary welcomed us warmly as we sat down near the mirror. People were as busy as bees preparing the bride and also themselves.

I could not believe the day we had waited for with much pluck had finally arrived. Everyone was set to In the wink of an eye we drove off to the church.

"Today is my sister's wedding day," I said.

Smile was plastered on her agent face. Her eyes twinkled like stars in the sky. Joy seemed to be rising in her after every minute.

We finally arrived at the Saint Andrews Church. Illusions were by the old women as we came out of the car. The church was flanked by relatives and friends. A bride with us we lead the way inside.

Red and white balloons decorated the church. The choir sang in a melodious voices that you could even hear the devil being driven away. We sat down and waited for the bride.

Mark, the groom was as happy as a lamb. He was so excited that he kept fidgeting all the time. Just as Mary walked in, we all stood up in awe. Her snow white car caught everyone's eyes as they say, precious is always visible. Her beauty was ravished by the wondrous smile on her visage. She swayed her lips from left to right. Mary wore a gown with beauty. Her elegant body together with her diamond necklace shone in a bewitching manner.

As she made her way to podium, Markovan his set teeth. It seemed like a million years had passed by. She reached the podium.
Dressed in a well black suit, the pastor welcomed all of us. He started preaching about marriage. He had time I went to Smuland.

Before my best friend nudged me on my side. It was time to make their vows. "Mary do you take Mark to be your loving husband through sickness and health until death do you part?" "I do," she replied. "Mark do you take Mary to be your wife until death do you part?" "No," he said.

Mark meant the air. Everyone was mixed with disbelief and confusion. I took my book and headed out of the church. I stopped abruptly as I heard Mark unfold the story to Mary. "I love your sister, that is why I cannot marry you," he pleaded.

Mary shot out of the church, as I rushed after him to explain. I was a minute too late because she had driven off in My Mother’s Car. Tears were stained on her face. "Oh no! how could this happen?" I thought.

Just then a loud bang filled the air. Cloud of smoke was seen rising from another direction. I rushed to the scene and what I saw made my heart skip a beat. My mother’s car had come head on Collision with a Stationary lorry.

The horrible truth dawned on me that M was dead. A torrent of tears cascaded down my face. I had caused the death of my sister! If only I had never involved myself with Mark.

As long as diamonds remain precious and the ocean vast, I will live to remember that awful day.
A WEDDING THAT NEVER WAS

Describe a wedding ceremony you attended since you were born.

It was an ordinary Sunday morning when the sun was baking through the trees in the sky and the birds were chirping the morning of the holiday makers planning a perfect day.

I was busy doing my house chores and our jeep was loaded with vehicles honking (pippiti, pippiti, pippiti). My curiosity grew and I ran to where the hours were going from.

To my surprise I saw a local traffic vehicles which were decorated with many different colors and buttons. This was a clear indication that there was a wedding somewhere in the town. I decided to follow the streamers towards the church as the green of the church welcomed the bride.

The bride looked so gorgeous as the sun set on her beautiful gown. Her powdery gown was adorned with dazzling white shoes and looked like a walking rainbow. The bride entered the church with her maid of honor and was assisted by her parents. Everyone was gathered to see the bride and her father as they looked as walking rainbows.

The bride and groom arrived before the bride and was wearing a black suit, a white shirt, and black shoes. The sun was shining on the church by his parents. The church was packed to a sitting limit and everyone looked happy.

The mass was led by a tall, lumpy, and black priest. He started with a word of prayer. The music started immediately and the priest asked everyone to kneel. Everyone was silent. There was no sound of music. The sound of laughter was heard. It was sudden as everyone laughed. The groom wrapped the bride in a lingering hug and a beautiful and cute kiss.

They were given diamond rings which they exchanged in sun. They applauded loudly and proudly for the newly wedded couple. The groom could not believe that all of his young fans were in church. He was the one who won such a beautiful bride.
The bride shuffled her feet for a moment and turned to her sister. "Joey wanted this to be perfect," she said, "and he really wanted to make it special for the groom."

They stood there, watching as the guests filed out of the venue, some shedding tears and others laughing. It was a mix of emotions that only celebrated such a grand occasion could bring.

As they turned to leave, the bride reached out to her sister and hugged her tightly. "Thank you," she whispered. "Thank you for being there for me."

And with that, they walked out into the night, hand in hand, their hearts full of joy and tears, knowing that this was just the beginning of a new chapter for them both.