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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES USED IN DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNERS' ENGLISH VOCABULARY IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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REG. NO. C50/10129/07

A research dissertation submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English and Linguistics of Kenyatta University

APRIL, 2012.
DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

To my late Cucu, Beth Njeri Kimemia, who never lived to see some of her prayers come to pass; my parents Charles Ngugi and Lilian Wangui, who laid the foundation for my education; my husband and friend, Charles Kamotho, for his immeasurable support; our daughters, Ivy and Lyn, for their prayers and finally, our son Roy, for crowning the course.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my appreciation to my supervisors Dr. Martin C. Njoroge and Dr. Daniel O. Orwenjo for their guidance right from proposal stage up to the completion of dissertation. My thanks also go to all the lecturers who instructed me at Kenyatta University for their inspirational lectures in class, through which I have been motivated to explore some interesting issues concerning English language teaching and learning. Mr A. D. Bojana deserves gratitude for editing the final draft.

Last but not least, I would like to give my immense gratitude to Njeri, my sister, the Varsity ville prayer group without whose support, my dream of pursuing further studies would not have been possible.
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

This study has used some terms in specific ways:

Activity: An action that is carried out in order to process or understand language.

Concept: The total collection of meanings, associations, ideas and images linked to a word.

Learning: The process of developing conscious or multilingual knowledge through formal study.

Lexis: The vocabulary of a language in contrast to its grammar.

Lexical unit: An item, which functions as a single unit, regardless of the orthographical units it contains.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLT</td>
<td>Communicative Language Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCSE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KIE</td>
<td>Kenya Institute of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNEC</td>
<td>Kenya National Examinations Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First Language</td>
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<td>L2</td>
<td>Second Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Presentation, Practice and Production</td>
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<td>TBLT</td>
<td>Task-based language teaching.</td>
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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary forms a major component in the study of a language and since the mid-1980s a lot of research has focused on this area. The study sought to survey language activities used to enhance the development of learners' vocabulary in Kenya secondary schools. Specifically, the study sought to first, examine the presentation of vocabulary activities as outlined in the Kenyan secondary school English syllabus and English textbooks. Second, it sought to find out vocabulary learning activities that teachers engage learners in so as to help them develop their vocabulary. Third, it investigated the learning activities that are considered to be effective in development of English vocabulary and finally, from available literature, the study has provided a suggestion on vocabulary enhancement activities that can be used by students for effective vocabulary development in Kenyan schools. The study was carried out in four public secondary schools in Thika District. The schools selected were drawn from three main categories, namely; national, provincial and district levels of schools. Eight teachers of English randomly selected from the four selected secondary schools were used in the study. In addition, the secondary school English syllabus and two core form two English textbooks were analyzed to find out language activities recommended for teachers' use in vocabulary teaching. The study was guided by, Baker and Westrup (2000). Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP framework). The framework was used to discuss different language learning activities that were exposed to the learners to during the teaching of vocabulary. The data collected were coded, analysed and the emerging patterns interpreted and discussed. The study found that there are several vocabulary learning activities that enhance vocabulary in Form Two class in Kenya secondary schools. However, there lacks a systematic way of identifying what vocabulary should be taught to learners of different levels. In addition, the teachers are not well-guided on the specific vocabulary development activities that they should use. The study recommends that syllabus designers, textbook authors, material developers and teachers of English language take into consideration the importance of developing secondary school learners’ vocabulary as done in primary schools, especially in the choice of vocabulary enhancement activities to be used in teaching of vocabulary.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The important role played by English language in Kenya cannot be underscored. It is used both as an international and official language in Kenya. Mastery of English language is very crucial to every Kenyan. The Kenya Institute of Education reflects the importance of English language in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) syllabus. The English syllabus states that those who master English reap many academic, social and professional benefits (KIE, 2002).

The single biggest component of any language course is its vocabulary (McCarthy, 1990). This observation implies that without words to express a wide range of meanings, communication in a language cannot happen in any meaningful way. For example, it is difficult for anyone to understand what s/he reads if s/he cannot decipher the meaning of a word in the sentence. Templeton and Pikulski (2005) point out that without teaching vocabulary, many students can fall behind in other subject areas. Further, McCarthy (1990) asserts that one of the most important tools teachers of English can give to students in order for them to succeed not only in their education but also generally in life is a wide range of rich vocabulary and the skill for using words in a given language. He further affirms that people's ability to function in today's complex social and economic world is mightily affected by their language skills and knowledge contained in words.
While most students who succeed in the earlier classes continue doing well in vocabulary in their higher classes, there are some who do not. Furthermore, research has shown that many children who are good readers in the lower level of education will not automatically become proficient comprehenders in higher levels of education (Thornbury, 2002). This is because the effects of the lack of attention to vocabulary instruction normally manifest themselves in the higher level of education where tests on reading tend to contain passages that have complex content and uncommon vocabulary (Ndethiu, 2007). In consideration of this, it is imperative that the teachers of English seriously consider enhancing acquisition and development of vocabulary of their learners.

Teaching of vocabulary is best done through subjecting learners to vocabulary enhancing activities (Coady & Huckin, 1997). According to Krashen (1993) and Nagy (1997) facilitating reading is the most important thing a teacher can do to improve students' vocabulary development. However, beyond providing students with lots of interesting books and other resources, teachers should avail a variety of vocabulary activities for their students.

Paribakht and Weshe (1997) grouped various vocabulary enhancing activities into five categories: first, there is selection attention, which is designed to draw the learner’s attention to the target words; second, there is recognition, where the necessary elements are provided so that the learners recognise the target words and their meanings. The third category is manipulation, which involves rearranging and organising given elements to make words or phrases. The fourth is interpretation, which involves analysis of meaning of words with respect to other words in a given
context, and lastly is production category whereby learners are involved in exercises that demand the learners to produce the target word in appropriate context. In this sense, the teaching of vocabulary by the teachers of English could be assessed based on these categories of activities.

Reviewed studies carried out in Kenya reveal that learners display difficulties in acquisition and use of vocabulary in Kenyan high schools (Njoroge & Ndung'u, 2009; Nyamasyo, 1992). A number of issues like poor spelling, a narrow vocabulary and an inability to express ideas when writing in English are some of the problems that learners face when they leave secondary school in Kenya. Since the mastery of English has a lot of benefits in Kenya, the students must be especially facilitated to master English for their future professions. This study sought to address the teaching of vocabulary in schools especially focussing on the various activities teachers used to develop learners’ vocabulary in Kenya high schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been recognised (McCarthy, 1990; Singleton 2000; Kamil et al., 2005). However, although research-based conclusions have shown that vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in a learner’s literacy development, there is little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in the school curricula and virtually no vocabulary development instruction takes place during content instruction (Templeton & Pikulski, 2005; Beck et al., 2002). The Kenyan experience is not different as there is no formal vocabulary lesson (Njoroge & Ndung'u, 2009).
The Kenya secondary school English syllabus expresses the importance of vocabulary as reflected in its objectives. One of these objectives stipulates that by the end of secondary education learners should be able to build a wide range of vocabulary (KIE, 2002). However, there is no clear guidance on how teachers can assist learners to build their vocabulary in a classroom setup. It is expected that learners will pick a range of vocabulary during the learning of the language skills, grammar or when reading the literary works since the English syllabus adopts an integrated approach. This is unlike what has been done on grammar, and the four skills of learning English which learning activities are well given. (K.I.E, 2002). The decision on how to teach vocabulary seems to be solely left mainly to the individual teachers of English since the syllabus has not guided them on how to teach vocabulary. This raises two fundamental questions: the first is on how teachers of English handle vocabulary teaching in the classroom, and second, the activities in which learners are engaged in the classroom to facilitate vocabulary development. This study sought to find out the reality on the ground.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

(i) To identify the vocabulary enhancement activities presented in the English syllabus and in the English textbooks for teachers' use.

(ii) To find out the specific activities the teachers use during their lessons to facilitate development of learners' vocabulary.
(iii) To establish the learning activities that teachers and learners find most effective in vocabulary development.

(iv) To propose, with the help of available literature on lexis, vocabulary enhancement activities that can be utilized for effective learners' vocabulary development in Kenya schools.

1.4 Research Questions

This study endeavoured to answer the following questions:

(i) What vocabulary learning activities are presented in the English syllabus and English textbooks for teachers' use?

(ii) Which specific activities do teachers use during English lessons to develop learners' vocabulary?

(iii) Which activities do the teachers and learners find to be most effective in the teaching of vocabulary?

(iv) Which vocabulary enhancement activities does the available literature suggest for effective learners' vocabulary development?

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

This study was conducted under the following assumptions:

(i) Secondary school English syllabus and English textbooks have included language activities that teachers could use in developing learners' vocabulary.
(ii) The teachers engage their learners in specific activities during English lessons to develop their vocabulary.

(iii) Some vocabulary enhancement activities are considered as being most effective in the teaching of vocabulary.

(iv) The available literature suggests vocabulary enhancement activities that can be used for effective learners' vocabulary development in Kenya schools.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was designed to find out ways in which acquisition and development of English vocabulary by the secondary school students could be enhanced. As mentioned earlier, research has shown that vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in students' literacy development. It was, however, noted that the teaching of English vocabulary has not been emphasized much in the syllabus unlike what has been done, for example, in grammar. There is evidence showing learners' inadequacy in both the range of vocabulary they are familiar with the information on vocabulary (Njoroge & Ndung'u, 2009). One major issue, which then arises, is how the teaching of vocabulary is done, which therefore, makes this study very timely.

It is hoped that the findings of this research could provide information to shed light on the teaching of vocabulary in English language classroom in Kenya. This study was able to find out the specific learning activities that teachers used to enhance learners' vocabulary development and was able to establish that in some cases, teachers could adhere to what in the syllabus and at times they could not.
The findings could be useful to teachers since the study purposed to suggest, with the help of the available literature on vocabulary teaching various language activities that learners could be engaged in during the teaching of vocabulary to assist in developing their vocabulary. In addition, the study may provide information that could also benefit the teacher educators in enriching pre-service and in-service programmes. Curriculum developers and practitioners may also be given insights, which are important for both building theory and practice. The publishers could also use the information to improve on learning activities to be included in the books they publish.

This study will be significant in adding to the knowledge in the already existing literature on vocabulary learning and acquisition in Kenya (Ndung'u, 2003; Ngumo, 2007; Orwenjo, 2009; Njoroge & Ndung'u, 2009). The study is hoped to be of contribution to the ongoing research on the teaching of vocabulary.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There are many areas that can be studied in the field of English language. This study, however, limited itself to vocabulary. This is because vocabulary is crucial in assisting one to express or understand what is being communicated. The study sought to find out the presentation of vocabulary in Kenya secondary schools. This is because by the end of high school level, learners are expected to have achieved some proficiency in English language. Any given syllabus gives teachers guidance on what to teach and how to teach it. For this reason, this study analyzed both secondary English syllabus and Form Two English textbooks to find out which vocabulary learning activities are available for teachers’ use.
The study focused on the Form Two class since it is the level where learners’ vocabulary development should be enhanced in readiness for intensive reading in Form Three and Form Four. The study used two Form Two teachers of English and learners from four public secondary schools in Thika West District. Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP framework) was used in data collection, data analysis and its interpretation.

1.8 Conclusion

Having looked at the pertinent issues in this study, that is, the background information, the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, research assumptions, rationale of the study, the scope and limitations of the study, the study then proceeds to review literature and theories related to research area.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter puts the present study within the perspective of related literature. First, it looks at the approaches that inform the teaching of vocabulary in ESL settings, followed by relevant literature on second language instruction, vocabulary development activities and the theoretical framework that guides the arguments in this study.

2.2 Approaches to Teaching Language

There has been great development in language teaching methods, which has been determined by the kind of proficiency that is emphasized. Three methodologies have successfully dominated second language learning arena: The grammar translation method, audio-lingual method and the communicative approach. In these methodologies, vocabulary has been treated differently depending on the theories that have been considered in forming the specific language teaching method.

The main goal of grammar translation method was to help learners study a foreign language in order to read its literature. Translation was used in studying a language. In terms of dimension given to vocabulary, words were selected from the text or passage that was being used. The words were taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study and memorization. Singleton (2000) points out that foreign language was taught through memorization of grammar rules, and practice. This method clearly brings out the relationship between first language (L1) and second language (L2) in the learning
of vocabulary. Swain (1996) argues that mother tongue can influence the way second language is learnt particularly when bilingual word lists are used.

In grammar translation method, learners study grammar and learn a list of vocabulary in order to translate sentences. It emphasizes on practice of forms and rules. According to Carter (1988), a significant amount of vocabulary can be learned successfully through this method of rote learning though it is often criticized. The method brings in some activities that can be used in the teaching of vocabulary. The present study aimed at finding out the activities which teachers used during English lessons.

Audio-lingual method looks at language as being made of elements that combine using certain rules. This method argues that language could be taught without translation and therefore, classroom instruction was strictly on monolingual approach. According to Richard & Theodore (1986) concrete vocabulary in the direct method was taught through demonstration of objects and pictures while abstract vocabularies were taught by association of ideas. The structures, however, were taught through drilling. The activities involved in audio-lingual method are dialogues and drills. Dialogues provide the context of language structure; they are also used for repetition and memorization. Correct pronunciation, rhythm, stress and intonation are emphasized. Audio-lingual approach lays emphasis on spoken language. Language is believed to be learned through habit formation and automatization. It is believed that language has to be presented and practiced intensively so that learners can use words correctly without errors. The study wished to find out the different learning activities
that teachers could involve learners in to help them practise new words and be able to use them correctly.

Direct method is based on structuralism. It looks at language being made up of structural entities or elements. The method advocates that learners master the target language by mastering its structural elements. It views language as a habit formation that is characterized with repetition and structural drilling. The method views practice as an important aspect in language learning.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method that views language as a system for expression of meaning. The aim of CLT is to develop the ability of the learner to use language in real communication. Brown & Yule (1983) view communication as involving two main purposes: the interactional function, where the language is used to establish and maintain contact and the transactional function, where language is used to exchange information. CLT is, therefore, directed towards enabling the learner to interactional and transactional function in L2.

Communicative method, on the other hand, emphasizes on knowing meaning. The method is based on functional view of language and how people use language. In reference to these three methods, Singleton (2000) argues that the needs to introduce new language then help learners to practise it and finally give them an opportunity to communicate freely with each other in English.

The secondary school English syllabus acknowledges the importance of communicative aspect and it has stated communicative competence as one of its goals in the learning of a language (KIE, 2002:7). CLT emphasis is that much of the time is
spent on developing learners' skills. After presenting and practising language items (vocabulary, grammar patterns), more importance is given to production, where learners interact to complete the tasks. This study sought to find out the activities that help learners to produce what they have learned.

2.3 Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary is considered as an important factor in the comprehension of language and the number of words acquired is strongly related to competent language use (Nation, 2001; Read, 2000). Therefore, if learners are to achieve any kind of functional proficiency in a second language, it is important that studies on effective teaching methods of vocabulary be carried out.

Vermeer (2004) points out that words are key to understanding and being understood. However, one must seek to establish what is meant when it is said that a word has been acquired. When people talk about acquiring 'word', mostly they tend to mean knowing its definition. But knowing a word's definition is not the same as being able to use the word in speech and writing. Schmitt and McCarthy (1997) suggest that acquiring a word requires more than just familiarity with its meaning and form. Nation (2001) on the other hand describes the various kinds of word knowledge necessary to master a word completely. He describes lexical knowledge as taxonomy of components. Acquiring a word means knowing its form (spoken, written and word parts); meaning (concepts and associations); and use in terms of grammatical functions, collocations and constraints (Nation, 2001). In addition, he points out that learners have to acquire both the receptive knowledge and the productive knowledge of the word. Receptive knowledge involves being able to recognize the word when it
is heard or when it is seen, and recognizing its meaning. Productive knowledge of a word builds on the receptive knowledge; for example, it involves being able to spell and pronounce a word, being able to use it in the right grammatical patterns and with the words it usually collocates with.

The implication is that for learners to acquire new words, they have to be exposed to the various concepts underlying it. It was the interest of this study to find out the learning activities the teachers engage learners in so as to expose them to the various concepts of words and eventually acquire these concepts in the sense described.

2.4 Second Language Lexical Instruction
Singleton (2000) argues that in L1 and L2 classrooms, the approach to lexis involves a combination of instruction and/or activities focus on particular expression and also on incidental acquisition. Incidental vocabulary learning is generally understood as learning words in context (Nation, 2001). Laufer (2000) defines incidental vocabulary acquisition as the acquisition of vocabulary through any activity not explicitly geared to lexical acquisition. This includes learning from extensive reading, from taking part in conversations and from listening to stories, films, television or the radio.

Intentional vocabulary acquisition is defined as the activity aimed at committing the lexical information in the memory (Laufer & Hulstijn, 2001). This is a deliberate way of directing learners’ consciousness to learning a word. It is clear that direct instruction produces better methods and better word acquisition than no instruction at all (Wagner, 2007; Graves, 1986; Templeton and Pikulski 2005) estimate that at least 80% of words that children acquire by the time they are in their sixth grade are learned through direct instruction.
This study looked not only at incidental acquisition but also concentrated on the activities that focus on vocabulary development as Coady (1997) argues that if a systematic development of second language vocabulary is desired, it cannot be left to students on their own, to acquire specific knowledge without guidance. The learners require some guidance for them to be able to gain vocabulary knowledge as they read.

Language activities have a very important role in giving learners opportunities to learn new words and practise the learned words as explained in the Presentation, Practice and Production PPP framework (Baker & Westrup, 2000). This study sought to find out the different vocabulary enhancement activities used in Kenyan secondary schools. In addition, the study grouped the various language activities depending on the different roles they have in the learners' acquisition of vocabulary.

2.5 Vocabulary Development Activities

Teachers can use different language activities during the teaching of vocabulary. Following the notion of deep processing of a word by Craik and Lockhart (1972) cited in Schmitt & McCarthy, (1997), activities can be grouped into two major categories: the deep processing and shallow processing activities. For example, copying word from the blackboard is an activity that may be grouped as shallow type of processing while productive tasks such as constructing sentences using some given words may be grouped as deep processing and may lead to better retention. Ellis, (2003) identifies two types of tasks that that can be used in teaching language: Task supported language teaching and task - based language teaching. The latter uses tasks as the central unit for planning and teaching while in the former, tasks are used to assist learners practise what they have learned. This study focused on task supported
language teaching which involved presentation, practice and production during the lesson.

Paribakht and Wesche (1997) grouped these activities into five distinct categories. These are: selection attention; recognition; manipulation; interpretation and production. Selection attention activities use different techniques to draw the learners' attention to the target words. The activities aim to ensure that students notice the target word. Selection attention is thought to be the first stage in acquisition of the word and the least demanding exercises type for the learner. Examples include: bold facing; italicizing; circling; underlining; providing students with a list of target words in the beginning of the text and asking them to read the words and notice where they appear in the text; learners underline the target words every time the words appear in the text.

In recognition exercises, all necessary elements are provided and the learners are asked only to recognize the target words and their meanings. The learners are expected to use the old knowledge that they have to understand the target words. Examples include: Matching the target word with the definition, replacing the target word with a synonym in a sentence or a passage, selecting the meaning of the target word from a multiple choice of meanings and choosing the correct picture after seeing or hearing the word.

Manipulation activities allow the learner to be involved in rearranging and organizing given elements to make words or phrases. The exercises require the learner to use the existing knowledge of morphology and grammar. Examples include giving
derivations of words, thus changing the grammatical category of the target word, such as from noun to adjective or from verb to noun, and combining different words to form compound words.

Interpretation involves the analysis of meaning with respect to other words in a given context like the collocation, synonym and antonyms. Examples include: finding the odd word, in a series of collocates, multiple choice cloze test exercises, guessing the meaning of the word from context and the words may also be grouped according to the parts of speech.

Production activities require the learners to produce the target words in appropriate contexts. Examples include: Open cloze exercises, labelling the picture, seeing or hearing the L1 equivalent or an L2 synonym and providing the target word, indicating the mistake in an idiom used in a sentence then correcting it and constructing sentences using the target words. One of the objectives of this study was to establish activities that teachers mainly use to develop learners' vocabulary.

Ngumo (2007) evaluated the presentation of vocabulary in English class four textbooks. The findings show there was a good coverage of vocabulary. However, the present study was different from Ngumo’s because it looked at the Form Two textbooks and was mainly interested in the actual teaching of vocabulary in secondary schools using some of the activities given in those textbooks. The current study was interested in looking at how teachers utilize different activities in the teaching of vocabulary.
2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study evaluated the teaching of vocabulary using Baker and Westrup's (2000) Presentation, Practice and Production (PPP) framework. The PPP framework has three main phases: Presentation phase, practice phase and production phase.

a. Presentation Phase

The teacher introduces the new language items that students need to learn. When presenting new words, the teacher must show three things clearly:

i. What the word means.
ii. How and when it is used.
iii. What it sounds like.

The teacher should in addition show learners how to form vocabulary and check the spellings of new words. Since the learners need to understand the meaning of the new language, the teacher must use the new word in obvious context. The teacher may use real objects or pictures or draw objects on blackboard. The phase helps learners to know the matching, spelling, pronunciation and formation of word.

It is at this phase that teachers engage learners in activities geared to understanding the structure of words to be learned. The current study was to find out what language learning activities teachers use during this phase of the lesson.

b. Practice Phase

Learners need plenty of activities that will help them practise new words. Students can do this by listening, repeating, writing and reading the new words using a wide
variety of learning activities. The students can practise individually, in pairs, groups or as a whole class.

It is at this stage the teacher corrects sentence construction, use of language and pronunciation. This stage is called controlled practice phase. It uses repetition techniques that are used in direct method such as drilling. At a later stage, students do engage in activities with less help and control. At the end of presentation and practice phase of the new words, the learners should be able to speak or write in the new language fairly well without making mistakes. The learners are given different activities which will allow them to use the language they have learned in a freer situation. This study also sought to find out the vocabulary learning activities that teachers use to help learners practice words in a meaningful manner at this phase.

c. Production Phase

The learners are engaged in activities, which allow free language production. They may have to do some of the activities when they leave the classroom, for example, writing a poem or a letter. In a classroom situation the learners may be engaged in communicative activities in pairs or as a group. The learners are expected to use the words that they learned before.

It was hoped that the framework would help to establish the presentation of vocabulary enhancement activities in both English syllabus and English textbooks. In addition, help find out the specific activities that teachers give learners, to help learners' practise and produce the new words presented during the lesson in order to eventually develop their vocabulary. The framework is relevant to the present study as
it is based on effective learning principle in addition to giving learners opportunity to practise so as to become more fluent in English. The teacher introduces the new words, then the students are engaged in activities to help them practise new words and finally, the student are given time to use the language they have learned to communicate with each other, a feature that should occur in the production phase.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the literature and the theories that present the argument in this study. The theoretical models are, therefore, relevant in the selection of the research design, selection and design of tools for data collection, sampling design for the taxonomies and sampling of the students, which are expounded in Chapter 3. The reviewed literature has also presented the gaps this study intended to fill.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology in terms of: research design, the study population, the sampling design, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Design

A descriptive survey research design was used to guide the study. This type of design attempts to describe correct current conditions in any given areas of study (Wimmer et al., 2006). The choice of the survey design has further been justified by Orodho & Kombo (2002) who say that the purpose of survey research is to gather data at a particular time and describe the nature of existing conditions. The study aimed to establish the various language activities used in enhancement of vocabulary development in Kenya secondary schools and hence a survey design was seen to be ideal.

3.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Thika West District. This district has been newly created from the original Thika District in Kiambu County, Kenya.
3.3 Study Population

The population in this study constituted all secondary schools in Thika West District. Thika West District has a total of 34 secondary schools, 13 of which are public and 21 are privately owned. However, this study surveyed teaching of vocabulary in public secondary schools only. The public schools were chosen so as to limit other extraneous variables such as economic factors.

The study population was drawn from the Form Two class. This is because it is the level where the learners’ vocabulary ought to be developed in readiness for the intensive reading in forms three and four.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Thika West District has the three categories of public secondary schools, namely: National, provincial and district schools. Purposive sampling of the schools was done so that the three categories of schools in the district are included in the study. The schools with more than one stream were preferred so that two teachers could be randomly chosen since the study limited itself to four secondary schools.

The sample population included two Form Two teachers of English language who were randomly chosen from the four selected schools in the district. A sample of eight teachers was deemed enough to elicit the data on language activities that were used in Form Two classes. In addition, two English textbooks were randomly sampled. This number is supported by Milroy (1987) who argues that bigger sample for linguistic studies would not be necessarily because they tend to be redundant, increasing handling problems with diminishing analytical returns.
3.5 Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

The study used the following research instrument: document analysis, observation schedule and questionnaires.

3.5.1 Document Analysis

This instrument was used to collect the information on vocabulary activities recommended in the English syllabus and in the English textbooks. In addition, it aided the study in proposing the vocabulary enhancement activities that can be utilized for effective vocabulary development thus help in achieving the first and the fourth objectives of the study respectively.

English syllabus and English textbooks were read and analysed to identify the various vocabulary enhancement activities presented. A checklist (see Appendix 4) was preferred since according to Grainger (2001), the use of a checklist can lead to a more systematic and thorough examination of textbooks. The checklist used in this study was based on the various activities that several researchers have identified such as gap filling and cloze test (Thornbury, 2002). The activities were written down and later discussed in terms of whether there was any discrepancy between what the English syllabus recommends, what is written in the textbooks and what the teachers actually do in the classroom. A scheme of work is one of the documents that a teacher follows while teaching. It was, therefore, analysed to find out what activities teachers used during the teaching of vocabulary. Various literature on lexis were read to identify vocabulary enhancement activities and theories that informed them to be able to propose language activities that can be utilized by the teachers to effectively develop learners’ vocabulary.
3.5.2 Questionnaire.

There were two questionnaires used in data collection for the two types of respondents in the study, that is, the teachers and the students. The questionnaire (see Appendices 1 & 2) were used to collect data on the activities that teachers used during the lessons to develop learners' vocabulary. The instrument was also used to establish the activities that teachers and learners found most effective in vocabulary development. The questionnaire for the students was to identify the activities the vocabulary learning activities they were engaged in during the lesson and the ones they found most effective in vocabulary development. The questionnaire had both open-ended and closed items. The open-ended items gave the respondents greater freedom of expression of ideas, while the closed-ended items were used by the researcher to gather specific responses such as the specific activities the teachers use.

The teachers and the learners were issued with the questionnaire designed to elicit information on learning activities that are used during leaning to develop learners' vocabulary

3.5.3 Observation Schedule

The researcher observed the English lesson in selected classes in each school. Observation of four different lessons was done to collect data on the second study objective. The checklist was used during the observation (see appendix 3). All the vocabulary activities that the teacher used were ticked against the details in the checklist. This allowed for a range of comparisons on what teachers indicated to be doing and the actual implementation of the same.
3.6 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The researcher used the information given by the subjects for the purposes of the study only and treated it with utmost confidentiality. The informants were not coerced to give information. The researcher got a research permit from the Ministry of Education to conduct the research in the schools.

3.7 Conclusion

The chapter has looked at methodology that guided the study. The questionnaires, the document analysis and the observation schedule were effective in eliciting the data in line with the objectives of the study. What came out clearly from the study is that the three methods of data collection all had to be used together, so as to corroborate the data elicited from the respondents. The analyses of data as per the methodology in which the data are described and interpreted as presented in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the results of the data analysis. This will be followed by a discussion providing an explanation and interpretation of the results from the analyses of the data. First, is a section that presents the vocabulary activities recommended in both the secondary school English syllabus and English textbooks that teachers of English are expected to engage their students in during the lesson. Section 4.2 gives a highlight of the activities that teachers actually use in the classroom while section 4.3 discusses the activities that the teachers identified as most effective. This section is followed by a presentation on proposed vocabulary enhancement activities from available literature.

4.1 Presentation of Vocabulary Enhancement Activities in Secondary School English Syllabus and English Textbooks.

One of the objectives of the study was to find out how vocabulary enhancement activities are presented in both the secondary school English syllabus and textbooks approved for use in secondary schools. In this subsection, we discuss these vocabulary enhancement activities as outlined in the English syllabus and in recommended English textbooks:
4.1.1 Vocabulary Enhancement Activities Syllabus

The Kenya secondary school English syllabus adopts an integrated approach and assumes that learners will be able to ‘pick’ some vocabulary as they learn grammar and the four skills. In addition, the learners are expected to build their vocabulary as they study literature. Thus, there are no specific language learning activities that target vocabulary development. However, a number of language activities that are presented in the secondary English syllabus for development of grammar and the four skills, can also be used to develop learners’ vocabulary. For example, jumbled exercises, gap filling exercises, transformation exercises, cloze test, language games, substitution and rewriting exercises are recommended for use in English language teaching.

Table 4.1 Vocabulary learning activities presented in the secondary school English syllabus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Vocabulary learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jumbled exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Cloze test.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gap filling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Substitution(replacing / equivalent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Transformation exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Rewriting exercises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Oral activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sentence, paragraph and essay writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gap filling requires the learner to be involved in sentence and text completion tasks. The tasks may be open gaps where the learner fills in the gap by drawing from the mental lexicon be it in a sentence or a text. Closed gaps, on the other hand, provide
learners with words in form of a list to choose from to fill the gaps provided in a given task. An example of such an exercise is presented in Excerpt 1 below:

Excerpt 1

Choose the correct words to complete the following sentences.
1. The weather always _______ (affect/effect) my moods.
2. She was _______ (too/to) tired to run.
3. I need another _______ (envelop/envelope) for this letter.
4. It is always cooler in the house _______ than/then out there.
5. The dictionary _______ (may be/maybe) helpful in exercises.
6. I often walk _______ (buy/by) Njoroge’s house.


Thornbury (2002) describes Transformation exercises as the ones that focus on the formal properties such as affixation and the way words combine to form compound words. Richards (1985) argues that word formation processes help learners recognize the basic forms of words and how they combine with different derivational affixes. An example of such an exercise is given in Excerpt 2 below:

Excerpt 2

Identify the compound noun in each of the following sentences and indicate what words it is made up of.
1. Flowers and vegetables are grown in greenhouses during the cold seasons.
2. Mwitta’s sister bought him some delicious ice cream from the supermarket.
3. My housemate left the gate open all the day long.
4. Many shops use giveaways to attract customers.

5. My uncle bought shortcakes biscuits for us when we travelled.

(Kioko et al, 2003:13)

The cloze test is an activity that helps in dealing with language as it occurs in a ‘real’ or natural state (Carter & McCarthy 1988). A short passage is selected, then some words are left out and the student is required to supply the correct word in each case. In most cases, such an activity covers all parts of speech that are found in each text. Excerpt 3 shows an example of such a task:

Excerpt 3

Complete the following paragraph by filling in the blanks with the most appropriate word from the list given below.

I remember the first day ................went to school as if it was .............I did not want to go, ........my grandfather with ........I was staying, held my hand ........and took me to school. When we ......, I was taken straight to class 1 Yellow. I walked ........to the desk the teacher showed me. As I walked, I could feel all ..... on me. I sat in between two ........children who seemed much ...........than I was. They kept making faces ........me whenever our eyes met. I was too scared to continue sitting there. I stood up and asked the teacher for .............to go out. I ran out.............the door and towards ............small gate I had seen earlier on. Soon I was at home................with my toys. When ........grandfather arrived, he was very ..........to find me at .................

Substitution activities can be compared to matching a word with its meaning, where the learner is given a word which she or he has to pair with a visual representation, a synonym, an antonym and a collocate, translation or complete a word puzzle as given in Excerpt 4 below:

Excerpt 4

Use one word to replace the underlined words in the following sentences:

1. The people who were going to vote were registered in advance.
2. How many people did you see at the voting place?
3. The serial killer was finally trapped and caught by police.
4. Campaigning on Election Day is against the law.


Jumbled exercises require learners to group words into different categories. Therefore, they include grouping words according to parts of speech, ranking and sequencing words or sentences into some kind of order. An example of this is presented in Excerpt 5 below:

Excerpt 5

Arrange the adjectives given in the brackets in the right order and then use them to complete the following sentences.

1. Mine is the _______ handbag. (blue, leather, small)
2. I live in _______ house. (furnished, old, large)
3. His mother has just bought a _______ table. (wooden, coffee, beautiful)
4. There is a ________ rug in the room. (soft, wonderful, woollen)
5. I have a __________ clock. (useful, alarm, digital)

6. He was a ____________ doctor. (medical, famous)

7. She gave me a ____________ jewellery box. (small, metal, square)

Source: ((Kioko et al, 2003:66))

**In sentence and text writing exercises,** learners create context for a given word. The learners may construct sentences; write short narratives or a dialogue using words that are provided. This is presented in Excerpt 6 below:

**Excerpt 6**

Write a paragraph and include the facts below to support the following statements.

“karani will get good grades in forthcoming examinations.”

Facts:

i. He has been in the top position since he was in form one.
ii. He does not waste time.
iii. He has a well-organized study schedule
iv. He has the support of his class teacher.

(Kioko et al, 2003:22).

**Several games** can be used but most useful are those that encourage learners to remember a word and preferably at speed (Thornbury, 2002). Spelling race was the most commonly used game. The learners are divided into groups and then expected to compete in either writing a word by correcting it on the blackboard or spelling it out. The teacher awards some marks for each correctly spelt word to either of the groups.

4.1.1.1 **Discussion of the Findings.**
As mentioned earlier the Kenyan English syllabus adopts an integrated approach and has therefore provided language activities that teachers may use to develop learner’s
grammar and the four language skills. However, these language activities, if well adopted by teachers, can help learners develop their vocabulary. The effectiveness of an approach to vocabulary teaching such as the integrated approach adopted by the Kenyan curriculum was noted much early by Rivers (1968). She observes that learning too much vocabulary through direct instruction gives the students a false sense of security regarding their competence of the target language. She adds that much emphasis in learning vocabulary learning gives students the false impression that the most important thing about learning a language is accumulating words without realizing that meaning is expressed in groups of words and in combination of language segments, and that the meaning of an individual word is usually difficult to determine when it is separated from a context of other words and phrases.

It is, perhaps in line with this view that the Kenyan secondary school syllabus has not listed the vocabulary items to be taught at whatever level but has, in keeping with the integrated approach, suggested an array of learning activities that can be used to teach vocabulary in fusion with the other language skills. The use of vocabulary learning activities is left to the discretion of the teacher. This agrees to a research-based conclusion which have shown that although vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in a learner’s literacy development, there is little emphasis on the acquisition of vocabulary in the school curricula and virtually no vocabulary development instruction takes place during content instruction (Templeton & Pikulski, 2005; Beck et al, 2002).

The study also found that the activities provided in the secondary school syllabus were geared towards developing grammar and the four language skills. Though these
activities are listed in the syllabus, the study found that teachers did not have to use them. Vocabulary learning appears to be a consequence of teaching other language skills and as Njoroge and Ndung’u (2009) indicate, teaching vocabulary in this manner does not necessarily lead to vocabulary development. According to Solange (2001) the syllabus adopts a traditionally way of teaching vocabulary above primary level which was mostly incidental, limited to presenting new items as they appeared in reading or sometimes listening texts. This indirect teaching of vocabulary assumes that vocabulary expansion will happen through the practice of other language skills, which has been proved not enough to ensure vocabulary expansion. He further argues that nowadays, it is widely accepted that vocabulary teaching should be part of the syllabus, and taught in a well-planned and regular basis. Lewis (1993) concludes by saying that vocabulary should be at the centre of language teaching, because ‘language consists of grammaticalised lexis, not lexicalised grammar’. O’Dell (1997) adds that if vocabulary is given a high profile in the syllabus and the classroom the students will see its importance and understand that learning a language isn’t just about learning grammar. This affirms to Wilkins’s (1972) view that without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed.

It is, therefore, clear as Singleton (2000) argues that in L1 and L2 classrooms, the approach to lexis should involves a combination of instruction and or activities focus on particular expression and also on incidental acquisition

4.1.2 Vocabulary Enhancement Activities English Textbooks

Several KIE approved textbooks are available for use in the learning of English language in Kenya secondary schools. For example, *New Horizon in English* by
Kenya Literature Bureau, *New Integrated English* by Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, *Advancing in English* by Longhorn Publishers and *Headstart Secondary English* by Oxford University Press are some of the recommended textbooks. However, only the two commonly used textbooks were used for the purpose of this study, namely: *Headstart Secondary English* by Oxford Publishers and *Advancing in English* by Longhorn Publishers.

One aspect of data analysis involved going through the two sampled books. *Headstart Secondary English* by Oxford and *Advancing in English* by Longhorn Publishers and establishing the learning activities highlighted for use during vocabulary teaching. Table 4.2 below shows the results of the learning activities from analysis of the two English textbooks.
Table 4.2 Learning activities in the Form Two English textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activities</th>
<th>Headstart Secondary English</th>
<th>Advancing in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap filling exercises</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inferring meaning from contexts</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze test</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution exercises</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word puzzle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation exercises</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classifying a word</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching a word with its meaning</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence writing</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dramatizations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language games</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.2, it is evident that textbooks contain a variety of vocabulary learning activities. The English textbooks have not only presented the language learning activities provided by the syllabus but they have also added others, for example, word puzzles, guessing meaning from context, classifying words according to the part of the speech and pronunciation exercises. From Table 4.2, it is evident that some
learning activities were more frequently used in the textbooks than others. For instance, sentence construction was the most commonly used activity with a high score of 19.7% and 29.7% in *Advancing in English* and in *Headstart Secondary English*, respectively. The second most frequently used language learning activity in the two textbooks is gap filling at 3.8% and 21.6% in *Advancing in English* and *Headstart Secondary English*, respectively.

The two textbooks adapted different learning activities. Some exercises were overused in either of the textbooks. For example, the activity of guessing from context was overused in *Advancing in English* with a rating of 19.7% while in *Headstart Secondary English*, it was rated at 4.1%. No cloze tests or word puzzles were used in *Headstart Secondary English*. The two activities were, however, used in *Advancing in English* with a low frequency of at 3.3% and 1.6% respectively. On average, transformation exercises, dictionary and dramatization were the least used language learning activities in both books. Figure 4.1 has been also used to present the information discussed above.
4.1.2.1 Discussion of the Findings

The two books analyzed revealed several language activities which may be geared towards developing learners' vocabulary. The common activities evident in these books comprised gap filling exercises, looking up meaning in the dictionaries, guessing meaning from the context, sentence writing, matching a word with its meaning, using word puzzles, substitution exercises and classifying a word to its word class. Speech drills such as dialogues, dramatization, role playing and reading minimal pairs were also used. As indicated in Table 4.2, on the learning activities in Form Two English textbooks, the textbooks had a variety of exercises of language learning activities that enhance the learning of vocabulary. According to Solange (2001), this variety is important as it helps to develop and reinforce word meanings
throughout instruction. He argues that this provides language-rich activities that teach new words in meaningful contexts, including what students already know, and helping students to understand the inter-relationships among words.

Whereas this scenario has a positive effect of providing the teachers with an array of options to exploit within the classrooms and thereby ensuring their autonomy as the endline curriculum implementers, care should be taken to avoid a situation whereby teachers would use only particular books and therefore only particular activities. This is underscored by another finding of this study which showed that teachers used different learning activities to develop learners’ vocabulary. However, the teachers frequently used some of vocabulary learning activities creating an impression of over-reliance on the textbooks leading to the assumption that, what was in the textbook was what they were required to do such that they did not see the need to refer to the syllabus at all.

Such a situation can be detrimental especially in cases where books favoured by teachers. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) each year publishes a list of approved books in its “yellow book” for each subject in the curriculum. Teachers should be encouraged by school authorities to use at least two of such approved books in the teaching of English for each level.

Another finding is that with the secondary schools English syllabus not providing the target words per level of the English course covered, choice of vocabulary to teach was solely left to the publishers of the English textbooks. The vocabulary learning activities were mainly presented after reading a passage. Headstart Secondary English, for example, has a set of words after each comprehension passage around
which various vocabulary enhancement activities such as, guessing from context, gap filling, matching words with its meaning and using the dictionary are given. The textbooks had already highlighted the target words to be taught in the passage with the assumption that if there are any new words, they would be taught by the teacher or learnt by the learners on their own. This meant that other words that are unfamiliar to the learners may have been ignored. However, according to Coady (1997), the potential of implicit or the incidental approach to vocabulary acquisition through extensive reading cannot be underestimated. This is because children are observed to expand their vocabulary knowledge progressively through repeated exposures in various discourse contexts. In addition, proponents of this view (For example, Krashen, 1989) argue that it is impractical to learn an enormous amount of vocabulary in a structured and explicit way due to the time constraints of the L2 classroom. Nevertheless, the urgent need to reach a threshold level of vocabulary is readily seen by L2 learners under the condition that they do not immerse in a rich-input learning context as their L1 counterparts. This would then account for why, though there were a selected number of lexical items to be focused on per unit in the textbook, the number of activities in each unit was varied.

As mentioned earlier the textbooks had a variety of exercises of language learning activities that enhance the learning of vocabulary. Paribakht and Wesche (1997) have identified and also gone further and grouped the learning activities into five categories: selection - attention, recognition, manipulation, interpretation and production which are supposed to be used serially if successful learning of vocabulary is to take place. For example, the word 'complete' can be manipulated to form words
like ‘incomplete’, ‘completion’ after which it can be matched with its synonyms or antonyms or it can be used in a sentence. However, Paribakht and Wesche’s (1997) framework was seen not to be fully utilized in the choice of activities in the two textbooks in the sample as only an array of discrete items assessing vocabulary was used. In the absence of use of this framework in the two textbooks studied, it was not possible to establish the efficacy of use of the discrete activities in the two textbooks in vocabulary development in learners.

4.2 Vocabulary Learning Activities Used by Teachers During English Lessons

Teachers were observed to engage learners in a number of varied learning activities in order to help them in vocabulary development. Table 4.3 below shows the vocabulary learning activities used by teachers during English lessons.
Table 4.3: Vocabulary learning activities used by teachers in English lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activity</th>
<th>No. of teachers in National schs.</th>
<th>No. of teachers in Provincial schs.</th>
<th>No. of teachers in District schs.</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap filling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching word with its meaning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word puzzle</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language games</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing from context</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences text writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>31</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows that the respondents were engaged in a number of learning activities which helped them to build their vocabulary. Table 4.3 shows that the most commonly used learning activity during the lesson was matching a word with its meaning. This was made use of by all the teachers and it covered 25.8%. Sentence writing as seen in Table 4.3 is the second most ranked learning activity where seven out of eight teachers used this activity with a rating of 22.6%, followed by gap filling and oral activities at 16% and 12.90%, respectively. However, some of the learning activities which could also help learners in building their vocabulary, for example, transformation exercises, word puzzle and language games were not used at all.
Figure 4.2 below summarizes the vocabulary learning activities as used by teachers during the English lesson:

![Bar graph showing frequency of vocabulary learning activities]

4.2.1 Discussion of the Findings.

Teachers were observed to use a variety of language learning activities to enhance learners’ vocabulary development during the English lesson. Activities such as matching a word with its meaning, sentence and text writing, gap filling, oral activities, guessing from context and looking up the meaning from the dictionary were found to be mostly used by the teachers. The use of these activities during the lesson created a variety in vocabulary learning (Harmer, 1983). He adds that when learners are presented with a variety of learning activities, it ensures their continuing interest in language learning as compared to classes which have the same learning activities.
However, the teachers frequently used some of vocabulary learning activities creating an impression of over-reliance on the textbooks leading to the assumption that, what was in the textbook was what they were required to do such that they did not see the need to refer to the syllabus at all. Vocabulary, as already noted, was taught as a consequence of teaching other language skills such as reading and grammar. For example, it was observed that while reading a passage, a new word would crop up and the learners would be instructed to find the meaning in the dictionary.

Although Table 4.3 indicates that Oral activities were ranked 3rd with 4 teachers using it, it was observed that reading of the minimal pairs was the main oral activity that teachers used as it was frequently presented in the textbooks the teachers followed. The other oral activities that were available for teachers such as role play, language games, debate, impromptu speech and dialogue were rarely used. Richards & Theodore (1986) argue that learning will only take place only if there is some kind of communicative purpose that involves form and the meaning. Thus, use of the minimal pairs actually ends up decontextualizing the lexical items as the items are learnt discretely. As a result, in the absence of other oral activities, the learners lacked the opportunity to use words in natural contexts.

Dictionary use was ranked 4th with 3 teachers using it. It was observed that when it came to the actual use of the dictionary, the primary focus in using the dictionary was the meaning and not the pronunciation aspect. Learners would be asked to look up the meaning of the word from the dictionary and then apply it to the context. Dictionary use is a valid activity in helping learners develops their vocabulary (Summers, 1988). It is, however, clear that teachers do not train their learners on how to use the
dictionary to their advantage. For example, the dictionary has a variety of meanings; it also gives the different forms of the word, meanings and pronunciation. Failure to teach the learner how to use a dictionary, to get the pronunciation of the word meant that the learners totally depended on the teacher’s model, irrespective of whether the teacher’s pronunciation was accurate or not.

4.3 Most Effective Language Activities in Vocabulary Development

One of the research questions sought to find out the activity the respondents, who comprised both students and teachers, thought to be most effective in vocabulary development. The most effective language activities as suggested by the teachers and learners are presented in the following Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Effective vocabulary development activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language activity</th>
<th>Teachers Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Learners Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Writing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral activities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze Test</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guessing from context</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 above shows that the respondents were aware of the learning activities that enhance vocabulary development. However, the teachers and learners did not agree on the learning activities that they found to be most effective in developing learners’ vocabulary. The learners suggested sentence writing and oral activities like pronunciation, debate, impromptu talks to be the most effective vocabulary
development activities. The learners also suggested word puzzle, cloze test and word dictionary as effective. In contrast, the teachers suggested guessing from the context to be the most effective learning activity at 50% in developing learners' vocabulary in addition to sentence writing, oral activities, cloze test and dictionary all at 12.5%.

Figure 4.3 below brings out the different learning activities suggested by both teachers and learners to be effective.

Figure 4.3: Most effective vocabulary learning activities suggested by teachers and learners.

4.3.1 Discussion of the Findings.

The eight teachers interviewed thought different language activities were most effective in developing learners' vocabulary. However, it was observed that most of the teachers thought that guessing meaning from context was the most effective learning activity in vocabulary development. In guessing meaning from context, the learners are expected to get the meaning of a given word, based on word knowledge
and previous experience both of the word and the given texts. The learners draw conclusion on the word meaning using other words that are close to (McCarthy, 1990). The teachers' proposal that inferring meaning from context was the most effective learning activity in vocabulary development concurs with Nattinger (1988), who argues that inferring meaning vocabulary from context is the most frequent way to discover meaning of a word as one uses some clues. It is, however, clear that, inferring meaning from context requires learners to have sufficient command of vocabulary, grammar and reading skills in addition to relevant knowledge to the text (Nation & Coady, 1988). The activity will, therefore, be a challenge to learners with limited vocabulary and this may be the reason learners may not have found it to be the most effective.

It is, however, clear that teachers and learners do not agree on the most effective vocabulary learning activity. Whereas the teachers felt that inferring from reading context was the most effective learning activity that could enhance vocabulary learning, the learners on the other hand favoured sentence writing exercises. This may imply that no single language learning activity could be said to be effective and therefore, a variety of activities should be used to make learning interesting, in addition to exposing learners to different aspects of a word. Moreover, the fact that the opinions of students and teachers on the most effective learning activities were at variance is hardly surprising given that the two groups would normally view the learning process from different pedagogical lenses.
4.4 Task-Based Language Teaching

One of the objectives in this study aimed at proposing, with the help of available literature on lexis, vocabulary enhancement activities that can be utilized for effective vocabulary development in Kenya schools. The researcher identified Task-based language teaching (TBLT) as one method that teachers can use to help learners develop their vocabulary. Task-based learning offers an alternative for language teachers. In a task-based lesson, a teacher does not pre-determine what language is to be studied. What is central is completion of a task and the language is used by the learners to complete the task. Task is any activity in which students use language to achieve a specific outcome. The activities reflect real life and learners’ focus on meaning. The proponents of TBLT view language learning as a developmental process aimed at promoting communication and social interactions rather than a product acquired by practising language items. Learners learn the target language more effectively when they are naturally exposed to meaningful task-based activities (Breen, 1987).

The tasks are typically performed in stages: the first stage is the pre-task stage where the teacher introduces and defines the topic. At this stage, a teacher introduces the topic and gives the student restrictions on what they will have to do at the task stage and might help the students to recall some language that may be useful for the task (Willis & Leaver, 2004). The next stage is the task stage where the learners engage in activities that will help them recall words and phrases that will be useful during the performance of the main task or learn new words or phrases that are essential to the task. The learners perform tasks in pairs or small groups after which they compile a
report and present their findings to the class in written or spoken form. The final stage is the language focus stage during which specific language features from the tasks are discussed and focused on. Here, there will also be feedback from the learners in form of reports.

One of the findings as presented in Table 4.3 is that learners thought that the most effective vocabulary development activities are those which allow the learner to use the given words in context such as sentence writing and the oral activities such as debate, role play and dialogue. These activities as proposed by the respondents offer great potential for adoption of the task – based approach as they teach language in a more natural context. Of significance is the fact that these activities proposed by the learners require very minimal teacher input thus enhancing appropriate modelling structures through their own collaborative efforts. Cowie (1988) argues that the vocabulary of the native is acquired through exposure to fixed word combination used in day-to-day life. It is, therefore, necessary as Widdowson (2003) suggests that learners are exposed to varying formulaic fixed expression since much of normal language is regurgitation of patterns we have picked from others. Vocabulary and grammatical structure that may be used in the task are given by the teachers.

The pre- task stage often includes replaying what has been recorded from people doing the task. (Willis & Leaver, 2004). This gives the students a clear model of what will be expected of them. The students can take notes and spend time preparing the task. TBLT then, becomes most appropriate as learners are exposed to the words and phases that they will be expected to use during a given task. The learners are also given an opportunity to use the words during the task. The task provides context for
the use of the words or phrases as learners carry out the task, when they write the report and as they present the report. The teacher is able to identify areas that learners have weakness and assist them on the same. TBLT provides learners with natural sources of material, ideal situations for communicative activities and supportive feedback allowing for much greater opportunities for language use.

As discussed earlier, the English secondary school syllabus takes an integrated approach. Thus, it will then be possible to integrate all the four skills, namely: Speaking, writing, listening and reading. Task-based learning allows a learner-centred approach as it allows for meaningful communication and provides for practical extra-linguistic skill building. Although the teacher provides the words at the beginning, the learners are set free to use all the language they know rather than just the target language.

Richard & Theodore (1986) argue that language is a system for expression of meaning through communication. In TBLT, learners work to complete a task and they have abundant opportunity to interact with each other as well as the teacher and the contents. Such interaction is thought to facilitate language acquisition, as learners have to work to understand each other and to express their own meaning. In addition, there is negotiation of the meaning. The learners can also seek explanation on what they have not understood from the other members of the group. Nthiga (2010) argues that allowing learners to ask for clarification of a point from his peers, may assist the learners as the explanation is delivered in a language that the student understands. Interacting with other learners offers an opportunity to listen to language which may go beyond their present ability but which may be assimilated into their knowledge of
the target language for later use (Ellis, 2003). It is, therefore, clear that TBLT will offer learners vocabulary development activities which are not just drills but are real-life situations that they encounter daily in their life making learning meaningful.
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a general summary of the findings of the study, followed by pedagogical implications, then, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the research. Finally, areas of further research have also been suggested.

The study was guided by four objectives; first identifying the vocabulary enhancement activities recommended in the secondary school English syllabus and in the English textbooks used in teaching English. The English syllabus and two Form Two English textbooks were read and analysed to identify the various vocabulary enhancement activities presented. A checklist (See Appendix 4) was used for a more systematic and thorough examination of textbooks. The activities were written down and later discussed in terms of whether there was any discrepancy between what the English syllabus recommends and what is written in the textbooks.

The second objective sought to find out the specific activities teachers use during their lessons to develop learners' vocabulary. The researcher observed eight teachers during the English lesson in selected classes in each school. A checklist was used during the observation (See appendix 3). All the vocabulary activities that the teacher used were ticked against the details in the checklist. This allowed for a range of comparisons on what teachers indicated to be doing and the actual implementation of the same.
The third objective sought to establish the learning activities that teachers and learners found to be most effective towards vocabulary development. There were two questionnaires used in data collection for the two types of respondents in the study, that is, the teachers and the students. Eight teachers and eight learners were used and, therefore, a total of sixteen respondents were used.

Finally, the last objective sought to establish what the available literature proposes as the effective vocabulary enhancement activities for vocabulary development in Kenya schools. It was found that many scholars have given different views on how to develop learners’ vocabulary. For example, Paribakht & Wesche (1997) propose the use of comprehension-based vocabulary enhancement activities.

The study was guided by PPP (framework). The framework is relevant to the present study as it is based on effective learning principle in addition to giving learners opportunity to practise becoming more fluent in English. The teacher presents the new words, then the students are engaged in activities to help them practise new words and, finally, the students are given time to use the language they have learned to communicate with each other, a feature that should occur in the production phase. In this study, the framework used assisted in assessing the vocabulary enhancement activities that teachers use to help learners to practise and produce new words.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The English syllabus adopts an integrated approach and has, therefore, provided language activities that teachers may use to develop learners' grammar and the four skills. However, these language activities, if well-adopted by teachers, can help
learners develop their vocabulary. The vocabulary to be taught at whatever level has not been provided by the syllabus.

The textbooks have provided teachers with some vocabulary development activities that teachers can use to develop learners' vocabulary. The different books have frequently used different vocabulary learning activities such that there is a possibility of a particular teacher using particular vocabulary activities every time if he or she uses a certain textbook. On the other hand, a teacher who uses several textbooks may be able to expose the learners to different vocabulary development activities giving learners an exposure to variety of activities.

The teachers used different learning activities to develop learners' vocabulary. However, the teachers frequently used some of the vocabulary learning activities creating an impression of over-reliance on the textbooks leading to the assumption that, what was in the textbook was what they were required to do such that they did not see the need to refer to the syllabus at all.

The learners did not agree with the teachers on the most effective vocabulary development activity. This may imply that there is no single learning activity that may be said to be effective as each activity requires learners to address particular aspects of the words. The learners should be exposed to a variety of activities that bring out different aspect of the words and teachers should also take into account the opinions of the learners on how they learn best within the framework of the learner centered approach to learning.
There are different approaches to vocabulary development among the learners. The teachers followed the PPP framework where learners were presented with the words, then they were given activities to help them practise and lastly, they produced the words. However, from the available literature, the researchers in the field of linguistics have suggested that task-based language teaching is an approach that can help learners develop vocabulary.

5.2 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this study have implications to the teaching of vocabulary in Kenya secondary schools. It is apparent from the study that the English syllabus is not specific on the learning activities that are to be used to enhance vocabulary development among secondary school learners of English. The teachers, therefore, are not guided on what vocabulary enhancement activities to use in order to develop learners' vocabulary and what vocabulary to teach at each level of the high school English course. Lack of emphasis on the vocabulary that learners should be taught, may make the teachers cover what is only provided in English textbooks available for teachers use, or even disregard the teaching of vocabulary completely.

In addition to this, English textbooks present several language learning activities that can be used by teachers to develop learners' vocabulary. The textbooks presented different activities at different frequencies to the teachers for use in the classroom. (cf. table 4.2 for details). It, therefore, implies that the teachers may not use particular vocabulary learning activities if they relied only on one textbook. It was evident from the findings that majority of the teachers mainly used the textbook for teaching
vocabulary. Consequently, the learners were only exposed to certain vocabulary development activities.

Further, the findings have implications on teachers of English language in secondary schools. As earlier indicated, many teachers rely on textbooks in preparation and teaching of vocabulary lessons. Little reference is made to the stipulated English language syllabus. It is for this reason that majority of teachers tend to use only particular language learning activities that are used in the commonly used textbooks such as those in *Headstart Secondary English*. The implication for both teaching and learning is that the learners who are not exposed to a variety of vocabulary learning activities may not find vocabulary learning meaningful. The textbooks could expose a variety of vocabulary learning activities if they adapted Paribakht & Wesche (1997) framework which offers several vocabulary learning activities for every stage as discussed.

5.3 Conclusion

One of the findings that has emerged from the study is that there are several vocabulary learning activities that enhance vocabulary in the Form Two class in Kenya secondary schools. However, it has also emerged that there is lack of a systematic way of identifying what vocabulary items should be taught to learners of different levels. In addition, the teachers are not well-guided on the specific vocabulary development activities that they should use. It should be the responsibility of teachers trainers, syllabus designers, textbook authors and teachers of English language to take into consideration the importance of developing secondary school learners’ vocabulary as they have done in primary schools. This is necessary as it will
enable learners to read and understand, and also be able to use the right words to communicate effectively both in speaking and writing.

5.4 Recommendations

The importance of vocabulary in development of any language cannot be underscored. It, therefore, forms the backbone to the learning of the English language. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

- Curriculum developers should consider guiding the teachers on the vocabulary to be taught at what specific level and the vocabulary learning activities the teacher can use to enhance learners' vocabulary development.

- The textbook authors should consider adopting the five categories of learning activities as proposed by Paribakht and Weshe: Selection, recognition, manipulation, interpretation and production. The suggested activities will give learners an opportunity to use variety of activities which will expose learners to different aspects of a word and also different contexts to use a word.

- Teachers should make deliberate attempts to use several textbooks that expose learners to a variety of vocabulary enhancement activities. In addition, teachers should teach learners on how to use specific vocabulary learning activities since they may not be able to use what they do not have knowledge of.
• Teachers should make vocabulary learning and teaching to be more learner-centered by discussing the learning activities that learners find to be enjoyable and effective.

• Teachers may also consider making vocabulary learning activities more meaningful by use of task-based language teaching which gives learners an opportunity to use language in the natural state and in a meaningful manner.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Study

The study focused on learning activities that help learners in developing their vocabulary in Form Two in Kenya secondary schools. Thus, further research is needed, for instance, to examine learning activities that teachers may use in other levels of the English course. It is also important that a study is conducted on how teacher trainees are prepared to teach vocabulary in secondary schools. Research on number of words that learners should be exposed to at different levels of the English course in secondary school level should be replicated in other areas not covered by this study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Teachers

Date ............................

I am Beth Njeri Ngugi, an MA student in Kenyatta University. I am carrying out a research on the teaching of vocabulary in Kenyan secondary schools.

I would therefore, request you to provide the information by answering the following questions. The information will be confidently handled and only used for the purpose of this study.

Category of the School

National [ ]
Provincial [ ]
District [ ]

1. a) What language activities does syllabus recommend for use in development of learners’ vocabulary?

b) In your view, how is vocabulary covered in the syllabus?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very poor [ ] Poor [ ] Fair [ ] Good [ ] Excellent [ ]

c) Give reasons for your answer (1b) above


2. Which text books do you use as your references when teaching vocabulary?

   a) .................................................................

   b) .................................................................
3. Which vocabulary developmental activities are frequently presented in the textbooks?

4. a) What learning activities do you engage learners in when teaching vocabulary?

   b) Name the learning activities that you find to be most effective

   c) Give reasons for your answer (4b) above.
Appendix 2: Questionnaire for learners.

Date ....................

I am Beth Njeri Ngugi, an MA student in Kenyatta University. I am carrying out a research on the teaching of vocabulary in Kenyan secondary schools.

I would therefore, request you to kindly provide the information by answering the following questions. The information will be confidently handled and only used for the purpose of this study.

Category of the School

National [ ]  Provincial [ ]  District [ ]

a) What learning activities are you engaged in when being taught vocabulary?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

b) Which learning activities among them do you find to be interesting when doing?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

c) Which learning activities do you find to be most effective in terms of helping you not forget a word you have never encountered before?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
## Appendix 3: Observation Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities used by the teachers</th>
<th>Tr1</th>
<th>Tr2</th>
<th>Tr3</th>
<th>Tr4</th>
<th>Tr5</th>
<th>Tr6</th>
<th>Tr7</th>
<th>Tr8</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching words with meaning.</td>
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<td>Cloze test.</td>
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<td>Labeling pictures.</td>
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<td>Replacing/ equivalent</td>
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<td>Word puzzle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compounding words.</td>
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<td>Derivation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection exercises.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Definition.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classifying words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guessing form context</td>
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<td>Constructing sentences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix 4: Checklist for Activities in Textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities used in text books</th>
<th>Textbook 1 (Headstart)</th>
<th>Textbook 2 (Advancing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matching words with meaning.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cloze test.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labeling pictures.</td>
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<td>Replacing/ equivalent</td>
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<td>Word puzzle.</td>
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<td>Selection exercises.</td>
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<td>Definition.</td>
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<td>Classifying words.</td>
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<td>Guessing form context.</td>
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<td>Constructing sentences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other activities.</td>
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</table>
Appendix 5: Form two English Syllabus

5.0 LISTENING AND SPEAKING

5.1 Specific Objectives
By the end of Form 2, the learner should be able to:

a) use correct stress and intonation
b) respond to oral information on a variety of subjects
c) communicate correctly, confidently and appropriately in different contexts
d) demonstrate acceptable communication skills
e) identify features of myths, legends and songs

5.2 Introduction
In Form 2, the use of correct stress and intonation, in addition to correct pronunciation should be emphasized. The use of audio and video tapes would be quite useful. Literary and non-literary material on issues such as drug and substance abuse, equality among men and women, social responsibility, integrity, human rights and information technology can be used to facilitate the acquisition of these skills.

5.3 Content
a) Pronunciation
   i) Further practice on problematic sounds
   ii) Stress and intonation
   iii) Rhyme in poetry
   iv) Word play (puns)

b) Listening Comprehension and Note-taking
   i) Listening and responding to myths, legends and songs
   ii) Features of myths, legends and songs
   iii) Listening and responding to information on:
        - issues of social responsibility,
        - drug and substance abuse
        - equal role of men and women
        - integrity/anti-corruption education
        - information technology
   iv) Skills of attention and turn taking through use of dialogues

c) Mastery of content interviews

d) Etiquette
   Telephone etiquette

e) Non-verbal skills in listening and speaking
   i) Facial expressions, gestures and eye contact
   ii) Bowing/courtsying

6.0 GRAMMAR

6.1 Specific Objectives
By the end of Form 2, the learner should be able to:

a) use parts of speech correctly and appropriately
b) identify the constituents and the functions of the verb phrase
d) Adjectives
   Order of adjectives

e) Adverbs
   i) Adverbs of place and degree
   ii) Comparative and superlative forms of adverbs

f) Prepositions
   Complex prepositions e.g. in spite of

The reference materials (library, encyclopedia and the internet)

b) Intensive reading
   i) Study of novels, plays and poems
   ii) Focus on characterization and themes
   iii) Aspects of style

c) Extensive reading
   i) Literary and non-literary materials on social responsibility, gender responsiveness, drug and substance abuse and human rights
   ii) Biographies
   iii) Novels
   iv) Plays
   v) Poems

8.0 WRITING

8.1 Specific Objectives
   By the end of Form 2, the learner should be able to:
   a) spell words correctly and use punctuation marks appropriately
   b) communicate effectively in writing, using a variety of sentence structures