

**LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH
LANGUAGE ORAL SKILLS IN KENYAN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS: A CASE OF KAKAMEGA DISTRICT**

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

To my mother: a role model in my life

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

L1	First Language
F	Female
M	Male
L2	Second Language
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
ESL	English as Second Language
R.P	Received Pronunciation
ELT	English Language Teaching
D.E.O.	District Education Office
UCLA	University of California at Los Angeles
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
ALM	Audio-Lingual Method
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching

LIST OF SYMBOLS

ˈ: Syllable stress

ˊ: Rising tone

ˋ: Falling tone

ABSTRACT

This study dealt with the linguistic strategies used in the teaching of English language oral skills in selected secondary schools in Kenya. The objectives upon which the study was based were: identify and describe the English language oral skills of secondary level of Form Two students as outlined in the English syllabus; find out the qualifications of the teachers of English who teach Form Two class; identify and describe strategies used in teaching oral skills in Form Two; determine the difficulties teachers face in using the identified strategies to teach oral skills and suggest remedies that may be used to improve the teaching of oral skills. The study adopted an eclectic approach in the selection of theories to be used in the analysis of the data. Some of these theories are Evaluation Theory Development by Alkin on which University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Evaluation Model was developed, Behavioural Theory on which Audio – Lingual Model (ALM) is based and The Communicative Theory of Language. To gather the study data the instruments used were: an interview schedule for Form Two teachers of English, a questionnaire, a class test on oral skills set by the researcher for the students and a classroom observation schedule for determining which strategies teachers actually use during oral language skills lessons. Data analysis procedure was content analysis of the outputs of interview schedules, questionnaires, class tests, and observation schedules drawn from each class studied. The study results were presented in the form of tables, percentages, bar graphs, pie charts and also data findings from which correlation between the variables were calculated. The main findings of the study were: the oral skills at Form Two are being taught. However, it was found out that teachers of English have preferred skills they teach over others. For example, they prefer teaching pronunciation to other areas of oral skills like stress and intonation. It was found out that the teachers who teach English in Kenya and in particular, in Kakamega District are qualified. It was noted that teachers use different strategies in teaching English oral skills except for stress placement, intonation patterns in sentences, and contextual interpretation of sentences. Further, it was also noted that the students involved in this study have difficulties in English language oral skills, especially in stress, intonation patterns in sentences and contextual interpretation of sentences. The findings will be beneficial to students, teachers, textbook writers, other researchers and curriculum developers.

CHAPTER ONE

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Brown and Yule (1983) point out that for most of its history language teaching has been concerned with the study of the written language. Nunan (1989) also supports this idea. The written language is the language of literature and scholarship. It is the language which is admired and studied and is rich in excellent exemplification. Baker and Westrup (2003) say that most schools and many language institutes aim to help their students pass local, national or international examinations. Many of these examinations are written, with little or no speaking element to them. Teachers (and students) may feel that speaking skills can be ignored because it is much more important to improve writing skills for such examinations. It is also easier to correct mistakes in written work, and teachers and students can more easily see their progress, or lack of it, in writing. Speaking can be more difficult to mark as correct or wrong than written work.

In fact, Mackey (1965) says that reading is easier than understanding the spoken word of equal difficulty, because in reading one can proceed at the speed which suits best, one can re-read that which he did not understand at first reading, one can look up unfamiliar words. All this is impossible when listening to someone talk. For similar reasons writing is easier than speaking. Bernhardt (2000) on the other hand points out that before children begin to learn to associate the written form with speech, they need to learn the vocabulary, grammar and sound system of the oral language. He says that research has shown that there is a close connection between oral vocabulary and reading ability. The

ability to attend to the individual sounds within words is also an oral skill that is closely associated with reading ability.

On one hand, Woodsworth (1967) stresses that auditory comprehension plays an important linguistic role in language-learning. It is an accepted fact of language use that speaking is dependent on hearing just as graphic skills depend on audial ones. This is supported by Hockett's observation (1958, 118) on "auditory feedback," or the hearing of one's own speech, namely that any impairment of it has an adverse effect on one's ability to articulate sounds correctly. On the other hand, Carroll (1963) and Huebener (1965) say that language-learning involves the acquisition of skills in speaking and understanding speech, while reading and writing are secondary skills. Hall (1966) and Brooks (1964) add that one of the facts commonly cited in support of this principle is the manner in which children learn their mother tongue – by hearing and speaking it: it is not until they have achieved a considerable audial command that reading and writing are learned. Serious consideration of spoken language as a subject for teaching has a long history, but only made a decisive impact on the teaching of English Language in Kenya after the end of the Second World War. Initially major attention of teaching English was devoted to the teaching of pronunciation. Harmer (2001) explains that this was because during the outbreak of the World War II, a large number of American servicemen had been posted all over the world and therefore, it was necessary to provide these soldiers with at least basic verbal communication skills.

Wilkins (1972) asserts that educated people are those who can read and write and, it is believed, one undergoes education in order to be able to read and write. For them, being

able to speak does not constitute valid evidence. They know illiterate individuals who have learned to speak the foreign language, especially English, to a degree that permits reasonable communication without any formal instruction at all. Yet they are uneducated people. They are not considered to have learned the language since they remain illiterate. Wilkins still stresses that a literate person is one who can understand written language. Based on Wilkins' views, it can be concluded that spoken language is given less importance.

However, Sweet (1964) decreed that "all study of language, whether theoretical or practical, ought to be based on the spoken language." While Hall (1966) points out a physiological factor which is frequently overlooked namely, silent articulation or sub-vocalization in reading and writing:

It is commonly thought that we can read and write in complete silence, without any speech taking place... but nevertheless, inside the brain, the impulses for speech are still being sent forth through the nerves, and only the actualization of these impulses is being inhibited on the muscular level, as has been shown by numerous experiments.

Woodsworth (1967) stresses that the primacy of the spoken word has long been recognized as significant in the teaching of foreign languages. In 1942 Leonard Bloomfield wrote:

...the acquisition of a 'reading knowledge' is greatly delayed and ... the reader's understanding remains very imperfect unless he has some command of actual speech.

Woodsworth adds that although it plays an important role in society, the written language, even that of literature is entirely dependent on the spoken language. Moreover, writing is a comparatively recent phenomenon with very limited scope until the invention of the printing-press.

At present, the situation of teaching English in Kenya has changed. For example, first, Kenya hardly has any more native speakers of English teaching in public secondary schools. This is because of the dearth of trained teachers who would provide a theoretical description of the native languages and therefore, linguists had to rely on observation (Harmer 2001, 79-80). Second, indigenous Kenyan teachers who are capable of fluent communication in English but are incapable of consistently and completely modeling Standard English and RP (Received Pronunciation) have replaced native speakers. Third, the syllabi and learning materials such as the course books of late the 1960s and early 1970s have recently been revised and oral language skills, which had been stopped in 1973 (Bogonko, 1992), have been re-introduced in the revised English Syllabus for the K.C.S.E. (KIE, 2002). The revised syllabus and materials used to teach English in Kenyan secondary schools today are progressive i.e. starting from the easiest to the difficult ones. There are oral skills stipulated at each level of this school level to be taught. The teachers are expected to draw the schemes of work for the English course from this syllabus and the recommended teaching/learning resources by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE).

English is very important in this country for a variety of reasons. The most obvious one is that by virtue of its being the medium of instruction in the school system from Standard Four to the end of school, it is a compulsory subject of study at both primary and secondary school (Ominde Commission, 1964). The national language policy as noted in Nyamasyo (1992) and Wasambo-Were (1986) state that English is the official language of commerce, law, the mass media and the medium of instruction in education. Consequently fluency in all aspects of the English language including both written and

verbal and, in particular, the paralinguistic and extralinguistic aspects of English, namely prosodic and supra-segmental features, articulation of sounds, undoubtedly enable students to perform better in all other subjects. It is therefore the responsibility of the teacher of English both primary and secondary school to ensure learner's fluency in all the skills and in particular, speaking, by building on the foundations laid in the primary school, (K.I.E., 1985).

Baker and Westrup (2003) reinforce that more and more educators, governments, ministries of education and employers need people who can speak English well. Companies and organizations want staff who can speak English in order to communicate within the international marketplace. Students who can speak English well have a greater chance of further education; of finding employment; and of gaining promotion when employed. Speaking well also helps students to access up-to-date information in various fields including science, technology and health. Good English speakers will be in a strong position to help their country's economic, social and political development. So by learning to speak well, students gain a valuable skill which can be useful in their lives and can enable them to contribute what they have learnt to their community and country.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Researches have been done on the teaching of reading (Kiende, 2002), teaching of spoken English (Mundui,2002) but there is hardly any research on oral language skills, in particular, the pronunciation of sounds, the placement of word stress, sentence stress and intonation patterns by learners of English especially at Form Two level of secondary

school. Documents developed by KIE, including the Handbook for Teachers of English in Secondary Schools in Kenya (K.I.E,1987) and the recently revised English Language Syllabus (K.I.E, 2002) state that for the learner of English to attain these language skills, the teacher needs to adopt specific approaches of teaching to enable the learner to do so. While the English Language Syllabi in the school system in Kenya over the years have consistently stated that listening and speaking play a primary role in the social and academic life of the language student, hardly any research has been done on oral skills – as it occurs in the English language classroom in Kenya.

Based on the information above, it is evident that emphasis on the teaching and learning of English at the secondary school level in Kenya has tended to be laid on a broad perspective—teaching English Language—with hardly any specific statement on what aspects of the skills entailed in language use. Curriculum and Syllabi of the English language—as a course of study at the secondary school level, have tended to cover very wide concepts and notions ranging from linguistic form to aspects of language perception and production. Much emphasis has tended to be laid on the specifics of linguistic form. Therefore, there is hardly any clear attention focused on productive skills such as speaking i.e. oral English. Furthermore, there is hardly any substantial literature in Kenya regarding the status of oral language skills of learners, especially at the secondary school level and more so, on how their oral ability—speaking –is being developed at this level. Further still, there is hardly any documentary evidence that, even with the inclusion of spoken language content in the Revised Syllabus (K.I.E, 2002), the spoken language skills are being adequately developed, and if so, how. This study

therefore, is set to find out if the oral skills stipulated at Form Two are taught and which linguistic strategies are used.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study specifically aimed to:

- (a) describe the oral language skills of secondary level of Form Two students as outlined in the English revised syllabus,
- (b) find out the qualifications of the teachers of English who teach Form Two class,
- (c) describe strategies used in teaching oral skills at the Form Two level of the secondary school,
- (d) determine the difficulties teachers face in using the identified strategies to teach oral skills,
- (e) suggest remedies that may be used to improve the teaching of oral skills.

1.4 Research Questions

- (a) Which oral skills are taught at Form Two level?
- (b) What are the qualifications of the teachers of English who teach Form Two class?
- (c) How do teachers of English teach oral skills?
- (d) What difficulties do teachers face in teaching oral skills?
- (e) What remedies can be proposed to overcome these difficulties

1.5 Research Assumptions

This study had the following assumptions:

- (a) That the teachers of English use the revised English syllabus by KIE (2002)

- (b) Teachers use several strategies in teaching oral skills at the form two level of the secondary school
- (c) That teachers of English who teach Form Two are all trained
- (d) That the English Language oral skills at Form Two are taught
- (e) That there no difficulties the teachers of English encounter when teaching the English Language oral skills

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

1.6.1 Justification of the Study

This study, though based on a small number of Kenyan secondary schools, hoped to contribute toward education in Kenya through the findings that have been established. Oral skills have recently received emphasis as an examinable component in Kenya, The KIE Revised English Syllabus (2002). Therefore, there is need to find out if they are taught at Form Two level or not.

1.6.2 Significance of the Study

The study would be significant to the learners for the development of their competence in the articulatory skills (speaking). It would also be useful to the teachers of English because the difficulties they face in teaching oral skills would be identified and possible remedies suggested. It would be useful too to the textbook writers because they will include in their text books the English language oral skills that need special attention at Form Two level. Further, it would be useful to the curriculum developers since the findings of this study will be a pointer to the English Language oral skills they need to address. Finally, it would be useful to other researchers because it will contribute to the

stock of knowledge on linguistic strategies in the teaching of English Language oral skills.

1.7 Research Scope and Limitations

1.7.1 Research Scope

The study focused on the linguistic strategies used in the teaching of English Language oral skills in Kenya only. The primary school level has not been covered because they (primary schools) are only the basic foundations for teaching oral skills. The study specifically limited its focus on the strategies secondary teachers use to teach articulation of sounds /l/ and /i:/, transcription of English sounds such as /θ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/, which were selected to determine if the students are taught and they are familiar with them, stress placement in words and sentences, intonation patterns and contextual interpretation of sentences. This is because additional areas in spoken English would make the content too broad for the time and resources available.

1.7.2 Research Limitations

The study was limited to 12 secondary schools of the recommended 10% of the target population. It has included samples from private/public and urban/rural categories. These categories also include boys and girls schools only, mixed boys and girls schools, and boarding and day secondary schools. From each of the selected schools a sample of Form Two students participated in the study. The Form Two class to be studied was chosen because the English Syllabus (KIE, 1985) and Kenya National Examinations Council (K.N.E.C.) Regulations and Syllabuses K.C.S.E. (2000-2001) recommend that

this is when speaking skills should be emphasized. It is argued that in the Forms Three and Four Course, the skills already acquired in the first two years of the secondary school are refined at these two last levels as the students are now confident enough to study more sophisticated texts. Kakamega District was chosen to be a representative of other districts in Kenya.

1.8 Definition of operational Terms

Strategy:	An activity/technique used to teach English language oral skills
Method:	This is a way or the organization of teaching materials into a unified programme of presentation
Native Speakers of English:	Those people whose first language is English
First Language:	It is a language one learns (or acquires) as a child
Second Language:	It is a language one learns after acquiring the first language
Foreign Language:	When Kenyan students learn English they are learning a foreign language
Target Language:	It is a language being learned as opposed to the learner's native tongue or first language
Progressive:	This means beginning with those items of oral skills that are easiest and moving on to more difficult ones
Oral skills:	They are items/elements learnt by secondary school students and in particular Form Two through spoken language
Transcription:	This is a representation of speech sounds in writing.

CHAPTER TWO

2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of related literature. English Language Teaching (ELT) strategies generally, ELT in Kenya, a brief mention of prosodic features and strategies of teaching oral language skills and specific areas to address are briefly discussed. Finally, the theoretical framework that informs and explains the phenomena in this study is presented. The theoretical framework include: behaviorist theory with its audio-lingual method, the evaluation theory development with its University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Evaluation Model and the Communicative theory with its Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 English Language Teaching Strategies Generally

According to Verghese (1989), over the years there have been different methods employed for the teaching of English as a second language. The earliest method is the one generally known as the Grammar- Translation Method. This method is based on the assumption that language is primarily graphic, that the main purpose of second language study is to build knowledge of the structure of the language either as a tool for literary research and translation or for the development of the learner's logical powers, and that the process of second language learning must be deductive, requires effort, and must be carried out with constant reference to the learner's first language. The method insisted on the memorization of grammatical rules and translation of related texts, and paid little

attention to speaking and reading as skills to be developed. Then there came the Natural Method. This was based on the belief that the maximum exposure of the child to the target language without the least interference from the mother tongue would enable the child to learn the language. Later emerged another method called Structural Method or The Oral Method. This method insists that to secure a practical command of a foreign language such as English one should know well how the word order, the structural words and the word forms are employed to construct sentences or meaningful patterns of expression. While teaching structures through the oral method a student is enabled to hear the new speech unit from the teacher, understands it as a series of meaningful sounds, and perhaps recognizes it. This enables the students to imitate the sounds without analyzing individual words, and later reproduce the structure in an appropriate situation.

The Audiolingual method, which was very popular from the 1940s through the 1960s, is based in structural linguistics (structuralism) and behaviorist psychology (Skinner's behaviorism), and places heavy emphasis on spoken than written language, and on the grammar of particular languages, stressing habit formation as a mode of learning. Lessons in the classroom focus on the correct imitation of the teacher by the students. Not only are the students expected to produce the correct output, but attention is also paid to correct pronunciation. Critics of Audio-lingual Method (ALM) asserted that this over-emphasis on repetition and accuracy ultimately did not help students achieve communicative competence in the target language. In the 1950s, the theoretical underpinnings of the method were questioned by linguists such as Noam Chomsky, who pointed out the limitations of structural linguistics. The relevance of behaviorist

psychology to language learning was also questioned, most famously by Chomsky's review of B.F. Skinner's verbal behaviour in 1959. The audio-lingual method was thus deprived of its scientific credibility and led linguists into thinking afresh.

Despite being discredited as an effective teaching methodology in 1970, audiolingualism continues to be used today, although it is typically not used as the foundation of a course, but rather, has been relegated to use in individual lessons. As this type of lesson is very teacher centered, it is a popular methodology for both teachers and students, perhaps for several reasons but in particular, because the input and output is restricted and both parties know what to expect. The critics of ALM looked for new ways to present and organize language instruction, and advocated the notional functional syllabus, and eventually Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) as the most effective way to teach second and foreign languages.

Historically, CLT has been seen as a response to the audio-lingual method and as an extension or development of the notional-functional syllabus. As an extension of the notional-functional syllabus, CLT also places great emphasis on helping students use the target language in a variety of contexts and places great emphasis on learning language functions. Unlike the ALM, its primary focus is helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation.

The scope of Communicative Language Teaching has been to make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and to develop procedures for the teaching of

the four language skills. In describing CLT as a fusion of both grammatical and functional teaching, Littlewood (1981: 1) says one of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it gives systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. Though CLT has been criticized by Swan (1985) and Bax (2003) for paying insufficient attention to the context in which teaching and learning take place. It has been defended against this charge by Henry Widdowson in the *ELT Journal* (1985 38(3): 158-161) and Harmer (2003) that the communicative approach is deemed a success if the teacher understands the student. But, if the teacher is from the same region as the student, the teacher will understand errors resulting from an influence from their first language. Native speakers of the target language may still have difficulty understanding them.

2.2.2 English Language Teaching in Kenya

In Kenya English is taught as a second or third language, for some even first language and it is an official language of commerce, law, the mass media and in education. English is the medium of instruction from fourth year of school as well as being taught as a subject of study (KIE, 2002), (Nyamasyo, 1992), (Muthiani, 1986) and Wasambo-Were, 1986). There are theories of acquisition of second language (Krashen, 1987) and (Krashen and Terrel, 1983) but this study looks at the manifestation of what the teacher is doing to instill competence in students.

According to Brumfit (1984: 69-70) language fluency activities aim at the development of a pattern of language interaction within the classroom, which is

close to that language used by competent performers in the mother tongue in normal life. What this must mean according to Brumfit is:

1. the language comes to be used in small group conversations, as informally as possible;
2. teachers re-organizing their classes into groups of varying sizes to allow maximum student conversation and,
3. teachers ensuring that students relate genuinely to written texts and to other modes of communication in which feed back is dependant mainly on the receiver such as recordings and broadcasts and formal face-to-face interactions such as lectures and speeches.

It is clear from the above points that language teaching instead of handling the four skills that is, listening, speaking, reading and writing as separate activities integrate each language learning activity (e.g. conversation or discussion) with its communicative function and purposes. Brumfit further says that the four skills would be re-classified into four activities as follows:

1. Conversation or discussion
2. Comprehension (either of speech or writing)
3. Extended writing
4. Extended speaking

All the four activities given above are provided for in the Kenyan Primary School English Syllabus. Pupils in Standard Six, Seven and Eight engage in debates in which they are able to make speechlets, which can be considered extended speaking activities.

The component in the communicative model also requires the teacher to attempt to employ authentic materials (e.g. news papers, magazines, shopping role-play exercises, etc.) to make language teaching as communicative and as real as possible. For instance, a primary school pupil should be able to write a letter to his/her brother, sister, uncle or friend and say something that is not just real but useful and serves a function. The same can be said of spoken language activities and listening activities, which should be integrated in real conversations in paired, and group work situations and which, for example, enable students to communicate their own ideas, opinions, or stories. There are different instructional materials that are used as teaching resources in ELT at Form Two. These are the course books, teachers copy, teachers Handbook, dictionary, use of radio and others like film recordings. Their uses depend on their availability, methods of use and the strategies the teacher chooses to use. These instructional materials too help the teacher to teach prosodic features of speech with ease which are part of the main focus of this study.

2.2.3 Prosodic Features

Fox (2000) states that prosodic features of speech include length, accent and stress, tone and intonation. Catford (1988) defines stress as the initiator power. As a prosodic feature of language, it is always manifested in terms of pulmonic pressure initiation. Pitch is the voice-quality. He continues to explain that pitch and pitch changes are utilized in languages in two distinct ways. On the one hand, variation of pitch may be related to relatively long stretches of speech, which may be many syllables in length, and which correspond to relatively large grammatical units such as the sentences, e.g. 'Jane was

here 'yesterday (- ,). Pitch variation used in this way is called intonation. On the other hand, the pitch variations of a language may be related to short stretches of speech, typically of syllable length, and to small grammatical units such as words and morphemes. Examples of words may be **table** and **water**, while those of morphemes are like **un** and **able**. Pitch variation used in this way is called tone. Accent (') is an emphasis given to a syllable or word by means of stress or pitch.

Length is duration which refers to the time of particular articulatory postures. It is possible to control duration quite independently of stress. Though duration is an independently controllable variable in speech, there is some degree of natural or universal relationship between duration and vowel quality. It has been observed in many different languages that, other factors being equal, open vowels e.g. /a:/ tend to be longer than close vowels e.g. /i/. It is assumed that the reason for this is that open vowels require a bigger articulatory movement, and it naturally takes longer to execute this than the shorter movement of close vowels.

This does not imply that the above are the only features to be recognized, other features like rhythm are considered where appropriate. These features are identified not only because they are the most linguistic of the features but also because they are the major components of prosodic structure. Halliday (1989) says that all natural speech, in any language, is marked by patterns of intonation and rhythm while intonation is the melodic movement: the rise and fall in pitch of speech, rhythm is the 'beat' of the language,

which gives it an organization in time. All forms of spoken English are rhythmic as English is a stress-timed language. However, one of the main problems faced by foreign and or, second language learners of English is getting the rhythm right—especially if their own language is predominantly syllable-timed, and does not contain weak or reduced syllables, for example, most African languages. The next section deals with the strategies of teaching oral skills.

2.2.4 Strategies of Teaching Oral Skills

There are several strategies used in teaching oral skills. There are more recent strategies which are not only used to set standards of correctness and a measure of one's conception of literacy but also a good command of the English language. Not all the strategies have been described in this study. The ones that are dealt with are: dialogues, dramatization, simulation and role-play, discussions and debates, speech drills, taped recordings, poetry and presentations KIE (1987).

2.2.4.1 Dialogues

A dialogue is spoken or written conversation or talk. Ellis and Tomlinson (1980) point out that, dialogues serve to show the pupils what such intonation pattern is appropriate for a specific situation. KIE (1987) says that these can be done with the teacher speaking or a student speaking to another student. A teacher can play a recorded tape of students holding a dialogue to teach intonation, sentence stress or even minimal pairs. For example: Dialogue on intonation and sentence stress could be as follows.

A: Has 'John gone to 'Nairobi?

B: I 'don't 'think he has.

A: You mean you 'don't really know if he's 'gone?

B: No, not `real 'ly Jane.

Source: Tiffen (1969)

Further still, the teacher could identify the sound which is causing a problem to students and plan minimal pairs of words in sentences and dialogues aimed at correcting the problem. For example, consonant sounds /t/ and /d/ could be taught using the following dialogue:

*David: Hello, Tom, how **did** you spend the **day today**?*

*Tom: Oh, it was a tough **day**.*

*David: **Did** something wrong happen?*

*Tom: There are **difficulties** in life, which one cannot avoid*

*David: Oh **dear**. **Tell** me what you mean.*

*Tom: All right, **David**. **Death** has no mercy. My friend Nick is **dead**.*

Source: Tiffen (1969)

In the above exercises the learners should do most of the talking while the teacher plays the role of the facilitator to maximize learner practice, and guide the learners to achieve the objective of oral fluency. This will help the learners to pronounce and discriminate the words like *today*, *avoid*, *dear*, and *tell* correctly instead of being articulated as **dotay**, **afoit**, **tear**, and **dell**. The Kenya National Examinations Council Report (2003) explains many candidates allow mother to interfere too much with the way they pronounce and write English words. Dialogues are used for repetition and memorization of sounds. Correct pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation are emphasized (Richards and Rodgers, 1986).

2.2.4.2 Dramatization

Baker and Westrup (2000) say that a drama activity is in many ways a version of a role-play. Drama for language practice does not always mean learning a script by heart and performing it. Students can improvise and create a drama for themselves, using language they have already learned. According to the Handbook for Teachers of English in Secondary Schools in Kenya, the class may dramatize certain actions in their daily lives such as going shopping, fishing, or attending a soccer match (KIE, 1987). Dramatization can be used to teach intonation, short word group and sentence stress. For example:

Peter: You `spend a lot of `time in the `workshops. What kind of ´career are you `thinking of?

Simon: I'm `wondering about ´going into `industry. The `local textile `mill-training `scheme is a `good ´one.

Peter: How `do you ´get chosen for ´that?

Simon: They see what your `class record is like, and then ´give you a `series of ´practical ´tests.

Peter: So that's why you `work in the `workshops?

Simon: `No, I like it. But I can use a `file and `hacksaw and `try square, --all the basic `metal work tools. It may be `useful in a proper `machine shop one of `these `days.

Source: Handbook for Teachers of English Ministry of National Education (1974)

2.2.4.3 Simulation and Role Play

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995) simulation is the deliberate making of certain conditions that could exist in reality, e.g. in order to study them or learn them. While Byrne (1986) defines simulation as an activity where the participants normally discuss a problem of some kind with a setting that has been defined for them. Role-play, on the other hand, is defined as an activity where the

participants interact either as themselves in imaginary situations or other people in imaginary situations. Harmer (1983) posits that the idea of simulation and role-play is to create the pretence to real-life situations in the classroom: students simulate the world, for example, they can simulate the President of State giving a public speech on Madaraka Day. Baker and Westrup (2000) say that in a role-play, students are given a part to play in a fictitious situation. They have to act the role of their character, for example, a priest or a preacher. Role-plays are useful because students have to think about how their character will react. Also, some students participate better when they are pretending to be someone else than when they are themselves. With the right kind of class involvement and teacher encouragement, simulations with or without role-playing are highly productive of language and extremely enjoyable for students and teacher especially when teaching word stress and intonation. For example:

Teacher: 'Fred, when will you be in 'Form 'Three?

Fred: I'll be 'Form 'Three next 'year.

Teacher: When were your 'parents 'got 'married?

Fred: They 'got 'married 'Twenty years 'ago.

Teacher: Why 'can't your 'brother 'visit you more 'often?

Fred: My 'brother does not 'visit me more 'often be 'cause he 'lives in the 'village.

Teacher: Why 'does your 'mother 'sell 'bananas?

Fred: She sells 'bananas in order to 'buy 'clothes.

Source: Tiffen (1969)

2.2.4.3 Discussions and Debates

To discuss is to talk about something while a debate is a form of discussion. The two terms are therefore related. People argue for and against a given topic in a debate. For example, the class can be divided into groups of six to eight, with a leader appointed in

each group, and a recorder assigned to take notes on the topic being dealt with. The teacher would select a few comments, may be on pronunciation of English sounds that do not occur in most Kenyan languages but are common in English, such as contrastive sounds which the learners normally find confusing (K.N.E.C., 2000-2001). For example:

/æ/	/ɑ:/	/ʌ/
back - /bæk/	bark - /ba:k	buck - /bʌk
cap - /kæp/	carp - /ka:p/	cup - /kʌp/
cat - /kæt/	cart - /ka:t/	cut - /kʌt/
bad - /bæd/	bard - /ba:d/	bud - /bʌd/
stack - /stæk/	stark - /sta:k/	stuck - /stʌk/

KIE (1987) emphasizes that throughout the discussions and debates the teacher's role is that of a facilitator, a guide and a sustainer of the continuity of the exercise. The learner should do most of the talking; for the more they talk the less shy and confident they will become.

2.2.4.4 Speech Drills

A drill is training in something by means of repeated or regular exercises e.g. pronunciation drills. Correct spoken habits can only be attained by constant repetition. Tiffen (1969) and KIE (1987) postulate that there are different types of drills designed to practice the correct form, or correct meaning, or both. Some of these drills are situational drills, dialogues, substitution drills, transformation drills, etc. Speech drills can be used to teach word stress, sentence stress, intonation, and pronunciation of speech sounds like, for example:

1. Situation drill:

A: Has 'Peter finished reading the 'book I lent him?

B: I 'don't ` think he ´has.

A: 'Could you find out 'definitely for ´me?

B: 'Yes, `certainly.

Source: Tiffen (1969)

This can be practiced individually, in groups or half the class taking different parts together.

2. Substitution drills:

He	wanted	me	to open the window
They	asked	him	write a letter
She	told	them	to go home
		us	to shut the door
		her	to return the book

Constant repetition of this substitution drill can help students attain correct spoken habits. It can be practiced either individually or in groups to improve on their pronunciation, sentence stress and intonation.

Quirk et al. (1985) explains that when we have occasion to indicate the pronunciation of vowels and consonants, we use symbols. For example, the different sounds that are represented by the letter *o* in forms of the verb DO:

Do/du:/ they

Don't/dəʊnt/ they } read much?

Does/dʌz/ he

In *Do /u:/* the long back vowel is formed when used in the present simple. In the contracted form, *don't /dəʊnt/*, the centring diphthong is formed while in *does /dʌz/*, central vowel between open and half-open is formed in the third person present simple.

2.2.4.5 Poetry

Poetry is another strategy used in teaching English language oral skills. Okumba (1994, 1999) defines poetry as the use of versified language to express human feelings, thoughts, and ideas. Elegwa, et al. (2006) stress that in learning and reciting poetry, this exploits the sounds of language more deliberately and systematically than any of the other literary genres. The various features of sound in a poem are usually arranged in a pattern to create rhythm and enhance meaning. These features include vowels, consonants, stress and intonation. The 'O'level Revised Syllabus (2002) for English at the Form Two level suggests oral or written poetry as one of the resources the teacher could use to teach the English speech sounds. For example, the following poem is used to teach intonation, sentence stress, vowels and consonants.

When I see the beauty on my beloved's face

*'When I `see the `beauty on my `beloved's ´face'
I ´throw ´away the ´food in my ´hand;
'Oh, `sister of the `young ´man, ´listen;
The ´beauty on my ´beloved's ´face.*

*Her ´neck `is long, when I `see ´it,
I ´cannot ´sleep ´one ´wink;
'Oh, the ´daughter of my ´mother-in-law,
Her ´neck is like the ´shaft of a ´spear.*

*'When I ´touch the ´tattoos on her ´back,
I ´die;
'Oh, `sister of `young ´man, ´listen;
The ´tattoos on my ´beloved's ´back.*

*'When I `see the 'gap in my 'beloved's ´teeth,
 Her 'teeth `are ´white like 'dry ´season `simsim;
 'Oh, 'daughter of my 'father-in-law ´listen,
 The 'gap in my 'beloved's `teeth.*

*The 'daughter of the 'bull ´confuses my ´head,
 I 'have to 'marry `her;
 'True, `sister of the `young 'man, ´listen;
 The 'supple `ness of my ´beloved's `waist.*
 Trans. Okot P'Bitek (KIE, 1987: 133).

The song illustrates which words are stressed in each line and the meaning the poet wants to bring out basically to express an emotion of love. This can be recited individually or in groups by correct placement of stress and intonation.

2.2.4.6 Oral Presentations by Students

To present is to give a talk before a group. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1995) defines present as to produce a show, play, broadcast, etc. for the public. In a classroom setting both the teacher and learners give presentations and this is useful because it develops the speaking skills, in particular, the oral skills. Tiffen (1969) reports that each student can be allowed seconds before the class to state what they think on a given topic. Such topics may be as varied as possible including, for example, corruption is rampant in Kenya; HIV/Aids is a killer disease; or a book they have read. Such presentations enable the teacher to select and focus on specific English speech sounds occurring in the book/text but which have been observed to be problematic. Or a class, which makes an educational visit to the local community, has many subjects on which to make reports. For example, after a visit to the post-office, one student may describe the

mail sorting room, another the Morse code used in the telephone office, and a third the coin box telephone. This can be used to teach selected pronunciation of speech sounds, for example, /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/ as in: post and box, telephone and daily.

2.2.4.7 Taped Recordings

This is another strategy teachers adopt to teach English oral skills. A teacher can play a recorded tape of sounds, which he intends to teach, for example, the following minimal pairs:

cat- /kæt/	cut- /kʌt/
hat- /hæt/	hut- /hʌt/
lack- /læk/	luck- /lʌk/
cap- /kæp/	cup- /kʌp/
bad- /bæd/	bud- /bʌd/
stack- /stæk/	stuck- /stʌk/

Source: English Syllabus for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (1985)

After the students have listened to the words from the tape, the teacher can ask them to use the above pairs of words in sentences. Alternatively, a portion of the recorded text may be played and necessary explanations given by the teacher. The text in full may be played again; simultaneously a detailed analysis of the text followed by questions put by the teacher to individual student may be attempted. The tape recorded words can be used for class oral work leading to the elimination of personal mistakes in pronunciation, intonation and rhythm. To guide this study theoretical framework need to be discussed.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The stance on choice of theory of this study is eclectic approach with regard to the data analysis of this study. Eclectic approach is the use of more than one theoretical approaches or frameworks in a study. In this study the theories used with their relevant models were: The Evaluation Theory Development with its model, The University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Evaluation Model (Alkin, 1969), Behaviorist Theory developed by B.F. Skinner with its model, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM) (Richards and Rodgers, 1986) and (Rivers, 1968). The Communicative Theory of Language (Hymes, 1971) with its model, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

2.3.1 The Evaluation Theory Development

The Evaluation Theory Development gave rise to UCLA Evaluation Model (Alkin, 1969). Alkin defines evaluation as a process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern, selecting appropriate information and collecting and analyzing information in order to report summary data useful to decision makers in selecting among alternatives. In a later development of this model (Alkin, 1991) Alkin states the following assumptions about evaluation of the effectiveness of the entity being evaluated:

1. Evaluation is a process of gathering information.
2. The information collected in an evaluation is used to make decisions about alternative courses of action.
3. Evaluation information should be presented to decision makers in a form that they can use effectively and which is designed to help rather than confuse or mislead them.
4. Different kinds of decisions require different kinds of evaluation.

Cronbach (1963) defines evaluation as the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational program. He outlines three purposes of evaluation:

1. Evaluation is used for deciding what instructional materials and methods are satisfactory and where change is needed.
2. Evaluation is used for identifying the needs of the pupil for the sake of planning his instruction, judging pupil merit for purposes of selection and grouping, acquainting the pupil with his own progress and deficiencies.
3. Evaluation is used for judging how good the school system is, how good individual teachers are, etc.

In this study this model was adopted to describe the linguistic programme through which English language oral skills in secondary schools in Kenya are integrated, ascertain what changes they (oral skills) produce in students, analyze the information and identify aspects of the programme where revision is desirable or necessary. Genesee and Upshur (1996) also add that second the overall purpose of second language evaluation is to make sound choices that improve second language teaching and enhance second language learning. Such decisions are based on informed judgment. This model is relevant to this study because it was used to collect appropriate information on teacher strategies in secondary schools and analyzed the data and identified aspects of the strategies where revision is desirable or necessary.

2.3.2 The Behaviorist Theory

The next theory that was used in the analysis of data in this study is the behaviorist theory with its audio-lingual model. Baker (2001) says that the behaviorist theory is linked with the audio-lingual method because of the following three historical circumstances. First, the prime concern of American linguistics at the early decades of the 20th Century had been to document all the indigenous languages spoken in the USA. However, because of the dearth of trained native teachers who would provide a theoretical description of the native languages, linguists had to rely on observation. Second, for the same reason, a strong focus on oral language was developed. At the same time, behaviorist psychologists such as B.F. Skinner were forming the belief that all behaviour (including language) was learnt through repetition and positive or negative reinforcement. The third factor that enabled the birth of audio-lingual method was the outbreak of World War II, which created the need to post large American servicemen to provide these soldiers with at least basic verbal communication skills.

The audio-lingual model is therefore, used in the analysis of data in this study drawing from a structuralist perspective on language as proposed by American linguists in the 1950s and also guided the discussions of classroom practice. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), an important tenet of structural linguistics is that the primary medium of language is oral: Speech is language. Brooks (1964) advances that since many languages do not have a written form in such cases, language is primarily what is spoken and only secondarily what is written. Therefore, speech has a priority over writing in language teaching. Huebener (1965) adds that spoken language is purely an instrument of communication used in given situations. Dialogue should therefore, form the basis of

every language lesson. Krashen (1987) and Krashen and Terrel (1983) also support this view that the lesson typically begins with a dialogue which, at some point after an unspecified length of study, arrive at the stage at which the structures and phonological system had been established as habits and could focus on the message, allowing for real communication in the target language. The data in this study was collected from students on pronunciation, intonation and stress placement, and the audio-lingual model has been useful in the analysis of this data.

Rivers (1968) also supports the views of Richards and Rodgers and states that a linguistic science and a foreign-language teacher proclaimed the linguistic principles on which language-teaching methodology should be based:

1. Language is speech, not writing: The proponents of the audio-lingual method lay stress on learning to understand and speak at least some of the language before learning to read and write it. This does not mean that the student must know the language thoroughly before learning to read it, but rather that any portion under study should be mastered orally before being introduced in printed or written form. This enhances correct articulation and intonation.
2. A language is a set of habits: Just as a child growing up in a particular culture acquires social habits, so does such a child acquire the habits of the language of a group. When students hold dialogues or conversations with one another, they develop fluency and competence in oral skills. Good models and a supportive environment are also important.
3. Teach the language and not about the language: Students need to do more practice in the active oral use of the language.

4. A language is what its native speakers say, not what someone thinks they ought to say: The expressions students learn from audio-lingual materials are those that they would hear around them in the country where the language is spoken.
5. Languages are different: since the major difficulties for the language learner are to be found at those points where the language differs most radically from the native language, audio-lingual materials are designed, where possible, to present the problems of a specific foreign language to students who speak another specific language. The materials emphasize and give special drilling in the major contrasts between these two languages.

The Audio-lingual model therefore has been used to guide the discussions of the classroom practice and has served as the basis of this study in the analysis of data on pronunciation, stress, intonation and interpretation of sentences by drawing attention on productive skills i.e. oral English and focus on the development of the oral ability of the learners.

2.3.3 Communicative Theory of Language

Another theory that has been adopted in this study is the Communicative Theory of Language. Hymes (1971) developed this theory and some of its characteristics are: first, language is a system for the expression of learning; second, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication; third, the structure of language reflects its function and communicative uses and fourth, the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

The second, third and fourth characteristics seem to apply to this study in terms of spoken language being understood as communicating meaning particularly when students use intonation, rhythm and articulation of sounds. For instance, as mentioned before, one of the main problems faced by foreign learners of English is getting the rhythm right, especially if their own language is predominantly syllable-timed. Communicative Language Teaching, which is based on Communicative Theory, is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign language that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. Unlike the ALM, its focus is on helping learners create meaning rather than helping them develop perfectly grammatical structures or acquire native-like pronunciation.

Rivers (1983) reinforces what Hymes (1971) had developed that if students are really to communicate with speakers of language, they need also to know the culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with others – appropriate levels of language for different situations and different relations; conversational openers and gambits and when it is appropriate to use; how to negotiate meaning in various circumstances, and when and how to use appropriate gestures and body language; the message content of pitch, loudness, and intonation patterns; the questions and comments that were acceptable and unacceptable in the culture, and the importance of distance in communicative encounters. Whereas UCLA model has been used to collect information on teacher strategies in secondary schools, this model has been used to analyze data on intonation, stress placement and contextual interpretation of sentences.

2.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on literature that related to this study. Studies that relate to the linguistic strategies used in teaching English Language oral skills and features of speech have been reviewed. The chapter also presented the theoretical framework that has guided the analysis and explanation of the phenomena that have been observed.

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this study, which includes research design, site of the study, study population, sampling procedures and sample size, data collection methods, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Survey design was used. Surveys are mainly conducted in case of descriptive research studies. They are concerned with describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that either exist or existed. The design is efficient in collecting large amounts of information within a short time. The intention of survey research is to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. The design is suitable for this study because there are linguistic strategies used in teaching English language oral skills in Kenyan secondary schools. The design therefore, is to help the researcher to collect information, analyze and interpret conditions that exist.

3.3 Site of the Study

The study was carried out in Kakamega District of Western Province in Kenya (Appendices 5 and 6). Kakamega town is the headquarters of the district offices, including the District Education Offices. People from different parts of Kenya live there. It has various ethnic groups of people and this cover fairly issues of diversity of first language (L1) which impact on linguistic languages, for example English and Kiswahili.

There are 110 secondary schools in Kakamega District of which 102 are public and the remaining, 8 are private. Out of 110 schools a sample of 12 schools was selected, 9 were public found in both rural and urban areas, and 3 were private also found in both rural and urban areas. Most Secondary schools in Kakamega District have double streams and some have single streams. This therefore determined the number of teachers who were included in the study. This is because some schools have one teacher teaching the double streams and others; have two teachers teaching two different streams. The district was chosen because of accessibility; ease of reaching the respondents and to minimize on operational costs.

3.4 Study Population

The study targeted a total of 656 Form Two students, 392 were male and 264 were female, from 12 selected schools. The targeted number of teachers of English was 16, 9 were male and 7 were female.

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The schools were categorized thus: public or private/rural/urban. Approximately 656 Form Two students were observed during oral skills lessons. Out of this total, only 20% was included in the randomly sampled student respondents. To arrive at 12 schools, the schools in a list of all public and private schools in the district were categorized as either public or private/rural/urban as shown in table 1 below. This list of schools was obtained from the District Education Office (D.E.O). Using a table of random numbers the schools were selected on a proportional basis as follows: 3 private schools and 9 public schools. To ensure that the study does not miss certain vital parameters, the schools were

further categorized into: private, public, urban and rural respectively. Each category had 3 schools even if they were private/urban/rural or public /urban/rural. The 16 teachers, who were interviewed and filled the questionnaire, were determined by the number of streams a school had. Amongst the selected schools, there were those which were Day only with both male and female students (Mixed), Boarding only, and Boarding and Day. Table 2 shows their distributions.

The following table represents the categories

Table 1: Distribution of categories and status of schools in the study area

School category and location		Female	Male	Total	% of total
School category & Location	Public:				
	Rural	175	183	358	54.6%
	Urban	66	75	141	21.5%
	Private:				
	Rural	0	107	107	16.3%
	Urban	23	27	50	7.6%
Total:					
Rural		175	290	465	70.9%
Urban		89	102	191	29.1%

Students by Gender

Table 1 shows that the number of students in public secondary schools located in a rural /urban area is higher compared to private ones which are also located in rural/urban areas. The public/rural categories have a percentage of 54.6% and public/urban have 21.5%, while private/rural have 16.3% and private/urban have 7.6% respectively. On the

whole, the total percentage of students in rural schools is 70.9%, while that of urban schools is 29.1%.

Table 2: Distribution of categories of learning institutions in the study area

Category of Schools	Gender		Total	% of total
	No. of Female	No. of Male		
Day only (Mixed)	63	81	144	22%
Boarding only	115	265	380	57.9%
Boarding and Day	86	46	132	20.1%
Total	264	392	656	100%

It is noted from table 2 that there is a high number of students in boarding schools only with a total percentage of 57.9% compared to other categories which have 22% and 20.1% respectively.

3.6 Data collection Methods

The data for this study was collected using the following instruments: an interview schedule, a questionnaire, a language test and an observation schedule. The interview schedule was used to elicit information from teachers on English language oral skills. The questionnaire was used to obtain information from the sampled teachers of English and it was also used to obtain information on how they prepare their schemes of work, while for the student respondents, a language test was administered. An observation schedule was used to undertake classroom observation made during English language lessons.

3.6.1 Interview Schedule

The instrument (ff. Appendix 1) had five open-ended items and this gave the teachers of English complete freedom of response. The objective of the interview was to solicit in-depth information that would supplement the information from the questionnaire.

3.6.2 A questionnaire for the Teachers of English

This instrument (ff. Appendix 2) had seven open-ended items. It sought the background information of the teachers of English that is, name of school, age, sex, professional qualifications and in-service course(s) attended. It also sought information on how teachers of English prepare schemes of work, how many oral lessons they teach per week, what methods they use to teach oral skills and the materials they use in teaching the oral skills, the areas of oral skills that students find problematic and how they handle the teaching of problematic sounds.

3.6.3 Language Test

The class test contained eight items (ff. Appendix 3) set by the researcher. The items in the test included tasks that required to read aloud, to listen to a taped recording of words and write them down. Items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were prior recorded. This was to prevent variations in pronunciation that the learner might notice in aural (while listening). They were therefore, presented at a moderate conversational tempo, undistorted either by excessive speed or artificial slowness. The students were to read sentences in item 4 and identify homophones. They were also expected to write down words indicating stress in words and sentences as per the instructions given in item 6, write and indicate intonation patterns in sentences in item 7 and, write down and explain the meaning of

the sentences given on contextual interpretation in item 8. This was carried out either in the classroom or library depending on how the school had organized.

3.6.4 The Classroom Observation Schedule

This instrument (ff. Appendix 4) was used during the oral skill lessons to observe and identify the strategies used by the teachers during the English language oral skills. The data was used to determine which strategies are most used.

3.7 Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale trial intended to assess the adequacy of the instruments to be used for data collection. It reflects what the actual study would be. Piloting was done in three schools selected at random from Kakamega District. From each school one form two stream was selected of which its students were then observed during the oral skills lesson. From this only 10 students from each school sat the class test. One teacher of English for the selected Form Two class in each school was involved in the study. These teachers were observed during the oral skills lessons in Form Two classes, and were then given a teacher questionnaire to fill in (ff. Appendix 2). The teachers were also interviewed and recorded on tape to draw data that would supplement the information from the questionnaire.

The pilot report fulfilled the research objectives, the findings and observations derived from this pilot study supported by the available literature in this area. It also provided useful answers to the stipulated research questions. The pilot study findings were used to improve the appropriateness of the methods for data collection and data analysis in the

main study. Since the rationale for this study was to focus on the linguistic strategies in the teaching of English language oral skills, this report showed how to fulfil this rationale.

3.8 Data Analysis

The study adopted both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyse the categories of data drawn with the various instruments preceded in the preceding sections.

3.8.1 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis provides in-depth explanations about a phenomenon. The researcher used it to analyze information in a systematic way in order to arrive to some useful conclusions and recommendations. The researcher obtained detailed information about the phenomenon being studied that is, linguistic strategies in the teaching of English language oral skills in Kenyan secondary schools, and then established patterns, trends and relationships from the information gathered. Since data in qualitative analysis are in the form of words rather than numbers, the words were grouped in categories and general statements were made on how these were related. The researcher used the interview schedule to obtain data from teachers of English.

3.8.2 Quantitative Analysis

In quantitative analysis, the responses in the questionnaire were assigned numerical values from which statistical descriptions were made. Data was described using descriptive statistics to enable the researcher to meaningfully describe a distribution of scores using a few statistics. In this study the descriptive and numerical data were

generated from the analysis of scores obtained from the students' class test, the observation notes and schedules, teachers' questionnaires and interview schedules and predictive correlation studies based on the findings were used to determine the linguistic strategies used in teaching oral skills. The results of the analyzed data then were presented and discussed.

3.9 Summary

The chapter has discussed the research methodology of this study. The research design that is, the survey design that was used has been discussed. The site where the research was carried has been highlighted. The study population, sampling procedures and sample size have been dealt with in detail. Further, data collection methods: interview schedule, a questionnaire, language test and observation schedule have also been discussed. The pilot report that determined the adequacy of the instruments that were used in this study has been presented. Finally, data collection procedure, data analysis: qualitative and quantitative analyses have been discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS.

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter Three the Research Methodology for this study was discussed in detail. This chapter presents the findings of the linguistic strategies used in the teaching of English language oral skills in Kenyan secondary schools in Kakamega District. The findings are presented in three main sections. The first section is the professional input to English language teaching which has two sub-sections: teachers' age and gender, and additional professional development of teachers of English. The second deals with English language teaching in the classroom which has five sub-sections. These are: teachers' preparation of schemes of work, preferred oral skills by teachers, strategies adopted in teaching of oral skills in Form Two, areas of success of teaching English language oral skills and problematic areas of teaching English language oral skills. The third section is the specifics of oral skills. It is sub-divided into seven sub-sections. These are: articulation of the selected vowel sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/, transcription of speech sounds /ɒ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/, listening and transcription of the speech sounds in word final position, homophones in sentences, stress placement on words and sentences, intonation patterns in sentences and contextual interpretation of sentences.

4.2 Professional input to English Language Teaching

Most teachers teaching English in Kenya and in particular, in Kakamega District, are qualified. There are public and private teacher training institutions that train them. There is also a common curriculum prepared by the Kenya Institute of Education used to

prepare students in English Language Teaching. In Kakamega the following table shows the professional qualifications of the ELT teachers who participated in this study.

Table 3: Professional Qualifications of Teachers

Professional Qualifications	Professional Qualifications	No. of Female	% of total	No. of Male	% of total
	Diploma	0	0%	0	0%
	Graduate	7	44%	9	56%
	Post Graduate	0	0%	0	0%
	Total	7	44%	9	56%

Gender

It is evident from the table that all teachers who teach English in this study sample are qualified up to degree level. This is represented by 44% female and 56% male. This is a good indication that there is trained personnel in teaching of English language because teachers can teach with a lot of confidence and hence better results are expected. Consequently, in Kenyan teacher training institutions there are courses stipulated for English language teachers undergoing training (Kenyatta University Calendar 2003/05). It is expected that by the end of four years, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students taking English language as their teaching subject should be well placed to teach it effectively, and in particular, oral skills.

In this study, data was drawn from teachers who were interviewed in the selected schools to find out how their training in English has enriched their teaching of oral skills. About 87.5% English teachers acknowledged that some course units that were taught at the University, for example, Phonology and Phonetics, which involve both practical and theory, have helped them in the teaching of oral skills. They, for example,

are able to articulate words correctly, use intonation in sentences, stress words correctly depending on the meaning they want to bring out and that they can communicate effectively (cf. section 2.3.3).

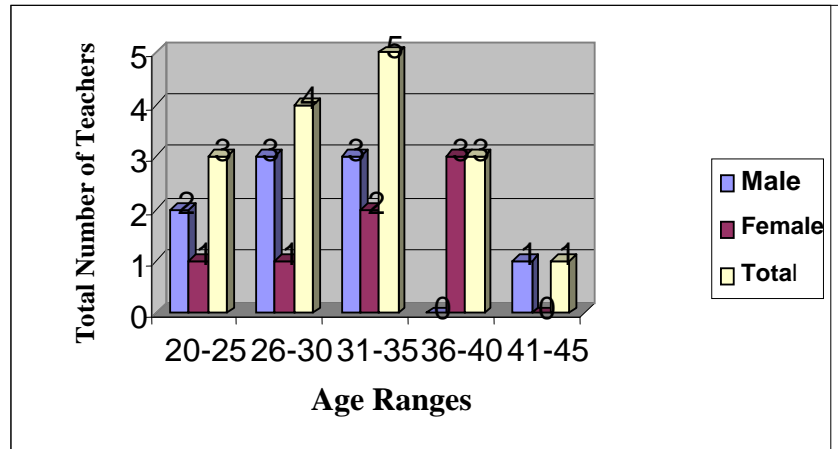
Training has also enabled teachers to be able to determine the differences and difficulties of their students in their spoken language since they (students) come from different geographical backgrounds. Shih-hsien (2007) adds that most students are from different cultural backgrounds with different levels of proficiency in English. Students all have different learning histories and learning styles. They also have different perspectives and expectations in learning English. Therefore, training of teachers to be able to teach English is very important in the teaching of English language because it caters for these differences and difficulties of students.

Despite the fact that there have been courses on offer in English for teachers of English, not all of them (12.5%) have benefited much from the training in English in terms of teaching oral skills. They obtained little initial training in oral skills the time they were in their various universities. During their time in the university, the teaching of oral skills was not very much emphasized. They teach it presently through their own research, or having attended in-service courses on oral skills or through wider reading, and also through their interaction with students. Vandenberghe (2002) stresses the role of support needed for teachers' professional development. He argues that an innovation cannot be enacted unless English language teachers are given opportunities to learn new concepts, new ways of presenting content, and new ways of interacting with students. This will help teachers to teach English language oral skills with a lot of ease.

4.2.1 Teachers' Age and Gender

The teachers' age and gender was determined as an integral part of this study. Their ages ranged from 24-45 years, a trainable age if opportunities are available. The following bar graph shows the teachers' age and gender

Figure 1: Distribution of English language teachers per age/gender

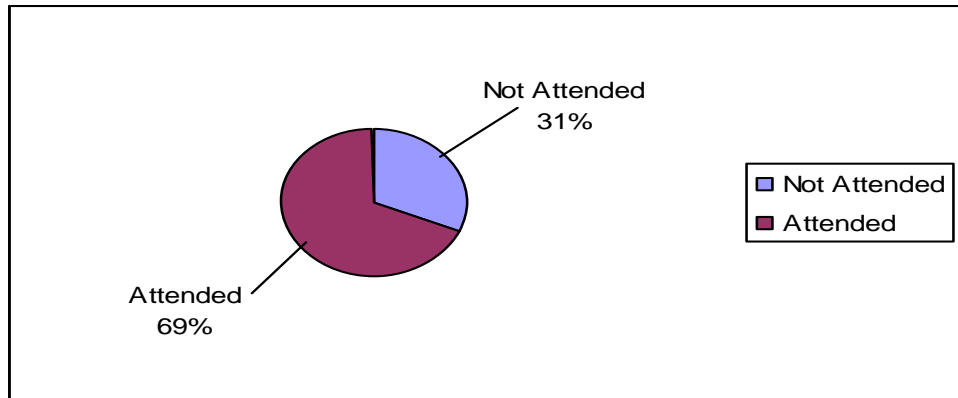


It is evident from the graph that most English language teachers in the Kenyan secondary schools as represented by Kakamega District in this study are relatively young. Their teaching experience reveals that 43.75% have taught for 15 years, and 50% for 10 years while 6.25% for 5 years. They have received training and are mostly men. For example, the percentage of male who teach English in the sample of this study is 56.25%, while that of female is 43.75%. This is contrary to a widely held belief that English language teaching is a women's domain. From the bar graph, it is evident that the number of men who teach English is higher than that of women. So each teacher of English, regardless of sex, can do a good job in teaching English and in particular, the English language oral skills.

4.2.2 Additional Professional Development of Teachers of English

From the study the researcher collected data on the number of teachers of English who attended the in-service courses. The following pie chart shows those who have received in-service training to teach English and those who did not.

Figure 2: English language Teachers' Attendance of in-service courses



Out of the total number of teachers that were interviewed, 69% indicated that they had attended in-service courses while 31% had not. This reveals that a good number of teachers of English are willing to attend courses that are offered to develop their teaching techniques of English.

The curriculum in Kenya is constantly reviewed whenever there is need. For example, the presidential working party on the implementation of a government decision to establish a second university in Kenya in 1981 under the chairmanship of Mackay recommended change of the Kenyan Education system from 7-4-2-3 to 8-4-4. This new system was introduced in 1985 (Oluoch, 1982) and its major objective was to give a broad based education and introduce prevocational skills that would prepare learners for

the world; hence making them self reliant especially those who end their schooling at primary school level.

Since its inception, the 8-4-4 system has been evaluated several times: in 1990, 1995 and 1999 (Asiachi and Oketch 1992), (Omulando and Shiundu, 1992), (K.I.E, 2002). These evaluations have shown that the curriculum is broad and there is need to review and rationalize it. Innovative methods of teaching particular elements in the English syllabus which teachers of English may not be familiar with are also introduced. This requires that teachers attend in-service courses to acquaint themselves with the new changes in the curriculum.

Trends in the education sector in Kenya indicate that in-servicing of teachers of English is a common feature. Such courses are organized whenever there are changes in the syllabus in terms of content and teaching methods. In Kakamega District this activity of in-servicing also occurs. Such courses are offered by: the Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB), the Kenya Education Board, the National Educational Services, Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and Longhorn Publishers. These different institutions tend to focus on particular areas of the syllabus. For example, KLB and Longhorn are publishing houses from which the English Language syllabus draws its teaching/learning resources for teachers and students. During the in-servicing courses teachers are given exercises on the area being handled to discuss in groups; for instance, on the aspects of oral skills. For example, they would be given work on stress placement in words and in sentences; pronunciation of problematic words like **bury, insult, gate, get**, etc. Then afterwards

they would be explained to how to teach them in a classroom situation by use of, for example, communicative theory of language and the audio-lingual approach models.

Despite the fact that teachers of English receive in-service courses whenever need arises, data from this study shows that 31% of the teachers have not attended such courses as evident in figure 2 given above, for various reasons. Some such reasons include lack of diversity in what the in-service facilitators offer. This discourages some teachers since they think they are going to be taught the obvious content which perhaps they are already familiar with. Additionally, it was reported by some of the sampled teachers in this study that the in-service courses are not frequently given and that is why some teachers (31%) have not attended. It could be of great help if there would be planned in-service courses by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with different institutions and persons that promote education in Kenya to be offered every term. It is also observed that many of these courses are offered by individual bodies unlike the Ministry of Education which should be in charge of such a program in the country. Also, in the provision of such a program, trainers need to be encouraged to give sufficient consideration to the teachers' existing beliefs, behaviors, and the classroom context in order to achieve harmony between these and the new ideas introduced through the in-service courses.

The in-service courses are part of the ELT in Kenya (cf. section 2.2.2). They provide skills in the use of various methods including oral narratives or poems in the teaching of oral skills. They enrich teachers with new methods of teaching English and in particular,

the oral skills. During in-service courses teachers review the methods and contents entailed in the English syllabus.

In-service courses emphasize on how oral skills are integrated in the teaching of literature and language. For example, a text (excerpt) can be extracted from any recommended set book. From it comprehension, oral skills, grammar questions, etc. can be asked. They have been able to inculcate in teachers confidence so that whichever aspect they teach in language, they are confident because they have the right content to give to the students. It is believed that as teachers go for these in-service courses, they learn a lot from the facilitators because they participate in different activities like group discussion, written and oral exercises on the areas being handled. These areas could be pronunciation, intonation, word stress and other aspects of oral skills.

The present 'O' level syllabus (KIE, 2002) puts a lot of emphasis on the above listed aspects in oral skills. They are some of the areas teachers had tended to ignore in the previous curriculum. The in-service courses in this regard therefore have also helped remove the confusion teachers have had on how to handle the oral skills content of the course. Teachers were to be given guidelines on how to teach oral skills in English language since they are not tested orally as in the case of the courses offered on the French and the German languages respectively.

However, teachers have come to realize that oral skills are not necessarily the spoken form of English only. They also include reading, listening and writing. It is also a fact that such skills can be tested in written English. The more it is tested in written, the more it enriches the spoken form. Written and oral works go on concurrently. One cannot

teach, for example, word stress, without putting the stress on the word by writing and actually articulating it. What is written down is simply to remind the learner to articulate the word correctly.

Apart from some teachers' unwillingness to attend in-service courses, occasional offering of the very courses, another drawback is the time period in which such courses are usually conducted. For example, one of the courses that were offered on oral skills was in first term 2003. It was a one day workshop. This time was short and the teachers may have gained very little information on the teaching of oral skills. Besides faced with the problem of limited time, the courses are not offered regularly. It could be important that the courses be given quite often not just once in a while. KirkgÖz (2008) notes that despite such teacher development facilities, the initial implementation schedule tend to be largely unrealistic in that teacher training in many cases is not usually sufficient and implementation timelines tend to be short. Wedell (2003:447) acknowledges that time is important for changes to spread throughout the educational system. The span for such a nationwide curriculum innovation must necessarily be long and extensive to allow teachers to take on new ideas and have enough time to try them out and adapt them to their situations.

Further still, it was pointed out by the teachers in this study sample that the in-service courses have not really enriched teachers' teaching of oral skills. This is because some facilitators in such courses are not good models in English pronunciation. Such facilitators, for example, experience difficulty in the articulation of certain speech

sounds such as /t/ and /d/, /p/ and /b/, /f/ and /s/, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, /g/ and /ŋ/, etc. This is possibly why the emphasis has been laid on the teaching of oral skills (KIE, 2002).

4.3 English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Classroom

Data was collected on the number of oral lessons accorded per week using a questionnaire for teachers of English. The results are as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: No. of oral lessons per week

No of oral lessons	No of oral lessons taught	Female	Male	Total	% of Total
	1	4	5	9	56%
2	3	3	6	38%	
3	0	1	1	6%	
Total	7	9	16	100	

Gender of teacher

This table shows that most teachers, at 56%, accord only one lesson to oral skills, 38% teach two oral lessons and 6% teach three oral lessons per week. This reveals that oral skills are not allocated adequate time compared to other aspects of the content of the course possibly because they are regarded as less important (cf. section 1.1). It is also noted from the table that female teachers accord few lessons to oral skills. There is no female teacher who teaches 3 oral lessons per week. This is surprising because it is held by many people especially men that English teaching in Kenya is a women-oriented subject and they could accord more time to it and especially in terms of teaching. This study disapproves this and holds that any qualified teacher of English can teach English language oral skills.

The teaching of English in Kenyan schools is systematized. In this regard, time is allocated for the teaching of English as for other subjects in the school programme. The content items to be taught at each level of school are also stipulated in the work schemes for a particular school term by individual teachers based on the syllabus. Lesson preparations are in turn drawn from the schemes of work. Further still, there is a well thought out and approved time table in schools that guides the teaching of English and other subjects in the school. Each lesson lasts 40 minutes and a double lesson lasts 1 hour and 20 minutes. At form two there are six lessons apportioned for English language; four lessons to grammar and other aspects of language, and two apportioned for literature. It is at the discretion of the teacher of English to decide how many lessons to allocate to oral skills within the four grammar lessons in Form Two.

The English language syllabus (KIE, 2002) provides a long list of items to be dealt with at secondary level of Forms 1-4. These include the following: problematic sounds, stress and intonation, rhyme in poetry, word play, rhythm in poetry, distinguishing word class on the basis of stress and use of tone to reveal attitude. The oral skills to be dealt with in Form Two include: problematic sounds such as /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, stress, intonation, rhyme in poetry and word play. Although all of them are required to be covered as stipulated in the syllabus, there are areas among them that teachers prefer teaching over others. The Kenya National Examination Council Report (2004) emphasizes that teachers of English should always endeavour to cover all aspects of the syllabus without predicting questions for leaving out those they regard as unimportant. There is a tendency to concentrate on some aspects to the exclusion of others for example, stress and intonation.

4.3.1 Preparation of Schemes of Work by Teachers of English

Schemes of work are a requirement for teachers in Kenya. They enable teachers to plan their work into teachable units. They are normally drawn from the syllabus at the beginning of a school year. The researcher gathered data regarding how teachers of English prepare their schemes of work. The table below shows those teachers of English who scheme per term or yearly.

Table 5: Teachers' preparation of schemes of work

Teachers of English		Termly	%	Yearly	%	Total %
Gender	Female	5	31.2%	2	12.5%	43.7%
	Male	6	37.5%	3	18.8%	56.3%
	Total	11	68.7%	5	31.3%	100%

Preparation time

The table indicates that 31.2% female and 37.5% male prepare their schemes of work termly, while 12.5% female and 18.8% male do it yearly. This reveals that the teachers of English do prepare the schemes of work and this too helped the researcher to determine when the English language oral skills under study are taught.

4.3.2 Preferred Oral Skills by Teachers

As noted in the preceding section (cf. 4.3), there are areas that teachers prefer teaching over others. The table below shows the order of preference.

Table 6: Areas of preference in teaching oral skills by teachers

Oral skills	Total Responses	% of total
Stress	3	19%
Pronunciation	7	44%
Stress and intonation	4	25%
Pronunciation and stress	2	12%
Intonation	0	0%
Total	16	100%

Frequency of use

The above table reveals that the teachers prefer teaching pronunciation, followed by other least preferred areas which include: intonation and stress placement. Kenworthy (1987) explains intonation as the speakers' change in pitch of their voice as they speak, making it higher or lower in pitch at will. Additionally speakers use pitch to send various messages. For instance, the way we would respond to a statement is different from the way we would respond to a question. In this study, it was observed that teachers allocated more time to pronunciation and word stress. (Woodsworth, 1967) says that more attention is given to the details of pronunciation than the other elements of speech for example, stress and intonation. These other elements are just significant to speech production, if not more so, than the articulation of the sounds themselves. Little time was given to intonation (0%). An analysis of student data on their ability to answer questions on intonation also revealed that they did not perform well; possibly because of the same reason (ff. 4.4.5 - 4.4.6).

4.3.3 Strategies Adopted in the Teaching of Oral Skills in Form Two

Among the approaches of teaching oral skills not adopted by teachers in this study include: presentation, simulation, debates, word collecting, dramatization, word hunt, etc (KIE, 1987, Baker and Westrup, 2003). Their absence could be possibly due to the fact that the teachers are not familiar with them.

English is taught as a second language in Kenya and plays a central role in the school curriculum. It is an essential subject as it services other subjects (KIE, 1987). This is because English is the medium of instruction from Standard Four of Primary School onwards to University. Fluency in all aspects of the language, therefore, enables a student to perform better in the other subjects. Byrne (1986) defines fluency as the ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without too much hesitation. To achieve this, teachers at all levels, including the Form Two class use methods stipulated in the revised syllabus (KIE, 2002), Teachers Handbook for Secondary Schools (KIE, 1987) to teach English in. Such methods include reciting poems, telling stories, discussion, debating, dramatization, role play, speech drills and, audio and video tapes (cf. section 2.2.4). Teachers use some of these methods and others not among the above listed ones to teach oral skills during an English language lesson. For example: **speech drills, poetry, question and answer, dialogue, reading aloud, pair groups, discussion** and **story telling** to teach pronunciation, word and sentence stress, and intonation.

4.3.4 Areas of Success of Teaching English Language Oral Skills

As noted earlier (cf. sections 1.1 and 1.6), the re-introduction of the oral skills in the English language syllabus has been long in coming and is necessary (cf. section 1.6) since they are now an examinable component in the ‘O’ level examinations. Data collected from the classroom test revealed that students are able to articulate words correctly. For example, in the articulation of sound /t/ by learners, girls were able to score a percentage of 83.6% correct and 16.4% incorrect while boys scored 80.8% correct and 19.2% incorrect (ff. Appendix 7). This could mean that teachers use speech drills to teach sounds and they give both individual and group work. Once pronunciation is mastered, other reading for comprehension becomes easy especially when pronouncing sounds such as the bilabials /p/ and /m/ found both in English and in the learners’ first language. From this study data, it was observed that when students learn pronunciation, it interests them because it is a break from writing. When students carry out activities in the course of an ELT lesson, they are motivated to pay more attention in class. However, it was noted that large class size and lack of facilities were a constraint to any kind of pair/group work activities as envisioned in the new curriculum.

Teachers of English in the research schools have partially succeeded in the teaching of word stress and intonation (cf. section 4.3.2, table 6). For example 25% of the teachers in this study found it easy to teach students how to distinguish word class on the basis of stress for example, **'produce—noun** (something that has been produced) and **pro'duce—verb** (to show something). Students learn that the same word can give different meanings depending on stress. Out of 16 teachers who were interviewed,

12.5% use words from other languages such as the students' first language or Kiswahili to make the lesson more interesting and enjoyable. For example, in this study the languages used by teachers who were interviewed are Lwisukha and Lubukusu. Both languages are Luhya dialects. For example, Lwisukha words like **'lila –verb –cry** and **li'la—noun – intestine**, **'mwana—noun –child** and **mwa'na—adjective – my dear**. Lwisukha has the placement of stress different from English one. Stress placement in Lwisukha seems not fixed although stress in English is also determined by the number of syllables a word has. For example, in Lwisukha stress is placed on the first syllable when the word is a verb and the second syllable when the word is a noun. Again in some words, stress is placed on the first syllable when it is a noun. In English on the other hand stress placement occurs on the first syllable when the word is a noun and on the second syllable when the word is a verb. Kenworthy (1987) points out that there seems to be a very strong tendency in English for what is called core vocabulary to have stress on the first syllable. This means that many common nouns such as water, table, woman, etc. and adjectives will have stress on the first syllable as in pretty, pleasant, ugly, etc. This rule seems not to apply in Lwisukha language (L1) because stress for nouns can be on the first or second syllable as shown in the example above; and stress for adjectives too.

4.3.5 Problematic Areas of Teaching English Language Oral Skills

As noted in section 4.3.4, although students have shown a positive response towards learning English language oral skills, teachers in this study sample pointed out that it is an area which is generally problematic. Stress and intonation (ff. 4.4.5-4.4.6) are

difficult to master by most students, perhaps because students assume them to be easy and that they may just develop in English language oral skills as they do naturally in the acquisition of the first language. The following are examples on stress and intonation in both Luhya dialects (Lwisukha and Lubukusu) and English languages:

(1) Stress

(a) **Li'tala** (Lububusu) –a shed for the cattle

(b) **'Litala** (Lwisukha) –a homestead

These two examples carry different meanings depending on stress as indicated.

In section 2.4, stress was defined as the initiator power, i.e. the prominence or greater force given to a syllable in a word as it is uttered. The number of syllables stressed by the speaker depends largely upon the nature of words composing the utterance. Baker and Westrup (2003) emphasize that if language learners hear a good model, most of them will be able to use the correct word stress after they have heard and repeated a new word several times. Correct word stress is therefore important, for if stress is placed incorrectly, this can be a major cause of misunderstanding and hence, miscommunication. For example,

(i) **'Desert** /dezət/ —large piece of land with very little rain

(ii) De**'sert** /dɪzɜ:t/ —to leave

The above examples indicate that correct word stress is essential if one wants to send out the precise message without causing any misunderstanding. So in this study it could be the case that the mispronunciations and incorrect stress placements by the students are due to the absence of good models of articulation in English pronunciation from whom students can learn.

(2) Intonation

(a) **ǃOlikhoča ́esikuli?** (Lubukusu) – (ǃ, Are you go ́ing to ́ school?)(b) **ǃNdikho ́ekhola ́ekasi** (Lubukusu). – (I ǃ, am ǃ, working.)

The two sentences carry a message of politeness although the first one is a question, seeking information, while the second one is a statement. The first part of the sentence has a falling tone, while the second part has a rising one.

Mwangi, et al. (2004) emphasize that intonation is very important as it enables us to communicate the right message. For example:

(i) Excuse ́ me? (making request)

(ii) Do you like ́ oranges? (requires Yes/No answer)

(iii) ǃ, Jane likes sweets. (shows emphasis), i.e. it is Jane not anyone else

These three sentences carry different messages as shown depending on intonation. This reveals that intonation is indeed important for intelligibility and distinguishing meaning and therefore, it should be taught.

According to the teachers in this study, it is the speeches by school principals that mostly provide a model of pronunciation. Some principals, however, are not good speakers of English. They mispronounce such words like gate, goals, beat, target, in continuous speech as in the following examples:

(i) gate- /get/ instead of /geɪt/

(ii) goals- /gɒls instead of /gəʊls

(iii) beat- /bit/ instead of /bi:t/

(iv) target- /tɑdʒet/ instead of /tɑ:ɡɪt/

The above data reveals that students possibly require good models and a supportive environment to enable them strengthen their oral skills in English.

The other problem that was pointed out by 25% of the teachers of English during the interview session is that in as much as the teaching of oral skills is being emphasized (Koech Report 2000), it is not being taught at all levels. For instance, oral skills in English are not taught at the lower level of the primary school, especially standards 1-4 (KIE Primary Education Syllabus, 2002). This is despite the fact that initial teaching of such oral skills at the lower level of school is critical to the learner's eventual mastery and use of the English language in oral communication (K.I.E, 2002).

Further, the teachers in this study asserted that almost 50% of their students find those English sounds that are not found in their L1 or those which are closely related difficult. For example those sounds that are absent from their L1 system are /b/ and /d/ as in bad – **pat**, dad – **tat**, as shown below in the phonetic chart for the L1 against the English language one.

Phonetic Chart for Lwisukha (L1)

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Palatal-Alveolar	Velar	Glottal /Uvular
Plosive	p		t			k	
Nasal	m		n	ɲ		ŋ	
Lateral				l			
Rolled			r				
Fricative	β	f	s	ʃ	ʃ		h
Affricate			ts	tʃ			
approximant						w	
clusters	mb		nd nz	ɲdʒ		ŋg	

Source: Ingonga (1991)

Phonetic Chart for English

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Post-alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Velar	Labio-velar	Glottal
Plosive	P,b			t,d				k,g		
Nasal	m			n				ŋ		
Fricative		f,v	θ,ð	s,z			ʃ,ʒ			h
Affricate						tr,dr	tʃ,dʒ			
Approximant				l	j	r			w	

Source: Gimson (1994)

The Lwisukha has a total of 31 phonemes and English has 26, as shown on the phonemic charts above. The students do not realize that the phonetic system of L1 is different from the one in English and that there are differences in speech sound systems of English and students' L1. Kenworthy (1987) says that the more differences there are, the more difficulties the learner will have in pronouncing English. He further reinforces that learners will have a strong tendency to hear the sounds of English in terms of the sounds of their native language. They (learners) need to know what to pay attention to and what to work on. Because speaking is for the most part unconsciously controlled, learners may miss something important. For example, they may not realize that when a particular word is stressed or said in a different way this can affect the message that is sent to the listener.

Teachers in this study further still reported that half of the students also have a problem of equating sounds to letters. For example, when asked to write the sound /ʃ/, they will write the letters **sh** to represent it. Waweru (2003) explains that many errors bear a strong resemblance to the characteristics of the L1 and that indeed many erroneous sentences are read like word-for-word translation from L1 to L2. Thus interference is regarded as a mechanical transference of habits from the source language to the target language (TL) and that second language learning is a process, which involves the replacement of old habits by new habits. Yet Schmied (1991) observes that the influence of L1 has a basic cause of African variation in English, because it obviously influences the pronunciation distinctly. For example:

- (i) hope –**hoope**
- (ii) coke –**cook**
- (iii) wrote –**roote**
- (iv) robe –**roob**

From this data, the length and the diphthong sound /əʊ/ are represented as double letters by students (ff. Appendix 15).

Data from this study also reveals that there are some students who are good at pronouncing words correctly but when they are asked to transcribe them, they find it difficult. For example: not, cock, rot (ff. Appendix 15). They transcribed them incorrectly as /**knot**/, /**coke**/, /**rote**/. Consequently, 25% of the teachers in this sample reported that the teachers who teach in primary schools teach many subjects and therefore, they may not cover the content that is required adequately or in depth. In addition, teachers in this study reported that there is lack of specific language policy in

most schools. Students are not restricted to speaking English while in school. During the interview 12.5% of the teachers said that in a class of about 50 students, 75% communicate in either Swahili or ‘Sheng’. An example of ‘Sheng’ sentence was given by one of the teachers in the study sample as:

‘Yenyewe hii paper ilikuwa cargo to make matters worse tulipewa gidhae chache’(This paper was hard and to make matters worse we were given less time).

Additionally, the same percentage of the teachers acknowledged that there are some sounds in English they too, find difficult to pronounce. These include those sounds that especially make the difference between short and long vowels and also diphthongs. For example:

- (i) cot –caught
- (ii) coat –court
- (iii) pot –port
- (iv) boat –bought

Logically, phonetics should be taught in a language laboratory. In their training of English, 25% of the teachers in this study did not capture the correct pronunciation of sounds because most institutions do not have language laboratories. This reveals that there are some sounds which are difficult both to teachers and to students as well. Catford (1988) stresses that those who try to learn new sounds by ear alone, without any systematic training in the use of their organs, generally succeed only partially. This may be the case of teachers of English in the Kenyan context. Most training institutions lack such facilities. Teachers are trained mostly by ear.

Others however, that is, 25% of the teachers reported that half of the students do not speak English as a dominant home language and this could greatly affect the teaching of oral skills negatively. Conger (2008) advances that the density of the co-ethnic community and the extent to which English is spoken by the neighbours will influence students' opportunities for learning the language. This could be the case in Kakamega District because of the diversity of languages in the area. Besides, the quality of the students the teachers (25%) have are those who obtained low marks in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (K.C.P.E.) especially in English. The teachers attributed this to poor education background and also influence of L1 of the students. Therefore, it could be that for one to be good at oral skills, one must also be good at the subject academically. Further still, it was reported that there are about 50% of the students who consider Kiswahili language to be more important than English. This negative attitude towards English makes them think that English is very difficult and they put most of their energy into Kiswahili. When they are encouraged to speak the Standard English, they think they are being forced to ape the British. This could be the reason why Nyamasyo (1992) comments that most students leave school with very little competence in English despite the high priority given to the teaching of English.

As pointed out before, English in Kenya is taught as a second or third language and that there are different instructional materials that are used in ELT at Form Two (cf. section 2.2.2). Half of the teachers in this study said that there are hardly other learning aids other than the course books in most schools. This lack of learning aids is therefore, another difficulty. The teachers said that they lack learning aids like radios, audio tapes/cassettes, dictionaries and enough text books to enable them teach oral skills

effectively. The reason could be that although there is a revised syllabus in Kenya, there is no revision of the resources to suit the changes in the curriculum. So there is lack of appropriate teaching resources which need to be reconsidered. An examination of text books for Form Two revealed that text books could not capture the spirit of the new syllabus, i.e., the listening and speaking components of ELT were not adequately catered for. Teachers require information about the thinking behind designing the text books, explicit guidelines for learning content, as well as how to make use of textbooks. The other difficulty experienced is that of large classes in schools and yet limited resources. It becomes hard for them to teach especially pronunciation and word stress. Table 7 given below provides a summary of the problematic areas for students in English oral language skills as given by teachers.

Table 7: Problematic areas in English oral language skills for students

	Areas of difficulty	Total Responses of teachers	% of total
Areas of difficulty	Stress placement	2	13%
	Intonation	2	13%
	Pronunciation	5	31%
	Stress placement & Intonation	5	31%
	Pronunciation & Intonation	1	6%
	Stress & Pronunciation	1	6%
	Total	16	100%

Frequency of occurrence

Table 6 shows that about 80% of the students do not find stress placement, intonation and pronunciation of sounds very problematic as reported by teachers in this study. Those who find problems in oral skills have percentages ranging from 6% - 13%. This is surprising because the poor performance of students in the class test contradicts these

results (ff. sections 4.4.5 – 4.4.6). For example, it was noted that most students (especially those in private, public and urban secondary schools) did not place stress correctly on the words: ‘protest’ as verb, ‘protest’ as noun, ‘present’ as adjective and ‘present’ as noun (cf. Tables 13, 14 and 15). Yet the table above reveals that they do not have many problems in stress and intonation. This could be that the teachers did not give a genuine report about their students. They may have wanted to please the researcher that the students do not have much difficulty in these areas. It could also be that teachers’ perception differs from students’.

4.4 Specifics of Oral Skills

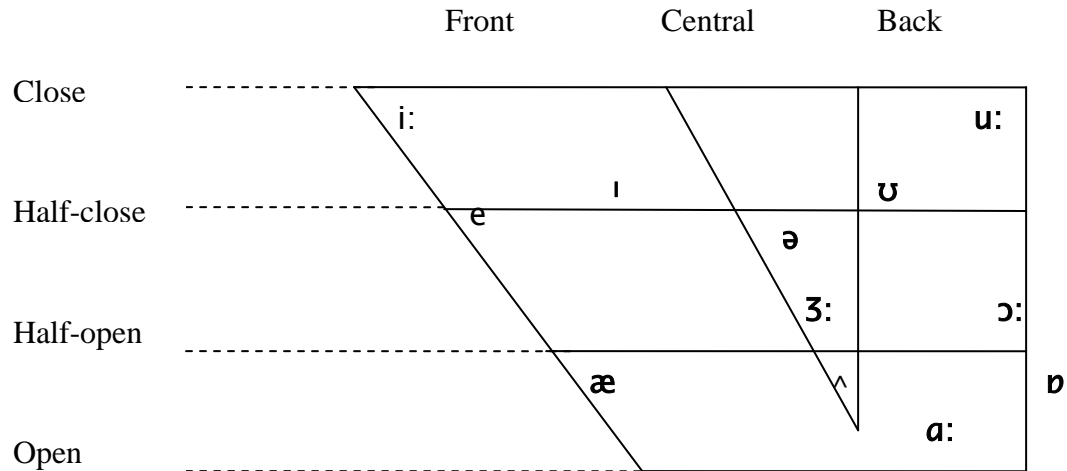
The specifics of oral skills in this study include: articulation of selected vowel sounds, transcription of speech sounds, homophones in sentences, stress placement on words and on sentences, intonation patterns of sentences and contextual interpretation of sentences. These specifics of oral skills were based on gender and categories of schools in terms of correct and incorrect answers.

4.4.1 Articulation of the Selected Vowel Sounds by Form Two Students Based on Categories of Schools and Gender

To articulate is to produce through speech—utterances, which may be realized grammatically in terms of speech sounds, words, phrases, longer linguistic units such as phrases, sentences as well as non-verbal features as stress, pitch, intonation among others. Catford (1988) reiterates the distinctions of speech sounds into vowels and consonants (p. 119) and defines vowels as a class pulmonic pressure sounds normally voiced, with a maintainable central oral approximant. He adds by saying that in fact, all vowels can, in principle, be described as approximants or resonants articulated at various

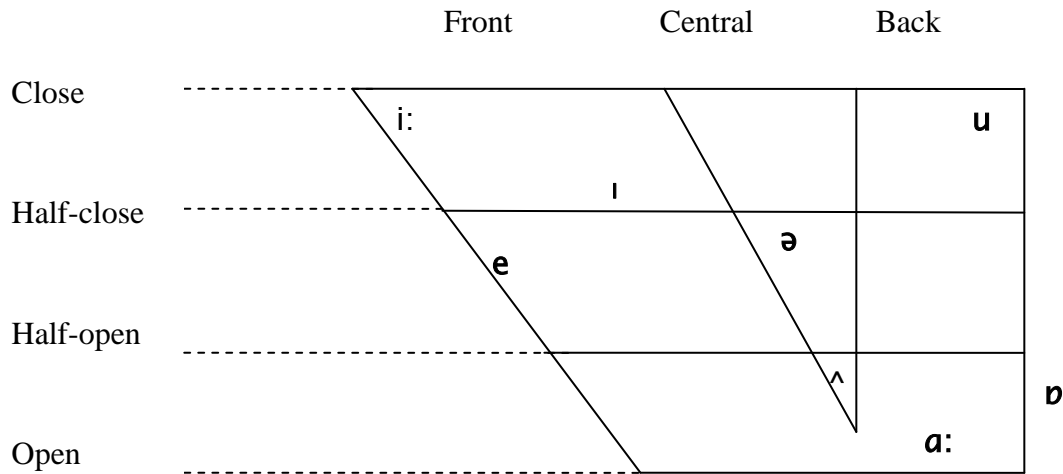
oral and pharyngeal locations. The focus of analysis in this study were the speech sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/, /ɒ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/. The following vowel chart shows the locations of the 12 pure vowel sounds in the English language.

Chart showing locations of the 12 pure vowel sounds in the English Language.



The students are expected to articulate the sounds correctly as modeled on the 12 pure vowels in the English language (IPA revised to 1989). However, 23.4%, 49.4%, 35.8% girls and 25%, 47.2%, 31.5% boys respectively (ff. Appendices 8, 10 and 12) had problems with articulating sounds /i:/, /əʊ/ and /ei/. They instead gave the following variants: /ɪ/, /ɒ/ and /e/ as shown in the table below.

Chart showing locations of the 12 pure vowel sounds in the English Language



This vowel chart shows that there are some sounds such as /əʊ/ and /eɪ/ in the words: **hope** and **late**, which possibly were not familiar to students because, either they do not use them in their daily communication or they are not found in the students' first language.

The articulation of the selected vowel sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/ by Form Two students was to determine their familiarity with these sounds and also to confirm that they had been taught successfully. First, sound /ɪ/ was in the following words: **bit, live, mill, rich, fill, ship, hit, lip, lid** and **sick** (ff. Appendix 7). Second, sound /i:/ was in the following words: **beat, leave, meal, reach, feel, sheep, heat, leap, lead** and **seek** (ff. Appendix 8). The students were required to listen to a tape recorder and repeat after the tape (cf. section 3.6.3). The tables below show learners' performance in the articulation of English sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/.

Table 8(a): Articulation performance of learners on sound /ɪ/

Articulation	School Category		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	&Gender/ articulation	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M			
correct		40	211	147	145	100	122	144	104	1,013	81.0%	
incorrect		10	39	33	35	30	18	26	46	237	19.0%	
Total		50	250	180	180	130	140	170	150	1,250	100%	

School Category & Gender

It is evident from table 8(a) that broadly, both female and male students in private, public, urban and rural secondary schools do not have any significant problems with the articulation of sound /ɪ/. The articulation results of the students of vowel /ɪ/ show that of the total articulations, 81% were correct, with only 19% being incorrect in word medial position. /ɪ/ sound is unrounded half-close centralized front vowel (cf. vowel chart above) which occurs in most words in English and other languages. This could be the reason why students found it easy to articulate it. The other reasons could be: first, the strategies of teaching oral skills especially dialogues, debates and speech drills (cf. section 2.2.4) were appropriately used by the teachers of English. Second, teachers could be giving a lot of practice exercises to students on the sounds to do individually or in groups, and particularly on the problematic speech sounds.

Mungai, et al. (2006) stress that it is important to study and learn the sounds of English very carefully if you are to be able to pronounce them correctly, not only in speech work but also in other areas of language. Inability to use the sounds correctly may lead to inaccuracy and unintelligibility in one's speech. In English, unlike in many local

languages in Kenya, sounds are not always pronounced as they appear in print, and some are not even pronounced at all. Others are totally alien to a learner with a non-English background. Therefore, it requires a student of English to learn all these sounds and to correctly use them to distinguish English words and their meanings. Students gain some confidence and fluency at the level of pronunciation of the selected words on which they have been guided.

Table 8(b): Articulation performance of learners on sound /i:/

Articulation	School		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	Category & Gender/ articulation	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M			
correct		37	202	140	120	100	117	129	98	943	75.4%	
incorrect		13	48	40	60	30	23	41	52	307	24.6%	
Total		50	250	180	180	130	140	170	150	1,250	100%	

School Category & Gender

Table 8(b) indicates that the students do not have any problems with the articulation of vowel sound /i:/ which is unrounded nearly close front vowel. In terms of performance, 75.4% of the articulations were correct as compared to only 24.6% incorrect ones. It is possible that this good performance by the learners could be due to the appropriate teaching strategies adopted by teachers. For example, teachers could be carrying out oral practice and using dialogue in course books containing this sound. It is likely that the students will find them (dialogues) more attractive especially if they feel they are

learning something in addition to new language. It could also be that the learner is exposed to the use of this speech sound /i:/ and this constant exposure should affect the pronunciation skills positively (Kenworthy, 1987).

4.4.2 Listening and Transcription of Speech Sound by Form Two Students

In the preceding section (cf. 4.4.1) the focus was on the sounds /ɪ/ and /i:/. In this next section, the focus is on listening and transcribing of sounds /ʊ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/ from a taped recording. Byrne (1986) defines listening as the receptive skill of understanding that is, the ability to interpret a message. Logically, one listens to what he/she hears, interprets the message and then understands it. For example if words like: *bid* and *bead*, *hid* and *head*, are read to students, the students listen, interpret and write what they have understood. Language items are read to students testing their mastery of sounds in English. Transcription, on the other hand, is a representation of speech sounds in writing. It is to represent a sound by means of a phonetic symbol. For example:

bit --/bɪt/	beat --/bi:t/
live --/lɪv/	leave --/li:v/ etc, (ff. Appendix 7)

The transcription of the selected speech sounds /ʊ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/ (cf. vowel chart, section 4.4.1) are analyzed, each pair at a time as shown below.

4.4.2 (a) Transcription of speech sounds /ʊ/ and /əʊ/ by Form Two Students

The words for transcription of speech sound /ʊ/ include: hop, not, cock, cost and rob (ff. Appendix 9). Sound /ʊ/ is a rounded nearly open back vowel while sound /əʊ/ is a

falling diphthong with closing tongue glide from /ə/ towards /ʊ/. The words for speech sound /əʊ/ are: **hope, note, coke, coast** and **robe** (ff. Appendix 10). The students' performance in the transcription exercise is shown in tables 9(a) and 9(b) below

Table 9(a): Learners' transcription of speech sound /ð/

Learners' transcription	School Category & Gender/Learner Transcription	Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
	correct	18	86	83	83	43	59	61	52	485	64.7%
	incorrect	12	64	25	25	35	25	42	38	265	35.3%
	Total	30	150	108	108	78	84	102	90	750	100%

School Category & Gender

Table 9(a) shows that the correct transcription of the words containing sound /ð/ by Form Two students account for 64.7% of all transcriptions, while 35.3% incorrect. This good transcription ability may be due to the instructional materials being used including class texts, tape recorded materials, video tapes and reference materials like dictionaries. However, some students had problems with the transcription of the words: **hop, cock,** and **rob**, whose correct transcriptions are /hɒp/, /kɒk/ and /rɒb/ but were mistranscribed as /həʊp/, /kɔ:k/ or /kəʊk/, and /rəʊp/ or /rəʊb/. The reason could be that since the students transcribed the words by listening to the tape, they would not ask for repetition in case they did not hear the words clearly. Byrne (1986) says speaking is an integral part of listening. It is this particular kind of interaction (listen-respond-listen etc.) which is difficult for the learners. Further more, students probably need to be exposed to more

literature in English to encounter a wide vocabulary than is present in their course books; partly because they feel the need for this themselves and partly because inadequacy in this area often causes communication break down.

Table 9(b): Learners' transcription of speech sound /əʊ/

Learner's transcription	School Category		Private		Public		Urban		Rural			
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	% of total
correct	15	74	65	68	39	46	42	42	391	52.1%		
incorrect	15	76	43	40	39	38	60	48	359	47.9%		
Total	30	150	108	108	78	84	102	90	750	100%		

School Category & Gender

It is evident from table 9(b) that the students do not have many problems with the transcription of sound /əʊ/ which is a falling diphthong with closing tongue glide from /ə/ towards /ʊ/. Of the transcriptions made, the results show a total percentage of 52.1 % of the total transcriptions are correct. Teachers could be using literal materials like poems, tongue twisters and cut outs from magazines or newspapers in teaching sound /əʊ/. It could also be that teachers of English use taped recordings to teach the sound /əʊ/. On the other hand, 47.9% of the total transcriptions are incorrect. Some students have problems with the transcription of the words: **coke**, **robe**, **wrote**, **coast**, and **note**, which should have been transcribed as: /kəʊk/, /rəʊb/, /rəʊt/, /kəʊst/, and /nəʊt/ respectively. They transcribed them incorrectly as:

- (i) coke - /kɔ:k/, /kʊk/
- (ii) robe - /rɒb/
- (iii) wrote - /rəʊd/, /rɒt/
- (iv) coast - /kɔ:zt/
- (v) note - /nɒt/ (ff. Appendix 15)

As pointed out before, sound /əʊ/ is a diphthong. Ladefoged (1982) defines a diphthong as movement from one vowel to another within a single syllable. He says that most speakers of British English distinguish words like *hot*, *hood*, *he*, *head*, *high*, using diphthongs. Many Midwestern speakers and Far western speakers do not distinguish between the vowels in pairs of words such as “*odd*” and “*awed*”, and “*cot*” and “*caught*.” This could be the reason why some students in this study sample did not perform well. They do not distinguish words like **cock** and **coke**, **rot** and **wrote**, **rob** and **robe**. Other reasons could be: incorrect listening, inadequate model speakers in the environment and lack of reading materials.

4.4.2 (b) Transcription of Speech Sounds /e/ and /ei/ by Form Two Students

Sound /e/ which is unrounded front vowel between half-open and half-close is in the words: let, met, pen, bet, get and wet (ff. Appendix 11) while sound /ei/ which is a falling diphthong with closing tongue glide from /e/ towards /i/ is in the words such as late, mate, pain, bait, gate and wait in this study data (ff. Appendix 12). The students’ performance in transcribing these words is presented in tables 10(a) and 10(b).

Table 10(a): Learners' transcription of speech sound /e/

Learner Transcription	School Category & Gender/Learner		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M				
correct	26	119	93	86	54	68	73	66	585	78%		
incorrect	4	31	15	22	24	16	29	24	165	22%		
Total	30	150	108	108	78	84	102	90	750	100%		

School Category & Gender

Table 10(a) highlights that students do not have any notable problem with the transcription of the words with the sound /e/. Of the total transcription given, 78% are correct. For example, both female and male students had no difficulty with the words: pen, get and wet (ff. Appendix 11). This remarkable performance could be due to: first, the strategies adopted by teachers like story telling, debates and discussions in small groups. Second, students may be reading class readers and news papers to develop their vocabulary and expand their knowledge in oral skills. Third, sound /e/ is a common speech sound found in most languages and students use it in their daily communication. However, there are 22% of the total transcriptions which are incorrect. The words that were transcribed incorrectly were: **let**, **met** and **bet**. Both girls and boys mistranscribed them as:

- (i) let - /late/, /lit/, /lid/
- (ii) met - /mate/, /meet/, meat/
- (iii) bet - /bett/, /bate/, /bed/ (ff. Appendix 15)

This could be that teachers may not be giving repetition exercises which tend to act as speech therapy to students in this study data especially those who have pronunciation problems due to interference of their first language.

Table 10(b): Learners' transcription of speech sound /ei/

Learners' Transcription	School Category & Gender/Learner Transcription	Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of Total
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
correct		23	99	78	74	48	62	55	66	505	67.3
incorrect		7	51	30	38	30	22	47	24	245	32.7
Total		30	150	108	78	78	84	102	90	750	100

School Category & Gender

As noted from table 10(a) learners in this study hardly have many difficulties in the transcription of many of the English vowels and diphthongs. In table 10(b) shown above, the correct transcriptions account for 67.3% of all the transcriptions. For example, both female and male students had no difficulty with the transcription of the words: **pain** and **wait** (ff Appendix 12). This could be that there is availability of resource materials like course books, supplementary books and also students may be using many activities like language games to reinforce and possibly extend what has already been taught. Byrne (1986) says that language games are effective because the learners are so involved in playing the game (e.g. the 'information' gap) that they do not realize that they are practicing language items. Nevertheless, they have 32.7% incorrect of the transcriptions. For instance, they have problems with the transcription of the words: **mate**, **bait**, and **late**, and this was mainly noted in female students (ff. Appendix 12). The words were to be transcribed as: /meit/, /beit/, and /leit/. The students mistranscribed them as:

- (i) mate - /met/, /mait/, /mete/ /meet/
- (ii) bait - /bat/, beid/, /beight/, /bate/
- (iii) late - /laite/, /lait/, /lete/ (ff. Appendix 15)

This could be that teachers may not be giving remedial exercises to students to practice the use of sound /ei/. It could also be that teachers may not be using reference materials, especially dictionaries to guide the students on how to pronounce and transcribe words correctly.

4.4.3 Listening and Transcription of the Speech Sounds in Word Final Position

Apart from the transcription of the speech sounds /ɒ/ and /əʊ/, /e/ and /ei/, the students also transcribed the speech sounds /t,d,p,b,f,v,s,z,tʃ,dʒ/ in word final positions. The words that were to be transcribed contained stops, fricatives and affricates. Each category had both voiceless and voiced sounds as in:

- (i) stops: /t,d/ and /p,b/ in the words mate and made
- (ii) fricatives: /f,v/ and /s,z/ in the words leaf and leave, race and raise
- (iii) affricates: /tʃ,dʒ/ in the words batch and badge.

Voiceless and voiced word final consonant sounds were analyzed as follows.

4.4.3 (a) Transcription of the speech sounds /t,f,p,s,tʃ/ in Word Final Position by Form Two Students

The words that contained sounds /t,f,p,s,tʃ/ included: **mate, leaf, slap, race** and **batch**

(ff. Appendix 13). The students' performance is shown in table 11(a) below.

Table 11 (a): Learners' transcription of voiceless word final consonant sounds /t,f,p,s,tʃ/

Learners' Transcription	School Category & Gender/Learner Transcription		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
correct	19	91	60	69	44	51	55	54	443	70.9%		
incorrect	6	34	30	21	21	19	30	21	182	29.1%		
Total	25	125	90	90	65	70	85	75	625	100%		

School Category & Gender

It is evident from table 11 (a) that most students do not have many problems with transcribing voiceless speech sounds /t,f,p,s,tʃ/ in word final position. Of the total transcriptions given, 70.9% are correct, that is, both female and male students have no difficulty transcribing the words **leaf**, **slap** and **race** (ff. Appendix 13). The students could be speaking English most of the time especially while in school. It could also be that teachers use strategies like simulation and role play, speech drills (cf. sections 2.2.4.3 and 2.2.4.6) in teaching these sounds. But there is 29% which the students transcribed incorrectly. Some students, both female and male, had problems transcribing the word **mate**, but girls in particular, had more problems transcribing the word **batch** than boys (ff. Appendix 13). The words were to be transcribed as /meɪt/, /bætʃ/. The students mistranscribed them as:

(i) mate - /met/, /mete/, /mait/

(ii) batch - /patch/, /burge/, /butch/ (ff. Appendix 15)

This could be due to poor modeling by the environment and especially the mass media (Radio and TV) programmes e.g. "Vioja Mahakamani". This was reported by 12.5% of

the teachers in the sample study that about 50% Of the students tend to emulate the comedians and news readers on radio and television and yet some of them are not good speakers of English.

4.4.3 (b) Transcription of the Speech Sounds /d,v,b,z,dʒ/ in Word Final position by Form Two Students

The words that contained sound /d,v,b,z,dʒ/ included: **made, leave, slab, raise** and **badge** (ff. Appendix 14). The students' performance is shown in table 11(b) given below.

Table 11 (b): Learners transcription of voiced word final consonant sounds /d,v,b,z,dʒ/

Learners' transcription	School Category & Gender/Learner Transcription		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M				
correct	19	94	62	72	48	55	62	49	461	73.8%		
incorrect	6	31	28	18	17	15	23	26	164	26.2%		
Total	25	125	90	90	65	70	85	75	625	100%		

School Category & Gender

It is noted from table 11 (b) that students do not have problems with transcribing voiced word final consonant sounds /d,v,d,z,dʒ/. Of the total transcriptions, 73.8% were correct as in the words: **made, leave, raise** and **slab**. This good performance could be that teachers are using speech drills, presentations and giving remedial exercises to students. It could also be that these are familiar sounds found in both English and the students' first language. On the contrary, 26.2 % were incorrectly transcribed. Some students in particular, girls, had more problems transcribing the word **badge** than boys (ff. Appendix 14). The word **badge** is transcribed as /bædʒ/ but the students mistranscribed

it as /batch/, /berch/,/berge/ (ff. Appendix 15). Students may not be doing individual exercises to practice how to transcribe these sounds.

4.4.4 Homophones in Sentences

Homophones were also part of this study. Sentences containing homophones were used to test if students were familiar with them. Quirk et al. (1985) define homonyms as words which share the same phonological or orthographic shape but are morphologically unrelated. For example ‘rose’ (noun) is a homonym of ‘rose’ (past tense verb). Quirk emphasizes that there has been considerable disagreement and confusion over the use of the term homonym, which has often been extended to apply to homomorphs (same morphological form but different syntactic function) e.g. ‘red’ as a noun and ‘red’ as an adjective. Similarly, ‘homonym’ has often been used ambiguously, according to whether it denotes identity of pronunciation, e.g. ‘trip’ – short journey and ‘trip’ – a fall, of spelling, e.g. ‘hare’ – animal and ‘hair’ – fine strands that grow from skin of people and animals, or of both, e.g. ‘saw’ (noun) and ‘saw’ (past tense verb). These distinctions can be made, where required, by the use of the terms homograph and homophone. Homographs are words with same spelling e.g. saw (noun) and saw (past tense verb), row/rəʊ/ and row/raʊ/ but different in meanings. Homophones on the other hand, are words with the same pronunciation as in heard/herd, no/know but different in spelling and in meaning. Homophones also occur in other languages, e.g. Lubukusu, ‘Omulosi’ (noun) - a witch and ‘Omuloosi’ (noun) – a wife/old lady.

The following are the homophonous words in context focused on the study sample:

- (a) The form two students are wondering **whether** the **weather** is changing today

- (b) We are going to **meet** at the hotel and eat roast **meat**
- (c) Write the names of those who want to go and see the baptismal **rite** in the church
- (d) Get me a rose **flower** and a packet of maize **flour** from the supermarket
- (e) They spent the **whole** day digging that **hole**

The results of their performance are shown in table 12 below.

Table 12: Learners' performance on identification of homophones

Homophones	School Category & Gender/Homophones		Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total	% of total
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M				
correct	23	117	90	86	63	69	80	72	600	96%		
incorrect	2	8	0	4	2	1	5	3	25	4%		
Total	25	125	90	90	65	70	85	75	625	100%		

School Category & Gender

It is observed from table 12 that students do not have any problems in identifying words which are homophones in the class test that was administered (ff. Appendix 3). Of the total questions asked, 96% were answered correctly. Both female and male students performed very well (ff. Appendix 16). This could be due to: first, teachers could be using different activities in teaching and building learners' vocabulary and familiarity with such English words (Byrne 1986). For example, through dialogue like:

*A: Tom will **wait** here until the **weight** of the sun flower is taken.*

*B: He will **wait**, get the **weight** of the sun flower and proceed to the market to **meet** his father and then buy **meat** from the butchery.*

*A: By the way, I'll tell you a **story** when we get to the **storey** building.*

*B: Sorry, I'd like to settle down and work out **some sums**.*

The highlighted words in the dialogue are pronounced the same and yet their meanings are different. The teacher can use it to teach homophones in English language.

Second, teachers could be using appropriate strategies in teaching pronunciation by enabling learners, or involving learners in making impromptu speeches. In such practice, the learners are made to use the identified words in their speech. Additionally, teachers may be employing the minimal pair test to enable the learners isolate speech sounds being taught in which the pair words differ in one sound and thus differ too in meaning. For example:

hat and hut /hæt/ and /hʌt/

bat and bad /bæt/ and /bæd/

chase and chess /tʃeɪs/ and /tʃes/

wine and vine /waɪn/ /vaɪn/

cat and cart /kæt/ and /kɑ:t/

Third, through class discussion teachers could be giving students through dictation and spelling tests words with similar sounds to identify their meanings. For example:

rain and reign

some and sum

sun and son

no and know

However, table 12 shows that of the total questions answered on identification of homophones, 4% were incorrect. It was observed that the words: **meet** and **meat**, **whether** and **weather**, **flower** and **flour**, as in the sentences given below, posed difficulties:

- (i) We are going to meet at the hotel and eat roast meat. The students identified **eat** and **meat** to be homophones instead of **meet** and **meat** in this sentence.

- (ii) The form two students are wondering whether the weather is changing. The students identified **wondering** and **changing** to be homophones rather than the two words **whether** and **weather**.
- (iii) Get me a rose flower and packet of maize flour. They identified **packet** and **supermarket** to be homophones instead of **flower** and **flour**.

According to Rivers (1968), it may be explained that any portion of language under study should be mastered orally before being introduced in printed form. Second, students need to do more practice in the active oral use of the language. In regard to the data in this study, the teachers could use methods like repetition exercises to emphasize and give special drilling in the major contrasts between the learners' language and English. Ultimately, the Kenya National Examination Council Report (2009) emphasizes that teachers of English should continue exposing students to more samples of homophones.

4.4.5 Stress Placement on Words and Sentences

4.4.5 (a) Word Stress

Gimson (1970) defines stress as the prominence or greater force given to a syllable in a word as it is being uttered. Accordingly, when an English word has more than one syllable one of these is made to stand out more than the other(s) (Kenworthy, 1987: 10). This is done by saying that syllable slightly louder, holding the vowel in the nucleus of the syllable a little bit longer, and pronouncing consonants very clearly. These features together combine to give that syllable prominence or stress. The following words illustrate:

'rebel (*noun*) and *re'bel* (*verb*), in which for the noun the first syllable in the example receives prominence whereas it is the second syllable in the word as verb that receives prominence.

The form in which a word is pronounced when it is considered in isolation is called its citation form (Ladefoged, 1982:97). Table 13 given below shows the students' performance in stress placement on the citation forms of the following words:

Pro'test – verb, 'protest – noun, 'present – adjective and 'present – noun.

Table 13: Placement of stress mark on words by learners – Private secondary

Stress placement	Stress Placement/Gender	Female	Male	Total	% of total
	correct		3 (15%)	44 (44%)	47
incorrect		17 (85%)	56 (56%)	73	60.8%
Total		20	100	120	100%

Gender

Table 13 shows that a large proportion (60.8%) of learners in this study has difficulty in placing stress on words correctly. It is evident from their performance in the production of the two words in their citation form that more female (85%) students than male (56%) ones experience this problem. For example:

Pro'test – verb – students placed stress on the first syllable instead of on the second syllable

'Protest – noun – they placed stress on the second syllable rather than on the first syllable.

This could be perhaps due to the fact that the words are being produced in isolation, i.e. in their citation form. This could also be that teachers may not be using materials like taped cassettes to teach students on stress placement in words in isolation; or in context. Teachers lack the necessary teaching equipment possibly because they are not available in schools. However, the small percentage of the students that is, 39.2% placed stress on words like protest – verb, protest – noun and present – noun correctly. This could be

either chance correct placement; or possibly the fact that they have encountered such words in context.

Table 14: Placement of stress mark on words by learners- public secondary

Stress placement	Stress placement/Gender	Female	Male	Total	% of total
	correct		31 (43.1%)	22 (30.6%)	53
incorrect		41 (56.9%)	50(69.4%)	91	63.2%
Total		72	72	144	100%

Gender

It is noticeable from table 14 that the performance of the students in stress placement in words is very low. It is observed that 63.2% of the total number of students and in particular, boys (69.4%), placed stress on words incorrectly. They did not know where to place stress when a word is either a noun or an adjective as in the following example:

'protest – noun – it was marked by some students as: pro'test, prote'st

'Present – adjective – it was marked as: pre'sent, prese'nt

This could be that teachers do not give emphasis on stress placement in words by using the appropriate teaching methods. For example, through oral practice, students can place stress in words depending on meaning/word class, whether the word is a noun or a verb and also identify which words are to be emphasized in a given sentence. Todd (1987) gives the following example:

(i) This is your 'permit

(ii) Per'mit me to say

In English a shift in stress pattern can indicate a shift in the way a word functions as the examples above. Thus, when 'permit' functions as a noun, the stress is on the first

syllable and when it is used as a verb, however, the word takes the stress on the second syllable. The other remaining percentage, 36.8% of the total students, mainly placed stress on protest as verb and present as verb correctly. This could be that they do individual work and they may have good command of English.

Table 15: Placement of stress marks by learners – Urban secondary

Stress Placement	Stress Placement	Female	Male	Total	% of total
	correct	28 (53.8%)	14 (25%)	42	38.9%
	incorrect	24 (46.2%)	42 (75%)	66	61.1%
	Total	52	56	108	100%

Gender

It is evident from table 15 that students in this category of schools especially boys (75%), have problems in placement of stress on words and 61.1% of the total number of students placed stress on words incorrectly. As students in public secondary schools, these also did not know how to mark stress in words as revealed from their performance in the class test for Form Two students as in the examples shown:

Pro¹test – verb – was marked as protest¹, ¹protest, pr¹otest, pro₁test

¹Present – noun – was marked as present¹, prese₁nt, pre₁sent

This could be that teachers may not be using reference materials like dictionaries and pronunciation models to teach stress in words. However, 38.9% of the students placed stress on words correctly. This could be that some students are self-motivated and do individual work on their own.

Table 16: Placement of stress marks by learners – Rural secondary

Stress Placement	Stress Placement/Gender	Female	Male	Total	% of total
	correct	25 (36.8%)	41 (68.3%)	66	51.6%
incorrect	43 (63.2%)	19 (31.7%)	22	48.4%	
Total	68	60	128	100%	

Gender

Surprisingly, table 16 shows that the performance of students in this category of schools is better compared to the other categories discussed above. Boys (68.3%) have performed better than girls (38.8%). On the whole, of the total number of students, 51.6% placed stress on words correctly. This could be that teachers in this category of schools are using the appropriate instructional materials like course books in teaching students. On the contrary, 48.4% of the total students placed stress on words incorrectly as shown in the following examples:

Pro'test – verb – was marked as 'protest, pr'otest

'Protest – noun – was marked as pro , test, pro'test, prote'st

'Present – noun – was marked as presen't, pre'sent, pres'ent

'Present – adjective – was marked as pr'esent, pre'sent

This could be that teachers do not give students activities that involve vocabulary, writing and reading skills. Kenworthy (1987) adds that English is variable – any syllable of a polysyllabic word can carry the main stress. This is very different from other languages which have 'fixed' word stress. For example, in a two – syllable word, the second syllable will always be stressed; in a three – syllable word the final syllable will always be stressed. In some languages the stress is always on the root, no matter what

affixes are added. If either of these tendencies is present in their own language, learners of English will unconsciously assume that English has a similar regularity. The following table 17 summarizes students' performance according to categories of schools.

Table 17: Placement of stress marks by learners according to categories of schools

Placement of Stress	Placement of	Private	Public	Urban	Rural	Total	% of
	Stress/School						total
Category							
correct	47 (39.2%)	53 (36.8%)	42 (38.9%)	66 (51.6%)	208	41.6%	
incorrect	73 (60.8%)	91 (63.2%)	66 (61.1%)	62 (48.4%)	292	58.4%	
Total	120	144	108	128	500	100%	

School Category

Table 17 shows that the performance of students in these categories of schools is low except the rural secondary schools (51.6%). Of the total number of students, 41.6% placed stress on words correctly. This could be that although teachers may be teaching them, they are also making a lot of efforts to learn/study on their own. Nevertheless, 58.4% of the total number of students placed stress on words incorrectly. This could be that teachers may not be applying the strategies used in teaching word stress for example, use of flash cards and literal materials like poems. It could also be that teachers have neither taught the students the rules for stress placement nor used strategies that could get learners to discover the rules themselves. Kenworthy (1987) adds that although at first glance the placement of word stress seems totally unpredictable as well as highly variable, there are rules and patterns. Certain suffixes seem to determine or 'govern'

where the stress falls in a word. If students can be made aware of these patterns, then they will be able to figure out the stress pattern of a new word for themselves.

The English syllabus for KCSE (1985) emphasizes that it is necessary for students to learn correct placement of stress and pitch modeled on Standard English in words and sentences because there may be problems of meaning depending on where the stress falls. Such problems are more effectively rectified if the teacher listens for words where the stress or pitch is consistently misplaced and gets the pupils to correct placement of stress or pitch chorally and individually. For example words that need the placement of stress are:

ad`vice	ad`vise
`present	pre`sent
`produce	pro`duce
`record	re`cord
`conduct	con`duct
`rebel	re`bel
`progress	pro`gress
`discuss	dis`cuss

Source: English syllabus for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (1985)

Quirk et al. (1985) say that we speak of stress when we are considering the prominence, usually perceived as greater loudness by the listener, with which one part of a word or longer utterance is distinguished from other parts. For example, the word *indignant* when uttered has stress on the second syllable. It is an adjective which means having or

showing angry surprise especially when one feels accused falsely. In such case, we can show the stress by a raised vertical mark: in'dignant.

Elegwa, et al. (2006) emphasizes that it is important to use stress correctly since stress placement can change the meaning of a word and its word class or part of speech in a word such as *conduct*, *subject*, *refuse*, *extract* and *absent*. Teachers can help students to perfect their stress placement by drilling and correcting them (Baker and Westrup, 2000).

4.4.5 (b) Sentence Stress

Baker and Westrup (2002) say that we stress syllables within a sentence, not just within a word. To mark stress in a sentence, we make those syllables louder and longer, and also higher in pitch. Kenworthy (1987) points out that in spoken English there are various ways in which a speaker gives the listener information about the relative importance of different parts of the message. One way of doing this is to put stress on the words which carry the most information. Speakers often decide that they want to give more or less prominence to a particular word. A word may be given less weight because it has been said already, or it may be given more weight because the speaker wants to highlight it. For example:

A: There's plenty of salt

*B: There isn't any salt on the **table***

In the above example, B would probably give extra stress to ‘table’, meaning: ‘There may well be salt, but I want to point out to you that, there isn’t any in a particular place – on the table.’

The students were required to place a stress mark on words that needed to be stressed to bring out the intended meaning in the following sentence.

I had 'never 'seen a 'doctor until the 'time I had 'Rift valley 'fever just be'fore I was to 'take my ex'ams in 'February – It was until I suffered from Rift valley fever that I ever saw a doctor in my life. This happened in the month of February before I sat for my exams.

Table 18 below shows the students’ performance.

Table 18: Placement of stress marks in a sentence by learners

Sentence stress placement/ School Category & Gender	Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total scores	% of total scores
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
correct	7	39	17	4	8	0	10	16	101	8.1%
incorrect	43	211	163	176	122	140	160	134	1,149	91.9%
Total	50	250	180	180	130	140	170	150	1250	100%

School Category & Gender

Table 18 shows that students especially boys (0%) in urban secondary schools have difficulties in placement of stress marks on words in sentences. 8.1% of the total number of students placed stress marks on the words in the sentence that was given correctly. This is very low performance. 91.9% of the students placed stress marks on words in the

sentence incorrectly. This raises concern if sentence stress in English is actually taught in these schools. Some students either placed no stress marks on the words or placed them at randomly, while others underlined a word or part of a word they thought carried stress. For example:

- (i) I had nev'er se'en a do'ctor 'un'til the time I h'ad Rift va'lley fe'ver, just 'before I was to ta'ke my exams in February
- (ii) I have ne'ver se'en a doctor un'til the time I had 'Rift v'alley f'ever, just be'fore I was to take my exams in Fe'bruary.
- (iii) I ha'd never see'n a do'ctor until the time I ha'd Ri'ft va'lley fe'ver, just before I was to ta'ke my exa'ms in F'ebruary
- (iv) I had never seen a doctor until the time I had Rift valley fever, just before I was to take my exams in February
- (v) I had never seen a doctor until the time I had Rift valley fever, just before I was to take my exams in February

This could be that the students were unfamiliar with this area of sentence stress and they did not know what to do. Kenworthy (1987) comments that every word seems important to someone who is struggling to put together a message in a new language. The concern 'not to leave anything out' often leads to overstressing; fluent speakers who are pausing a lot and searching for almost every word, often end up stressing every word. He adds that the introduction of sentence stress will be more effective if the teacher can select a context which forces learners to grapple with this notion of importance. For example, they could devise activities which will involve the learners in selecting according to importance like sending a telegram and writing newspaper headlines.

Although the learners have developed this concept in their native languages, sentence stress in English seems to be difficult.

4.4.6 Intonation Patterns in Sentences

O'Connor and Arnold (1973) say that English intonation means the pitch patterns of spoken English, the speech tunes or melodies, the musical features of English. Kenworthy (1987) adds that speakers can change the pitch of their voice as they speak, making it higher or lower in pitch at will. The two basic melodies are rising and falling. These can be very sudden, and can be put together in various combinations (rise-fall-rise, fall-rise-fall, etc). According to Gimson (1970), such rises and falls in pitch level, or patterns of intonation, have two main functions: accentual and non-accentual intonation. First accentual intonation accentuate intonation changes by means of rendering prominent for a listener those parts of a sentence on which the speaker wishes to concentrate attention (i.e. what the speaker considers to be important). For example:

'Jack _ˌ likes fish (i.e. not peter, but Jack likes fish). Second, non- accentual intonation is used as a means of distinguishing different types of sentences, for example, the same sequence of words may, with a falling intonation, be interpreted as a statement or with a rising intonation, as a question. For example:

_ˌ Jack likes 'fish (i.e. not meat or poultry, etc)

Quirk et al. (1985) explains that we speak of intonation when we associate relative prominence with pitch, the aspect of sound, which we perceive in terms of high or low, falling or rising. Thus we will say that the intonation nucleus in the following utterance has a falling tone, as is normal when a sentence is a statement:

The 'man has G` ONE

By contrast, if this nucleus had a rising tone, the sentence would usually have the value of a question:

The 'man has G´ ONE

The Form Two students were given the following sentences to indicate the intonation pattern:

- (i) We drank a lot of milk yesterd , ay.
- (ii) Which was the correct an´swer?
- (iii) Now do you believ´e me?
- (iv) I only need to se , e it.
- (v) I am not su , re, but I think she ca , lled.

Table 19 below shows the summarized results of the students.

Table 19: Marking intonation patterns in sentences by learners

Intonation Marking	Intonation		Private		Public		Urban		Rural			
	Marking/School Category & Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	% of total	
correct		8	16	0	0	3	6	0	7	40	6.4%	
incorrect		17	109	90	90	63	64	85	68	586	93.6%	
Total		25	125	90	90	66	70	85	75	626	100%	

School Category & Gender

It is noticeable from table 19 that students, especially in public secondary schools have a problem in marking intonation pattern in sentences. Of the total number of students only 6.4% marked intonation pattern in sentences correctly. It could be that the students are not being taught intonation in English as shown by this low performance and that least

or no remedial exercises on it are given. Shockingly, 93.6% of the total number of students marked intonation pattern in sentences incorrectly. They were not sure what they were supposed to do. Most of them underlined words which they thought would indicate intonation pattern in sentences. For example:

- (i) We ate a lot of bananas yesterday.
- (ii) Which was the correct answer?
- (iii) Now do you believe me?
- (iv) I only need to see it.
- (v) I am not sure, but I think she called.

This could be that teachers may not be involving students in class activities like drama, holding dialogues, language games and presentations. Again, it could be that teachers do not organize grammar/oral skills contests and public speaking in schools to help students improve in marking intonation patterns in sentences, improve learning and also develop confidence. Furthermore, students also may not be taking any action to try and improve on marking intonation patterns in sentences by doing individual and group exercises. Woodsworth (1967) points out that a student usually focuses on the pronunciation of individual words and, unless properly directed, fails to perceive and imitate the intonation of the sentence as a whole. Additionally, since all languages have intonation pattern (Kenworthy 1987: 39) it could be sensible to exploit in the classroom a tendency to compare the new and native languages as a means of building awareness of intonation.

Quirk et. al (1985) say that we expect a fall on the nuclear syllable in most questions beginning with a wh-word, as in (i) and (ii), in one-word responses to questions on words or names (iii) or even letters uttered in isolation as in (iv).

- (i) What's his name?
- (ii) What's the first letter
- (iii) 'Margaret
- (iv) P

The falling tone communicates an impression of completeness and that a tone unit has a falling nuclear tone unless there is some specific reason why it should not.

The rising tone is when we wish to indicate that our utterance is nonfinal or that we are leaving it open and inconclusive. This may be because we are counting or listing and have not come to the last item. For example:

- (i) Twelve, Thirteen, Fourteen, Fifteen
- (ii) There are fifteen

It may also be because another clause is going to follow:

- (i) When I came he greeted me warmly
- (ii) I saw her this morning and invited her to Dinner

Alternatively, we may be seeking a response from someone (but not by means of a wh-question):

- (i) ` Have I kept you waiting
- (ii) You're leaving already

It may show a polite suggestion that a (confirmatory) comment would be welcome. This might be expanded by adding a tag question with a falling nucleus:

She was looking háppy tonight, wàsn't she?

The absence of dogmatic finality in the rise may enable us to make imperative more gentle and persuasive:

- (i) Don't be unpléasant
- (ii) Please sit dówn

4.4.7 Contextual Interpretation of Sentences

Wardhaugh (1977) says that the study of meaning/semantics has been one of the most neglected areas in linguistics and such neglect is understandable because many serious difficulties arise in discussing meaning. One of the ways he uses to discuss meaning is by generative semantics. This means that the deep structure of a sentence is a semantic structure rather than a syntactic one and the syntactic restrictions and arrangements are completely determined by the semantic structure. For example:

- (i) His *operation* was a success – He operated successfully
- (ii) His operation was a *success* – He was operated on successfully

This problem of interpretation of meaning of sentences could also be found in other languages for example, Lwisukha Language:

- (i) Oyu *numwana* wewe – the speaker points out that the child belongs to him/her
- (ii) Oyu numwana *wewe* – The speaker is wondering whether really the child belongs to him/her or not

The following sentences were to be interpreted by form two students in written.

- (i) Is Jane *going* to Kakamega? – The speaker is wondering whether Jane is really going to Kakamega

- (ii) Is Jane going to *Kakamega*? – It is not clear whether Jane will go to Kakamega or elsewhere
- (iii) Are you happy with *her*? – It is not possible to be happy with her
- (iv) Are *you* happy with her? – You, of all people, can't be happy with her
- (v) Are you *happy* with her? – You cannot be happy with her

The table below shows their performance.

Table 20: Interpretation of Sentence by learners

Interpretation/ School Category & Gender	Private		Public		Urban		Rural		Total scores	% of total scores
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
correct	0	15	16	10	2	6	9	4	62	9.9%
incorrect	25	110	74	80	63	64	76	71	563	90.1%
Total	25	125	90	90	65	70	85	75	625	100%

School Category & Gender

It is evident from table 20 that students, both girls and boys, have problems with interpretation of sentences. Of the total scores, 9.9% were interpreted correctly although the students were not sure with what they were doing. The bigger percentage, that is, 90.1% was interpreted incorrectly as in the following examples given below.

- (i) Is Jane *going* to Kakamega? – Jane is taking off/shows whether the action is occurring at that moment/going is used to show the present continuous tense etc.
- (ii) Is Jane going to *Kakamega*? – indicates a place whether Jane is going to do something in Kakamega/ shows the place where Jane is to travel

- (iii) Are you happy with *her*? – Being sad with a person whose name is not mentioned but she is a girl/wants to know whether you are happy with her or not
- (iv) Are *you* happy with her – shows whether you are interested in her or not/inquiring if she/ you are happy with her/shows if they are both happy/Have you been impressed with her?
- (v) Are you *happy* with her? – shows whether you are happy with her company or not/The question is stressing on the act of being happy/the state in which the person is.

This could be that the students' experience of the English language is very limited. The Kenya National Examinations Council Report (2008) says that teachers of English should train students on how to derive meanings of words and phrases from the context, while the KNEC Report (2009) stresses that apart from teaching the students the use of the dictionary, they should explain the various shades of meaning and more importantly the fact that meaning is context based. Byrne (1986) advances that an important aspect of language is the need to learn how to make the best of the little you know; how to accommodate what you know of the language to the situations in which you are required to use it. Kenworthy (1987) also adds that learners need to know what to pay attention to and what to work on. Because speaking is for the most part unconsciously controlled, learners may miss something important. For example, they may not realize that when a particular word is stressed in a sentence, it can affect the message that is sent to the listener. The communicative theory explains this: that primary units of language are not

merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

4.5 Summary

Chapter four has focused on data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussions. Professional input to language teaching in Kenya and English language teaching in the classroom which included strategies adopted in the teaching of oral skills in Form Two, teachers' preparation of schemes of work, preferred oral skills by teachers, areas of success and problematic areas of teaching English language oral skills were highlighted. Finally the linguistic issues, the core of this study, comprising of articulation of the selected vowel sounds by form two students, listening and transcription of speech sounds of word final position, identification of homophones in sentences, stress placement in words and sentences, intonation patterns in sentences and contextual interpretation of sentences have been dealt with in detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The preceding chapter dealt with data presentation, analysis, interpretation and discussions. In view of this, the present chapter presents summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study set out to determine the linguistic strategies used in the teaching of English language oral skills in secondary schools in Kenya. It focused mainly on identification and description of the oral English language skills of secondary level of Form Two students, qualifications of the teachers of English who teach Form Two class, identification and description of the strategies used in teaching the oral skills in this class, the difficulties teachers face in teaching such skills and remedies that could be used to improve the teaching of oral skills.

It was noted that the oral skills at form two are taught and very importantly, the teachers of English prepare schemes of work. However, it was found out that the oral skills are not allocated adequate time compared to the other aspects of the course possibly because they are regarded as less important.

On the issue of teachers' professional qualifications, it was found out that the teachers teaching English in Kenya and in particular, in Kakamega District are qualified. It was

also found out that high percentage of teachers had received professional input through in-service courses.

It was noted that teachers use different strategies in teaching English oral skills except for stress placement, intonation patterns in sentences, and contextual interpretation of sentences. The most popular ones used include: speech drills, poetry, question and answer, dialogue, reading aloud, pair groups, discussion and story telling. It was found out that teachers of English have preferred skills they teach over others. For example, they prefer teaching pronunciation to other areas of oral skills like stress and intonation.

It was found out that teachers of English lack learning aids like radios, audio tapes/cassettes, dictionaries and enough textbooks to enable them teach oral skills with ease.

Further, it was also noted that in most categories of schools involved in this study, the students have difficulties in English language oral skills, especially in stress placement on words and sentences, intonation patterns in sentences, contextual interpretation of sentences and measures should be put in place to improve.

5.2 Conclusions

From the above findings, the following conclusions can be made. First, the oral skills are being taught except they are not allocated adequate time compared to other aspects of the content. Second, teachers of English in Kakamega District are professionally trained and qualified and a high percentage of them have received professional input through in-

service courses. Third, teachers use different strategies for example, speech drills poetry, question and answer, dialogue, reading aloud, pair groups, discussion and story telling to teach oral skills except for stress placement, intonation and contextual interpretation of sentences. Finally, there are difficulties in the teaching of oral skills because of lack of learning aids like radios, audio tapes/cassettes, dictionaries and enough text books.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, it is recommended that the teaching of oral skills at form two be strengthened. All learners should be encouraged to listen carefully to English being spoken, to write in English and talk in English. Teachers ought to ensure that this is done carefully without making learners look down upon their own languages.

It should be the case that teachers are provided with in-service courses in order to equip them with mechanisms and skills of handling the new syllabus, and, especially the oral skills which have been re-introduced.

Teachers should teach all the oral skills as stipulated in the syllabus so that students may not have problems in learning them.

Teaching and learning resources, especially the course texts should include more practical work, for example, practice exercises on word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and contextual interpretation of sentences.

While to the curriculum developers it is recommended that as they revise the curriculum, they may pay special attention to word and sentence stress, intonation patterns and contextual interpretation of sentences. To do so would improve students' performance in these areas. To the researchers, it is recommended that they may do research in other areas of oral skills not handled in the present study.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The present study focused on linguistic strategies used in the teaching of oral skills in Kenyan secondary schools: a case of Kakamega District. There is need to undertake studies on any linguistic form that has not been covered in this study.

In view of constant changes in the curriculum, it is necessary that studies be initiated to cover the following:

- The teaching /learning of English in the current 'integrated' problem.
- Preparation of English language teachers for the secondary school syllabus.
- Teaching/training in oral skills

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1****INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR FORM TWO TEACHERS OF ENGLISH**

1. Background information

Name of school..... Date of interview.....
 Name of teacher..... Class taught.....
 Size of class (a) Boys.....
 (b) Girls.....

Teacher's academic qualifications:

- (a) Diploma
- (b) Degree

Teacher's experience:

- (a) 5 – 10 years
- (b) 10 – 15 years
- (c) 15 – 20 years
- (d) 20 – 25 years

2. (i) How has your training in English enriched your teaching of oral skills?
 (ii) Briefly describe any in-service courses you have attended since completion of your training
 (iii) In what way have these in-service courses enriched your teaching of oral skills?
3. (i) How do you teach oral skills generally?
 (ii) What specific area(s) do you like teaching?
 (iii) Where are the main areas of success/weakness?
4. Besides the resource materials recommended what other materials do you use to teach oral skills?
5. What ways do you use to improve the teaching of oral skills?

APPENDIX 2
TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE OF ENGLISH

1. Background information

	Date.....
Name of school.....	District.....
Class.....	Division.....
No. of students in class.....	
Professional Qualifications of teacher.....	Age.....
	Sex.....
In-service course attended (if any).....	
.....	

2. (a) How often do you prepare the schemes of work?

(i) Termly (ii) Yearly

(b) How many oral lessons do you teach per week?

.....

(c) Name/list the methods you use to teach oral language skills

.....

3. (a) Which materials do you use in teaching the oral language lessons?

.....

(b) How do you use each one?

.....

(c) According to your answer above, how has this contributed to the teaching of oral language skills?

.....

4. (i) Which area of oral language skills does your students find more problematic?

(a) Pronunciation of sounds (b) Stress placement of words (c) Intonation

(ii) How do you handle the teaching of problematic sounds?

.....

5. (i) Do you give your students remedial exercises on oral skills?

Yes []

No []

(ii) If yes, how often?

(iii) What kind of remedial exercises?

.....

6. I find teaching of

(i) Pronunciation:

(a) Easy

(b) Difficult

(c) Other.....

(ii) Stress Placement:

(a) Easy

(b) Difficult

(c) Other.....

7. Give reason(s) which support(s) your choice in either of the alternatives in (6) above.

.....

APPENDIX 3
CLASS TEST FOR FORM TWO STUDENTS

1. Say the following words as recorded in the tape

bit	beat	ship	sheep
live	leave	hit	heat
mill	meal	lip	leap
rich	reach	lid	lead
fill	feel	sick	seek

(10 students)

2. Write the following words after they have been pronounced from the tape

(a)

(b)

hop	hope	let	late
not	note	met	mate
cock	coke	pen	pain
cost	coast	bet	bait
rob	robe	get	gate
rot	wrote	wet	wait

(whole class)

3. Write down the following words as you hear them being read from the tape

mate	and	made
leaf	and	leave
slap	and	slab
race	and	raise
batch	and	badge

4. Read the following sentences and identify words that are pronounced in the same way:

- (a) The form two students are wondering whether the weather is changing today.
- (b) We are going to meet at the hotel and eat roasted meat.
- (c) Write the names of those who want to go and see the baptismal rite in the church.
- (d) Get me a rose flower and a packet of maize flour from the Supermarket.
- (e) They spent the whole day digging that hole.

5. Place a stress marker on the following words as you hear them being pronounced from the tape.

- (a) Protest – verb protest – noun
- (b) Present – adjective present – noun

6. Identify and put a stress marker on the words that need to be stressed in the following sentence:

I had never seen a doctor until the time I had Rift Valley Fever, just before I was to take my exams in February.

7. Read and indicate the intonation pattern in the following sentences:

- (a) We ate a lot of bananas yesterday.
- (b) Which was the correct answer?
- (c) Now do you believe me?
- (d) I only need to see it.
- (e) I am not sure, but I think she called.

8. Read and explain the meaning of each sentence below

- (a) Is Jane *going* to Kakamega?
- (b) Is Jane going to *Kakamega*?
- (c) Are you happy with *her*?
- (d) Are *you* happy with her?
- (e) Are you *happy* with her?

APPENDIX 4
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Date.....

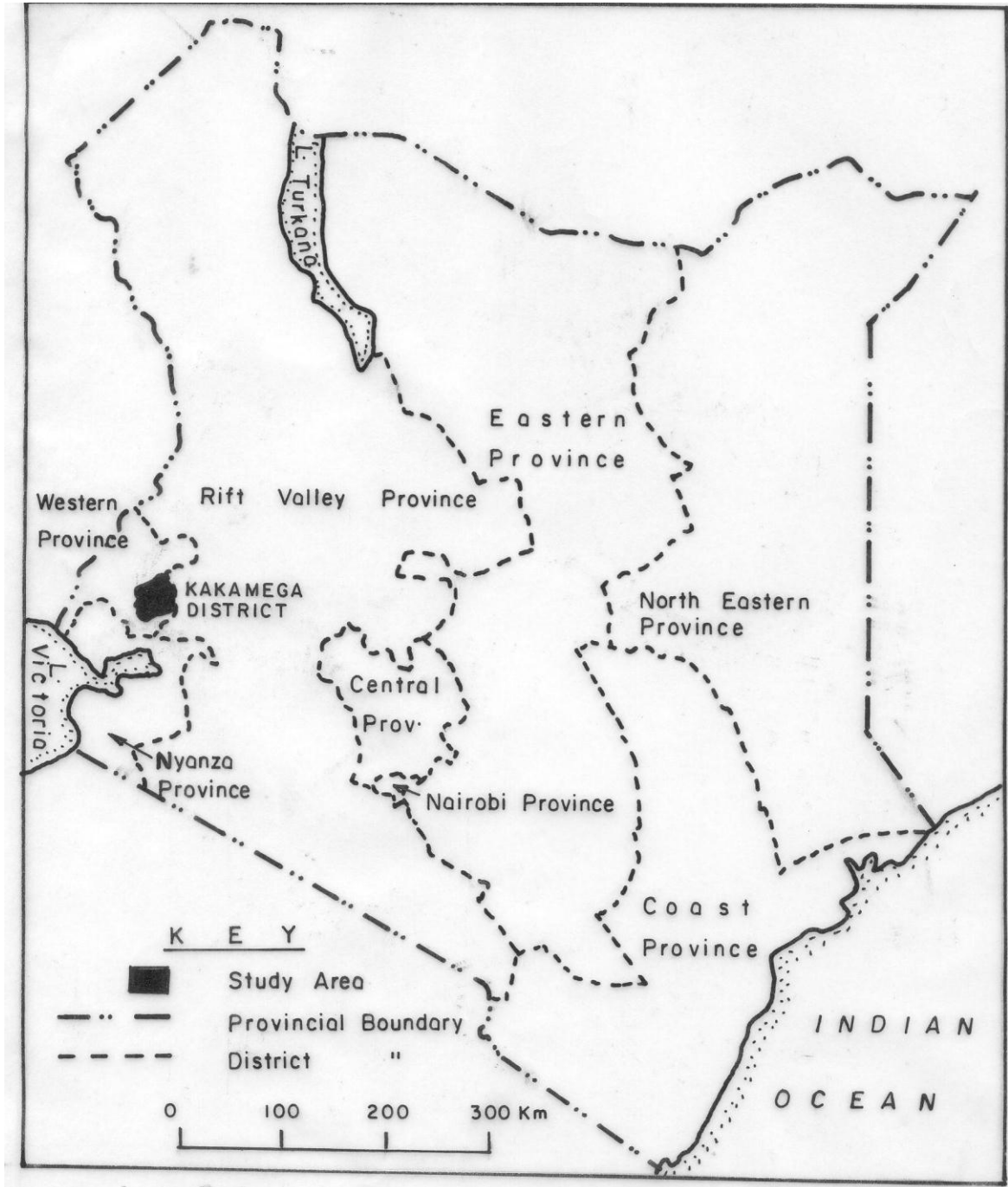
1. Name of school.....
2. The class being observed..... Time of lesson.....
3. Name of teacher..... Gender.....
4. Number of students in class.....
5. How many are: (a) Boys.....
(b) Girls.....

TEACHER (a) – KAKAMEGA HIGH SCHOOL FORM 2W

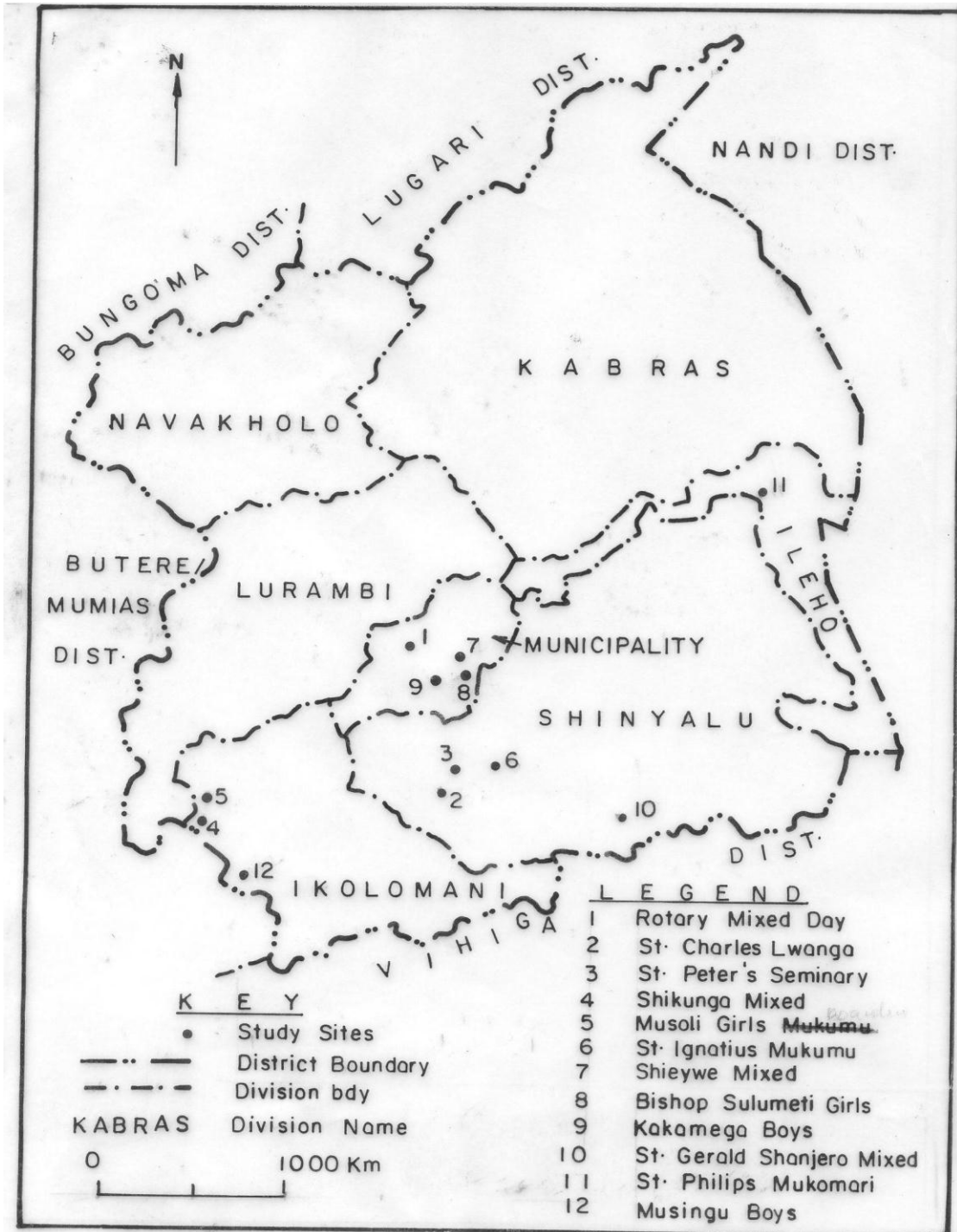
Observation Unit	LEARNING ACTIVITIES.									
Lesson	Speech drills	Dialogue	Debate	Presentation	Poetry	Telling Stories	Simulation	Role play	Reading aloud	Discussion
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

The researcher used this table to identify strategies teachers use for teaching oral language skills. The researcher attended four lessons in each school: two for observation and two for giving a class test.

APPENDIX 5
LOCATION OF KAKAMEGA DISTRICT IN KENYA



APPENDIX 6
SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA DISTRICT



APPENDIX 7

ARTICULATION OF SOUND /l/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /l/		Total No. of Girls=53	%	Total No. of Boys=72	%
Bit = /bit/	correct	48	90.6%	65	90.3%
	incorrect	5	9.4%	7	9.7%
Live = /liv/	correct	22	41.5%	25	34.7%
	incorrect	31	58.5%	47	65.3%
Mill = /mil/	correct	53	100%	72	100%
	incorrect	0	0%	0	0%
Rich = /ritʃ/	correct	50	94.3%	69	95.8%
	incorrect	3	5.7%	3	4.2%
Fill = /fil/	correct	52	98.1%	71	98.6%
	incorrect	1	1.9%	1	1.4%
Ship = /ʃip/	correct	33	62.3%	32	44.4%
	incorrect	20	37.7%	40	55.6%
Hit = /hit/	correct	52	98.1%	66	91.7%
	incorrect	1	1.9%	6	8.3%
Lip = /lip/	correct	28	52.8%	42	58.3%
	incorrect	25	47.2%	30	41.7%
Lid = /lid/	correct	52	98.1%	68	94.4%
	incorrect	1	1.9%	4	5.6%
Sick = /sik/	correct	53	100%	72	100%
	incorrect	0	0%	0	0%
Total	correct	443	83.6%	582	80.8%
	incorrect	87	16.4%	138	19.2%

APPENDIX 8

ARTICULATION OF SOUND /i:/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /i:/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Beat = /bi:t/	correct	46	86.8%	60	83.3%
	incorrect	7	13.2%	12	16.7%
Leave = /li:v/	correct	22	41.5%	24	33.3%
	incorrect	31	58.5%	48	66.7%
Meal = /mi:l/	correct	51	96.2%	66	91.7%
	incorrect	2	3.8%	6	8.3%
Reach = /ri:tʃ/	correct	47	88.7%	64	88.9%
	incorrect	6	11.3%	8	11.1%
Feel = /fi:l/	correct	45	84.9%	67	93.1%
	incorrect	8	15.1%	5	6.9%
Sheep = /ʃi:p/	correct	21	39.6%	33	45.8%
	incorrect	32	60.4%	39	54.2%
Heat = /hi:t/	correct	51	96.2%	62	86.1%
	incorrect	2	3.8%	10	13.9%
Leap = /li:p/	correct	23	43.4%	36	50%
	incorrect	30	56.6%	36	50%
Lead = /li:d/	correct	50	94.3%	64	88.9%
	incorrect	3	5.7%	8	11.1%
Seek = /si:k/	correct	50	94.3%	64	88.9%
	incorrect	3	5.7%	8	11.1%
Total	correct	406	76.6%	540	75%
	incorrect	124	23.4%	180	25%

APPENDIX 9

TRANSCRIPTION OF SPEECH SOUND /b/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /b/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Hop=/h ɒ p/	correct	30	56.6%	41	56.9%
	incorrect	23	43.4%	31	43.1%
Not=/n ɒ t/	correct	38	71.7%	57	79.2%
	incorrect	15	28.3%	15	20.8%
Cock=/k ɒ k/	correct	27	50.9%	30	41.7%
	incorrect	26	49.1%	42	58.3%
Cost =/k ɒ st/	correct	46	86.8%	65	90.3%
	incorrect	7	13.2%	7	9.7%
Rob=/r ɒ b/	correct	35	66.0%	40	55.6%
	incorrect	18	34.0%	32	44.4%
Rot=/r ɒ t/	correct	30	56.6%	47	65.3%
	incorrect	23	43.4%	25	34.7%
Total	correct	206	64.8%	280	64.8%
	incorrect	112	35.2%	152	35.2%

APPENDIX 10

TRANSCRIPTION OF SPEECH SOUND /əʊ/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /əʊ/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Hope=/həʊp/	correct	37	69.8%	50	69.4%
	incorrect	16	30.2%	22	30.6%
Note=/nəʊt/	correct	37	69.8%	46	63.9%
	incorrect	16	30.2%	26	36.1%
Coke=/kəʊk/	correct	10	18.9%	13	18.1%
	incorrect	43	81.1%	59	81.9%
Coast=/kəʊst/	correct	38	71.7%	58	80.6%
	incorrect	15	28.3%	14	19.4%
Robe=/rəʊb/	correct	17	32.1%	28	38.9%
	incorrect	36	67.9%	44	61.1%
Wrote=/rəʊt/	correct	22	41.5%	33	45.8%
	incorrect	31	58.5%	39	54.2%
Total	correct	161	50.6%	228	52.8%
	incorrect	157	49.4%	204	47.2%

APPENDIX 11

TRANSCRIPTION OF SPEECH SOUND /e/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /e/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Let=/let/	correct	30	56.6%	43	59.7%
	incorrect	23	43.4%	29	40.3%
Met=/met/	correct	34	64.2%	49	68.1%
	incorrect	19	35.8%	23	31.9%
Pen=/pen/	correct	52	98.1%	68	94.4%
	incorrect	1	1.9%	4	5.6%
Bet=/bet/	correct	37	69.8%	57	79.2%
	incorrect	16	30.2%	15	20.8%
Get=/get	correct	48	90.6%	61	84.7%
	incorrect	5	9.4%	11	15.3%
Wet=/wet/	correct	45	84.9%	61	84.7%
	incorrect	8	15.1%	11	15.3%
Total	correct	246	77.4%	339	78.5%
	incorrect	72	22.6%	93	21.5%

APPENDIX 12

TRANSCRIPTION OF SPEECH SOUND /ei/ BY LEARNERS

Words with sound /ei/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Late=/leit/	correct	31	58.5%	43	59.7%
	incorrect	22	41.5%	29	40.3%
Mate=/meit/	correct	20	37.7%	41	56.9%
	incorrect	33	62.3%	31	43.1%
Pain=/pein/	correct	44	83.0%	58	80.6%
	incorrect	9	17.0%	14	19.4%
Bait=/beit/	correct	25	47.2%	40	55.6%
	incorrect	28	52.8%	32	44.4%
Gate=/geit/	correct	35	66.0%	53	73.6%
	incorrect	18	34.0%	19	26.4%
Wait=/weir/	correct	49	92.55	61	84.7%
	incorrect	4	7.5%	11	15.3%
Total	correct	204	64.2%	296	68.5%
	Incorrect	114	35.8%	136	31.5%

APPENDIX 13

TRANSCRIPTION OF VOICELESS WORD FINAL BY LEARNERS

Voiceless word final sounds /t,f,p,s,tʃ/		Total No. of Girls =53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Mate=/meɪt/	correct	23	43.4%	37	51.4%
	incorrect	30	56.6%	35	48.6%
Leaf=/li:f/	correct	47	88.7%	63	87.5%
	incorrect	6	11.3%	9	12.5%
Slap=/slæp/	correct	48	90.6%	63	87.5%
	incorrect	5	9.4%	9	12.5%
Race=/reɪs/	correct	44	83.0%	65	90.3%
	incorrect	9	17.0%	7	9.7%
Batch=/bætʃ/	correct	16	30.2%	37	51.4%
	incorrect	37	69.8%	35	48.6%
Total	correct	178	67.2%	265	73.6%
	incorrect	87	32.8%	95	26.4%

APPENDIX 14

TRANSCRIPTION OF VOICED WORD FINAL SOUNDS BY LEARNERS

Voiced word final sounds /d,v,b,z,dʒ/		Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Made=/meid/	correct	49	92.5%	65	90.3%
	incorrect	4	7.5%	7	9.7%
Leave=/li:v	correct	49	92.5%	62	86.1%
	incorrect	4	7.5%	10	13.9%
Slab=/slæb/	correct	34	64.2%	50	69.4%
	incorrect	19	35.8%	22	30.6%
Raise=/reɪz/	correct	45	85.0%	63	87.5%
	incorrect	8	15.0%	9	12.5%
Badge=/bædʒ/	correct	14	26.4%	30	41.7%
	incorrect	39	73.6%	42	58.3%
Total	correct	191	72.1%	270	75%
	incorrect	74	27.9%	90	25%

APPENDIX 15

LIST OF WORDS NOT TRANSCRIBED CORRECTLY

(a) Sound /ɒ/

Hop –/ hope/hopp/

Not –/ note/knot /

Cock –/ coke/cork/coak/cok/coc/

Cost –/ coast/gast/

Rob – /rop/robe/rope/ropp/

Rot-/ roat/route/rote/wrote/root/

(b) Sound /əʊ/

Hope – /hop/houpe/hoope/hoop/

Note – /knot/naught/nute/not/knoot/noint/

Coke – /cork/cock/coark/coock/coak/cooke/cocke/cook/cok/

Coast –/ caused/caust/gost/cost/coursed/ghost/cost/

Robe –/ roupe/robb/roab/roob/roap/rope/roub/rob/robe/roop/rorbe/

Wrote

route/roat/roote/wroate/rote/rot/road/rott/raught/wroat/rode/rod/wraught/wrought/rought

(c) Sound /e/

Let –/ late/lit/lid/

Met –/mate/meet/meat/

Pen –/pan/ pain/ pane/

Bet – /bett/beth/bit/pate/bat/beat/pet/bed/

Get –/ gat/gate/

Wet – /wat/wate/wait/waite/weight/

(d) Sound /ei/

Late –/ led/light/lead/lete/laite/leat/lit/let/laid/layed/

Mate –/ made/met/mait/maite/mete/meet/mait/meat/

Pain – /pane/pan/pann/pen/pean/pin/

Bait – /bate/beid/baith/pait/beat/bead/beight/

Gate -/ geit/gait/geat/geite/

Wait – /waite/ weat/wate/wheght/whet/

(e) Word Final Sound /t,f,p,s,tʃ/

Mate – /mait/met/mete/meet/mat/

Leaf –/ liv/leave/life/leaf/

Slap – /slup/slep/slab/slape/

Race – /rais/ras/lace/ress/raise/reise/rase/

Batch–/burge/buge/butch/berge/patch/butch/burch/bach/budge/putch/buch/bunch/

badge/birch/

(f) Word Final Sound /d,v,b,z,dʒ/

Made – /maid/med/mid/mead/maide/

Leave –/ live/leaf/

Slab – /slub/slap/slarbe/slap/slerp/sleab/sleb/slape/slaub/slurb/slab/slarb/

Raise – /race/raize/rais/rise/rays/

Badge–/budge/bridge/batch/partch/patch

baurge/bage/baige/budge/bach/burge/berch/butch/

APPENDIX 16

HOMOPHONES IN SENTENCES

Words in sentences	Responses	Total No. of Girls = 53	%	Total No. of Boys = 72	%
Whether/weather	correct	52	98.1%	72	100%
	incorrect	01	1.9%	00	0%
Meet/meat	correct	50	94.3%	66	91.7%
	incorrect	03	5.7%	06	8.3%
Write/rite	correct	51	96.2%	70	97.2%
	incorrect	02	3.8%	02	2.8%
Flower/flour	correct	52	98.1%	67	93.1%
	incorrect	01	1.9%	05	6.9%
Whole/hole	correct	51	96.2%	69	95.8%
	incorrect	02	3.8%	3	4.2%
Total	correct	256	96.6%	344	95.6%
	incorrect	09	3.4%	16	4.4%

APPENDIX 17

LIST OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Rotary Mixed Day
2. St. Charles Lwanga Boys Boarding
3. St. Peter's Seminary Boys Boarding

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Shikunga Boarding/Mixed Day School
2. Musoli Girls Boarding School
3. Mukumu Boys Boarding School

URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. Shieywe Mixed Day School
2. Bishop Sulumeti Girls Boarding/Day School
3. Kakamega Boys Boarding School

RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

1. St. Gerald Shanjero Mixed Day School
2. St. Philip's Mukomari Girls Boarding School
3. Musingu Boys Boarding School