

**STRATEGIES OF TEACHING ENGLISH VOCABULARY FOR
WRITING COMPOSITION IN STANDARD SEVEN IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS,THIKA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA.**

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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

This thesis is dedicated to Almighty God, my family and my late father.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EFL	English as a foreign language
E L N	English Language Norms
E S L	English as a second language
H I	Hearing Impairment
K C P E	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
K C S E	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
K I C D	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
K N E C	Kenya National Examination Council
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
L A D	Language Acquisition Device
S L A	Second Language Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

For six years in a row, the performance of English language in general has been deteriorating, in Kenya, always attaining less than 50% in KCPE. Likewise, the performance of composition writing specifically was of great concern too. Most learners find it difficult to express themselves through selection and use of relevant vocabulary of while writing compositions. Since the knowledge of vocabulary is the single most important component of any language course, this study was to investigate and document the strategies of teaching vocabulary. It also examined the extent to which learners use vocabulary in their composition writing. Finally, it was set to find out how teachers pointed out the learners vocabulary mistakes and the learners response to the same. The study employed a descriptive research method and design. The target population was twenty two public primary schools, 2000 class seven pupils and 50 English language teachers in Thika sub-county. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used. The sample size was 10% of the target population of 2000 standard seven pupils and fifty teachers in public primary schools in Thika sub-county. The research instruments were the teachers' questionnaires, a checklist, an interview schedule and written compositions test for the learners. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, mean and frequency. Qualitative data was organized according to the objectives. The study addressed the gaps affecting the teaching and learning of vocabulary to help learners write interesting compositions to improve language performance in general. The study found that the decision to teach vocabulary lies squarely on teachers. This was so because 60% of teachers reported that they have time to teach vocabulary while 40% do not. Another finding was lack of consistence on how learners practice the use of vocabulary in composition writing. The study recommended that the teaching of vocabulary be prioritized. Learners who were exposed to vocabulary in various contexts were able to express themselves through appropriate use of relevant vocabulary to acquire good grades in KCPE. In conclusion, vocabulary knowledge is still an important component of English language learning as it helped learners to communicate in speech and writing. These recommendations will guide curriculum developers, designers, implementers as well as future research studies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

English language is the language of International Communication; this term covers both English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL) (Wingard 1981). It is a language in which most people in the world learn, speak and write (Ombati 2009). In most countries, where English is not a mother tongue, it is the most commonly taught foreign language. For example in Kenya, English is taught as a second language and as a compulsory subject in the school curriculum at primary and secondary levels (Kimemia 2009). According to Gachathi education report (1976) the teaching of English language was introduced as subject from primary one to make it supersede the predominant local languages as the medium of instruction from primary four upwards. In the university, English is the language of communication in teaching, learning and writing (Nyamasio 1992). In primary schools, it is used as the medium of instruction from class four and the language of examination up to University level, Ominde report, and (1964). English plays a central role in the study of all subjects and good proficiency in it is essential for academic success.

English is one of the official languages in Kenya such that being the language of the school; it has immediate transfer to the language of the community in Kenya (Ayot 1984).

It is mainly used in writing school teaching and learning materials as well as the legal documents such as the constitution of Kenya (Ngugi 2010). In spite of its crucial role in education and society, some children complete primary and secondary school without mastering writing skills in it (Ellis 1985). It is therefore necessary for learners to excel in English as a subject because the other school subjects are taught and examined in it. Writing is a skill not only for passing examinations, but helpful in our day to day activities such as writing a shopping list, directions, taking notes or letters to family and friends.

In formal contexts, writing is useful for filling forms, preparing memos, reports as well as official letters and minutes of meetings (Gecaga 2008). Knowledge of all English language skills is prerequisite in gaining employment in most of the sectors of the economy. It is therefore important that pupils learn how to write and relate meaningfully to what they write, (Groenewegen 2008). It is a well-known fact that without grammar, we may not be able to communicate very much but, without vocabulary hardly anything, (Gathumbi 2005). Use of vocabulary appropriately can be a speaker's and or a writer's strongest asset but when it is used inappropriately, it can be one's greatest liability.

The development of writing skills cannot be complete without looking at the strategies used for learning and teaching vocabulary and their use in writing composition. Language is considered as a system, it has elements that have to work in harmony. Grammar is normally seen as central element in the language system.

Learners need it for the development of the other language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, writing and vocabulary. They all relate to each other through vocabulary.

Grammar is made up of patterns and regulations that are used to convey meaning. It has the most distinctive aspect of language as it has features that are considered unique (Gathumbi 2005). According to Cook (1991) grammar had been given various labels by linguistics such as prescriptive grammar, traditional grammar and structural grammar. Abbott & Wingard (1985) said that Grammar is concerned with word or vocabulary formation and structures, parts of speech, sentence construction and functional categories such as subject, object and complements. Rules given about the vocabulary use and combination of all these elements are in grammar.

Although the new Kenyan primary school English syllabus (K.I.E, 2002), (now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) expected that; the learners be able to translate into use of English so as to enable them to listen, understand and respond appropriately, this has not been the case. Speaking with correct pronunciation, stress and intonations, and the ability to access written information through reading, has been an uphill task for many. Finally, enable to express their ideas meaningfully, legibly, accurately and fluently with originality and relevancy in writing proves to be quite difficulty.

Unfortunately, apart from speaking and listening, the other skills are examined in the final national examinations at primary level, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education, (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE).

The development of numeracy, reading and writing skills, generally referred to as literacy, provide basis for Kenyan school curriculum (Hann1984). This meant literacy, the ability to read and write simple sentence in any language was to be tackled and emphasized. Crystal (1999) argues that literacy is the main evidence of a child's educational progress. The four language skills that are emphasized in the Kenyan curriculum (2002) for primary education are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing is the last to master especially creative writing. Foundation in written work exists in introducing new language structures and vocabulary orally, creating realistic situational context, and giving plenty of practice in those situations. There ought to be plenty of practice of hearing and speaking before reading and writing stages are arrived at (KIE 1972). This practice takes a lot of time and is not necessary in our exam oriented system.

English literacy for all children only became a policy after an educational policy report by Ominde in (1964). Even then, the research project revealed considerable disparities in children's access to English language in their homes and schools. Disparities continue up to this day.

The recent English literacy norms (ELN) developed for standard 3 and 6 were aimed at setting the standard or norms in the context in Kenya's language policy. There are several language categories taught in Kenyan schools such as mother tongue, foreign languages, Kiswahili as a national language and English as the official language. The issue was that they only studied English to pass examinations. If the learners are not able to relate meaningfully to what they write, in expressing themselves, they usually are not communicating. They lack self-confidence and are not self-reliant (Groenewegen 2008).

Since the writing to be investigated in this study is the kind of writing that involves engaging ones brain before, during and after putting words on the paper. This can be completely difficult if the learner is not exposed to different kinds of vocabulary. This is because the writing process involved more than a moving hand. It takes a working brain as writing is thinking. It is always a process of discovery (Burns 1976). It often surprises the person holding the pen. This being the case, the need to learn and master vocabulary in different ways would help the learner to use them in expressing their feelings and thoughts. The appropriate use of a variety of vocabulary in the summative Kenya certificate of Primary education (K.C.P.E) composition writing was important. The candidates were expected to use relevant vocabulary learnt to write an interesting story on a given topic in forty minutes. This composition earns a maximum of forty marks. This therefore means that class seven is an important and special class which is appropriate for this study

According to Kenya National Examination Council KCPE report (2011), for the learners to write relevantly, he or she should interpret the title or topic of the story. This will depend on learners' experiences, interest, confidence and motivation. It also gives them an opportunity for demonstration of some elements of personal communication (Gardener, et al 1972).

The other challenges therefore, include sentence structures, use of punctuation marks like full stop, commas, speech marks, choice and appropriate use of expressive vocabulary. A legible handwriting is an added advantage.

Recognition of the importance of the English language mastery has led to the (K.I.C.D.) to state in the primary English syllabus (2002) that “at the end of the primary course, all learners are expected to have acquired sufficient command of English in spoken and written forms to enable them to communicate fluently. Despite this, English language is one of the worst performed subjects in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KNEC 2011). The English language composition writing has continually shown significantly low percentage marks in six year as reported by KNEC (KCPE) annual reports shown in table 1.1

Table 1.1 KCPE National Performance result in English written composition

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
40.48%	32.40%	42.70%	42.47%	42.43%	41.90%

According to KNEC (2011), English language in general was ranked second last. The only subject ranked behind was the Kenya sign language which was introduced recently for pupils with hearing impairment (H I). The southern African consortium for the measurement of educational quality (SACMEQ, 1998) and a report by quality education for social transformation (QUEST, 2001) indicated in 1998, criterion referenced reading tests, administered to a representative national sample, found out that 77% of Kenyan standard six pupils had not attained the English mastery level deemed desirable for successful learning in standard seven. This was bound to affect their writing skills at this level and hence their K.C.P.E performance.

Admittedly, there are many factors that contribute to lack of competence and poor performance in English language in both objective questions and composition writing. One of them was the teachers' inability to give learners sufficient instruction in writing (Groenewegen 2008). This was due to various reasons such as teachers' lack of training, experience in teaching writing skills, heavy workload and large number of pupils in a classroom. In such a situation, teachers find it difficult to handle effective teaching and learning of writing. This could be compounded by the fact that it is often difficult to measure writing skills (Harpin 1973). Factors related to instructional strategies will for instance contribute greatly to the learning outcome. The uses of relevant learning materials are also extremely important and cannot be ignored, (Kulm 2006).

In Thika Sub-county, the situation has not been different! In the last six years the class eight English performance has dropped and the mean scores were less than 50%. For the purpose of this study, English MOCK KCPE composition results for public schools were used because KCPE result is not separable. The mean scores for the years 2008-2013 is shown in the table 1.2

Table 1.2 Table Thika Sub-county Mock KCPE results

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
47.25	50.25	42.5	44.35	40.65	43.35

The centrality of vocabulary in English language learning had been emphasized by many Second Language Acquisition (SLA) scholars like (Lewis, 1993; Mc Cathy, 1990; Coady and Huckin, 1997; Thornsbun, 2003). Lewis pronouncement has been the most bold and provocative. He argues that vocabulary should be at the center of language teaching (Lewis 1993; 28). This was critically important to language learners, but had been under-valued in the field of SLA.

1.2 Statement of the problem.

The general performance of English composition in Thika had been below 50% for the last six years. Composition writing was greatly influence by the learners' ability to select and use appropriate vocabulary to express ideas interestingly. Good grades in composition writing depends on what vocabulary the learners know and how well he/she used them to express his/her ideas.

In the study of any language, the importance of vocabulary knowledge has long been recognized by scholars like (Mac Cathy, 1990; Singleton, 2000; and Kamil 2005) although research based conclusions have shown that vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in a learners literacy development, there was little emphasis on the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary in the school curricula and virtually no enough vocabulary development instruction that takes place during content delivery (Templeton & Pikulski, 2005;Beck et al 2002).

The Kenyan situation is not different as there is no vocabulary teaching strategies stipulated in the English language syllabus, (Njoroge & Ndungu 2009).Apart from consulting the dictionary for proper pronunciation, stress and intonation. There were no other instructions as to how the teachers could assist learners to build their vocabulary in a classroom set up. Since the new English syllabus (KIE 2002) adopts an integrated approach, it was expected that the learners picked vocabulary during the learning of the other language skills (Njoroge &Ndungu 2009). That was why this research was vital in finding out the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary used in writing composition. The study aimed at establishing whether learners used them in their composition writing. How the teachers helped learners to correct their vocabulary mistakes to improve their composition writing skills. Do learners respond to their assessed vocabulary mistakes in their compositions?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study seeks to achieve the following objectives;

- a. To find out the strategies used in teaching and learning vocabulary which are used in writing compositions.
- b. To establish the extent to which the learners were able to utilize the vocabulary learnt in composition writing.
- c. To find out how teachers assessed vocabulary mistakes in learners' written Compositions.
- d. To establish the learners' response to teacher's assessment of vocabulary in their written compositions.

1.4 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions

- a. What strategies were used in teaching vocabulary used in writing composition?
- b. Did the learners use the vocabulary learnt in writing composition?
- c. How teachers assessed vocabulary mistakes for the development of composition writing skill?
- d. How learners responded to the teachers' assessment of vocabulary mistakes in their written compositions?

1.5 Research Assumptions

- a. Class seven learners in public primary schools in Thika Sub-county learned vocabulary in different strategies of teaching.
- b. Class seven learners practiced using the vocabulary learnt in composition writing.

C. Teachers assessed vocabulary mistakes for correction and helped learners to improve their composition writing skill.

d. Learners improved their composition writing skill by responding and correcting their vocabulary mistakes.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study was significant in adding to the knowledge in the already existing literature on learning and teaching vocabulary in Kenya, (Ndungu, 2003; Ngumo, 2007; Orwenjo, 2003, Njoroge &Ndungu 2009). It contributes to the ongoing research on the teaching and learning of vocabulary used in writing composition which is examinable in both primary (KCPE) and secondary (KCSE) levels. This study also contributes towards English language teaching and learning especially vocabulary used in composition writing in Kenyan primary schools.

The techniques of teaching, learning vocabulary for composition writing and the comprehension of the learnt vocabulary was important. Although this research was limited to class seven it applies to all levels especially to those who are learning English as a second language. The findings would help writers of English language learning and teaching materials. It was of great help to the English language teachers in that it informed them of what techniques to use when teaching vocabulary intended to help learners write interesting composition.

The finding also informed and guided syllabus and material developers since it sheds light on the needs of the learners in topic selection, assessment as well as in learning vocabulary.

1.7.1 Scope of the study

This research specifically dealt with standard seven learners and teachers of English in selected public primary schools in Thika Sub- County. This was so because, at this level the learners were set to finish their primary education since most of the work in class eight was revision. In class seven the learners were expected to have acquired most of the vocabulary and the writing skill already established. This was in preparation for the summative primary examination (KCPE).

1.7.2 Limitations of the study

This study was limited to class seven pupils since it considered the performance of this class very instrumental to the composition writing in Kenya certificate of primary education examinations. It was also limited to writing as a skill which consists of many areas of concern. This study limited itself to composition writing specifically the strategies of learning vocabulary and using them. This study covered few randomly selected public schools.

1.8 Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework that guided this study was largely based on behaviorist psychologist B.F. Skinner. In 1959, Skinner proposed a program whereby learning had three elements. One of those elements was that learners were provided with information in small bits and bytes. Secondly, the learning process was self-paced by the learner. Thirdly, there was provision of immediate feedback both positive and negative to the learners. This approach was linear in nature and involved the following steps: learners were exposed to small amount of information and preceded from one frame to another item of information to the next in an orderly fashion.

Learners respond overly so that their correct responses could be rewarded and their incorrect responses corrected. Learners were informed immediately about whether their responses were correct or not (feedback), learners' progress at their own pace, (self-pacing). Programmed instructions were based on Skinner's "operant conditioning: Behaviorist theory conditioned by rewarding the right stimulus response patterns. According to Kearsley, behavior that was positively reinforced recurred intermittently, it is particularly effective.

(Romiszowski 1997) defined the 'core' of Skinner's stimulus-response model as "that learning had occurred when a specific response was elicited by a specific situation or stimulus with high degree of probability. The more likely and predictive the response, the more efficient learning was, in presenting a gradual progression of small units of information and relevant tasks to the learner. At each stage, the learner must actively participate by performing the set task. Skinner argued strongly for teaching designed to show what the learners know and build upon it, rather than what the learner did not know which mostly resulted in ridicule. He also argued strongly against teaching based on punishment.

The behaviorist conceived language as a conditioned verbal behavior consisting of a complex collection of stimulus-responsive bonds. Therefore, their view of the language learning process was one of providing student with sufficient practice to acquire the appropriate language responses. The student with sufficient practice acquired the appropriate language responses. The student was to spend the major part of his time responding to selected behavior, if reinforced it helped condition desired responses.

Language learning as a whole had greatly been influenced by behaviorist theories of learning. (Poltzer 1964) had stated that behaviorism was one of the basic contributions of Linguistic to the teaching of modern foreign languages.

(Valette 1966) also pointed out that textual materials in modern language were based on the assumption that language learning was chiefly a mechanical process of habit formulation. (Marton and Lane; 1961) had asserted that the tasks associated with second language learning are “indistinguishable” from those involved in conditioning learning in animal laboratory. The Skinnerian materials conformed to three basic principles mentioned earlier. That is, as the student progresses through stimulus response frames, he was first expected to make an active response to all stimuli. Secondly, the learner was led through small steps sequences which minimized the possibility of errors. Thirdly, one was given immediate feedback as to the correctness of his response (Markie 1969).

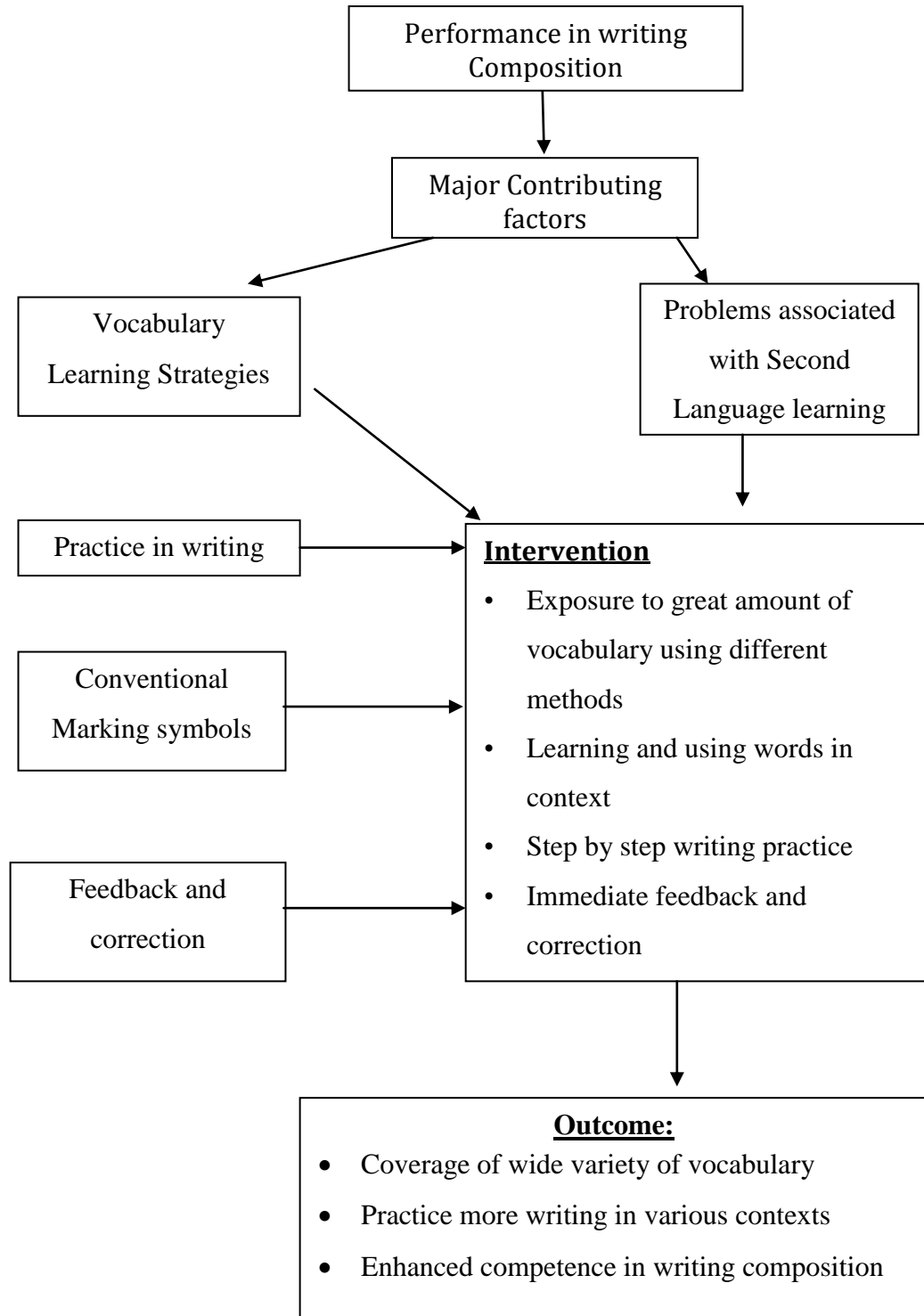
Writing tended to increase retention of learnt vocabulary, made available sources for later references; very importantly, it provided learners with physical evidence of their achievements and became a source whereby they measured their improvements (Carroll, 1966). According to (Chastain 1965), modern language teachers are faced with one central problem of developing the learner’s language ability in the second language. To a point at which learners’ language usage was characterized by the unconscious application of the rules of the language and conscious attention was paid to the ideas being communicated. In other words, for a language to be functional it must become a habit.

The second language learner was successful when he/she created almost instantaneously language appropriate to any given communicative context in both spoken and written situations. This theoretical framework informed this study that in developing composition writing skill, learners learned step by step. Individual learners progressed at their own paces, immediate feedback and corrections were important in the development and progress of composition writing skill.

1.9 Conceptual framework

This framework was based on the fact that the knowledge and use of English vocabulary was mostly realized in the performance of composition writing.

Figure 1.1 The conceptual framework showing the relationship of the study variables



Designer: Author

The conceptual framework guiding this study was based on the realization that pupils in public primary schools performed poorly in composition writing. This included the selection and use of vocabulary. The factors that contributed to this were the strategies through which vocabulary are taught and learnt and the problems associated with second language teaching and learning. Practice in the use of relevant vocabulary in writing composition, assessing, conventional symbols, feedback and correction.

The intervention to the problems of second language learning was the exposure to great amount of vocabulary and learning in the relevant contexts step by step. Composition writing practices based on the process rather than products, approaches immediate feedback and correction. Discussions were facilitated by the teacher helped learners to brainstorm every topic before they wrote individual work. This lead to coverage of variety of vocabulary used in familiar contexts, more writing practice and finally enhanced competence in writing composition.

1.10 Operational definitions of key terms

Active Vocabulary: Words that an individual recognizes in print and also uses correctly in speech and writing. In this case it meant production of variety of appropriate words in appropriate contexts to write interesting compositions or stories.

Composition: This was how different parts of speech of a language are organized and created a story on a specific topic and context.

First Language L₁: Mother tongue, the language acquired at home.

Hawthorne effect: The reaction of the test subjects that favored the research results, when they knew they were under study. This meant that pupils' written composition test was done in a normal classroom situation.

Learning ; A process that involved the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes from given sources through study ,realization of difference in what was known and what was the acquired in the new experiences.

Investigation: refers to a careful examination of the facts about a situation.

Mastery: This was the great knowledge and understanding of English language vocabulary and their proper use in both speech and writing.

Method: A particular way of doing something, in this study the words strategies, techniques and methods were used infer-changeably.

Passive vocabulary: Words that are understood but not used. These are words which a pupil was expected to recognize in print, know its meaning, in the context or even use them in writing but were not active in usage.

Procedures: are the correct and usual ways of doing something in this case teaching and learning vocabulary.

Second Language L₂: This was the language which a child learnt after the acquisition of the first languages. English is the second language to most Kenyan school children.

Strategy: is a plan to do something that was intended to achieve something or a purpose, in this case strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary.

Teaching strategy: was a way and it meant of carrying out teaching. It forms a general plan or design in which one fitted detailed instructional procedures.

Teaching: was a process of telling or showing someone how to do something either through talking, explaining, illustrating or demonstrating something.

Technique: a particular way of doing something, especially one in which you have to learn special skills. This meant learning vocabulary and using them in composition.

Vocabulary: the words that learners knew or used. A learner could have a wide or a limited vocabulary. In this case it meant variety of related words and their use in a context.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction.

This section covered literature review under which the researcher looked at, such as the importance of writing, writing in general and purposes of writing. The few related Kenyan studies and brief background of first language acquisition factors that influence second language learning. It also looked at the second language approaches as this study hinges on the general framework of second language learning. Finally, the strategies of teaching English vocabulary used in composition writing, assessing and correction. This was in relation to the development of composition writing skills and the use of the vocabulary learnt.

2.1 The importance of writing

Writing is one of the important activities of a literate community (Inyega 1986). This is the use of language in its written form, attaching meaning to words, phrases and sentences. This was done in a given topical context and was essential unlike hand writing which was a mechanical skill. Writing for communication presupposes, the learners had sufficient vocabulary to draw from in terms of words, that when put together in phrases or sentences brought out the intended meaning (Groenewegen, 2008). He further said that the importance of knowing how to write was that they did well in school as they learnt more vocabulary and related meaningfully to what they wrote. They enjoyed self-expression and learnt to convey needs in messages and other communication from within. As they got grounded in their writing skill, they became more self-reliant.

Writing is more than putting words on paper. It's the final stage in the complex process of communicating that begins with 'thinking'. It is an important stage in communication, the intent being to leave no room for doubts (Burns 1976). Writing is a more deliberate and conscious act than speech, it required the ability to reflect upon the choice of words to use parallel to those discussed by (Plarell 1981). Meta-cognitive abilities reflected on the ability to think and write deliberately. When writing compositions, learners were calling on both their linguistic knowledge and experiences. They used words relevant to what they want to communicate. To come up with a good interesting composition, required a learner who was independently able to read, comprehend, and interpret the meaningful words in a given topic.

According to (Thiga 1997) a topic was a limited subject that could be discussed with specific details. It also called for abilities to internally imagine and create own story. It was relevant to the pupils' age, experiences and environment. The selection and appropriate use of the correct vocabulary was very important. The vocabulary was relevant and communicates in a clear language that was understood reports KNEC (2011). (Templeton & Pikulski 2005) pointed out that; without learning vocabulary, many learners fell behind in other school subject areas. (McCarthy 1990) asserted that one of the most important tools teachers of English gave to their learners, to succeed in their education and life, was a wide range of rich vocabulary and the skill for using them in a given language.

This was because the effect of lack of attention to vocabulary instructions normally manifested itself in the higher level of education, where tests on reading tended to contain passages with complex content and uncommon vocabulary (Ndethiu 2007).

2.2 General studies on writing

Kenneavy (1986) said that “people were not born knowing how to do anything”, they all went through a process of learning the methods, and they practiced to make it perfect. This was true of writing, becoming a better writer started with learning and practicing the writing process. All writers, even professionals, struggle since they had to think of the right words to express new ideas. Writing was all about communicating ideas which could be powerful. This was because it convinced somebody into making important choices and decisions in life. Communicative language teaching was introduced between 1970s and 1990s by British linguists namely, (Halliday, 1973; Little wood, 1981 and Hymes. 1972) who were dissatisfied with the existing methods of language teaching. It was expected to take care of functional and communicative potential of language, a dimension of language teaching that had been overlooked (Hymes 1972).

(Gathumbi 2005) asserted that the goal of language teaching was having communicative competence on the part of the learner. Communication could be in written or spoken form. This study was about written communication. Writers had the knowledge to write scripts that made people laugh cry or scream during a movie. They design computer games and everything that is read or listened to.

This included the instructions on the user’s manual for consumer goods and house appliances like television. (Kenneavy 1993; 5), writing about the power of communication, argued that all writers, who influenced our lives shared the same secrets, that is, they knew how to communicate, what to say about a subject or a topic and someone to whom they are writing.

Although writers vary in the way they work through the process, they all used the following basic steps as which are: Prewriting: this was looked at as the first step which entailed thinking and planning. It involved choosing a subject, a topic or a purpose, and an audience; this was the person or persons to whom you are writing to. In this stage, the writer determines what he or she is going to write about and collect ideas. One created a plan for presenting ideas. It included brainstorming or listing ideas as quickly as they came to mind. In writing a first draft, one expressed ideas and details in sentences and paragraphs following the plan for presenting ideas. One also included ideas discovered during writing.

Evaluating and revising entailed looking over the draft, deciding on what is good and what needed to be changed and making changes to improve it. The writer therefore at this stage judged content, organization and style. In proof reading and publishing, the writer wanted to find and correct errors or mistakes. Then write or print out a final copy and share it with the audiences (Kenneavy 1993).

2 .3 Purposes of writing

There are many reasons why authors write. The aims or purposes of writing could be numerous and each piece of writing has its own individual purpose. Some of the basic aims according to (Kenneavy 1993) are discussed in the following paragraphs. Expository – under this the writer aimed at giving facts or passing information to the reader (informative): This was when the writer writes with the intentions of giving facts or other kinds of information. Expository is when the writer investigates in depth a complex idea or seeks an answer to a question.

In self-expression, a writer simply wanted to express his/her personal feelings, thoughts or opinion, a writer with descriptive aim gave detailed explanation of how something looked like, how it happened in a way that appealed our senses. The writer shared everything they observed, thought, and felt about a person, place, an event or even an object writes (Ngila, 2010).

In narratives, the writer was compelled to essentially give logical sequence of events, give sorted out ideas and events that were well planned (Bwire 2010). Failure to plan led to a lot of irrelevance. Sometimes one needed to cut down unnecessary details because of time. The writer simply and allowed the story to unfold naturally. Repetition of words should be avoided (Ngila, 2010). The greatest amounts of our oral and written communication are in the form of narration. Whenever we told or wrote about what happened, related occurrences in a series of events, we are narrating (Matiru 1984). Furthermore, narration could be formal or informal. Informal ones are often written to entertain and tended to follow a style of spoken language. Formal narratives such as those found in textbooks, reports, or lectures are intended primarily to inform.

In literary writing, writers created imaginative work such as short stories, novels, poems, lays and songs (Mugubi 2002). This included two broad categories of writing, creative writing and functional writing. Under creative writing, such as writings dialogues, conversations, miniature plays, poetry and stories. Functional writing are such as; reports, book review, scientific experiments, articles, announcements, invitations, condolences and advertisements (Gathumbi 2005).

According to (Mwanzi 1984) there are those forms of writing which are essential for general classroom learning for practical purposes in everyday life. For example writing letters, invitations, interviews, dialogues, reports, agenda, inventories, summaries and minutes are of great use to everyone. She further explained that letter writing was quite a challenging skill. They are used in vocabulary use for writing and are treated in the same way as the compositions.

The challenge lies in the format and in many cases, in the language which inhibits practice in letter writing. There are two types of letters, official (formal) letter and informal letter (friendly). Matiru 1984) said that in a friendly letter, the first areas of concern are the positioning of the address, date and salutation. The address of the friendly letter is normally in the slant form while that one of official in block format. In both addresses there is a comma after every line of the address and a full stop at the end of it. She goes on to explain that the date is written after the senders address, using words for the month and numbers for the date and year. The last handle is the conclusion. Like the salutation, the name normally used by the writer in ordinary conversation is used in the conclusion.

The relationships between the writer and the addressee may be used for a friend, your loving friend or yours affectionately.

Before learners are able to write compositions, many aspects of writing need to be considered these include; Learning how to write letters, as well as putting words together to make sensible sentences and paragraphs (Olando & Wacira 2011). Unlike the other English languages learning skills, composition writing is the most complicated. Learners, teachers and authors in general keep on improving

(Kenneavy 1986) throughout their writing career life. Writing composition is an advanced skill, especially to Kenyan primary school learners most of whom are not competent in writing their L1.

English as their second language alone presents its own problems (Gathumbi 2005). The learning of L2 and eventually composing creatively in the same language, present problems to different learners in different ways argues (Thiga 1997). The teaching of vocabulary for writing composition is not separable from the other English learning skills.

According to (Mujidi 2008), the fourth macro skill of language acquisition is writing. It is said to occupy a central role in all levels of literacy that is performance, functional, informational and epistemic level. Reading, writing and communication skills according to (Wells 1989) are called “literate thinking”; they also refer to using language deliberately as a tool of thinking. Wells (1991) makes distinctions among the processes believed to be involved in literate behavior and identifies four levels of literacy mentioned earlier.

The basic writing skills include holding a pen/pencil, forming letters and the ability to copy letters of the alphabet on papers or other media. Good handwriting, proper spelling and right punctuations constitute the primary skills. However, writing is more than putting words on paper as it is the final stage in the complex process of communication that begins with “thinking”, (Burns 1976). Learners need to acquire and develop pre-writing skills; they start with scribbling, making circles and other basic shapes on the floors and other surfaces.

This helps them to gain control of small finger muscles through squeezing activities, pinching and tracing activities (Akaranga 1995). According to (Mujidi 2008), our Kenyan situation of learning to write in second language there ought to be plenty of hearing and speaking before reading and writing stages are arrived at. Teaching English, method's Handbook by (KIE 1972) states that learning to write starts with letters of the alphabets, syllables then two or three-letter words followed by more complex one. All this start by copying before they can write their own following known to unknown and simple to complex words and sentences explains (Mujidi 2008).

2.4 Few Kenyan related research studies

The researcher reviewed a few studies carried out in Kenyan which are related to vocabulary and composition writing. They revealed that, learners display difficulties in acquisition and use of vocabulary in Kenyan high schools, (Njoroge & Ndung'u, 2009; Nyamasyo, 2002). A number of issues like poor spelling, limited vocabulary and inability to express ideas when writing compositions in English are some of the problems that learners' face, when they leave both primary and secondary schools.

That was why this research study sought to address the strategies of teaching vocabulary to class seven pupils in public primary schools and focused on whether they used them in their composition writing. A study carried out by (Inyega 1996), on factors affecting performance in English written composition, found that the writing of compositions as an activity of a literate community is an indication of the importance of English language.

As a form of communication, writing was also used to record events, experiences, convey information, feelings and ideas. According to (Allen & Valet 1972), it was obvious that it took many years of intensive study to write a second language fluently. This meant that writing as a skill was not automatic; and could only be taught in schools and not acquired like speaking.

Another study by (Sure 1982) on factors influencing achievement in written composition in primary schools in Thika and Nairobi found that pupils performed better because the schools had enough teachers. They also had extra teacher deployed for remedial work alone. In addition, those who taught English were involved in the setting and marking of the K C P E in the national level. This indicated that those teachers who were examiners with KNEC were assumed to do better in teaching, vocabulary as well as composition writing.

Rwanda (2009), on the search for breath and depth of vocabulary in comprehension found out that, as far as composing was concerned, developing a rich vocabulary was a priority and an ongoing challenge for both L1 and L2 learners.

This research was set to investigate the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary used in writing compositions. She further said that limited passive vocabulary made it difficult for learners to comprehend age- appropriate learning activities and express themselves especially in writing.

Teresia (1997) observed that while L1 pupils arrived at pre- school with a command of 2000-6000 words.

Most L2 pupils began their academic experiences at zero. Once in an academic setting L2 pupils are exposed to a great amount of vocabulary in the target language than pupils in a traditional L1 learning setting. Due to the intense focus on content in the classroom setting and lack of systematic vocabulary instruction in the syllabus, most L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge was insufficient for quality and appropriate expression in composition (Rwanda 2009). This helped to explain this study why learners needed to be exposed to variety of vocabulary learning strategies in different context to use when writings.

A study by (Thiga 1997) on cohesion and compactness in composition written by Kenyan urban primary school children found out that, L2 learners learning to compose in it is quite a demanding task, presents innumerable problems for the Kenyan child in particular. This was because most of them were yet to develop composing skills in their L1. This implied that it was necessary for learners to acquire a good command of their mother tongue, acquire necessary vocabulary and sentence pattern, before learning to compose in a second language. This research looked at strategies of teaching and learning English vocabulary, and using them in writing compositions.

Educational failure was primarily linguistic failure especially in writing considering that English is a second language and the language of examinations in Kenya. Writing is a deliberate and conscious process of forming letters on papers or other surface to record ideas by visible signs (Webster, 1993). Writing needed to be planned and organized because it was deliberate and conscious (Gathumbi 2008). Writing like speaking is a productive communication skill.

This demanded not only the writers' ability to form letters on papers and other media, but also, the knowledge of vocabulary in a communicative relationship. In a second language situation, creative writing skills were the most difficult to master. Student could achieve a high degree of correctness in spoken English when they concentrate on one or two grammatical features on single sentence exercises. But these students could not achieve the same standard in continuous writing. This was because the skills are not the same (Gathumbi 2005).

Applied linguistic scholars, such as (Inyega1986), Groenewegen, 2008 & Doff 1995) were in agreement that the best way to help learners acquire these writing skills was by providing them with opportunities for practice. Making and correcting mistakes was part of learning. It should not be used to frustrate learners, which are in line with the theoretical framework guiding this study. It was based on practice, feedback and corrections which are the essence of behaviorist theory and specifically programmed learning.

Although marking is part of the teaching task, teachers, especially the English language teachers spent many hours marking, grading class work and correcting those tiresome errors that crop up again and again. Sometimes the vocabulary mistakes are underlined or encircled to indicate errors (Gannon 1985). Teachers needed to agree with the learners about a few conventional abbreviations to be used during the marking. This helped learners to correct their own mistakes (Gecaga 2008). This study investigated whether learners corrected their mistakes to improve their skills in writing composition.

There are classroom procedures of teaching and learning writing, skills that followed certain principles of learning, although the composition writing performance results indicated differently.

The research looked at the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary for use in creative writing. It also looked on how the learners are helped to enrich their expressive vocabulary by replacing general terms with more specific ones in a context (Gathumbi 2005). Language learning is divided into four- areas. The skills are not to be treated in total isolation of each other; the integrative approach is applied, even when one skill like writing is the primary focus.

According to (Gathumbi 2005), the teaching process should be learner centered. This meant that the learners did most of the work. The teacher only played the role of advising and monitoring the tasks (Twoli 2007). There are many areas where learners experienced problems but this study only focused on the strategy of teaching and learning vocabulary and how the learners use them in writing their composition.

2.5 First language acquisition factors that influences second language learning

It was important to consider how children acquired their first language since some ideas about the first language acquisition were found to be influential in the field of second language learning. According to (Skinner 1957) language was not a mental phenomenon; it was a behavior. Like any other forms of human behavior, it was learnt by a process of habit-formation.

The main components of habit formation are that the child imitated the sounds and patterns which he heard around him (Good luck 1996). The people recognized the child's attempts as being similar to the adult models and reinforced them, (reward) the sounds, by approval or some other desirable reaction. In order to obtain more of these rewards, the child repeated the sounds and pattern, so that they became habits. This way, the child's verbal behavior was conditioned or shaped until the habits coincided with the adult models by the approval or some other desirable reaction.

The habit formation process was essentially the same as when a pigeon's behavior is shaped, so that it pecked at the correct discs in order to obtain food. Within this framework, the child's own utterances were not seen as possessing a system in their own right but as faulty version of adult speech. The mistakes are simply the results of imperfect learning; the process of habit-formation had not yet had time to run its full work. The behaviorist view of first language acquisition was strongly challenged as from 1960 onwards by (Chomsky 1994) linguistic theories and cognitive psychology. The arguments which had convinced researchers about the inadequacies of the behaviorist approach were that language was not merely verbal behavior.

Underlying the actual behavior that were observed, was a complex system of rules which enabled speakers to create and understand an infinite number of sentences, most of which have never been encountered before.

The capacity to learn language was deeply ingrained in us as species (Dan Stobin 1994). (Chomsky1994) agreed that we are designed to walk; we are not taught to.

It is pretty much; the same about language. Language acquisition is a creative process. Nobody was taught language in fact nobody can prevent a child from learning it. This was referred to as innateness. This creativity would not be possible if we had to rely on individual bits of learnt behavior. It was only possible because we had internalized the underlying system of rules. The knowledge of these rules was our linguistic competence which was different from the performance that could actually be observed (Krashen 1991).

The graphic representation of sound combination was an abstraction with an arbitrary relationship to that which it represented and was frequently over-looked. Convention alone made the relationship between sound and written symbols predictable. The abstract quality of a written communication was intensified by its complete detachment from expressive features, such as facial or body movement's, pitch, the tone of voice, hesitations or speed of the delivery as well as the emotional indicators such as heightened facial color and or variation in breathing. Writing lacked material context, surroundings, feedback from interlocutor or (the person you are writing to) as well as the relevant movements. Its displacement in time; like a written communication may be read as soon as it was written (like a note slipped to a companion) after months, years or centuries later.

It was interesting that we often did not understand a note we ourselves wrote earlier. The operation of writing, unlike speaking, must be performed as it were in a void, in response to a personal internal stimulus. Consequently, the writer must compensate for the absence of external contextual elements by deliberate inclusion and elaboration of explanatory details which the speaker omitted (Gathumbi 2005).

According to (Bloomfield 1887-1947) writing was not a language, but merely a method of recoding language by mean of visible marks.

According to soviet psychologist (Vygolsky1986) who drew our attention to the fact that writing was one of the higher functions of human consciousness which involves more than mere physical skills. It was characterized by awareness, abstraction and control. (Vygolsky in Scinto 1986) suggested that the comparative difficult for the child who was acquiring facilities in speech and in writing, approximates that of learning arithmetic and algebra. Most children learnt to speak and express themselves effectively in speech at about the same age, even though some personality and temperament may be more articulate than others. Many people never learnt to express themselves freely in writing.

To write so that one was really communicating a message, isolated in place and time, was an art that required consciously directed effort and deliberate choice in language. The high level of written expressions was so difficult to attain in a second language like learning to pronounce the allophones of /t/ by a process of successive approximations in imitations of a model may be relatively easy. Learning to say /t/ in response to various graphic combinations in a script and in a variety of graphics contexts is already more complicated? It demanded the recognition of abstract representations and their conversion from a visual to a phonic form, before the skill acquired in the simpler act can come into operation in the new situation. In short, it required awareness of the relevance of the graphic symbol and the recognition of what it stood for.

Children learnt abstract knowledge of rules or competence. However this was not what they are exposed to; they were only exposed to people's speech (performance). This process of extracting and abstracting knowledge from concrete examples cannot be explained by habit formation. The learning task was therefore a complex one. It was perhaps more complex than any other learning tasks that most human being undertook. Yet it occurred at a very early age and with exceptional speed; by the age of between three and a half and five years, normally – endowed children had internalized all the basic structures of their language.

Again this cannot be explained by habit-formation alone argues (Chomsky1964). (Rock 1984), observed that although children are exposed to different actual speech, they arrive at the same underlying rules as other children in the community? The evidence also suggests that they pass through similar sequences in acquiring these rules. From the onset, children seemed to be constructing their own rule system, which they gradually adapted in the direction of the adult system. This meant that the Child's language was not simply being shaped by external forces; it was being creatively constructed by the child as he interacted with those around him. This creative 'construction' hypothesis also had considerable influences on people's theory about second language learning (Ellis 2010).

The first language was the native language which learners already had and processes a set of its habit. Some of these earlier habits helped the new learning task, others hindered it. From the behavior perspective, when the first language habits were helpful to acquiring second language habits, we said this was positive transfer. This was because it helped to facilitate the learning of the new language.

This could be so especially if the subject – verb – object sequences was transferable directly into the second language. This, in our Kenyan situation could be likened to some Bantu language speakers learning ‘Kiswahili’ which has similar sequences and could be transferred directly (Gathumbi 2008).

If the first language and the second language being learnt are not transferrable directly, then the first language habit hindered the learning of the new one. It was a case of negative transfer or interference which was the most common terminology used to describe this situation. Interference was caused by the differences between the two languages. It was also said to be the learning difficulties and errors says (Ellis 2010). This had strong implications in second language instruction. We could compare the learner’s first language with the second language he was trying to learn. This was called constructive analysis said (Ellis 2010; 33).

With the differences that emerged from the above analysis, one could predict the language items that would cause difficulty and the error that the learners are prone to make. This belief was called the ‘contrastive analysis hypotheses (CA). We could also use the predictions in deciding which items needed to be given special treatment in the courses that we taught or the materials that we wrote. Intensive techniques can be used for those specific items. Such methods could be repetition, drills, audio-lingual and an audio-visual course (Cook 1993). Earlier he had noted that the learner’s first language habit could either facilitate or hinder the learning of second language habits. These mistakes resulted from the hindrances and interferences should not be seen as signs of failure.

On the contrary, they are the clearest evidence that the learners are developing systems and can offer insights into how they process the data of the L2. They kept on constructing rules from the data they encountered and gradually adopting these rules in the direction of the target language. On the Same note we would not expect all their incorrect notions about it to be simply result of transferring rules from their first language, but direct reference to the target language itself. This transferring rule from mother tongue was called Interlingua errors. They also made errors which showed that they are processing the second language in its own terms. These incidences showed that learners employed similar strategies that were generalized and simplified (Lock 1984).

Generalization was the judgmental learning strategic in all domains, even in L1 (Ellis 2010). In order to make sense of our world, we allocated items to categories on the basis of this categories, we constructed rules which predicted how the different, items behaved. This was clearly seen when learners generalized that all plurals are formed by adding a suffix “s”. They ignored the exception rule.

They also generalized that all past tense are formed by adding a suffix “ed” these error are common to both first and second language learners in speech and writing explained (Lanza 2004).

Simplification was the method learner’s used to eliminate many items like the demonstration pronouns, like one could say; teacher book instead of saying the teacher’s book or the teacher want a book. This reduction made production easier for the learner but incomprehensive for the listener or reader.

Both generalization and transfer mentioned earlier helped the learners to construct the rules which underlie the second language; they are creative construction hypothesis (Lock 1984).

Sometimes errors made in speaking and writing are errors like slips of the tongue ,loss of track of a complex sentence structure as we utter or write it down. In most cases learners are able to correct these kinds of errors themselves. They caused concern to the teacher when they were repeated over and over again argued (Chomsky1980). Lastly, there are errors that are due to the effects of teaching. They may be misunderstanding caused by faulty teaching, methods or materials. The errors are made in both formal and informal learning (Lock 1984).When English is taught as a foreign language (EFL), Systematic instruction in writing could produce tangible results. According to (Ward 1987), nothing was more fundamental to writing than the production of well- organized sentences. Oral practice prompted the pupils to compose whole sentences.

This practice enriched the writing of compositions. In writing, there is important related vocabulary (register) suitable and appropriate in a context or topic (Scheega 1998). Learners throughout the world learnt vocabulary in different ways in different language contexts. Some learners are exposed and heard words every day in and out of schools, so they began to understand and use it almost effortlessly.

Others hear it only at school; even their teachers may not speak much English so it becomes more difficult for them to learn to use English vocabulary (Joanna 2003).

2.6 Process versus product approach to teaching composition writing

The traditional view to teaching and learning of creative writing was the one which most of the teachers went through during their own education. It was rightly referred to as product oriented approach to learning writing because of common features: like, a title was given by the teacher; learners were asked to write a composition for example of between one to two pages on an A4 booklet and hand over to the teacher for marking. After marking, they are returned to the learners and forgotten. It was based on the assumption that the creative aspects of the writing process are mysterious and hence could not be taught. As a result, the study and teaching of composition writing from this traditional perspective was limited to the conceptions and mechanics of various genres the norms of style and usage (young 1980 p54).

The traditional or product-oriented approach from a modern practitioner's point of view was deficient in a number of important aspects; first, the teachers viewed the student writing as a product. There was an assumption that the student knew how to write and what the students produced was used as a test of their abilities to write. Secondly, the teacher concentrated on form, which was syntax, grammar and organization, than content which was seen only as the vehicle for the correct expression of grammatical and organizational patterns on which the teacher is focusing. The correct choice of vocabulary was part of this focus. Thirdly, learners saw their work as being tedious and a burden since they were not given any direction. Forth, students in most cases are not interested in what they write as they were not consulted in the choice of the topic and the audience. Lastly there was delayed or no feedback.

The modern approach to writing was a direct contrast to the product oriented approach and for that reason; it was referred to as process oriented approach to writing. It combined two approaches to writing: the communicative and process approach. According to (Chan 1986). This approach was based on the following assumptions. First people write to communicate with readers. Second people write to accomplish specific purposes and third, writing was a complex process. Hence, writing was perceived and consumed as a communicative act. Learners were encouraged to think as audience, (the reader or teacher) and the purpose of writing. Meaning rather than form is stressed. Writing was done as a process which has three stages; prewriting, composing and revision. In prewriting, the learners were given freedom to think, create ideas on the basis of their interest, experiences and knowledge. This was done without much interference and restriction from the teacher.

It was an active stage in which learners are encouraged in pairs or groups to freely exchange ideas opinion concerning the information, structures, language, vocabulary and supportive arguments. The composing stage was the writing stage which could appropriately be described as a writing workshop. This was because the learners should be encouraged to work together, consult one another; while the teacher's role was to facilitate and provide guidance whenever needed. Revision was essential because the learners edited and proof read what they had written. We cannot underscore the important of revising because it's well known that it was difficult to write the best of what we want the first time.

In this process oriented approach, the learners were involved in the writing process right from the onset. They were involved in selection of what they would like to write about. They were also involved in the selection of the audience, the people they would want to write to. In addition they get involved in the planning how the writing process should proceed.

Some of these activities took place in the classroom, where other learners together with their teachers provided immediate feedback in a number of ways. For example, individual wrote the first draft in the classroom while consulting each other or even when written outside the classroom it discussed in pairs or a small group while the teacher facilitated and provided guidance as well. Thus, the learners could made alteration to their draft before the final product was written and handed in for marking.

According to (Mouly 1992) distinction was made between the product of learning and process through which they were attained. Teachers were primarily involved in the process of teaching and learning, such that implementing effective method for both the immediate and the long time goals of education should be attained with maximum efficiency. The teachers need to be more concerned, for example, with helping the child develop skills by means of which he could find his own answer than giving him readymade answers to memorize.

Both process and product approaches to teaching and learning were important but the primary concern should be with 'how' rather than 'what'.

It must not be over concerned with passing examinations (that was limited to products) diverting its attention from the process through which true education was achieved. Many teachers of writing have long been dissatisfied with traditional paradigm and its implications for classroom practice. Consequently, research into the intensive and comprehensive studies of the development of creative writing abilities; had aroused the need for a new pedagogy of writing. Current approaches to the study of the nature of writing and its teaching in English had been documented by (Freedman, 1983).

2.7 The second language teaching and learning approaches

There are different approaches used in teaching and learning English as L2 (Joana, & Heather 2003) have pointed out three of such approaches; the grammar translation, direct method and communicative language teaching. In grammar translation, pupils study grammar and learnt lists of vocabulary in order to translate texts. The teacher used the learners' first or main language to explain grammars and texts. The facts that language was made up of words (vocabulary) and that could change according to rules (grammar) were the base of this method. The emphasis that the learner knew the rule of grammar, enough words to enable him/her to read and write was very useful for academic work.

The direct method which was mostly popular between 1940 and 1960 was found in many primary schools' second language textbooks.

The main way of teaching which made up the direct method are the audio lingual method which emphasizes repetitive and the visual method in which repetition was based on visual stimulus.

The two methods were based on the idea that all skills improve with practice. (Joana 2003) the four language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These methods aimed at helping learners to use English in their everyday situations rather than learning about grammar and vocabulary to translate texts. It emphasized the skills of speaking and listening which ignored other skills. They discouraged translation. Learners improved their skills by practicing responses to the teachers,' prompts or cues. Language laboratories are effective teaching aid for learners learning to listen and repeat this way. Direct methods excel in helping pupils say sentences correctly and pronounce English well. However, this method had its own limitations that the pupils may not always understand what they repeat. The pupils also not make their own responses in new and different situations. Some teachers may not be confident enough to use English throughout the lessons. It may not be useful for advanced learners.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) was based on the way children learnt their first language. Small children slowly got to use language correctly as they grew older. They used words already learned and gradually improve the way they communicate in their everyday life. They made mistakes as they learnt to use language. In CLT classroom, the teachers set different tasks and activities to encourage the pupils to communicate in English the language they had already learnt inside and outside the classroom. For example they exchange information, discuss and solve problems in pairs or groups.

Sometimes students struggled to understand or to be understood, but this was part of the learning process. Teachers did not always correct mistakes.

The learners of English improve more as they use it, just as children acquire the first language. This method worked best in situations based on what learners' experience, sets tasks, problems, which created interests and motivated the learners. These included everyday materials, such as newspapers, timetables as well as real objects in the tasks. This method worked when the learners heard and used English even outside the class. In places where the teacher was the only source of English, the student may not have enough to perform these communication tasks or activities (Joanna 2003).

According to (Gathumbi 2005) communicative language teaching was Vogue from the 1980s to 90s as a form of teaching. It was based on the premises that it was important to look at communicative aspect of language rather than mere mastery of linguistic structures. It was expected to take care of functional and communicative potential of language. A dimension of language teaching that had previously been overlooked. The aim of the approach was focused on the communicative competence, which included the ability to know if an utterance was formal, informal, feasible or appropriate in different situations (Hyme 1972).

(Groenewegen 2008) said that the main characteristics of CLT are that, learning of the target language, should be inductive where learners discover rules of language underlying a functional expression from given examples.

It was a move away from the commonly used deductive manner where rules of the target language were taught first before learners practiced with examples.

The language provided should be relevant and purposed activities set in meaningful context that reflected real world use. The teachers created opportunities where learners felt the need to communicate. These aspects helped learners to use language spontaneously, creatively in real life situations and improve their vocabulary. According to (Gathumbi 2005) all the (L2) teaching and learning approaches have no purpose of helping learners use the language, they have not mastered. This was because they may not grasp most of the concepts taught or even express their ideas.

(Groenewegen 2008) had also established at least five approaches of teaching English as a second language. These are grammar translation methods, the direct method, the audio lingual method, situational language learning and communicative language teaching discussed earlier. He had come up with two more, audio lingual methods and situational language learning. The audio lingual method was heavily influenced by the behaviorist theory and environmentalist view to language learning, which is basically habit-formation. Like in direct approach, it laid emphasis on oral proficiency; its main characteristics were use of drills and dialogues on carefully graded series of grammatical structures.

Use of mimicry and memorization where learners imitated native speakers, learning dialogues and responses by heart were encouraged, there is no explicit learning or teaching of grammar. (Bunyi 2008) also said that; the limitations of the audio lingual behaviors are that; it produced native like language behavior but not true competence. This entailed the ability to know when, where and how to use the language.

In order to perfect pronunciations, this was not suitable for young learners. It worked so well for highly motivated adult learners who had an urgent need to learn a target language and may not be possible in classroom teaching.

The situational language learning approach to teaching was popular in the 1960's. In Europe, it was also influenced by behaviorist theory. Its characteristics are a typical situation created with appropriate word list. There was emphasis on teaching new structures in some context, structures and vocabulary are presented in an authentic situation. There is no great emphasis on meaning but on oral practice to perfect proper pronunciation and lastly learners are encouraged to write and exercises on new structures.

Cummins' work on theoretical framework, offered a holistic view of bilingual language proficiency. She proposed that proficiency in one's mother tongue L1 has implications on one's L2 proficiency at different levels of academic development. She further argues that face to face communication proficiency is context embedded and demanded a wide range of meaningful paralinguistic cues and feedback. Everyone possessed this in his or her first language. It was also the proficiency of a motivated second language learner. Linguists who support Cummins ideas are (Bialystock, 1991; Collier 1989, 1992; Garcia 1994) had argued that cognitive development and academic development in the first language had been found to have positive effects on second language learning (Cummins 1981). Academic skills, literacy development, concept formation, subject knowledge and strategy development learned in the first language transfer to the second language.

(Hakuta & Cuevas 1997) have strongly supported the idea that native language use was advantageous in English-language learning. This use was defined within the range of commitment of bilingual program to programs in which almost all instructions took place in English.

The native language could be used to clarify and extends students' understanding supports (Gathumbi 2005). Second language students made sense of the L2 by using many of the same strategies that worked in acquiring the first language. What was different however, was that second language students; already had an understanding of the meaning, use and purpose of their L1. They now must learn how the L2 oral, print expresses those purposes, uses and meaning. (Lindfors1987) and (Cummins 1981), argued that programs designed for students learning English where instruction is given through L2 that is non-native speakers with no schooling in their first language takes many years than those who had basic schooling in their first language to reach age grade level.

On the other hand, Cummins pointed out that context reduced communication which was associated with language which did not have this extra linguistic support. Thus successful communication depended on the language used, the user's knowledge of the language itself, and the cues to meaning. Cummins referred to this type of proficiency as cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP). This was associated with literally and second language learning. The learners in this situation needed much more support to understand various language contexts.

2.8 Strategies of teaching and learning English language vocabulary.

Gathumbi (2005) stated learners encountered many new words everyday through conversations, information and class discussions. To acquire vocabulary, learners should learn how to recognize clues to the meaning of unfamiliar words. Learning the meaning of frequently used word parts is also helpful in building vocabulary. The following methods discussed helped expand vocabulary for use in composition writing. One effective way to learning and increasing vocabulary was by starting a word bank. Whenever a learner encountered an unfamiliar word, it was entered together with its definition or meaning. It was helpful if learners wrote a sentence or two using the new word. Definition, meaning and pronunciation of very difficult words should be looked up in the dictionary (Bwire & Vikiru 2008).

According to Groenewegen, (2008) learning of vocabulary could be done from the context. Most words encountered are used in combination with other words. The context of a word means the words that surrounded it in a sentence and the situation the word was used. These surrounding words often provided valuable clues to meanings; context clues provided meaning in a variety of ways (Gathumbi 2005). One of the clue types is through definition, restatement, which was words that defined the term or restated in other way, for example Otoyó's ambition is to circumnavigate or sail around the world. That way, the meaning of the word circumnavigate was given by the use. Examples used reveals the meaning of an unfamiliar word like conveyance such as cars , bicycles, Rick shows, airplanes, boats and space shuttles.

Comparison is another type of clue, It indicates an unfamiliar word was similar to a familiar word or phrase like ‘those glaciers were like huge ice cubes ’Vikiru (2008).

Use of pictures, drawings, miming and demonstrations can define words Thornsby (2002) & Redman (1989).

Another type of clue was contrast or opposite, for example Dorothy has become quite stodgy unlike Lucy, who is easy going. In the same way, causes and effects can give clue if the word is related to the cause or the result of an action, feeling or idea like; because the clouds looked foreboding, we decided to cancel the picnic. When words had several meanings, the learners looked at all the definition given for any particular word, and then determine the best meaning to fit a given context. Some dictionaries include sample context in all of them (sample) contexts given to make sure you’ve found the meaning that fits.

The knowledge of English vocabulary was also used in studying the other school subjects and sometimes other languages. It’s also important for learners to command a wide range of vocabulary. Grammar provided material to use in the patterns of a language. Vocabulary provided material to use in the patterns. There could never be grammar without vocabulary. The prototype theory (Rosch 1977) states that there existed an idea, in our mind from which other things emerge. Speakers and writers develop a central form of a concept in their minds which acted as a prototype from which they see other things or situations, (Gathumbi 2005). Words in any language denoted concepts and relates to abstractions in our mind. The concepts in turn related to the reality from which these abstractions were made.

This was the reason why people from different places observed and understood reality differently, learning occurred through experiences with words.

Vocabulary learning therefore cannot be a matter of substituting a new word for the word available in mother tongue (Gathumbi 2005). She further noted the vocabulary learnt needs to be retained. The frequency at which the new word is used by the learner had an effect on how well the word was retained. To learn and retain a new word a learner needed to use it in its right structured context severally over time. Learner's vocabulary must be functioning according to their age and linguistic level. This was not necessarily how it's defined in the dictionary but how it was used in the learners' world and environment.

Groenewegen (2008) said that syntagmatic relationship was used to develop vocabulary in that many words could not be understood in isolation as the meaning was often related to other words that helped to define them in the utterance or sentences. This constitutes the words syntagmatic relationships. This meant that a word was related to other words, like in 'the meeting will last for -----'. The dash can only be asking for a word that denotes time. That is, the meeting will last for two hours. Identifying other words that are not in the utterance or sentence helped the learner to develop the vocabulary and be able to get meaning by recognizing the relationship between words (Gathumbi 2005).

According to (Bwire & Vikiru 2008) there are various ways in which we could use syntagmatic relationship to develop vocabulary one of them is co-occurrence this was a situation where some words normally appeared together or are used together.

For words to co-occur in a sentence, it depended on certain characteristics attached to them like in the following sentences “Anita laughed the baby”.

Although the sentence was structurally correct, in that had the subject, verb and the object, it is ungrammatical because the verb laugh cannot co-occur with the object ‘the baby’ because it is an intransitive verb. Another sentence can be, the widow accompanied her husband, just like in the previous example the structure was correct grammatically but, it’s wrong functionally because a widow has no husband. He is dead and could not be together (Groenewegen 2008).

Collocation was when words con-occur frequently, they are said to collate. For example if one word was uttered, another one came into the mind these words are said to collate. For example sour- milk, torrential-rain. Knowledge of which word collocate would help vocabulary development by empowering the learners to be able to use vocabulary confidently (Gathumbi 2005).

An idiomatic expression was formed where more than one lexical item co-occurred in such a way that each had lost its original meaning, together they give rise to a new meaning, such idioms are; to lose one’s head, to burn the midnight oil and to shed crocodile tears (Ndeba 2006). Knowledge of idiomatic expression enriches a learners understanding and use of language especially in writing compositions.

They helped in fictional writing where they are mostly used (Orlando & Wacira 2006).Paradigmatic relations, the word relationships could be, made by those related words that are not in the sentences or utterance.

This was referred to as paradigmatic relationship.

This type of relationship meant that a word could be substituted for another in a sentence; for example the meeting will last for only two hours. The word meeting could be substituted with other words like; seminar, summit, assembly, symposium, lesson.

Homophones according to (Ndeba 2006) was the knowledge of words which are pronounced in the same way but have different meanings and spellings. Lack of knowledge of such words causes confusion especially in speech and in writing composition. Some of those words are hear /here sea/see and there/their.

According to (Gathumbi 2005) polysemy was another strategy in which one lexical item has different meanings which are revealed through the usage. For example, the word table has multiple meanings such as to lay the table, water table and to table a document. The word foot could mean, foot of the hill or mountain, the human foot, and the foot of the stairs. The ability to use polysemy showed a learner's advanced vocabulary usage. According to (Ngila 2009) synonyms are two lexical items with the same meaning but, seldom in all contexts. When they are synonyms in every context, they can be used interchangeably writes (Olando 2006). For example the words fuss / ado, froth/ foam are synonyms in all contexts.

However the words rub/erase, hide/ conceal, big/ large, are not synonyms in all contexts.

For example we could say rub and erase the black board(synonyms) we could say rub the ointment on your skin but not erase the ointment(not synonyms) we could say hide or conceal the scars on his neck (synonyms). We could say; the thief hid under the bridge but not the thief conceals under the bridge.

According to (Gathumbi 2005) hyponyms showed a relationship between two words in which one of them include the meaning of the other. For example the word cat and animal are related in that the cat is an animal. The word cat is a hyponym of the general term animal and belongs to a class called animals. This class or general term are also called the super ordinate. Hyponyms are related to the word for example animal- dogs, snakes, cats, fish and vehicle- lorry, car, bus van. Countries like Kenya, Somalia, Togo and Uganda. Learners can develop their vocabulary by generating as many hyponyms as they can from super ordinate.

Antonyms are lexical items with the opposite meaning. Vocabulary could be developed when the learners had the ability to identify and use an opposite of a word. Examples of antonyms are sad/ happy, cheap/ expensive, cry/laugh. Learning of antonyms should be contextual for effective vocabulary learning. They should be taught in a sentence not as a single word; like Mary is rude but Monica is polite.

Exclusion is a situation where the meanings of any two lexical items exclude each other by being either incompatible or contradicting to each other. Like saying dead/speak and night/sunshine. We see that the meanings of the words in each pair are contradictory. The dead cannot speak and there could be no sunshine at night. Exclusion also occurs when words are antonyms to each other.

For example, if we take words like young/ old, active / passive, we see that the condition could not be in existence at the same time as the words are opposite.

The Knowledge of using the correct vocabulary appropriately thereby conveying the intended meaning is very important (Ndeba (2008).

According to (Gathumbi 2005), scale meant two lexical items with contradictory meaning, with other lexical items in between them with meaning which gradually approach the meaning of either of the two extremes. For example hot and cold, other related words exist in a continuous scale, such as hot –warm, cool-cold. Another example was between words always and never. Always-usually–often–frequently–sometimes–occasionally–rarely–seldom–never. The knowledge of which lexical items are in between the two extreme words helped in vocabulary development. Learners’ are able to choose the appropriate vocabulary that can fit well in a particular situation (Kioko 2010).

According to (Bwire 2005) homonyms are words that have different meanings in different context. The meaning of homonyms was difficult to get unless they are used in a specific context. For example the word lie and rose would not mean much when uttered or spelt alone. However if we say lie down or lie to the teacher we get different meanings. The same case applies to the word rose like in rose plant and rose to the occasion then the writer gets the right meaning in the right context (Gathumbi 2005).

According to (Kioko 2010) the strategy of learning and teaching vocabulary through word formation was important as languages are dynamic in nature of which English language is no different.

Therefore, words in English are being formed all the time. Vocabulary can be learnt and developed through the knowledge of word-formation. English words are made from morphemes which are described as the smallest meaningful units of speech and writing. Bwire & Vikiru, (2008), stated that, in most cases suffixes only change the part of the speech of a word. There are also other aspects that helped in word formation asserts (Gathumbi 2005).

The knowledge and use of affixes in words helps to increase learners' vocabulary (Ndeba 2006). Prefixes appear before the root word and when attached, they change the meaning like in anti and septic which becomes antiseptic, the prefix anti means against. Suffixes appear after the root word and like prefixes, when added to the root word, it changes to another part of speech depending on the usage, like pain and less becomes painless, less means without. There are many different word forming prefixes especially antonyms. The other sure way in which learners develop vocabulary was by encouraging them to read widely and diversely.

The sentence was the basic unit for teaching vocabulary .This was because the learners were able to see how the word was used in the right context. The new word should be used in different sentences. The use of dramatization had been used successfully to teach vocabulary. It was used to show the meaning of difficult words especially verbs like snore, faint, horror by miming the feelings. The use of gestures and the non- verbal expressions could be used to explain meanings of difficulty words. (Groenewegen 2008) recommended the use of language games in teaching and learning vocabulary. Different games could be devised to enlarge a students' vocabulary.

Crossword puzzles and kangaroo words learning are fun and the learners' concentration is higher.

The use of a dictionary was a way of learning vocabulary for upper primary, this is often used when other methods fail or when they are doing their homework. It was a quick fix and the learners needed to be trained on how to use a dictionary first and point out the limitations. According to (Kingsley1974), learners should be able to use alphabetic order easily when using dictionaries. However, Thornsbury (2002) & Otto (1975) discouraged the use of dictionaries in the classroom citing that its dependence might inhibit the development of more useful skill like guessing, they termed it, "least productive."

The visual aids are used to explain difficult vocabulary. Research has shown that learners retains 80% of what is heard and seen and only 50% of what is only heard (Gathumbi 2005). Visual aids also increase learners' concentration and retention. Examples of commonly used visual aids are real objects which are professionally called (realia), like photographs, cartoon and or pictures. Illustrations on the chalk board or on a manila paper such as charts, sketches and flash cards could help learners get the meaning of difficult words (Bwire & Vikiru 2008), have agreed that the main objectives of teaching vocabulary are to help learners to be skillful speakers and writers of English language for use in day today interactions. Use of vocabulary when studying other subjects and when gathering information from books could be very helpful.

Inflection is a way of adding letters at the end of a root word; it changed the words in various ways. For example inflections like /s/, /es change the words from singular to plural, for instance one tree-six trees, one dress-ten dresses. Secondly, with an apostrophe inflection is used to show possession as in Mary's toy, boy's shirt. Thirdly, inflection could be used to show past tense using /d/, /t/, /ed/ and /ied/ as in live-lived, burn-burned, copy –copied. Lastly inflections showed the third person singular using /s/, /ies / and /es/ such as cook-cooks, try-tried, do-does.

Knowledge of how to use inflections helped learners not only in vocabulary development but also in the learning of grammar. Inflections are learnt individually in the specific word class. The difference between affixes and inflections is that affixes imply meaning while inflections do not (Gathumbi 2008). (Thornsbury 2002) refers to the use of affixes as affixation. The awareness of compound words as a strategy of learning vocabulary, involves combining two or more words to form a new single word with new meaning like dress and making which becomes dressmaking, compound words can be hyphenated as in bed-sitter, duty- free, and father- in- law. They could also be written as two separate words like booking office, disk joker and mobile phone.

According to (Kioko 2010) phrasal verbs are multiple- word verbs. The knowledge of phrasal verb is an addition to the development of a learners' vocabulary. Phrasal verbs are formed by combining two or three different words mostly verbs and prepositions to give different meaning, like put off which means to postpone or to decide to do something at a later date.

It also meant to discourage or to make someone not want to do something. Drop out meant to withdraw like from school or course (Orlando & Wacira 2006). The phrasal verb, when used in speech and in the written form, enriches a learner's language output.

Although information of phrasal verbs is part of development of vocabulary, it is also a valuable input in the learning of grammar. (Gathumbi 2005) noted that another strategy that learners could develop more vocabulary by forming anagrams. These are formed by re-arranging letters of given word to form new different words, like teacher can make more than ten words like teach, hear, heart, tear, here. Learners work individually, in pairs or in groups trying to form as many words as possible from a given word these activities the vocabulary level of the learners. Vocabulary that is used in writing composition should be familiar and easily understood.

According to (Ndeba 2006), a composition should not be flooded with difficult words whose meanings are not known. Teaching of similes was important in that it added flavor to a composition. Once the words are learnt, great care should be taken in the sense that they are applied where and when necessary. Most commonly used similes are found in grammar supplementary books, most teachers of English encouraged their learners to use various similes as they write.

The teaching of colloquial expressions was used for learning vocabulary for use in the writing of composition. They are used to make expressions effective and forceful.

They must be used appropriately, for example to smell a rat means to be suspicious and to get into hot soup means to get into trouble (Ngila 2007). He further explains that the other important expressions are the use of proverbs in writing. Proverbs are wise sayings which have hidden meanings. When used appropriately in a composition, they create a lot of interest in the reader. Proverbs are popularly defined as short expressions of popular wisdom. Some people use them regularly in their conversation. Some proverbs have originated from our languages and have English equivalent, like Hurry! Hurry has no blessing.

Mugubi (2002) stated that those double word phrases are groups of two words which are often used to express a certain idea. These two words may be joined by 'and' these phrases sometimes have more than two words. For example when they carry the article 'the', For example again and again, which means repeatedly, such and such to mean unspecified things of a particular type, kith and kin which means friends and relatives. Lastly, the learner emphasizes something by describing it as, far much more than it is.

The use of hyperboles in composition writing also makes the reading more exciting. For example, to awoken the dead, in a sentence like; 'I screamed so loud enough 'to awaken the dead'. 'The accident victim lay 'in a pool of blood', writhing in pain and agony (Ngila 2008). Ndeba (2006) said that learners should be given writing tasks according to their age and abilities. Writing composition is one of the main areas of learners' achievement tested in upper primary. Learners should be able to express their own opinions and handle increasingly complex information as they advance towards the end of their primary schooling.

The use of vocabulary in writing composition was fueled by familiarity with written words. This means that the learners should be encouraged and provided for with valuable resources like story books, fictions or non-fiction, magazines and newspapers to increase their vocabulary. The unknown word should be written in a note book.

The learner could look up for the meaning of words from the dictionary or ask the teacher for an explanation of the meaning wrote (Gichaga 2008). To enhance the understanding and development of creative writing, the learner should practice writing stories, letters or diaries. This helped them to expand ideas and find novel ways of describing things, situations and people.

Orlando & Wacira (2006) emphasized the use of personification as a writer's device in which non- human or objects are given human characteristics. This emphasized characteristics, suggests meaning and created a more vivid picture like; the fire burned with rage, the trees danced lazily and Jamila is a flower. The use of symbolism refers to the use of one thing to represent something else, such as; a 'storm' a symbolic of anger or unrest. A dove is often taken as a symbol of peace. In a sentence it could be used like: the meeting was such a storm, she breathed fire and brim stone when she discovered her husband intentions to divorce her.

2.9 Assessing and correcting pupils written compositions

This research would not make sense without any explanation on the assessment of pupils' written work to investigate the strategies teachers used to help learners develop and improve their composition writing skill.

This exercise was important to both the teacher and the learner as they would be informed through the provisions of the feedback. On the side of the teachers they would be able to see if the objectives had been achieved while the learners are informed on what they were able to do well and what need to be improved (Twoli (2007). Writing like any other skills needed to be practiced as “practice makes perfect”.

Teaching is a conscious educational activity or process, it was prudent therefore, to take stock and gauge how the learning process was fairing from time to time. For the purpose of this study, the measure of the performance should be written compositions test. The feedback was to be used to improve the performance of both the teachers and the learners.

omposition writing required the learner to write continuous prose. It tested the learners’ ability to understand the topic, use their imagination, organized their ideas and communicated them in writing. This task required the learners to tap from their active vocabulary, choosing appropriate and variety of words was an advantage KNEC (KCPE reports 2010).

Chapter 1984) noted that assessment was important in teaching and learning, without which no one would tell about the progress made. Otherwise, it was pointless giving the pupils wide experience in speaking, listening, reading and writing, the modes through which children learnt a language. Rowntree (1977) said that word assessment of English was used in broad sense to include ranges of activities from examining, marking, responding to and discussing children’s work.

Rowntree (1977) also suggested that assessment occurred whenever one person, in some kind of interaction, direct or indirect with another was conscious of obtaining and interpreting information about knowledge and understanding attitudes of that other person. For the purpose of this study, assessment was focused in developing and expanding vocabulary within the limit of the individual child's ability and requirements. To provide feedback to the pupils' written work, let him/her know how well his work was progressing. The teachers and the pupils should be able to identify strengths and weaknesses specifically in the choice of appropriate relevant use of variety of vocabulary in writing composition. Marking is part of the teaching task, teachers, especially of English spend many hours marking class work.

Specifically in compositions writing, correcting those common errors that crop up again and again. Sometimes words and sentences are underlined or encircled to indicate a mistake notes (Gannon 1985). Many teachers did not see the need to agree with the learners on conventional abbreviations or symbols used during marking. Most of the times the learners are left to guess why they failed to impress the teacher. The use of known and established abbreviations and symbols would help the learner to correct their own mistakes (Gecaga 2008). This would help the learners to identify, classify and correct their own mistakes easily. Some teachers just award marks on learners' composition without pointing out any mistakes or even underlining or ticking a single word. As a result this confused learners who couldn't tell what was wrong with their work (Gathumbi 2005). She went on to say that in L₂ situation, writing skills are the most difficult to master.

This study investigated whether learners really understood and corrected their mistakes in order to improve their vocabulary use in writing composition. Writing is a productive skill and proper spelling is important because a misspelt word changes the meaning the writer intentions. Rivers & Temperley (1978) propose that errors should merely be underlined.

The individual learner alone or in a group decided in what way the writing was inadequate and made changes. There are other few words which referred to assessment like responding to marking, grading, correcting and commenting on. The most common was marking. It was strictly observed that almost everywhere at all levels of educational systems. It was well known what it entailed even though there are many different perception of what is involved (Gannon 1985).

Doff (1995) suggested that making errors was not surprising, rather the new system of rules that the learner was "trying out." In language making errors was acceptable as a natural part of learning process. Learners felt uncomfortable when they saw the many errors they have made in their written composition. They felt that they are not taught properly and made them unwilling to write compositions any more. He further says that if learners are over corrected, it demoralizes them; make them anxious and less confident. Maina (1991) in his study of standard eight grammatical errors recommended that teachers should be able to provide appropriate input data. This would help pupils to eliminate most of the errors which he (Maina) had identified. Rivers & Temperley, (1978) & Jones (1980) have strongly supported individual attention in error treatment.

This concern was also expressed in the Ominde report, (1964) which recommended that teachers should adjust their instructional methods to the individual needs of the pupils and be more learners centered rather than teacher centered. Gathumbi (2005) also claimed that the English language teaching has for many years remained teacher centered. The learners would always have the errors underlined and the correct form written on top. At times a check mark as (Rivers & Temperly 1978) suggested was adequate on the margin and the teacher lets the learners find out what errors are.

In (Krashen 1985) affective filter hypothesis, he explained how affective factors like motivation, self-confidence, attitude and anxiety, related to second language acquisition (SLA). This according to (Delay & Burt 1972) who came up with this hypothesis, Krashen claimed that in the affective filter; it filters what input the learners came into contact with and how much that input was covered into what (Cords 1967) called “intake” less anxiety, high motivation and self-confidence are said to give learners low filters which enables them to get more input. Learners with high filters get little input, less intake due to anxiety and low motivation. This was more so in learning vocabulary and using them in writing composition. When teachers write generalized comments in written learners work like ‘poor’, ‘no story’, ‘lazy’, ‘work harder’, ‘wake up’ among others, it gives them anxiety, low motivation, low self-esteem and confidence, hence hinder improvement in their composition writing.

2.10 Identified Research Gaps

In conclusion the review of the related study had the following gaps:-

- a. Strategies of teaching vocabulary used in writing composition in public primary schools in Thika sub-county.
- b. Do learners use the learnt vocabulary in writing compositions?
- c. How do teachers assess the vocabulary mistakes in written compositions?
- d. Learners' response to teachers' assessment of vocabulary use in their written compositions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology in terms of research design, the area location of study, the target population, the sample size and sampling techniques, the research instruments, pilot study, data analysis procedures, logistic and ethical considerations. The research mainly seeks to identify the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary used in composition writing by class seven learners of Thika Sub-county.

3.1 Research design

This study used descriptive survey research design. Descriptive method focused on the process that was occurring as well as the product. This involved marking and assessing learners written compositions test, description of the state of affairs as they used the vocabulary learnt in a naturally occurring situation (Quereshi, 2005). More data was gathered from English teachers' questionnaires. They were on the strategies the English teachers and learners used to teach and acquire vocabulary. Do learners use the vocabulary in writing their compositions? How teachers helped the learners to improve their writing skills through the assessment of vocabulary used in written compositions. The data collected was analyzed and presented qualitatively and quantitatively according to (Orodho & Kombo 2002:2). Kombo & Tramp (2006) defines research design as the structure of research while Orodho, (2003) defines research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to the research questions of this study.

3.3 Location of study

The research study was carried out in Thika Sub- County. Being an urban setting, it was expected that the learners had sufficient and appropriate background information and would not be affected by extraneous variables such as location of school and lack of trained teachers. It was assumed learners in this proximity had access to a wide range of experience through encountering many different people and experiences. The performance of English language in general and specifically composition has been deteriorating over the years. Good grades in composition are greatly influenced by the knowledge and appropriate use of specific vocabulary. According to (Singleton 1993), the ideal setting for any research study should be easily accessible to the researcher and that which allows immediate rapport with the participants. (Wamahiu & Karugu 1995) stated that being familiar with the research site helped in gaining acceptance. This was because if the participants are hostile or even indifferent towards you, your research could not proceed.

3.3 Target populations

The study targeted public primary schools in Thika Sub-County. The choice of the public school was based on the expectation that learners were generally of an average of thirteen years. The public schools had equally qualified teachers and the pupils are exposed to similar experiences. The sampled primary schools are A B C D and E. The target population was made up of 2000 learners in class seven and 50 English teachers in the 22 public primary schools in Thika Sub-county. Class seven was targeted because it was the most strategic and appropriate class considering the summative Kenyan primary certificate of education (KCPE) examination in which Composition writing was examined.

This is so because it is at this level that learners are set to join class eight and they ought to have developed writing skills and acquired adequate vocabulary for writing compositions.

The research variables considered were based on performance of composition writing. The knowledge of vocabulary was important in writing composition to earn good grades. The dependent variable is performance in composition writing. The independence variables that affected the performance were; the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary practice in the use of vocabulary in writing compositions, assessment of vocabulary in learners' written compositions as well as feedback and correction of the same. The intervening variables were exposure to wide range of vocabulary in different context, step by step writing process which includes; pair group and class discussion, brain storming and encouraging learners. Immediate feedback and correction are important.

3.4 Sample size and sampling techniques

Thika Sub-county was purposively sampled. Being in an urban setting, it is assumed that the learners have average writing ability and form a population from which data was got. The researcher purposely targeted the Public primary schools from which reliable data was elicited, this was because they had equal average amount of time and resources that facilitated their English language vocabulary teaching and learning. Five public primary schools were randomly selected using balloting method. The names of the twenty two public schools in the municipality were written on twenty two pieces of paper of equal size with the name of one school on each paper.

The researcher then put them in a box, shuffled them and then randomly picked the first five schools. This was done to give each school an equal opportunity.

The subjects were selected using random sampling. The researcher wrote Y's and N's on small pieces of paper. Y stood for yes, while N stood for No). The pieces of paper were put in a box and shuffled. The learners were advised to pick a paper each twenty class- seven learners from each classroom of the selected schools.

According to (Milvory 1987) large sample for linguistic research studies was not necessary, it only tended to be redundant and complicated the data analysis. The English language teachers of the selected schools provide information in the questionnaires, and an attached checklist containing all the possible strategies learners could use in learning vocabulary. The checklist was used to find out the strategies used in teaching and learning vocabulary used in writing composition. Purposive sampling was used because it suited this study as it could be used with both qualitative and quantitative research. It allowed the researcher to use cases that had the required information in respect to the objectives of this study (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999).

Table 3.1 sampling grid

	Target population	Sample Size	Percentage (%) of the research sample	Percentage (%) of the Analyzed research sample
Schools	22	5	22	100
Pupils	2000	200	10	10
Teachers	50	10	20	100

3.6 Research instruments

3.6.1 Class seven English teachers' questionnaire

The questionnaire was a faster way of obtaining data than other means. (Borg and Gall 1989) had stated that questionnaires gave the researcher comprehensive data on a wide range of factors. Open-ended and closed-ended items were used. Molly, (1978) also added that questionnaires allowed greater uniformity in the way questions are asked and answered. This ensured greater comparability in the responses. The questionnaires sought the teacher's views on the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary for writing composition.

The importance of assessing vocabulary mistakes as a way of helping learners to correct and improve their composition writing skills. The response to assessed vocabulary mistakes in their written work. In developing the questionnaires, two broad categories of questions were considered, namely structured and unstructured questions.

Structured questions were accompanied by a checklist of all possible answers or alternatives, from which respondents selected the answer that best described their positions. These questions were constructed addressing the objectives and provided a variety of possible responses. They were used to gather teachers' views on strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary and their use in writing composition. Unstructured questions gave the respondent complete freedom to respond in his or her own way and words. According to (Mugenda and Mugenda1999), these kinds of questions exposed respondent's attitude and motivation towards vocabulary teaching and learning. It also exposed their interest and opinions.

3.5.2 The teacher's checklist

The checklist contained a list of possible teaching and learning strategies that could be used to teach and learn English language vocabulary used in writing compositions. It was used to find out the strategies used by the teachers. This checklist was developed from the suggested resources found in the review of literature.

3.5.3 The pupils interview schedule.

An interview schedule was a set of questions used in a face to face encounter. It was administered on four randomly selected pupils from the original sample per school. It was about their experiences in the use of vocabulary in writing composition. The reason for using an interview schedule was to get an in depth data on the assessment of written composition on learners and their response on the same. This was appropriate for learners of this age.

In addition, it enabled the collection of data for the specific objective; they were more flexible and yielded high response. The interview schedule questions were semi-structured were more flexible. It was administered orally, it also allowed more probing. According to (Blanchet et al, 2000) an interview schedule is set of representations associated with events witnessed by B of B. It is a speech event in which person A (researcher) extracted information from person B (learner).

3.5.4 Pupils written composition test

Assessment of written work was not an easy task, despite the numerous approaches available; (Cooper & Odell 1977). This was because assessment was made on finished text, which did not lead to an understanding of the difficulties that writers had experienced in the process of the production. For the purpose of this study, the pupil written compositions test was used. This helped the researcher to assess the learners' ability to utilize the learnt vocabulary in writing, and establish how the teachers assessed the pupils written compositions.

3.6 Pilot study

This was a small scale preliminary study the researcher conducted in order to evaluate feasibility, time and cost. The researcher used the teachers' questionnaires, checklist and pupils interview schedule. The researcher conducted a pilot study in which the instruments of the study pre-tested before the main study. In pre-testing the research instruments were identical to the ones that were to be used during the actual research study.

In piloting the researcher administered the instruments on one purposively selected school, two teachers and two standard seven learners of English in two classes. The purpose of this pilot study was to test the instruments to check whether there was enough coverage in terms of the information required.

Checking whether there were identifiable ambiguities in the wording of the questions in order to make improvement and rephrase vague questions. The pilot also helped to check out relevance, to strike out irrelevant items, check for deficiencies in the questionnaires like unclear instructions, insufficient space for writing responses and wrong numbering. The research instruments were administered to participants with the same characteristics as the ones under the study. The detected inconsistencies, ambiguities and irrelevancies were corrected and improved before the actual administration.

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability was concerned with the consistency of the actual measuring instrument or procedure. It was the extent to which an experiment, test or any measuring procedure yielded the same result on repeated trials. It is the degree to which an instrument measures the same way under the same conditions with similar subjects. The pilot study was used to estimate the reliability of the research instrument. The teachers gave their opinions. This feedback was essential for the research because the instrument were to answer the research questions.

3.6.2 Validity

(Nachimias & Nachimias 1969) said that validity refers to the degree to which research instrument accurately reflects or assesses the specific concerns that the researcher was attempting to measure. Consequently allows appropriate interpretation of the scores, expert opinion was sought to indicate whether the instruments are valid or not.

3.6.3 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher got an introduction letter from Kenyatta University and then sought permission from Ministry of Education through the National council for Science and Technology, and the Thika sub-county director of Education to carry out the study. The researcher proceeded to the selected schools to establish rapport and sought permission from the head teachers to collect data from teachers and pupils. This visit gave the researcher a chance to talk to the English teachers and requested them to fill the questionnaires, checklists, facilitate writing of the composition, marking and photocopying. The interview schedule was conducted by the researcher. The written composition test was of a common topic in a usual end of term exam. This greatly reduced anxiety and other Hawthorn effect. The marking was done by subject teachers in a pool. Pool marking is done by the subject teachers from different schools that come together for the purpose of marking compositions. They share equal number of compositions from each school. The subject teacher of the sampled schools –set aside the original stratified sample of twenty compositions per class. The final sample was picked randomly from the original 200 pupils for analysis.

3.7. Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages and measures of central tendencies. The data analysis involved editing, organizing and summarizing the information obtained through questionnaires, checklists, the interview schedule and the pupils' written compositions. Following the research objectives, the researcher brought out the meaningful observations made during the study.

The data helped the researcher to note major finding and made conclusions of the study, the suggestions and recommendations for future actions and research. Suggestions and contributions from various participants was used to draw conclusions of the study.

3.8. Logistical and Ethical considerations

Before visiting the selected schools, permission was sought from the Ministry of Education. This allowed the researcher to make preliminary visits to the sampled schools for introduction, to explain the purpose and the procedure of the study verbally. The researcher also made necessary arrangements for the administration of the research instruments for data collection. The subjects were assured that researcher respected and protected the confidentiality of the data obtained from the respondents. The respondents were informed that all the information was held in strictest confidence and reported only as aggregated characteristics not as individual response. The information was purely for the sake of the research. The researcher guarded against misrepresentation, biased writing, plagiarism and was sensitive to the respondents' views.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the researcher described the methodology used in the data collection, in order to have a systematic presentation and analysis in this chapter. Information from the data collected was categorized as follows; Section one discussed the characteristics of the class 7 teachers and strategies of teaching vocabulary used in writing compositions by standard seven learners in public primary schools in Thika sub-county. The ten most preferred by the sampled teachers in order of preference were discussed Section two discusses the extent to which learners were able to use the vocabulary taught in writing compositions. Section three examines the methods teachers used in pointing out the vocabulary mistakes in learners' written composition. Section four looked into the learners' response to teachers' assessment of the vocabulary mistakes in their written composition.

This research established research findings and answered the objective questions formulated in chapter one. The researcher administered the teachers' questionnaire and a checklist to class seven teachers of English. The interview schedule was administered to twenty randomly selected from the original research sample on "one on one" basis. The sampled pupils also provided a written composition.

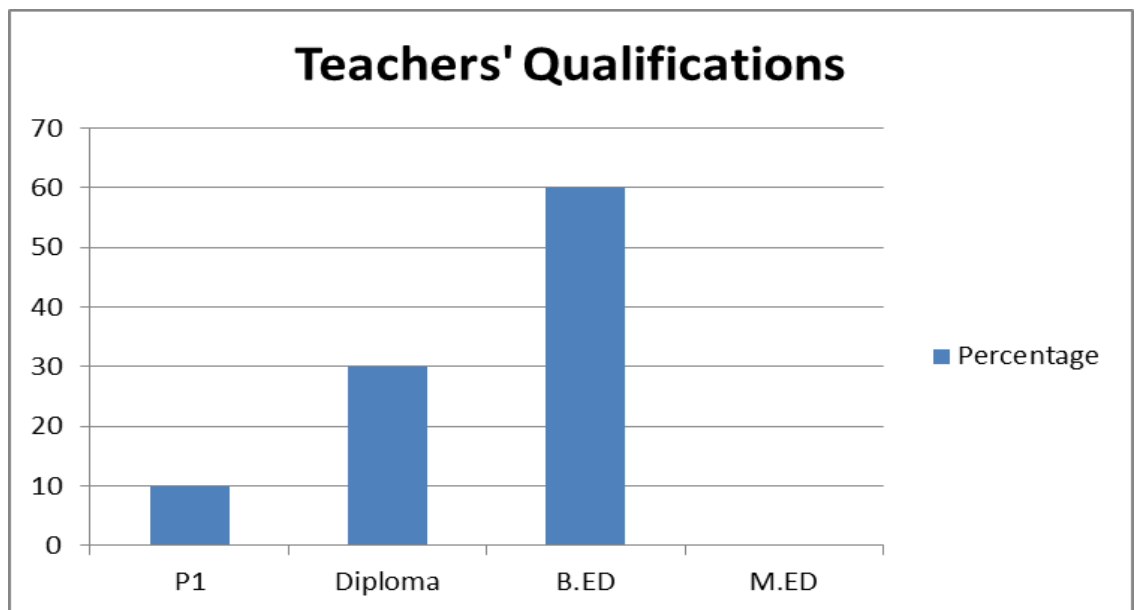
4.2 The characteristics of class seven English teachers

According to (Groenewegen 2008) factors that contributed to learners' lack of competence and poor performance in using vocabulary in composition writing, could be teachers' lack of training, experience in teaching compositions writing and heavy workload.

4.2.1 The teachers' level of education

It was prudent to find out the level of education of the English teachers in public primary schools involved in this study. It revealed that the teachers teaching English in standard seven are qualified as shown in the figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 The teachers' level of education

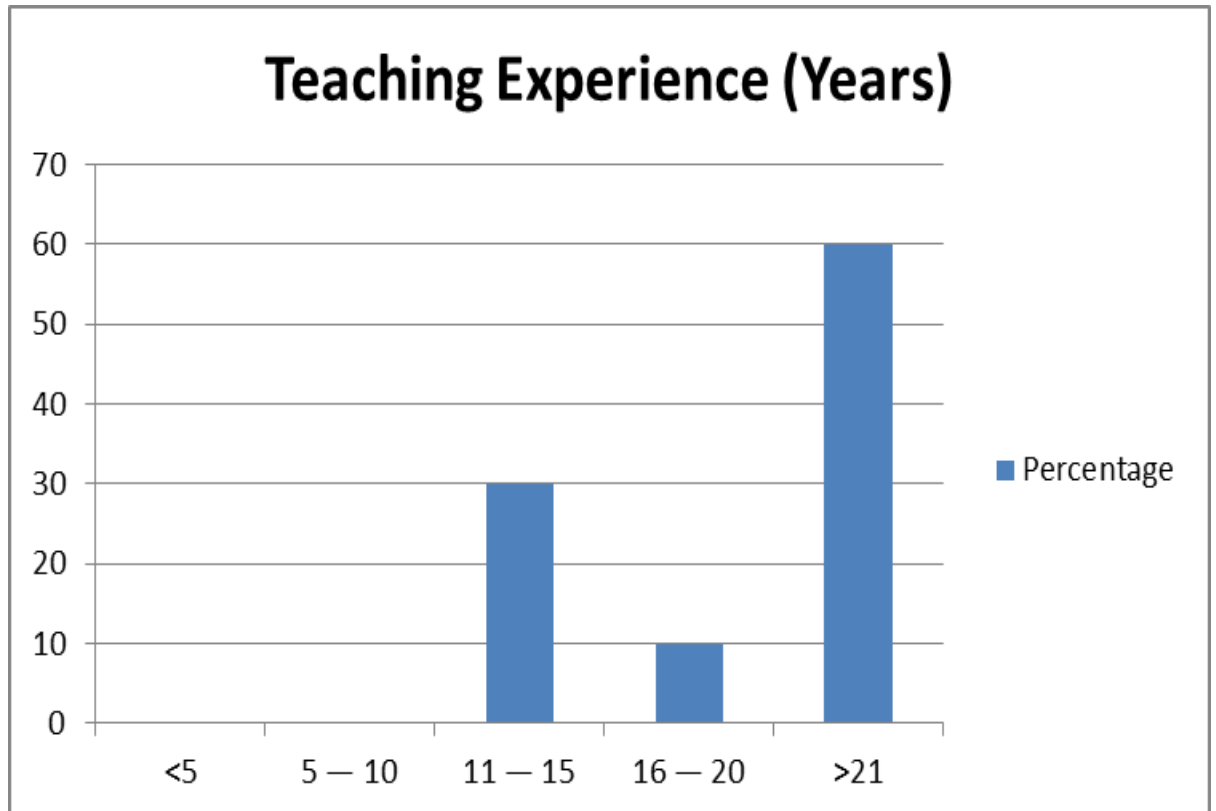


The result of the sampled teachers of English showed that 6 out of 10 (60%) of the teachers have gone through university education, 3 out of 10 (30%) are Diploma holders and only 1 out of 10 (10%) was a P1. That meant that the teachers were highly qualified,

4.2.2 Teachers experience in years

This study also sought to establish the profile of the English teachers of the sampled schools. The study mainly targeted class seven English teachers' of English, teaching experience in years.

Figure 4.2; Years of teaching experience

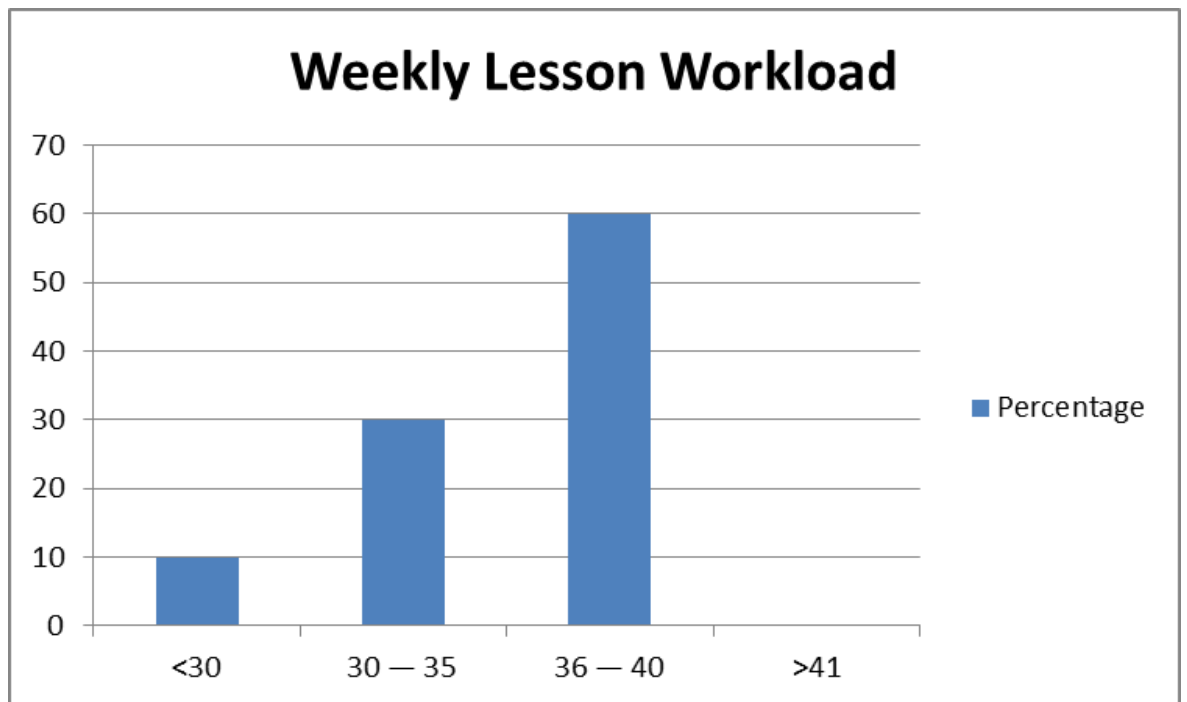


The study revealed that all the teachers of English had experiences of over ten years. Three out of ten (30%) had experience of between eleven and fifteen years, only 1 (10%) teacher had an experience of between sixteen and twenty years. The majority 6 out of 10 (60%) had a wide and rich experience of more than twenty one years as shown in figure 4.2.

4.2.3 The teachers' workload per week

The workload for the English teachers was worked out of the total 40 lessons per week.

Figure 4.3: Teachers' Workload per Week

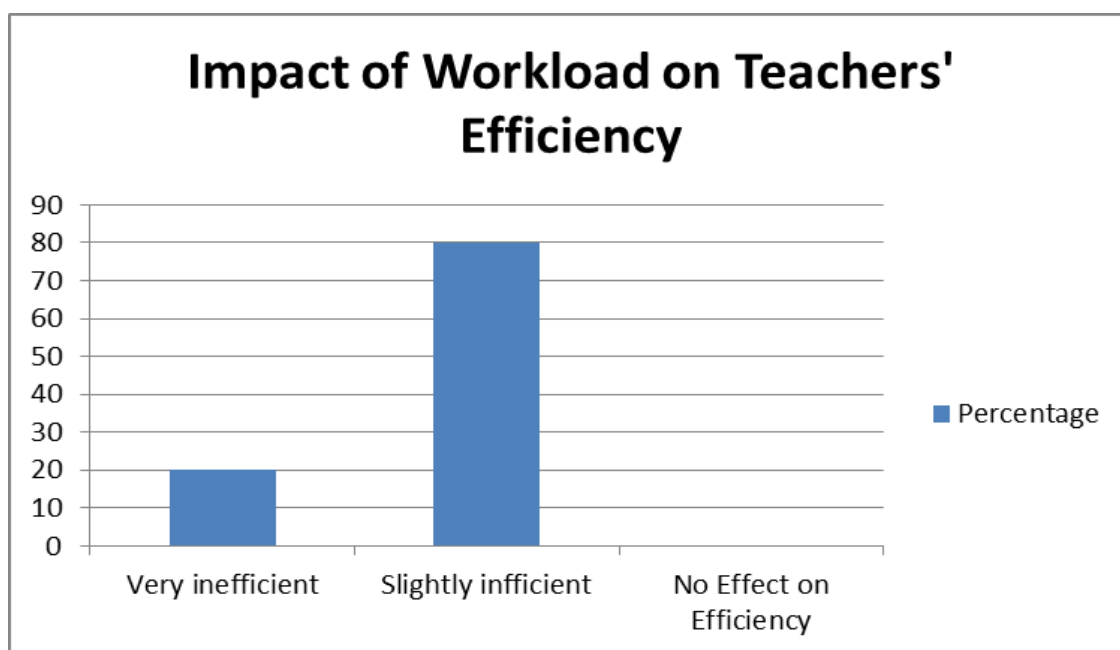


The data contained in figure 4.3 of the class seven teachers weekly workload shows that only one out of ten (10 %) had less than thirty lessons per week. Three out of 10 (30%) had between thirty and thirty five lessons for the same period, while the majority 6 out of 10 (60%) had between 36-40 lessons per week leaving them with less time for preparations and marking especially compositions.

4.2.4 Effect of workload on teachers efficiency

The information about the teacher's level of engagement was the explanation why learners were not given the opportunities to write composition more often. On the question whether the work load affected their effectiveness in teaching, the sampled teachers reported that it indeed affected them as shown in figure 4.4

Figure 4.4 Effects of workload on teachers' efficiency.



The implication of heavy workload was that N=8 (80%) teachers were affected slightly, while N =2 (20%) were very inefficient; this meant that the teachers' heavy workload affected the efficiency of their work performance especially those teaching English. The level of workload affected the teachers' performance in language teaching which required teachers to spend more time in teaching and assessing pupils work especially composition as supported by Gannon, (1985).

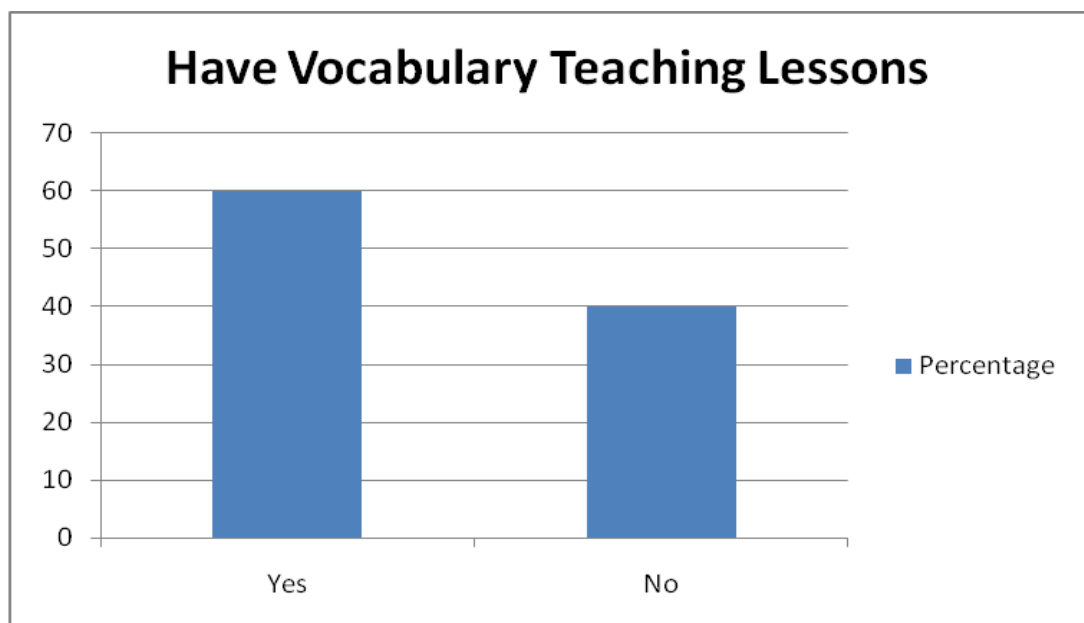
4.3. Strategies for Teaching and Learning of Vocabulary

The first objective of this research study was to find out the strategies for teaching English language vocabulary used in writing composition in standard seven.

4.3.1 Availability of an integrated vocabulary teaching lesson

The significant factor underlying the challenge of teaching vocabulary was unavailability of vocabulary development instructions in the syllabus. However the study sought to know whether teachers had specific time when they taught vocabulary.

Figure 4.5 specific integrated vocabulary lesson



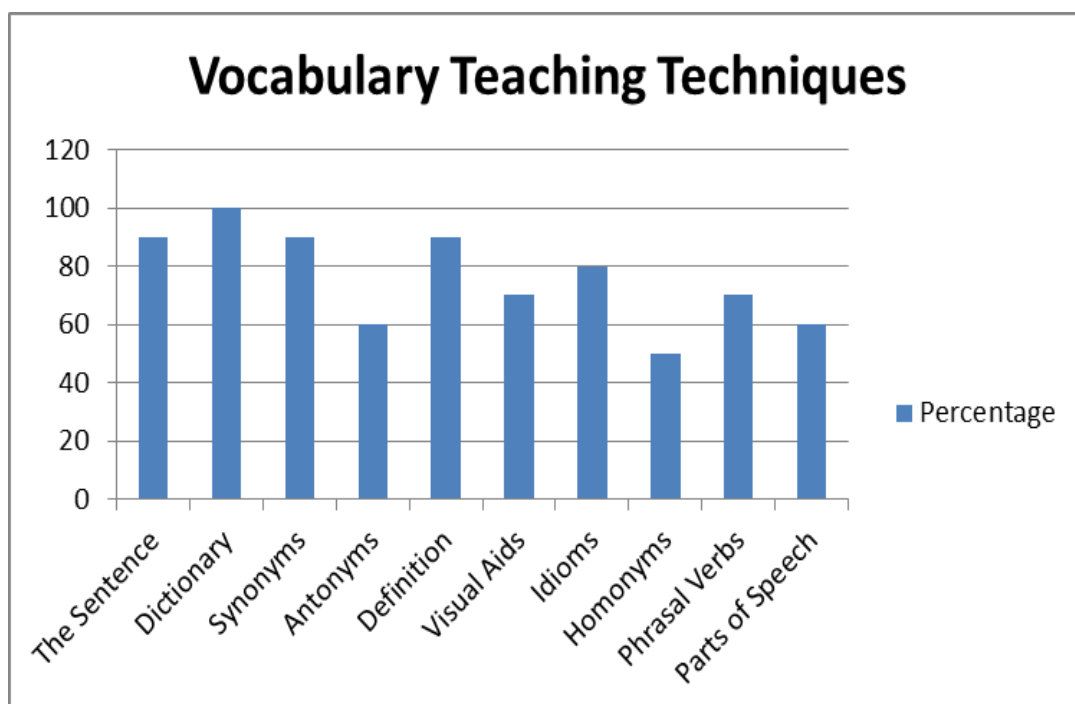
Six out of the 10 (60%) of teachers indicated that they had time for teaching vocabulary used in writing composition, while a significant 4 out of 10 (40%) of the respondents indicated they had no specific time or lesson set aside for teaching vocabulary. The question now arises, when and how then, do they teach vocabulary (figure 4.5).

4.3.2. Preferred vocabulary teaching strategies

On the strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary, data was captured through the checklist. It was attached to the standard sevens' English teachers' questionnaire.

It contained suggested vocabulary teaching and learning strategies that the researcher came across in the review of literature. The respondents were to tick only ten, which he/she uses.

Figure 4.6 the ten most preferred Methods of Teaching Vocabulary



The first research question sought to find out the strategies of teaching vocabulary by teachers. The teachers responded by ticking ten (10) preferred methods (from the checklist) they used in the classroom as shown in the figure 4.6. The discussion on each strategy follows thereafter in the same order. Among the most common methods used in teaching and learning vocabulary are shown in Figure 4.6 included; the sentence structure, dictionary, synonyms, antonyms, and definition of vocabulary, visual aids, homonyms, phrasal verbs and parts of speech.

The study also found out that all teachers (100 %) used the dictionary as a tool in the teaching of vocabulary.

Contextualization, was supposed to be a foremost technique of teaching acquisition of vocabulary in second language, had a classroom usage of only 40% and therefore, discussed in the additional section.

4.3.3 The use of a Sentence

The use of sentences in teaching vocabulary was important because it is the largest grammatical unit in any language. One of the major weaknesses in written compositions as cited by KNEC in 2011 KCPE Newsletter was weak sentence structures. The candidates also failed to use variety of the sentence structures and patterns to avoid monotony to make their composition interesting. When learners learned vocabulary use in sentences, it became easier for them to use when writing compositions. This is in agreement with (Ward 1987) who said that, “nothing is more fundamental to writing than the production of well-organized sentences”.

”According to (Olando & Wachira 2003) a sentence is an independent unit of grammar that communicates a complete thought and consists of a group of related words. It begins with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. Nine out of ten or 90% of respondents indicated that they used sentence structures to teach vocabulary, which means that words are learnt in the right context. However, for the purpose of this study, the uses of sentences were for the extension of vocabulary learning.

In support of using sentences in teaching vocabulary Gathumbi, (2008) who asserted that, a sentence is supposed to be the basic unit for teaching vocabulary. This enabled the learners to see how the new word was used in the right context.

The words can be reinforced by giving learners opportunities of using words in their own sentences as individuals, pairs, or groups. Thornsbury, (2002) says that the use of sentence was an effective vocabulary enhancing activity. He also suggests that, sentence writing may be used together with oral activities like pronunciation, debates or when communicating in a classroom situation and not necessarily in writing.

This agrees with (Ward 1987) and (Scheega 1998) that oral practice prompts the pupils to compose whole sentences which enhances the writing of compositions, where specific vocabulary suitable for every context is used. The use of sentences may involve replacing an underlined word with another in vocabulary development.

4.3.4 The use of Dictionary

The use of dictionary in teaching vocabulary was indicated by all the respondents. This was probably so because of the availability of printed materials or what has been suggested in Kenya primary English syllabus for class seven (KIE now KICD 2002). The teachers are advised to keep on consulting the dictionary for correct pronunciation, stress and intonations when teaching new words or vocabulary. As much as the dictionary is popular with teachers, scholars like (Gathumbi 2008 and Thornsbury 2002) have discouraged it, saying that it might become a drawback. Some dictionaries do not show different uses of a word in different context, leave alone how to use it.

It has been suggested that a dictionary should only be used when other methods fail, although it is a quick way of getting a definition of a word.

This agrees with Thornsbury, (2002) who discouraged the use of dictionary in the classroom because dependence on a dictionary inhibited the development of more useful skills such as guessing from the context.

4.3.5 The use of Synonyms

The use of synonyms in teaching vocabulary was preferred by many teachers, N=9 (90%) probably because the knowledge enlarged the learners vocabulary very fast. The learners were able to use variety of words to mean the same thing, avoided monotony and made their composition interesting.

Synonyms can be used interchangeably (Olando &Wachira 2006). These are words that share a similar meaning like old, ancient, elderly or aged. These words mean not young or new, however when talking or even writing we choose which word to use in which context. We can say an elderly man but not an elderly record player. There was need for learners to realize that although synonyms are similar they are seldom the same in all contexts.

4.3.6 The use of antonyms

The outcome of the research showed that 6 out of 10 (60%) of the teachers preferred to approach vocabulary teaching through the knowledge and use of antonyms. These are words with contradictory meaning; (Gathumbi 2005) says that the knowledge of opposites is another way of helping the learners to guess the meaning of unknown word (s). For example, I thought the exam would be easy but it was quite tricky. The learner was able to tell that the word tricky meant difficult or the opposite of easy.

When the learners knew the meaning of one word, it became easier to guess the meaning of the other.

Antonym or oppositeness may be of several kinds as pointed out in the literature review, in normal, everyday language, one is either 'alive' or 'dead' except in specialist medical terminology there are no intermediate terms. Such opposites are normally thought of as un-gradable. Antonyms like hot/ cold and big /small have degrees between them and have terms beyond the two extremes. Such opposites are called gradable like in: (Scorching) boiling – hot – warm – cool – cold – ice (freezing) and enormous- huge- large- big- average- medium- little- small- tiny- minute which Gathumbi, (2005) refers to, as 'the scale'. According to Carler, (1987), gradable antonyms are notoriously difficult to translate directly from language to language.

Another systematic feature of opposites is the way one term in a pair may operate as the unmarked or neutral form, for example in questions like; how big is your flat? And, how old is your son? The first question is not pre supposing that it is big. It may be quite small. How old is your son? This second question also could be referring even to a month's old baby. The word young may not be used to ask or answer question like, how young is your baby, neither can one answer the second question, as I am twenty years young. Just as in big/small, young/old. The words young and small are not commonly used unless the one talking already had the information on the same, such that he/ she probed further, how small or how old?

The word light could be the opposites of heavy, strong and dark depending on what one is talking about.

The word rough also could be the opposites of; calm, smooth, quiet and gentle.

4.3.7 The use of Definition of Words

In this method the teachers used other words to tell the meaning of words, N=9 (90%) of the respondents showed that this was a popular method of teaching vocabulary. It involved explaining the meaning of a word by restating an idea. The meaning of unknown word was determined by giving examples that clarified and helped to define it. Dictionaries were used as a source of word definition. For example the word participated as in, Mutiso participated in the cross-country. Mutiso took part in the cross-country. Mutiso was one of those who competed in the cross-country. Mutiso was a participant in the cross-country. One way of enhancing definition was by matching words with their meanings, since words could easily be forgotten, a matching exercise was necessary. It also worked better if a record of vocabulary learnt was kept.

When using this method, the words were translated in one's first language, an example can be written in a sentence in English or a drawing. Eventually a learner came up with his or her own dictionary which served as quick reference and source of fast revision Redman (1989). The other reason why the teachers preferred this method was they used learners' experiences in and out of the classroom to come up with familiar definition of words. The teachers encouraged the learners to use the words in their discussion to enhance, participation and production of vocabulary.

On the other hand, learners in class seven, who were being prepared for their academic study, are better of working from specialized academic word list aimed at helping them to write interesting compositions declares Thornbury, (2002).

In addition he says that teachers are not limited to the different ways that could ensure that the learners get the correct definition of a word.

4.3.8 The use of Visual Aids

This is the use of pictures, drawings, videos and real objects where learners used their sense of sight to enhance vocabulary learning. Seven out of ten or 70% of teachers indicated that they used 'realia' in teaching vocabulary. Visual aids were usually used by the teachers to make their presentations more comprehensible. These included maps, drawings, real objects, pictures, photos, cartoons, diagrams and audio recordings. This was in line with Colombo, (2009), who explained that visual aids helped the learners to experience from multiple sensory representations of the real things. Sometimes the teacher probed the learners to help them realize the meaning of words.

Video and photos were used to teach some of the words that denoted expression, mood and reactions such that the learners not only learned vocabulary but also understood the concepts. This was in agreement with what Bwire & Vikiru said that the "use of visual aids help the learners get the meaning of difficult words". Teachers routinely used 'realia' and images made content comprehensible and engaged the learners in lower primary. Unfortunately, as they move on in upper classes, the scope of the content grows and becomes more difficult; the teachers minimized the use of realia and visuals aids.

Research had indicated that exposure to learning through a variety of contexts was likely to promote retrieval of knowledge.

English language learners (ELLs) who struggled to comprehend their class-level language benefited from instructions that illustrate vocabulary and concepts with realia and visual aids. The use of diagrams, drawings and illustrations were powerful tools that made complex vocabulary more comprehensible to ELLs. According to Gathumbi (2008), research had shown that learners retain 80% of what was heard and seen compared to 50% of what was heard, thus placing the use of visual aids high in the order.

4.3.9 The use of Idioms

The use of idiom in teaching vocabulary was preferred by 8 out of 10 (80%) of the respondents. Idioms or idiomatic expressions are formed where more than one lexical item co-occurs. That way, each lost its original meaning and together gave rise to a new meaning. Orlando & Wachira (2009) said that the knowledge of the idiomatic expression enriched learners' understanding of the language generally in speaking, writing compositions as well as other creative activities. An idiomatic expression like "kick the bucket" for example the old man kicked the bucket, and was buried.

Idioms have to be understood as they cannot be interpreted by the meaning of individuals' words. Idioms are multi-word items or fixed collocations. However, the use of idioms and other multi-word items like phrasal verbs and similes cause problems when the learner uses them out of context. The use of multi-words accurately and appropriately, distinguished the intelligent learners from the others. The learners needed frequent exposure and practice in the correct context, until the learners became familiar and used them without difficulty.

These idiomatic expressions presented problems in both understanding and in production. This was because they could not be unpacked or allow any variation. They had narrow register range; they were only used in certain contexts and for certain effects. They therefore needed to be used cautiously. Sometimes idioms could be grouped together according to some categories, like those associated to body parts, like toe- the line which means to follow instructions strictly. Typically, they were grouped by themes like weather, technology and social life however, contextualized exposure works best.

4.3.10 The use of Homonyms

Homonyms as a strategy of teaching vocabulary was favored by 5 out of 10 (50%) of the respondents. According to Bwire (2005) homonyms are words having different meanings in different context, which are tricky and confusing to learners that was why it had to be explained together with homophones and homographs. All the same, these groups of vocabulary are essential in composition writing; however, they were easily mixed up and wrongly used. According to Olando & Wacira (2006) homonyms are words that have similar spelling and had similar pronunciation but had different meanings like: *Fan*- an admirer and at the same time it can be; - a machine with blades that currents air in a room.

Homophones are words that had similar pronunciation but different spelling and or meaning like: *Boy*- a male child or a young male child, *Buoy*- an object that floats on sea to mark dangerous and safe places. Homographs are words that have similar spelling but different pronunciation and meaning like ; *Rebel*- a noun meaning a person who fights his government, *Rebel*- a verb meaning, to disobey.

There are some words that are not actually Homonyms and are often misspelled because they are confused with words that sound nearly the same, such as, practice (noun) practise (verb). The teachers emphasized on meaning and usage of such words, that helped learners to make contextual reference. Some of these words were; accept/except and loose/lose alter/altar, formally/formerly and meet/meat. Regular practice in using homophones in writing helped learners to minimize those mistakes. These mistakes are only realized in writing because in speech they sound the same, and therefore contextualization was used in order to make it comprehensible.

4.3.11 The use of Phrasal Verbs

A phrasal verb, as a way of teaching vocabulary was preferred by N=7 (70%) of the respondents. It was one of the multi-word units and strategy of learning vocabulary. A phrasal verb is a set of words, usually a verb and one or two preposition or adverb whose meaning was different from the meaning of the individual word when used separately. The learners could not possibly learn phrasal verbs before they were familiar with verbs, prepositions and adverbs (Bukonya 1990). Learners who comprehended and used phrasal verbs in their expressions made their compositions more varied and interesting, which improved their quality. This was in line with what (Kioko 2010) said that the knowledge of phrasal verbs is an addition to the development of a learners' vocabulary.

Some phrasal verbs have more than one meanings like; Put off – means to postpone or deciding to do something at a later date as well as to discourage a person or to make someone not want to do something.

In the English language syllabus, KIE now KICD (2002) phrasal verbs are introduced in class five, and continue up to class eight. Phrasal verbs are commonly used in conversations and most of them are informal. However, learners should be able to note these expressions in their reading, conversations and writing.

4.3.12 Parts of speech

All languages, are made of words which are classified in different parts of speech, they are grouped in classes according to what they do in a sentence. These different classes are called parts of a speech. Six out of 10 (60%) of teachers, in the survey used the teaching of parts of speech as a strategy of teaching vocabulary. This could be a long, detailed strategy. This was not provided for in the English language syllabus KIE (KICD) (2002). However, some parts of speech are introduced in lower primary like (nouns) referred to as naming words and (verbs) which are doing words or words that described actions or state of being. Other parts of speech include adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, interjections conjunctions or joining words are introduced in bits throughout the syllabus. Class seven learns some parts of speech by the use of affixes, this word include both prefix and suffix. A prefix is a letter that is placed before a root word while a suffix comes after a root word Orlando & Wachira, (2009). The use of affixes as a vocabulary learning strategy is provided for in the English language syllabus and are learnt separately.

These parts of speech are classified further and took long to cover. Teaching them bit by bit did not give a clear picture as presented in the syllabus.

However, word-building activities were used by learners to build new words, for vocabulary expansion. Parts of speech presented most important basics of any language learning. The teaching of English vocabulary in parts of speech was popular in traditional grammar, which involved breaking up the sentences and labeling words in their parts of speech, which fall into one of eight different word classes or parts.

Therefore, affixes are useful in word building activity as suggested by McCarthy, (1994) learners learned to build new vocabulary by adding either a prefix or suffix, words like the verbs teach and farm when you add a suffix –er, you made nouns teacher and farmer. The word topic (noun) when added a suffix –al, you get an adjective topical. There are no clear rules about the use of suffixes in word building, but some suffixes are very common and sometimes are easily guessed. One of the ways of teaching and learning parts of speech was by use of affixes as provided for in the English language syllabus and course books. Thornbury, (2002) explains the use of affixation as one way of helping learners form new words to support parts of speech instead of following the traditional grammar of teaching each group at a time.

When grammar and vocabulary were taught separately, vocabulary meant content words. Recently this division has changed and interdependence of both grammar and vocabulary has taken shape in lexical approach. In this approach, vocabulary learning involves formation of individual high frequency words and word combinations.

It also encourages the organization of a syllabus around meanings. Teachers guided learners to pay attention to some of the suffixes and prefixes that had meaning. Sometimes they are specific to certain parts of speech. Prefix like pre- and ante- means before for example in words pre-natal, pre- school and ante-natal. Suffixes like -or,-er,-ness and -ment are noun forming from verbs like in edit-or, work-or and sing-er. Verb suffixes that form verbs from nouns or adjectives like -ate,- en -ify -ize- may mean make, for example irrit-ate, dict-ate, soft-en, class-ify, real-ize, and organ-ize. Adjective suffixes are used to make adjectives from nouns or verbs for example; -able, -ous, -less -some -ful and -y in words like comfort-able, danger-ous, care-less, faith-ful and wealth-y. Most adverbs are formed by adding suffix -ly to adjectives like neat-ly, slow-ly and quick-ly.

However, suffixes and prefixes were introduced at different times throughout the English language syllabus from simple to complex (Bukenya 1990) said that it was worth taking trouble to master, the common prefixes and suffixes of English. There are few prefixes which were difficult to master because they shared more than one meaning for example, 'dis' implied separation or being not part of, as in discord, discriminate, the prefix in' mean 'not' as in insensitive, in human.

Prefixes like im,il and ir also meant not for example in words, like 'im' in impossible, 'il' in illegible and 'ir' in irreligious. However, teachers were careful to point out some exceptional suffixes, which made both adjectives and nouns. Like ary, or, ory, a noun lavatory, adjectives customary, compulsory, ant/ent as in pleasant, agent, pleasant, insolvent, an/ian as in publican, guardian, Egyptian and Ugandan

.4.4 Additional Strategies

4.4.1 The use of different Registers

The English language syllabus was organized in themes like health, technology, transport and environment that was why teaching of vocabulary should be introduced in registers or different disciplines, therefore it was expected that the teachers would use this strategy. However, it lagged behind. These disciplines usually contain specialized vocabulary that learners needed to learn. This, therefore, was one of many vocabulary-teaching approaches that emphasize direct vocabulary training that acted as an introduction in focus to vocabulary instructions, the use of dictionary and contextualization. The specific vocabulary needs of ELLs in whatever educational setting was clearly addressed.

The teacher in this case needed to emphasize on the vocabulary, which were needed in writing an interesting composition touching on a specific area. Generally English vocabulary distracted the learners, as they would only learn what they were able to apply more specifically. Gardner (2013) argues that words be organized in groups of how they relate like tree-nest-bird-eggs.

Learners also made vocabulary network, like around the school, list all the sections (rooms) that are found in that building- further they may list items that can be found in each section like; The head teachers' office, one could find items like tables, chairs, trophies, cabinet, shelves, computer, photocopier and a wall clock. Such activities can be used to teach vocabulary in different topical themes mentioned above. Learning of vocabulary in different registers may be enhanced through the use of language games.

According to Lee, (1979) a vocabulary game was an activity in which the learners' attention is focused mainly on words. It included spelling games. This ensured that vocabulary teaching was enjoyable and successful. The teacher ensured that all learners took part as an individual, groups or teams. Uses of crossword puzzle were interesting finding words, which enhanced learners' concentration.

According to Thornsbury (2002), using games as a way of enhancing vocabulary learning and retention dubbed "how to put words to work" was fun and learners enjoyed them. For games to be enjoyable they were repetitive and interesting so as arouse attention. Games were carried out by individuals, pairs, group or whole class, for example while learning categories of color, clothes, fruits, sports and animals. The teachers guided the learners throughout the game, for example in the use of different adjectives, learners in groups made sticky labels on which they wrote adjectives in order to describe their friends, words like beautiful , tall, clever, nice playful, quiet, polite and others. They then had time to stick them on their classmates. This would also be followed by class discussion. How and why each learner felt when different adjectives were attached to him or her?

Which adjectives each had liked. Learning of vocabulary also adapted to circumstances like, shopping, going to hospital, athletic day, sports day or storytelling. Learners were involved individually, in pairs group or whole class. Like, in my father, sister or brother went to (name the shopping center and the name of a shop or supermarket). He or she broughteach learners adds an item and repeats the items already mentioned by other learners. They were encouraged to repeat whole sentences, for example.

My father went to Mathai supermarket in Ruiru town and bought a loaf of bread, a packet of biscuit, a kilo of sugar and so on and on. This type of games was aligned to teach different tenses.

4.4.2 Contextualization

The English language syllabus KIE now KICD (2002) was organized in themes whereby the teachers exposed the learners to the new word (vocabulary) related to that theme. This therefore meant that words learnt, the sentences structures or pattern as well as the comprehension reading were from that theme. It also meant that the variety of the vocabulary as used in this specific context, this way the learners were able to learn and had extensive vocabulary coverage. However the knowledge of vocabulary involved knowing how to writes it, it's meaning, how to use it, and when to use it.

Contextualization according to Gardner (2013) was perhaps the most important element of direct vocabulary instructions (DVI) that ensured that English language learners (ELLs), were actually conceptualizing the words they were trying to learn. This can be made clearer by using a first language gross, if the concept is already known. Vocabulary learning is always dependant on what an individual knows or doesn't know. All the same, the learners need a great deal of practice in rapidly recognizing word forms and automatically connecting forms with their meanings. This according to Macintyre, (2009) may also mean incorporating what learners know from their home context into their learning in school, which they would draw from their experience and knowledge.

Contextualization focused on learning in ways that build from learner's prior knowledge and experiences both in and outside the classroom. However, when the learners had diversity, like in modern classroom, the teachers created shared experiences through activity based and problem oriented instructions. According to Ngugi, (2012) in the research on language activities used in development of Learners' English vocabulary in Kenyan secondary schools, it was pointed out that the use of vocabulary learning activities is left to the discretion of the teacher. This agreed to another research- based conclusion which had shown that although vocabulary knowledge played a critical role in learners' literacy development, there was little emphasis on the acquisition of the same in the school curricular.

4.5. The extent to which Learners Use Vocabulary in Composition Writing

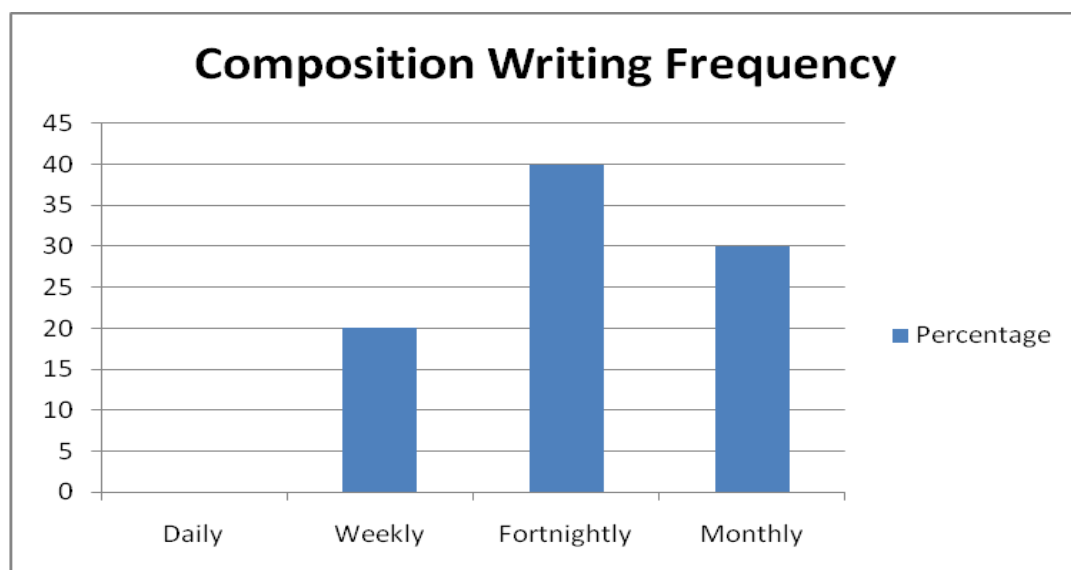
The second objective question sought the extent to which the learners used the learnt vocabulary when practicing writing compositions. The title of the composition was given in form of beginning of a story "as a police officer, I encounter many challenges, one day I was on patrol when.....In the course of learning, the class seven learners were taught about the work of a police officer. In a topic theme in their syllabus entitled 'professions' in this theme a list of related vocabulary confectioned to police activities and importance of maintaining law and order were covered.

4.5.1 The learners' frequency of writing composition

Composition writing skills like other skills needed practice in order to perfect them. The teachers needed to expose the learners to a lot of practice on writing composition.

For the purpose of this research, both teachers and learners agreed that there is need to practice writing composition. All (100%) of the sampled learners indicated that they write compositions and that all the compositions written were marked by their teachers of English.

Figure 4.7 Frequency of Composition writing



In response, the frequency of writing composition opportunities was irregular among the learners. (20%) of teachers indicated that they issued weekly composition writing assignments during which the use of vocabulary learnt in the course of the week was practiced. Majority, N=4 (40%) indicated that they only issued such assignments fortnightly. Further, 3 out of 10 or (30%) of the teachers indicated that they only issued composition writing assignments on monthly basis, during which learners practiced the use of vocabulary learnt in the month.

The impact of such delays in assessing learner's ability to use vocabulary implied that the learners missed the opportunity to practice and build their skills in self-expression through writing. This made it more difficult for learners to remember the vocabulary learnt which affected their performance.

This is in contrast to what (Peacock 1986) said about writing clearly, learners got more opportunities to practice writing, the more they wrote, the more confident they became in writing.

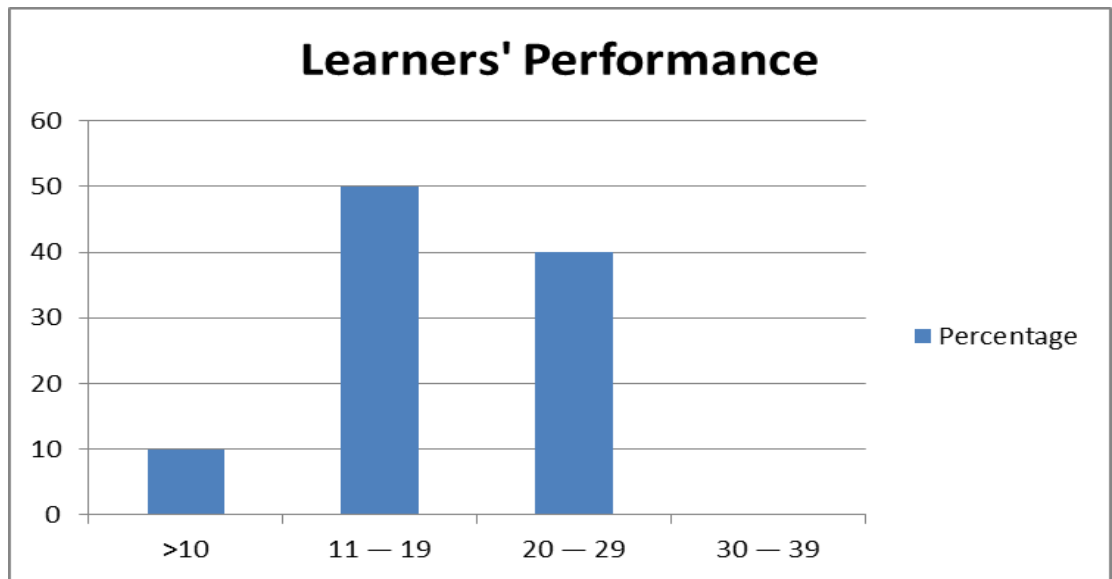
Learners simply learnt to write by writing according to (Andrew 2011) writing was a mirror of self, the soul and the world. Through writing we gave voice to our most intimate thought and imagination. Composition writing used linguistic approach which involved vocabulary acquisition, development and use. The improvement of appropriate choice of words moves from simple structures to complex ones. This was in line with the argument that knowledge became intake through practice, especially one that provided opportunities for using language. This was in natural communicative situations, referred to as “real operating condition”. Process approach to writing was also encouraged; language teachers held writing discussion with their learners in the classroom, also give learners “one-to-one time” to discuss what was expected of them or what they thought about a certain topic. Learners were involved in the process of writing as recommended (Mouly 1992). This was the discussion in the intervention stage of the conceptual frame work in chapter one figure 1.1.

4.5.2 The learners performance

For the purpose of this study, the learners wrote a composition whose beginning of a story was given; the instructions were: complete the story making it as interesting as you can. “As a police officer, I encounter many challenges, one day I was on patrol when”.....In the course of the learning the class seven learners learnt about the work of a police officer in the theme entitled “professions”

in the syllabus. In this theme the vocabulary relating to a police activities and the importance of maintaining law and order were covered. The time and circumstances of writing the composition was free of any Hawthorne effect. This was so because it was during a usual end of term composition writing test.

Figure 4.8 Learners' Performance



The outcome of the performance showed that the randomly selected and analyzed written compositions did not attain 50% which is 20 out of 40. The result of the analyzed final sample of the original of 200pupils, was 10% of the research sample, was clustered in four categories. The categories are; 01-10, 11-19, 20-29 and 30-39. The reason that led to 12 out of 20, (60%) to perform below average in composition writing, was lack of regular practice as shown in figure 4.7. Eight out of 20 (40%) scored above the average mark of 20 out of possible 40 marks. These figures were captured in the composition writing test that was administered to standard seven learners.

This was notwithstanding the fact that 7 out of 10, (70%) of the teachers believed that knowledge of English vocabulary contributed very much to learners' performance in the final Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). This further brought out the significance of better vocabulary teaching methods to help the learners overcome the challenge.

The characteristics of the four categories, according to KNEC (2013) KCPE English composition marking scheme were; the group that was awarded marks 01-10 was referred to as 'poor' these learners were unable to communicate any story and their language ability was minimal such that the teacher or examiner had to guess what they intended to write or meant. The worst composition in this category, the learner failed to use the English words meaningfully; words were repeated from the given rubric until they filled the pages. Some failed to write any correct sentence. This agreed with what (Rwanda 2009) said that lack of vocabulary knowledge was insufficient for quality expression in composition writing. She further explained that limited passive vocabulary made it difficult for learners to comprehend age appropriate activities.

Learners who were awarded marks 11-19 were classified as fair, although they lacked confidence in the language they communicated understandably, but only relatively so. Their stories were undeveloped; L1 influence was evident and lacked variety of words to express themselves. The third category included those learners who were awarded 20-29 marks .These learners were able to express themselves easily and fluently. They had well constructed sentences and had the ability to use English as a normal way of expressing themselves.

They had multi - word expression like similes, phrasal verbs and idioms in a limited way. According to KNEC (2013) KCPE composition marking scheme for English language, the fourth category was dubbed excellent; candidates were awarded marks 30-39 out of the possible 40 marks.

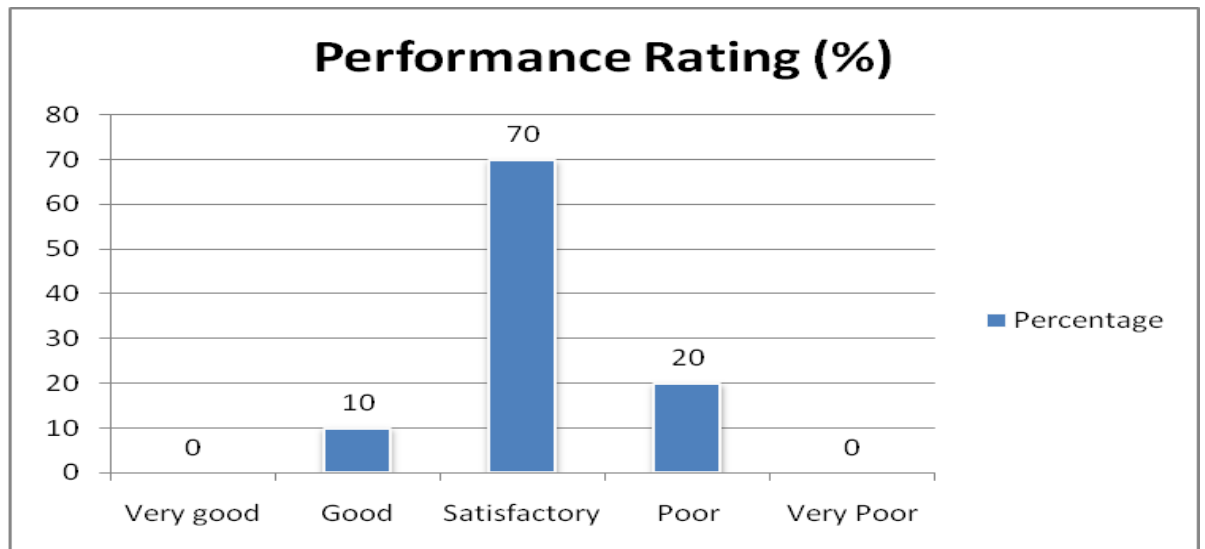
These learners were capable of communicating by carefully selecting and using appropriate vocabulary fluently. They also used English words attractively, creatively with originality and imagination. This way they shared their deep feelings, emotions and enthusiasm. These learners used vocabulary ambitiously and displayed mastery of English language. Unfortunately none of the sampled composition qualified in this category. Given this state of affairs, 9 out of 10 (90%) of the teachers surveyed concurred that composition writing presented more difficulty compared to multiple choice questions in the same examinations.

This was notwithstanding the fact that 7 out of 10 (70%) teachers believed that knowledge of English vocabulary contributed very much to learners' performance in (KCPE. This further brought out the significance of improving vocabulary teaching methods to help the learners overcome the challenge.

4.5.3 The learners' performance rating by teachers

The research sought to know what teachers felt about the learners' use of vocabulary in their composition writing. In answering the question on how they would rate their learners composition performance in their school, the teacher responded in the following way

Figure 4.9 Teachers' rating of learners' performance in use of vocabulary in writing



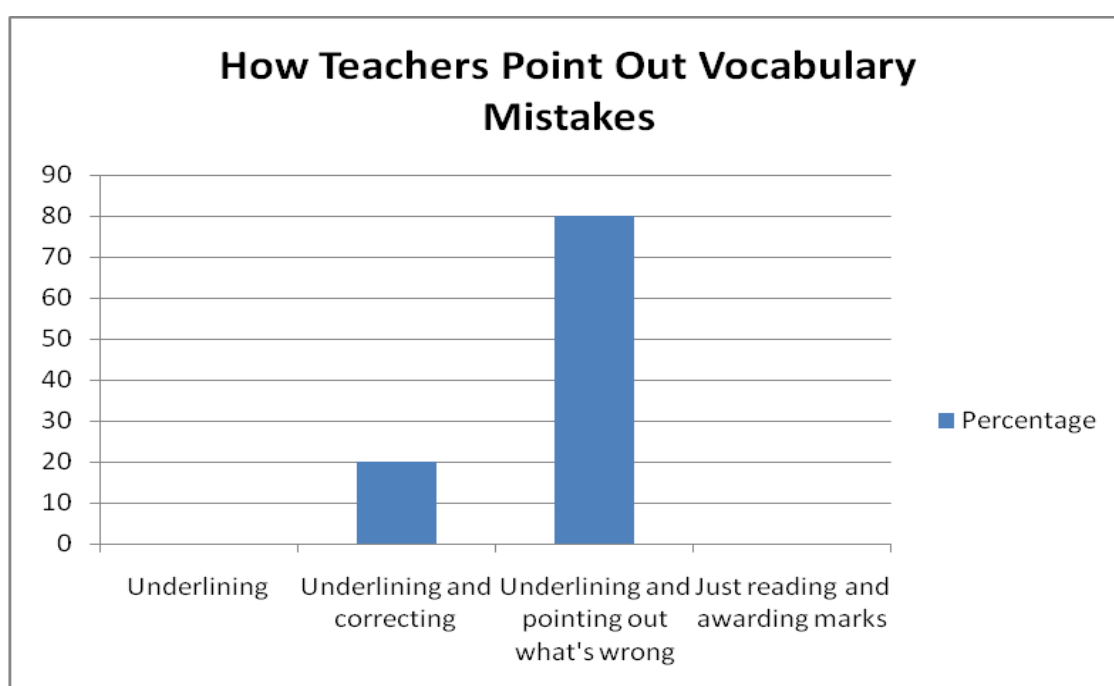
Despite 12 out of 20 (60%) percent of the learners posting below average marks, in the composition writing test in this survey, 7 out of 10 (70%) of teachers surveyed expressed satisfaction with their learners' performance in their general use of vocabulary in composition writing. Teachers responded this way probably because teaching and assessing writing skills in L2 was difficult. According to Gannon, (1985), it was tiresome and took a lot of time. \

Productive vocabulary referred to the words and expressions that the learners used correctly when producing oral or written language, both capacities are important and should be developed in order for learners to communicate effectively in speech and writing.

4.6.1 How Teachers Point out Learners' Vocabulary Mistakes

Keh, (1990) defined feedback as an input from the reader (teacher) to a writer (learner) with the effect of providing information to the writer for correction and revision. The teachers sampled indicated that they used two different ways of showing vocabulary mistake fig4.10

Fig. 4:10 Learners' response to teachers' correction



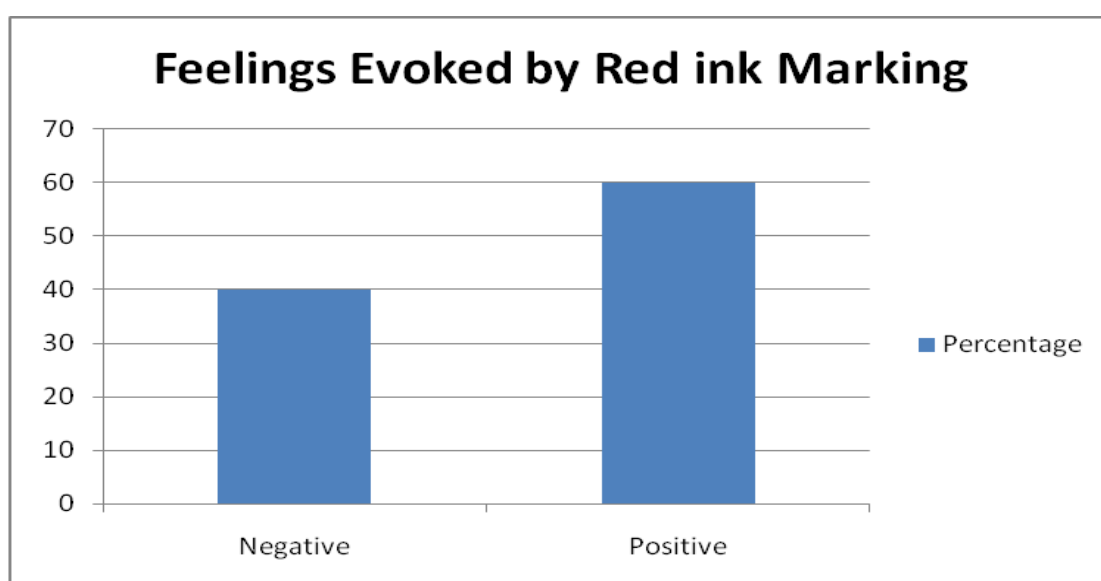
Underlining and indicating the nature of required corrections was the most commonly used method of pointing out vocabulary mistakes. The mistakes included incorrect use of vocabulary, wrong choice of words and spelling in learners' compositions. The standard color used in pointing out the mistakes and suggesting appropriate corrections was red ink. This collated well with learners' responses, which indicated that 8 out of 10 (80%) of teachers indeed underlined the vocabulary mistakes found in compositions and indicated the necessary kind of correction.

The remaining two teachers (20%) only underlined the mistakes learners' written compositions.

4.6.2 Learners feeling evoked by markings

After every test learners are usually anxious about the result, therefore it was important that teachers immediately marked the test and gave feedback without delay to avoid anxiety.

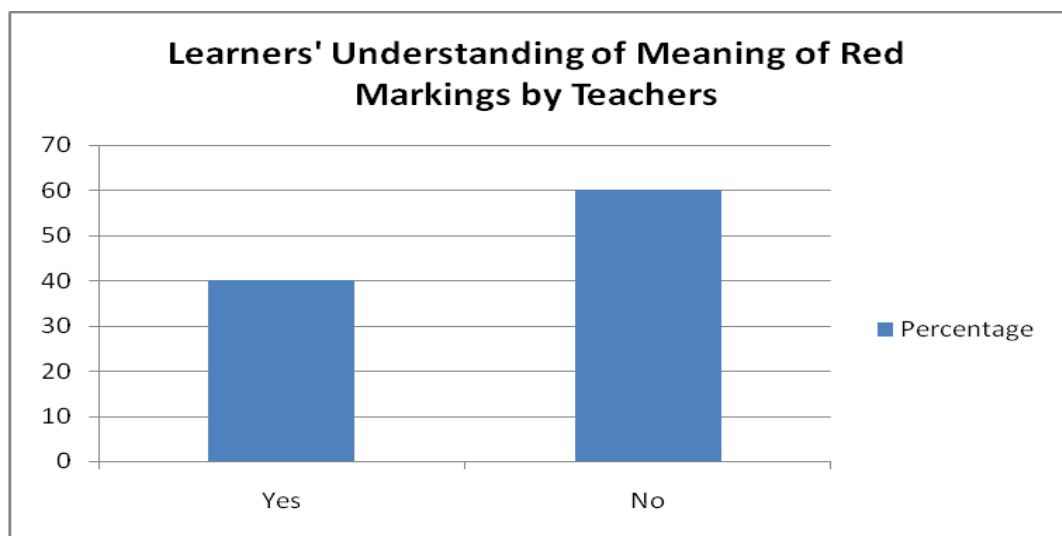
Figure 4.11 Learners' feelings evoked by markings in their compositions



The study found that 12 out of 20 (60%) of learners appreciated the fact that the teachers took time to assess and point out the vocabulary mistakes in their compositions. However, a significant 8 out of 20 (40%) of the learners did not take the corrections positively, as captured in figure 4.11. This reaction was due to two major factors. To start with, some teachers had not taken the time to explain to their learners what the red ink markings on their compositions meant, as captured in figure 11. Secondly, the negative sentiments ascribed to the comments that some teachers made regarding the learner's performance in the use of vocabulary. As such, the learners felt lost on why the markings were made and what they ought to have done to correct their vocabulary mistakes.

Communication breakdown between the teachers and learners regarding the corrections suggested was further emphasized by half or 50% of the learners who made immediate corrections to the vocabulary mistakes in the compositions as pointed out by the teachers. The remaining 50% did not, which was an indication that in half of the cases, the teachers did not follow up to ensure that the corrections were done.

Figure 4.12 Learners' understanding of markings by teachers.



Learners, on their part, expressed challenges that included lack of understanding of the meaning of the red ink marks as used by teachers in the marking of compositions, this was in agreement to what (Gecaga 2008) said, that most of the times the learners are left to guess why they failed to impress the teacher. The wrong attitude towards composition writing in general was due to negative remarks made by teachers about the vocabulary mistakes in their written compositions.

According to (Nthiga 2010) teachers relied so much on error feedback and commentary which concentrated mostly on weaknesses of the learners' compositions.

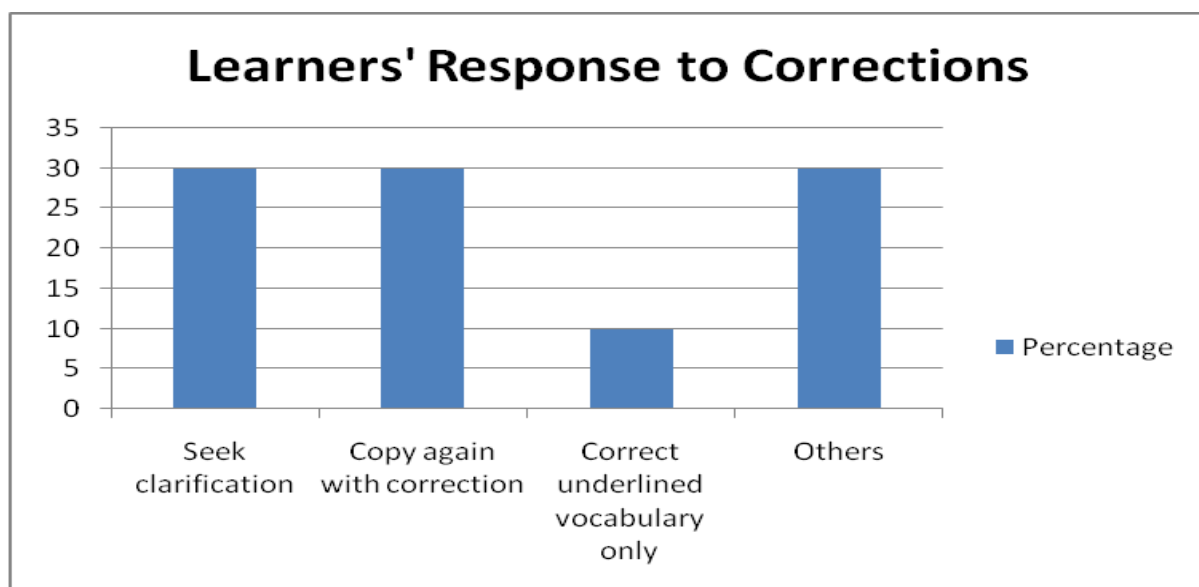
This was very de-motivating and therefore learners avoided writing more, they saw it as an opportunity for the teacher to point out their mistakes. Lack of consistency in methods used by teachers in pointing out mistakes to assist learners correct their vocabulary was discouraging to learners. This was contrasting with what (Rowntree 1977) put that, assessment demanded a level of interaction and discussion about the learners work. Rivers & Temperley (1978) proposed that errors should be merely underlined and the learners alone, in pairs or in groups decide in what way their writing was inadequate and make changes. They also claimed that errors should be underlined and marked with a symbol which acts as a guide to the kind of errors. Such symbols are; T=tenses, WO=word order or V=incorrect word used, for the purpose of this research study.

Nganga (2002) recommended that, teachers should give individual learners attention by going through the marked work with them. This was very important as different learner's made different mistakes. The teachers in the study pointed out the learners' vocabulary mistakes or error by underlining, writing correct word above the underlined word. The problem was that the learners did not understand why it was so and not what had been written. William (Ibid.72) explains that, when teachers are marking, they should underline a word then put a sign on top of the word or at the side which the learners would understand. This meant that the learners would find out their mistakes. If he/she cannot correct it he/she would see the teacher. This agreed with what (Nthiga 2010) called student- teacher interactions.

4.7. Learners' Response to Teachers' Vocabulary Assessment

The fourth objective of this research study was to establish the learners' response to the assessment of vocabulary in their written composition. In this research the teachers agreed that learners indeed corrected their vocabulary mistake in different ways. In as much as some of the learners had negative feelings and majority of them did not understand the meaning of the teachers red marks on their compositions, they attempted to correct their work in different ways.

Figure 4.13 Learners' response to correction



The study showed that 6 out of 20 (30%) of learners sought clarification from teachers on the mistakes made and suggested corrections. Six more learners (30%) copied the entire composition afresh factoring on the correction of the mistakes as suggested by the teacher. Out of 20 learners (10%) corrected only the vocabulary pointed out. The remaining 6 out of 20 (30%) of the respondents used other means other than the ones indicated in figure 4.13.

As learners are the central participants in the pedagogical process, the raw materials that go into the process of learning, the success of the process was determined by the knowledge and the skills the learners acquired after going through the process. Gathumbi, (2005) agreed with Ominde report, (1964) which recommended that teachers should adjust their instructional methods to the individual needs learners centered than teachers. The acquisition of vocabulary was demonstrated when learners are able to produce comprehensible pieces of writing at their level. The views, feelings and attitudes of the learners about what went on in the process of learning were therefore important.

It was argued that learners should be active and proactive agents in the feedback process, (Hyland & Hyland 2006a). In support of this (Lee 2008), said that learners' reaction or responses could be looked at in terms of affective factors or in terms of their writing development. Krashen argued that one only acquired a little more of what he understood, hence the need for provision of comprehensible input. In addition, one way of achieving this, was by simplifications, such as shorter utterances, sentences and less complex vocabulary.

Doff, (1995) in agreement said that when learners are over-corrected, it demotivated them and therefore avoided writing compositions; they saw it as another opportunity for the teacher to point out their mistakes and weaknesses which affected their performance. Additionally, allowing learners to participate in discussions was a good way of drawing from the learners' potential. Teachers indicated that they encouraged their learners to read story books and re-write the stories in their own words as a way of increasing vocabulary retention.

This way, they improved their expressions so as to enjoy writing and enhanced performance. Marking all the learners written compositions and giving immediate feedback, is crucial and a sure way of helping them to improve their composition writing skills. As every time they corrected their vocabulary mistakes was an opportunity for practice. Failure by the teachers to give learner' more practice, mark and give feedback immediately, are the reasons why use of vocabulary in composition writing was not realized. The learners were guided on to how to avoid errors by drawing a composition plan, before writing and later cancel the plan for each topic the learners listed down possible vocabulary to use as well as expressions that added flavor and beauty to the composition.

Learners are of different abilities and the teachers needed to consider each learner as an individual who worked at his or her own pace in their writing development. The teacher should not demand too much from a less able child, unless the learner wishes to produce a lot. The teachers encouraged the learners by ensuring that, what was written about was meaningful and comprehensible to others. Most of the composition writing activities evolved from discussion and experiences of learners (Westwood 1975).

For the acquisition and production of new words and phrases associated with new words in relation to the topic or theme, the teachers began by encouraging them to express their views, explore their own potential by thinking about the subject raised through questioning. This kind of discussion was managed by teachers when inducing their classroom a stimulus to good composition writing.

CHAPTER FIVE:
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter the summary of the findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study were made. The purpose of this study was to find out the strategies of teaching and learning English language vocabulary used in writing composition by standard seven learners and makes the necessary recommendations. The research questions in chapter one are answered by the analysis in chapter four. It sought to find out the extent to which the learners used the relevant and appropriate vocabulary in writing compositions. How the teachers assessed learners vocabulary mistakes, and the learners response to the same.

According to Borg and Gall (1989) the fundamental purpose of educational research was to develop new knowledge about educational phenomena. Specifically, the purpose of educational research was to develop our confidence regarding particular knowledge claims on educational phenomena by confirming whether they were true or false. Having collected and analyzed the data for this study, it was necessary to make a summary of the findings.

5.2 Summary of the findings

5.2.1 Strategies used in teaching and vocabulary used in composition writing

Although there lacks comprehensive guidelines in regard from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the study found that teachers had their own preferred methods which are discussed in section 4.3.

The ten most widely used techniques for teaching vocabulary for use in composition writing were the dictionary, sentence structure, synonyms, definitions, idioms, visual aids, phrasal verbs, parts of speech, antonyms, and homonyms. The effectiveness of some of these techniques in classroom had been challenged by scholars.

5.2.2 The extent to which the learners utilize the vocabulary learnt

From the figures captured in the composition writing test administered to the sampled learners, the outcome showed that the performance of most learners was below average. The challenges that led to 60 percent of the learners to perform below average in composition writing were lack of regular and consistency composition writing practice. Since only 20% of learners wrote compositions weekly. Only 40 percent wrote fortnightly, while 30% wrote compositions once a month. The rest 10% wrote once every term. Only 40% scored above the average marks of 20 and above out of possible 40 marks.

5.2.3 The strategies of assessing vocabulary mistakes in learners' written Compositions

The teachers sampled indicated that they used different ways of showing vocabulary mistakes; underlining and indicating the nature of required corrections being the most commonly used methods. This method did not in any way help learners to improve the use of vocabulary. Learners were instructed on how to recognize and correct their vocabulary mistakes using conventional symbols.

5.2.4 Learners' response to assessment of vocabulary in their written compositions

The study found that 60% of the learners sampled appreciated the fact that the teacher took the time to assess and point out the vocabulary mistakes in the compositions. However, 40% of the learners did not take the corrections positively. Some teachers had not taken the time to explain their learners what the markings on their compositions meant.

The other reason low performance was that some teachers made discouraging comments on specific learners' compositions. Communication breakdown between the teachers and learners regarding the corrections suggested was further emphasized by the fact that 50% of the learners made immediate corrections. The remaining 50% did not. This was an indicator that in half of the cases, the teachers did not follow up to ensure that the corrections were made.

5.3 Conclusion

As the study found out, there lacked a clear systematic and comprehensive instructions on teaching and learning English vocabulary used in writing compositions by class seven learners. The teachers in this study thus resulted to a number of techniques, such as use of the dictionary in classroom, which has been termed, ineffective for classroom use by scholars. A major contributor to the situation was lack of clear guidelines from the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the body mandated to develop such strategies in Kenya.

In the absence of such important guidelines, the research showed that 40% of teachers had no time for teaching vocabulary during content delivery in the classroom. The teachers' level of education and years of experience had no impact on the performance of the class seven pupils in the study in regards to vocabulary learned and used in composition writing. This was more so considering, that 60% of the teacher respondents had at least bachelor of Education degree, and also had over 20 years of teaching experience. Likewise, 60% of learners' performance was still below average in the composition writing test given to them. That being the case 70% of teachers felt that this performance was satisfactory.

From the study, it was thus clear that availability of comprehensive guidelines on appropriate strategies for teaching of vocabulary, as well as guidelines on how to examine vocabulary used in learners' compositions improved both the teaching experience for teachers, as well as the learning experience for learners, led to improved performance in composition writing.

5.4 Recommendations

Teachers and learners should work as a team in teaching and learning of using vocabulary in writing composition. Use feedback, as a point from where to build for proper development of writing skills. Teacher-learner discussion should involve face to face interactions between the writer (learner) and the teacher. These interactions can be individual, group or whole class lasting for 10-30 minutes.

- i. There is a need for developing acceptable conventional symbols for marking compositions, familiar to both teachers and learners, by KNEC. This would make it easier for learners to correct their own mistakes.

- ii. Marking should be coded to allow teachers to point the exact location of an error and the type.
- iii. The teachers summarized comment at the end of the composition should be positive to avoid demoralizing the learners.
- iv. Teachers should reduce the number of marks on the learner's composition to make it more encouraging and motivating the learners.
- v. Teachers should concentrate on one specific error pattern instead of marking all errors at the same time, some of these specific areas would be spelling, choice of vocabulary, relevancy in a sentence, appropriateness and or use of specific group of words like, adverbs, adjectives and others. It may also be of use of certain of, interpretation of proverbs and or other multi-words or choice of them.
- vi. Learners would benefit a lot in if they practice their oral and listening skills at their own level of development
- vii. .Most of the composition writing activities should evolve from discussion and experience of learners
- Viii. The Kenya institute of curriculum development (KICD) may include instructions on the process of teaching and learning vocabulary as well as composition writing and their methods of teaching in the English syllabus.
- ix. There is need for Kenya national examination council to include what composition marking entails by availing past marking schemes to help teachers not to beat round the bush when marking.

5.5 Suggestion for further research

While conducting this study, several gaps were noted, such as;

- i. Investigation on how the learners acquire the use of punctuations which is an important skill in writing compositions.
- ii. How teachers are prepared to deliver the knowledge of vocabulary and composition writing skills right from their training colleges?
- iii. Strategies of teaching and learning vocabulary spelling which is an integral part of teaching, learning and using vocabulary in composition writing.
- iv. A comparative study of strategies used in teaching and learning vocabulary used in writing composition in private primary schools.
- v. The setting of this study was limited to five schools in only one sub-county. The researcher felt that a similar study should be conducted in more counties.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire and checklist for the teachers of English

The purpose of this questionnaire was to seek information on strategies used in teaching and learning English language vocabulary, do the learners use the vocabulary taught in their composition writing and how you assess the learners' written compositions. Your honesty and cooperation will go a long way in helping the researcher achieve and accomplish the objectives of this study. This will help us all to improve the teaching of English in our school and Kenya as a whole. You don't have to write your name. The information you give will also be treated with utmost confidentiality and for research purposes only. The researcher will personally collect the completed questionnaires. Write your answer by ticking () in the provided spaces or by writing down your answers or responses in the spaces provided where necessary. Thank you for your cooperation.

SECTION ONE: Teachers Characteristics

Name.....(Optional)

Gender Male () Female () School.....

Classes taught.....

Highest professional qualification

PI () Diploma ()

B.Ed () M. E d ()

Others (specify).....

Indicate your teaching experience in years.

1 – 5 Years () 6 – 10 Years ()

11 – 15 Years () Over 16 Years ()

SECTION B

1. What is your teaching workload per week?lessons.
2. Does the workload affect the efficiency of your teaching? Yes () No ().
How far... Very inefficient () slightly inefficient () No effect ()
3. In your opinion, which skill of English language learning is difficult to teach? Rank them in order of difficulties (from most to the least)
Listening () Speaking () Reading () Writing ()
4. Which of the skills above is mostly examined in KCPE?
.....
.....
5. In the two English language examination presentation, which one do you think Present more difficult to learners?
Multiple choices () Composition writing ()
6. How can you rate the performance of composition in your school?
Very Good () Good () Satisfactory ()
Poor () Very poor ()
7. To what extent does the knowledge of English language vocabulary Contribute to good composition writing in KCPE performance?
Very much () Much () Considerably ()
Much () Not at all ()
8. Besides teaching vocabulary in the classroom, what other way can be used to enhance the mastery of vocabulary? Rank them in order of importance.
Story telling () Debating ()
Communication () Others..... (specify)
10. Do learners use the vocabulary learnt in class in writing English

Compositions? Yes () No ()

9. Do you have specific lessons when you teach English language vocabulary used in composition writing?

Yes () No ()

11. How often do your learners practice writing compositions?

Daily () Weekly () Fortnightly ()

Monthly () Termly ()

12. How do you point out learners' vocabulary mistakes?

Underlining ()

Underlining and correcting ()

Underlining and pointing out what is wrong ()

Just reading and awarding marks or grades? ()

13. How do learners respond to your marking?

Seek clarifications () Copy again with corrections ()

Correct the underlined vocabulary only () others (explain)

.....

14. Is correction done immediately?

Yes () No ()

15. How would you rate the use of vocabulary learnt in English composition writing by your class in general?

Above average () Average () below average ()

16. In your opinion what should be done to improve the use of variety of vocabulary in composition writing?

Explain.....

17. Do you think extra experienced teachers should be hired to teach English

vocabulary and how to use them in composition writing?

Yes () No ().

Give a reason

.....

18. Are you an examiner with the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)?

Yes () No ().

19. Do you think it helps you to improve your teaching especially on the area of?
teaching vocabulary and composition writing?

Yes () No ().

20. Do you think the English language teachers who mark KCPE have an
advantage over you?

Yes () No ().

APPENDIX A

SECTION C**CHECK LIST**

The following are some of the strategies that can be used to teach vocabulary used in writing composition by learners in class seven. Please indicate by a tick () ten (10) methods that you use in your class. Your accuracy and honesty are required.

Thank you for the cooperation.

1. The sentence ()
2. Dramatization and mime ()
3. Dictionary ()
4. References ()
5. Registers ()
6. Games ()
7. Synonyms ()
8. Antonyms ()
9. Contextualization ()
10. Connotative meaning ()
11. Definition ()
12. Visual aids ()
13. Syntagmatic relationship ()
14. Hyponyms ()
15. Idioms ()
16. Exclusion ()
17. Affixes ()
18. Homonyms ()

19. Phrasal verbs ()
20. Acronyms ()
21. Loan words ()
22. Proverbs ()
23. Anagrams ()
24. Level of formality ()
25. Hyperboles ()
26. Parts of speech ()
27. Similes ()
28. Compounding ()
29. Phonic clues ()
30. Syllabifications ()

APPENDIX B

Interview schedule for class seven learner

Name Class

School..... Age

Sex

2. Do you use the vocabulary taught by your teacher in class when writing composition? Yes () No ()

3. How often do you write compositions'?

Daily () Weekly () Fortnightly () Monthly () Termly ()

4. Are they marked?

Yes () No ()

5. Who marks them?

Subject teacher () other teachers () other pupils ()

6. Do you get back your marked compositions? Yes () No ()

7. How does the teacher show your vocabulary mistakes?

Underlining () Encircling () Underlining with corrections on top ()

Only marks are written ()

8. What words do your teachers use to comment on your compositions?

.....

9. How do you feel when you see the red marks on your marked composition?

.....

10. Are you able to identify your underlined vocabulary mistakes?

Yes () No ()

11. Do you correct your vocabulary mistakes immediately?

Yes () No ()

12. Have you ever been told by your subject teacher the meaning of the
Marks on your marked composition? Yes () No ()

13. Do you usually discuss your marked composition with your English teacher?
Yes () No ()

14. Who else helped you with your practice in compositions writing?

.....

Thank you.

