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INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS FOR
COMPOSITION WRITING IN FRENCH AT
THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL IN
NAIROBI, KENYA

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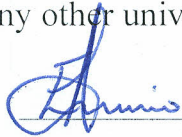
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DEDICATION

This Thesis is dedicated to my daughters: Effy and Louisa.

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It is with humility that I take this opportunity to thank all those who, either individually or corporately, directly or indirectly, contributed immensely to the completion of this thesis. I first of all thank The Almighty without whose gracious physical, material and mental empowerment this thesis would not have materialised.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CECR -	The Cadre Européen Commun de Référence
CNRTL -	Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales
CREDIF-	Centre de Recherche de l'Etude et de la Diffusion du Français
Ed. -	Editor
FFL –	French as a Foreign Language
KATF –	Kenya Association of Teachers of French
KCSE –	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIE –	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC –	Kenya National Examinations Council
SGAV –	Structuro globale audio visuel
USIU-	United States International University

ABSTRACT

Most foreign language teaching methodologies give priority to speaking. The acquisition of writing skills is usually given secondary priority. However, with the advancement of technology, the world has become smaller in terms of accessibility by the written word, which is more pervasive and transcendent. Learning a foreign language would be incomplete if one did not learn how to write well in it. There are studies in Kenya that intimate the unpopularity of writing in French for those learning the foreign language in secondary schools. There is however no research in Kenyan secondary schools investigating the instructional methods for writing in French and whether they are apt in motivating learners to write. This study is an effort to fill this gap. The main purpose of this study was to survey the instructional methods used by teachers in secondary schools to teach writing in French. Basing on the results from the field, the study was also to recommend the effective methods of instruction in composition writing in French, as a foreign language in Kenya. The target population were form 3 students learning French as a foreign language and their teachers. Nairobi schools were put into 4 clusters: day private schools, day public schools, boarding public schools and boarding private schools. Using simple random sampling, three schools were selected from each cluster, making a total of twelve schools in the sample. To select student-respondents, simple random sampling was used to select six students in each school. All the teachers for French in the sampled schools were respondents. There was a 100% response rate from the teachers and a 90.3% response from the students. Data were collected using teacher's interview guide, classroom observation schedule and student's questionnaires that were first piloted and found to be reliable. Having been a descriptive survey, data was analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage distributions. The findings revealed that teachers lacked appropriate instructional methods for composition writing. The study also revealed that there is a vicious cycle of students' dismal performance and lack of interest in composition writing in relation to teachers' lack of interest and confidence in the same. The study recommends pre-service and in-service training for teachers, publication and design of appropriate materials as well as necessary changes in curriculum development all geared towards motivating and needs-sensitive strategies of instruction in composition writing in French.

CHAPTER I

1.0 Introduction to the Study

This study was carried out to investigate the instructional methods for composition writing in French in secondary school for students learning French as a foreign language (FFL) in Nairobi, Kenya. In this chapter the researcher gives a background of the teaching of FFL in Kenya. The researcher also presents the statement of the problem, the objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study and the study limitations.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Foreign language policy in Kenya

English and Kiswahili are the official languages in Kenya. The government however recognises the importance of teaching French, which is a foreign language, to students in secondary schools. . The Wamalwa Education Report of 1972 recommended the expansion of the teaching of FFL in Kenya. Kenya was finding itself more and more in contact with the French world and therefore needed a workforce that could communicate in French (Wamalwa, 1972). Soon after the Wamalwa Report, the training of professionals, especially teachers, in French started in earnest in the state universities; University of Nairobi and its constituent college then, Kenyatta University College.

The teaching of FFL to prepare students for national examinations started in 1964. During the colonial era, before 1963, French was only taught in the European schools. The European schools were for the elite of the society while the African schools were for the African low class. The African schools' curriculum favoured technical and manual training aimed at preparing manual workers for their colonial masters. It is after independence that public schools started to offer FFL as a subject to Africans in Kenya.

French is one of the three foreign languages (French, German and Arabic) taught in the Kenyan secondary schools as optional subjects. In the 1960s and 1970s, students chose between French and Kiswahili. However, it is only ten schools that offered FFL as an examination subject then. Evidently, the last 20 years have seen a steady increase in the number of students learning FFL in secondary schools. In 1994, 102 schools presented students for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). KCSE is the school certificate given once one sits the national examinations after four years of secondary school. A survey carried out by the Kenya Association of Teachers of French (KATF) in 2007 found out that the number had increased to 256 schools in 2006 (Alliance Francaise, 2007).

When the teaching/learning of FFL started in secondary schools in Kenya, the educational system was 7-4-2-3 (7 years in primary school, 4 years in secondary school, 2 years in high school and 3 years at the university. This was replaced by 8-4-4 system of education (8 years in primary school, 4 years

in secondary school and 4 years at the university) in 1986. This resulted in the reduction of the period of learning FFL in secondary school from 6 years to 4 years in the present system. The number of lessons in a week also reduced. In the old system, form one and two learnt FFL for $2\frac{2}{3}$ hours (4 lessons) in a week while the 8-4-4 system permits only 2 (3 lessons) hours in a week. On the other hand, the form three and four in the old system had $3\frac{1}{3}$ hours (5 lessons) of French lessons in a week while their counterparts today have $2\frac{2}{3}$ hours (4 lessons). It follows then that students who entered the university to study French before 1990 had twice as much time of French lessons as compared to those entering the university after 1990.

1.1.2 The teaching of composition writing in French as a foreign language in Kenyan secondary schools.

The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), which is the national institution charged with designing the curriculum for all the subjects in the national educational system, states four general objectives for teaching French in secondary schools in Kenya as follow:

- To equip learners with the basic communicative skills for effective communication where French is required.
- To give learners access to oral and written materials in French.
- To facilitate further studies in Francophone institutions.
- To promote global peace through understanding and appreciation of the cultures of French-speaking people and through a more positive perception of foreign people's cultures.

The teaching of writing in French, together with other language skills, should in essence strive towards attaining the above objectives.

The national syllabus for French comprises the teaching of listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar. These five skills are taught simultaneously and cumulatively in a spiral approach. KIE stipulates that the course books used for the teaching of FFL be accompanied with audio material for teaching oral comprehension. The national examinations, conceived by KNEC, evaluate five language skills, which are listening, reading, speaking, writing and grammar (Kenya Institute of Education, 2002).

Most students learning a foreign language usually want to speak it fluently as fast as possible. Some foreign language educators are of the opinion that writing should not be given full attention until one acquires an independent mastery of the language ((David, 1975; Girard, 1972; Grassioulet, 1993). The communicative approach, widely used in language teaching in Kenyan schools, however advocates for the simultaneous attention to all the language skills. The teaching of composition is done progressively right from form one.

1.1.3 Composition writing in French at the Kenya National Examinations Council

The KNEC directives and regulations document stipulates the following types of compositions that students should be able to write in French at the end of the four years in secondary school:

- Compositions from a series of pictures
- Narration of events
- Descriptions
- Official letters
- Friendly letters
- Curriculum Vitae
- Dialogues/ conversations
- Recipes
- Programme of events
- Posters

(The Kenya National Examinations Council, 2006, p.280)

KNEC tests five language skills in FFL at the end of four years of secondary education. The structure and content of KNEC examinations for French have changed a lot since the 1970s. The testing of composition writing and oral expression vis-à-vis other language skills has been equal, in terms of total marks awarded, over the years. The table below shows the distribution of marks between the five language skills in the FFL papers over the years.

Language skill	1971-1983	1984-1990	1991-2010
Listening Comprehension	20%	20%	20%
Reading Comprehension	10%	15%	15%
Oral Expression	25%	25%	25%
Expression in Writing	25%	25%	25%
Grammar	20%	15%	15%

Table 1.1.1: Distribution of marks to the five skills in the French Papers by KNEC (Sourced from KCSE French past papers).

It is evident from Table 1.1.1 above that KNEC examinations do not give special weight to oral expression over expression in writing. These two skills are awarded the most marks of all the five skills tested. Each is awarded a maximum of 25% of the whole mark. The question which arises is whether the teachers too accord the two skills equal attention in terms of time spent on teaching/learning them.

1.1.4 The challenges of French as a foreign language in Kenya

Most learners of FFL in secondary schools in Kenya learn it as the third or fourth language after their mother tongue, Kiswahili (the national language) and English (the official language). French, therefore, appears when the morphological, syntax and phonetic systems of the first and second languages have already dominated the learners' linguistic system. The linguistic differences of these languages cause a lot of interference. Chhane-Davin (2005) during a conference of writing in all its states: cognitive science

approach of 20-21 May 2005, presented a paper entitled *L'entrée Dans L'écriture En Langue Seconde* (Introduction into writing in second language)¹ where she posited that composition by a student is either retarded or disabled because it does not pass directly to the referent but first passes through the mother tongue, which forms the screen (Chhane, 2005).

In Kenya, French is a foreign language whose use in the public is limited (Besse, 1987). The situation is made worse for the learners since the time allocated for it in the curriculum is the least compared to the other two languages in the syllabus: Kiswahili and English, which the learners started learning right from pre-primary level. While English is taught for 154 hours and Kiswahili is taught for 132 hours in a year from form one to form four, French is only taught for 66 hours in forms one and two. It is then taught for 88 hours in forms three and four in a year. It is apparent that the time is not enough to achieve mastery of all the competencies in language. This means that for the learners to attain mastery, both the learners and the teachers have to be ready to put in more time outside the school timetable.

French, being a foreign language, lacks historical links, media coverage, and opportunities for use, similar vocabulary, and common script unlike the official and local languages in Kenya. It is not frequently used in the daily life of the students. They do not hear people speaking French fluently at home or in the public. They do not hear it on radio or on television, except in arranged instances. There are inadequate reading and audio-visual materials (Kimaru,

¹ Author's own translation of the title from French to English.

1983; Ooko, 1990). The question that arises is how do students create situations or present themselves in situations where they can use written French?

The course books approved by the Ministry of Education to be used for teaching French in secondary 'Parlons Français', 'Entre Copains' and 'Au Sommet' do not explicitly explain the mechanisms of acquiring the skill of writing. The best that they do is to give writing exercises by giving situations or titles to write about. They lack sufficient exercises on writing.

It is a general perception that writing is generally more demanding than speaking, which is believed to have gestural support, shared context, variation, repetition, clarification, all which assist in communication (Njeru, 2004). Difficulty in writing is attributed to the fact that writing requires of the writer to adhere to grammatical rules, proper use of syntax, punctuation, spelling, paragraphing and the use of standard language. The writer needs to put in a lot of effort in the choice of terms and vocabulary. All these require a lot of effort and time on the part of the student.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study was born out of the researcher's desire to assess the instructional methods used by teachers for composition writing and whether they were apt in motivating students to write compositions. This gap was found in several research literature in the area of composition writing in FFL.

Of all the studies carried out in the department of foreign languages in Kenyatta University since 1990, none tackles the subject of writing among students learning FFL. The same lack of attention to composition writing is evident at the other four universities (Moi University, University of Nairobi, Maseno University and United States International University in Kenya) where French is taught. Most of the studies of FFL in these four universities in Kenya give priority to oral expression. There is only one study at Moi University that was geared towards studying writing, but this focussed only on the use of anaphors among students learning FFL (Ogutu, in Iraki, 2006).

Odhiambo (2002) came up with the findings that composition writing is the most unpopular learning activity among secondary school students. The research did not, however, explain what factors brought about this phenomenon.

The examination reports by KNEC for the KCSE results of 2002, 2003, 2004 et 2005 attribute the poor performance in writing compositions to lack of vocabulary and lack of creativity for various types of texts (KNEC, 2006).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The purpose of this study was to fill the gap left by research as concerns the instructional methods used in the teaching of composition writing in FFL in Kenyan secondary schools. The objectives of this study were:

- To explore the Instructional methods used by teachers in teaching composition writing in FFL in secondary schools in Nairobi.
- To identify the resources used in the teaching of composition writing in FFL in secondary schools in Nairobi.
- To examine the problems faced by teachers and learners of FFL in composition writing FFL in secondary schools in Nairobi.
- To identify the corrective measures adopted by teachers.

1.4 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- How do secondary school teachers give instruction to their students on how to write compositions in French?
- Which Instructional resources are used in teaching/learning composition writing in French to secondary school students?
- What problems do the teachers and the learners face in the teaching/learning of composition writing in French?
- What corrective measures do teachers use to remedy poor writing skills?

1.5 Significance of the study

Writing is a very important skill to master in any language one learns. The world today is full of the written word; be it in the internet, in the magazines, in newspapers, in brochures, in business cards, in memos, and many more. This should explain the significance of understanding the methods and strategies used to teach writing in FFL for it directly affects the ability of the learners to be able to competently use the language learnt in written communication for social as well as professional functions. This study intends to contribute in improving the teaching strategies for written French.

The study also intends to be of significance to teachers in a way of making them aware of the fundamental factors which they should pay attention to in order to bring their learners to competent composition writing in French. In addition, this study should be significant to curriculum developers too for it provides an objective explanation on which to base language policies. French teacher trainers too should benefit from the study for it helps to identify the areas of weakness in the teaching of compositions and therefore gives suggestions on how to effectively teach composition writing.

Having observed that the course books in use at the moment in Kenyan secondary schools give little attention to composition writing, this study intended to recommend to the curriculum developers the areas that need attention in the course books in regard to composition writing.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

Writing activities abound in a French class. There is writing used as supportive activities for other language skills and there is composition writing. Composition writing as distinguished from other writing would be defined as writing for a communicative objective. A student's composition is a written text that a learner comes up with as a personal response to a composition writing task. This study delimited itself to the teaching of composition writing to learners of FFL in secondary schools.

The study was deductive and only delimited itself to the predefined variables. It was not within the scope of this research to study all the respondents in the population. Due to time and financial constraints, the study selected a small manageable sample by limiting itself to Nairobi Province, Kenya.

1.7 Limitations to the study

This study was faced with certain challenges of which the researcher had no control over, but which did not compromise the attainment of the intended objectives of the study. Due to resource and time constraints, the study used a small sample to be representative of the whole population. Lack of adequate published works for literature review in the Kenyan context was also limiting. For this reason most of the search was done over the internet. Special privilege was given to the review of 'Le Français dans le monde'. Despite all these limitations, it is hoped that the results of this study would significantly contribute to the study of pedagogy of FFL.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was mainly grounded on Richterich's (1974) view that the methods and materials used in teaching writing in a foreign language must be motivating and should also correspond to the real needs of the learners. He suggests to the teachers to always refer to three factors in the teaching of writing. These are: the needs, the motivation and the situation of the learner.

Richterich (1974: 23) defines a need as '*a state of disequilibrium of an organism in relation to its environment*' or '*a state of a being as concerns what lacks in order to accomplish his/ her goals*'. He links the notion of need to the content of learning/teaching. The content should always respond to the needs of the learners. There should therefore be a direct link between the need and the objective for learning writing. It is important to note that the needs for writing vary indefinitely from person to person. They could be socioprofessional or sociocultural.

Richterich underscores the importance of knowing the individual and group needs for writing in a foreign language as it is very essential in designing the syllabus and content of learning/ teaching. He argues that it is this knowledge alone that gives authenticity and life to learning writing in foreign language that is otherwise lacking in most of the course books and materials. It is with this in perspective that the study sought to find out whether the teachers used composition writing tasks that were in line with the students' needs and interests.

Richterich (1974: 24) defines motivation as '*a combination of motives and impulses that drive an individual or a group of individuals to act or to have a particular behaviour*'. According to Richterich, motivation is a nervous system which results from a need. The knowledge of needs is therefore an important factor of motivation. Motivation is linked to the techniques, the attitudes and the behaviours of the teacher as well as of the learner in order to attain their objectives. He classifies three main categories of motivation in the learning of a foreign language:

- Motivations that relate to constraint. Here one is obliged to learn the language because it is part of the school curriculum.
- Motivations that relate to the ambition to excel. Here one learns the language because he/she wants to succeed socially, professionally or academically.
- Motivations that relate to the taste of knowledge. Here one learns the language because he/she derives pleasure from knowing.

Richterich (1974) recommends that the content and the teaching methods used should be able to transform the motivations of constraint to motivations of ambition to excel or to motivations of knowing. The content and teaching methods should also endeavour to sustain and develop the already existent motivations of ambition and desire to know. It is for this reason that the researcher thought it more data productive to use an interview guide for teachers because in so doing, they would be able to explain in greater detail how they motivate their learners to write in order to excel and to enjoy doing it

at the same time.

Richterich (1974) reiterates that all learning and all usages of a language happen in a situation. The elements in a learning situation are:

- The learners (note their ages, their mother tongue, their social status, their gender)
- The teacher (age, qualification)
- The methods and materials (course books, audio-visuals)
- The environment (the classroom, equipment)
- Organisation (timetable, syllabus, administration,)

The teacher has to pay a constant attention to the interactions between the elements in the learning situation in order to make them as productive as possible. The teacher also has to be sensitive to the elements in communication situation. The elements in a communication situation are as follow:

- The participants in the writing (their personality, their role, their aptitude, their social status, their ages)
- The place and the time (the décor, the duration, the time, the frequency)
- The intention for writing (to inquire, to express, to recount, to establish)
- The theme

Richterich argues that if writing is felt as a difficult aptitude to acquire it is because it is practised independently from its real use in the situations of communication. With this as a point of reference, the study aimed at surveying the situations under which students undertake the writing tasks. This was done by doing a classroom observation.

Richterich's model can be diagrammatically summarised as follows:

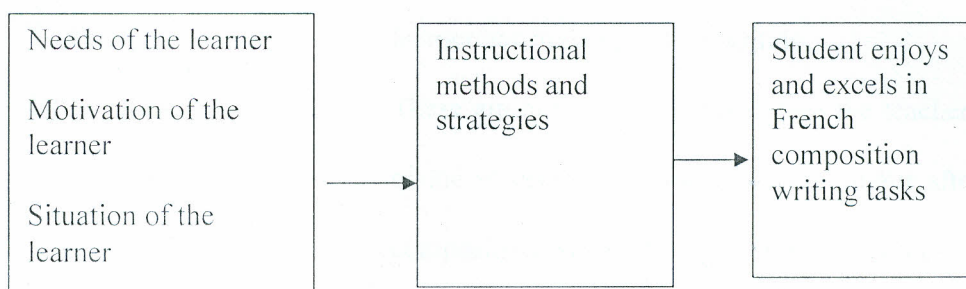


Figure 1.8.1: Conceptual model for the teaching of composition writing (sourced from Richterich, 1974)²

This study surveyed whether the instructional methods and strategies used by teachers to teach composition writing took into consideration the learners' needs, motivation and situation in order to steer them to enjoy and excel in writing compositions in French. This was done using three research instruments, namely, the teachers' interview schedule, the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation schedule.

² Researcher's own diagrammatic representation of Richterich (1974)'s view on the teaching of writing in FFL.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Composition:	A text or a piece of writing that students creatively compose, either independently, in a group or with the help of a teacher, in response to a writing exercise or task.
Corrective measures:	The action that a teacher takes or advises a learner to take to remedy the weaknesses a learner has in composition writing.
Difficulties:	These are any problems that either the teachers or the students face before, during and/or after composition writing that is a stumbling block in achieving success in writing compositions.
Foreign Language Teaching Methodology:	A particular way of teaching a foreign language based on certain principles and methods.
French as a foreign language:	The French language taught to learners to whom the language is a foreign language in their country.
Instructional methods:	The techniques, strategies and methods teachers use in class to help their students to learn.
Language skills:	The ability to communicate or understand communication in any form, written or spoken, in French.
Large class:	A Form three class of French of more than ten students.

Learner's situation:	The learner's socio-economic status and the human and material environment that he/she is subject to when learning to write.
Morphology:	The study of systematic formation of words.
Need:	What a learner feels he/she lacks and needs to acquire in order to achieve the goal in learning a foreign language.
Phonetic:	The study of the production, perception and transmission of speech sounds.
Resources:	Also referred to as learning materials, are the audio, visual and audio-visual items used with the aim to promote learning composition writing.
Small class:	A form three class of French of less than ten students.
Syntax:	The study of the rules governing how words combine to form phrases, clauses, and sentences.
Teaching methods:	The techniques that the teacher uses during a lesson to impart knowledge, skills and/or attitudes.
Teaching strategies:	Bringing together different courses of action or educational interventions to be implemented so as to achieve a specific objective.
Text:	A written composition.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher gives an analysis of the work and studies that various writers and researchers have done concerning the subject of instructional methods for writing expression in FFL.

2.1 The Teaching Methodologies of French as a Foreign Language

The last sixty years have been marked by a rapid transformation of methodologies in the teaching of FFL. After the Second World War, France realised that the popularity of the French language was threatened by English, which was becoming more and more the language of international communication. Consequently, the teaching of French became a major concern of the French government. The Ministry of National Education started a spirited diffusion of the language internationally. Thanks to the work of a team of editors constituted by the French Government and headed by Georges Gourgenheim, the methodology referred to as *Structuro Globale Audio Visuelle (SGAV)* was launched in mid 1950s. The coming of the *SGAV* coincided with the founding of the *Centre de Recherche de l'Etude et de la Diffusion du Français (CREDIF)*, that greatly supports research in the area of the pedagogy of FFL, in 1950 (www.lb.refer.org/fle/cours/cours3_AC/hist__didactique/).

The methodology of *SGAV*, which was very popular in the 1970s, had the objective of diffusing French for international exchange. It gave priority to the spoken French, and therefore under emphasized written French. The *SGAV* propagated the principles of the assimilation of sounds, rhythm and intonation by repetition. It was also based on the theory that synchronic association of visual perception with sound perception optimises memory. (Casnav - http://pedagogie.ac-amiens.fr/carec/arrivants/accueillir/fle_fls/didactique/methodo_audiovisuelle.htm).

The methodology christened Communicative Approach was born in the 1970s. This methodology contrasts to the *SGAV* in that while the latter gave first and greater emphasis to oral communication, the former advocated for the simultaneous development of both oral and written French. The Communicative Approach was advanced to remedy the weaknesses that were found in the earlier methodologies. These earlier methodologies were criticised for focussing only on the sentence structure while ignoring the intended communication and the parameters that motivate it. This Communicative Approach stresses more on the meaning and the context of a statement in a given situation of communication. It takes into account the linguistic as well as the extra linguistic dimensions, be they verbal or non-verbal, of the language use. This is because priority is given more to communication rather than to the formal aspect of the language (Casnav - http://pedagogie.ac-amiens.fr/carec/arrivants/accueillir/fle_fls/didactique/methodo_audiovisuelle.htm).

Presently, one would not say that there is any one particular methodology that is universally accepted in the teaching of FFL. What exists now is a flexible eclecticism from one methodology to another in order to adapt to different situations. This scenario is motivated by technological advancement and the liberalisation of the teacher. Ana Rodríguez Seara , in her article entitled “L'évolution des méthodologies dans l'enseignement du français langue étrangère depuis la méthodologie traditionnelle jusqu'à nos jours” (The evolution of methodologies in the teaching of French as a Foreign Language from the traditional methodology to the present)³, (http://www.uned.es/catedela/revista/n001/art_8.htm) argues that ‘the better a teacher is trained, the more he/she assumes his/her autonomy and the less he/she needs externally designed methods since he/she feels capable to adapt his/her teaching to a particular classroom situation.

All the same, the Communicative Approach is still popular in most situations where French is taught as a foreign language. The course books approved by the Ministry of Education for use in secondary schools to teach-learn FFL in Kenya (*‘Parlons Français’* and *‘Entre Copains’*) borrow a lot from this approach (Njeru, 2004). The Communicative Approach promotes the learning of the language in more authentic and real situations. The teaching content is usually based on the needs of the learner.

³ The researcher’s own translation of the title from French into English.

Presently (from the 1990s), there is an approach that is gaining prominence in the teaching of FFL called the Action Approach. This approach considers the learner of a language as a social actor. With this view, one learns a language so as to be equipped with a tool to accomplish social tasks. He/she is able to use of his/her language skills in order to act in response to social demands.

The *Cadre européen commun de référence* (CECR), whose main goal is to overcome the linguistic barriers so as to, among other objectives, promote human relations, is a common reference of the teaching of foreign languages based on the action approach. It was founded in 1990s by the European council. The council found it necessary to establish a common European model of reference for the learning of languages at all levels with the aim of promoting and facilitating cooperation between different European countries; have a good base of reciprocal knowledge of languages; and to help learners, teachers, certification organizations and administrators to coordinate their efforts (Casnav, 2008).

2.2 Instructional Methods for Composition Writing in French as a Foreign Language

Instructional methods would be used synonymously with teaching methods or teaching strategies. These are activities that are geared towards helping students to acquire and maintain the skill of writing in French.

The dictionary of the *Centre National de Ressources Textuelles et Lexicales*

(CNRTL) defines a strategy as a 'collection of coordinated actions, of skilful operations, of manoeuvres, with the aim of achieving a specific goal' (<http://www.cnrtl.fr/definition/strategie>). The Larousse dictionary defines the term strategy as 'the art of coordinating actions and of manoeuvring in order to attain a goal'.

Ayot and Patel (1992) define teaching strategies as a set of processes made up of systematically organized and followed activities put together to achieve the expected outcome. They identify two opposing categories of teaching strategies namely: the Expository versus the Heuristic and the Deductive versus the Inductive. While the Expository is teacher-centred, the Heuristic is learner-centred. The Inductive approach is where learning starts from the specific examples to the general rule, while on the other hand; the deductive is where learning starts from the general rule to the specific examples.

Legendre (1988) defines a teaching strategy as 'a combination of operations and of teaching resources planned and prepared by a subject with the aim of favouring the achievement of objectives in a teaching situation'. Using the above definitions as a resource, the researcher defines a teaching strategy as bringing together different courses of action or educational interventions to be implemented so as to achieve a goal or a specific objective.

2.2.1 A lesson of French as a foreign language

A lesson of FFL is the period when learners and their teacher interact in order

to attain the objectives of learning a certain aspect of the language. Various educators are unanimous that before teaching a lesson, the teacher has to put in considerable time in preparation for the lesson. Nott (1994) is of the opinion that

« if one accords enough time to preparation (listening, reading, discussion) and to a negotiated choice of the topic to be learnt between teacher and the learner, then one can lead a considerable number of students to a very high degree of personal commitment to the writing of compositions. »

Modard (2005) uses Miralet's model (see Figure 2.2.1 below) of an educational system to explain the steps involved in the designing of a lesson. When preparing a lesson, one has to take into account the psychological aspects of the learner, the content and the syllabus from where the lesson will be derived, the methods and techniques to use in teaching, the objectives of the lesson and the evaluation methods that will be used to assess the attainment of the objectives. Miralet's model demonstrates the relationship that exists between these components of a teaching lesson.

TO TEACH

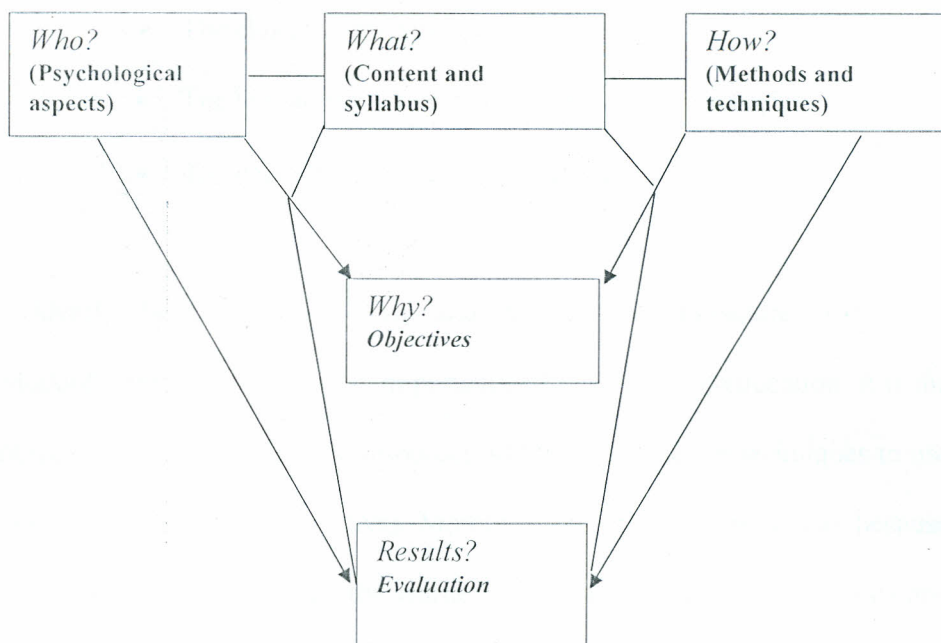


Figure 2.2.1: Mirralet's model of a dynamic educational system (as cited in Modard, 2005)

Just like Modard (2005) above, Legendre (1988) too identifies four components in all situations where French is taught as a foreign language thus:

- The subject (the learner)
- The object (the objectives to achieve)
- The agent (the resource materials and persons, the process and the resources)
- The context (the educative human environment)

Ayot and Patel (1992) name three basic steps of the process of preparing for a lesson:

- The definition of objectives
- The choice of content
- The preparation of teaching methods and strategies
- The definition of evaluation methods

Evidently the four writers Ayot and Patel (1992), Legendre (1988) and Modard (2005) underscore the importance of objectives in education. It is the objectives that determine the resources and the strategies or techniques to use in order to achieve the objectives. Moreover, objectives are necessary because they ease the evaluation of the learner's performance and the strategies and techniques used during a lesson. Objectives also allow for the review of the course of action if the preceding ones do not produce favourable results.

Nott (1994) classifies three types of objectives that are appropriate for a lesson of writing in a foreign language as stated below:

- The objectives of training the person that arouse him/her to want to reflect on self and on the world and to know how to express these thoughts.
- The objectives of knowledge that favour bicultural approaches.
- The objectives of the know-how that aim at the improvement of language abilities and the ability to compose and write texts.

The role of the teacher is a very important role in the planning of a lesson. A teacher who does not plan his/her lesson, be it long term or short term, can

easily be unmasked by his/her students. In order to avoid such an embarrassing scenario, Nott (1994) advises teachers to follow the steps below in planning for a lesson:

- To equip him/herself with the four components of learning (objectives, content, strategies and evaluation)
- Do an inventory of available teaching-learning resources
- Know his/her learners
- Plan his teaching-learning activities
- Do a periodical review of the teaching-learning activities

2.2.2 Instructional activities for composition writing

Composition writing is not just writing but writing for a purpose. Here, writing is done in a precise situation of communication where the audience is well defined, the reason for the communication is clear, the means of communication is known and the spatio-temporal circumstances are known to the learner. In composition writing, the learner is putting into communicative use the skills he/she should otherwise have learnt (http://www.lb.refer.org/fle/cours/cours3_AC/evaluation/fiche).

Michelucci (1999) posits that composition writing is a personal response to a particular task. A student usually expresses his/her own ideas to the topic in question. The subjectivity of ideas in composing a text explains why one task of composition may evoke varied texts. Nevertheless, as much as composition writing is subjective, it is hardly spontaneous and automatic to learners of a

foreign language. There are commands that a learner of a foreign language needs to be taught. Chantelaue (2000) argues that writing is more organised, more rigorous, more abstract, more rational, more logical and more social than speaking. Learners have to respect the rules of writing that concern the logical progression of text, isotope, connectors and the language register in order to write a comprehensible composition (Chantelaue, 2000; Michelucci, 1999 ; Modard, 2005 ; Vigner, 1982).

Reuter (1996) demeans the effectiveness of the traditional methods of teaching composition writing where, like a paradox, composition writing is not taught as such but as a synthesis of the sub-systems of language (spelling, syntax, vocabulary, conjugation, grammar, ...) and it is upon the students to learn by themselves how to integrate them. All that a student gets in this mode of teaching is an ambiguous model of Introduction - Body- Conclusion.

Reuter (1996) disfavours the prominence given to literary works by the traditional method arguing that by presenting to learners the finished works as if they were original from the beginning they get the feeling that writing is a mysterious activity or a special talent with which one is born. They therefore find writing as a reserve of just a few people.

It is however necessary to point out that using literature to learn a foreign language is not criticized by all. There are authors who are of the opinion that literature can be an excellent means of reference for models so as to avoid

gross departure from the rules of writing. Kilosho, in Iraki (2006) and Irungu (1992) state that apart from other advantages of studying literature in a class of FFL, literature:

- Allows students to deepen their intellectual knowledge.
- Is a sure way for the acquisition of linguistic competence.
- Feeds the class of FFL with thematic exercises.
- Provides proper vocabulary that is rich and thematic.
- Helps to improve expression in writing.

With the intent to improve learners' performance in writing, Chantelaue (2000) states that it is useful to deepen the analysis of written texts. The synchrony of reading and writing help an individual as well as collective writing by following the rules learnt from the reading texts analysed (Reuter, 1996). Reading is linked to writing by impregnation, imitation and reflection on spelling. Jorro (2005) presented a paper, entitled *Writing... yes, but how*, on the theme of writing in all its states: approach on cognitive science. She proposed, in this paper, that writing should involve language devices that boost interactions between writing and reading, speaking and writing.

Vanderheyde (2001) proposes an approach which maintains that writing should not be isolated but should be preceded by other activities of oral expression, of reading and of listening comprehension. These activities permit the creation of context and the generation of ideas. Language activities which precede or follow composition contribute to the attainment of diverse

objectives: grammatical, lexical, spelling, civilization, mastery of register of written language and knowledge of textual skills.

The modern approaches to education insist that the teacher must have a positive image of the learner. The learner is seen as a creator. The assumption is that in each individual lies a creative writer. This pedagogical approach of writing is founded on the principal of 'the pleasure of writing'. It is the task of the teacher to make the learner discover that he/she is capable of writing by guiding him/her to success (Reuter, 1996; Vanderheyde, 2001).

Writing workshops offer a conducive environment for interaction. Here emphasis is on learning rather than teaching, motivated by interaction. There is sharing of real or imaginary experiences between learners. They learn while practising. They face problems and overcome them with the linguistic knowledge and means at their disposal. During a writing workshop, the learners help one another by rereading their written work and correcting them. The disadvantage is that writing workshops demand a very high competence in the language and writing skills on the part of the teacher as well as the learners (Migeot, 1994; Reuter, 1996; Vanderheyde, 2001).

The Freinet pedagogical model explains that teaching writing does not happen in isolation. It should be linked to other practices of free expression such as music and drawing. This strategy plays the role of intermotivation in that writing should not be left to be the monopoly of literary writers. Writing

should instead be seen first as a communication practice before seeing it as a means of learning the language. The interest here is to create the desire and need to write (Adam, 1992; Reuter, 1996).

The modern approaches also favour the use of other media to evoke writing. Audio, visual, audio-visual, touch and even aromatic materials can be used to involve all the senses of the learner. These supports would also give him/her a greater chance to access his/her memories and imaginations (Vanderheyde, 2001). Writing tasks can be presented in the form of a picture, a series of pictures, an aroma, a sound, a sentence or a phrase that starts or ends a composition, a title or a theme to write on. A teacher must be endowed with infinite imagination so as not to be monotonous to his/her students.

The tendency of modern pedagogy is to give greater autonomy to the learners to work individually or in groups. All interactions in class must not always pass through the teacher or be initiated by him. He plays the role of a facilitator and not the uncontested master of yester years. This scenario does not necessarily mean that the teacher is less important. To the contrary, the teacher should brace him/herself for an even more demanding role. He/She must individually know his/her learners, the content and how to facilitate effective interactions between him/her and learners (<http://www.lb.refer.org/fle/cours/cours3>).

If learners are to be left to work autonomously then they should have the necessary resources to be meaningfully occupied. It is upon the teacher to teach the learners to learn using the aids and materials at their disposal such as the bilingual dictionary, the internet, other learners, the teachers, story books and audio-visual aids among other resources.

Modern pedagogy demands greater participation by the teacher. Added to the roles earlier mentioned, the teacher should also create motivation so as to help learning and to give greater meaning to learning activities. The teacher should create a conducive climate for learning in the class. A favourable climate emancipates the learner by making him/her have confidence that he/she can manage and he/she is assured that all will be done to help him/her achieve the task of writing (Richterich, 1974).

Authenticity in composition writing is given prominence in various studies. The writing tasks should be simulated for real life situations rather than having students writing texts in class that they would otherwise not write in real life. An example is given of, instead of telling students to write about "*Vos vacances*" (*Your Holidays*) they would rather be told to write in response to this task "*Ecrivez une lettre à un ami pour lui raconter ce que vous avez fait pendant vos dernières vacances scolaires*" (*Write a letter to a friend telling him/her what you did during the last school holidays*). In so doing the learners are aided to simulate a situation that they would replay in real life (<http://www.lb.refer.org/fle/cours/cours3>).

Modern technology, to be specific, Information Technology, has had a great influence on the educational field. Expectedly, FFL too has not been left behind in the use of computer assisted language learning. The most basic use of computers in the learning of FFL and especially in writing in FFL is the use of word processing. Word processing on the computer contributes to the learning of writing compositions as it plays the role of a tool or a facilitator to writing. Word processing makes writing to be easier by the use of computer commands. One can easily revise a text by inserting punctuation marks, reorganising paragraphs, deleting parts of the text, using the electronic dictionary, all without overhauling or rewriting the whole text (Barbier et al. 1998; Mangenot, 2000).

It is understandable why the use of word processing may make a learner of a foreign language to be more motivated to write compositions. He/she can easily manipulate the text without making his/her text dirty. Unfortunately, the use of computers can also have frustrating results, especially if the learner does not have the basic skills for operating a computer. (Mangenot, 2000: 202) argues that training in writing using the computer cannot take place without a human support: software that encourages true composition can be used independently, but only on condition that the exact tasks are given upward but evaluated downward.

Apart from word processing, there is a wide range of software which offer help in composition writing. Barbier, Piolat and Roussey (1998) did a

research that arrived at the conclusion that the use of computers has a beneficial effect, at different degrees, on the learning of writing compositions especially to learners of a second language. It was apparent that the degree of benefit differs according to the software that the learners use and according to the type of text that they are learning to write.

Still in the area of Information Technology, the resources for the teaching and learning of FFL have enormously increased on the internet. There are hundreds of websites offering resources for both the teacher and the learner of FFL. Notably, the resources found on the internet have been known to be interactive and greatly sensitive to individual differences. Seven of the common examples of free websites for the teaching and learning of FFL are as follows:

- ❖ http://www.tv5.org/TV5Site/enseigner-apprendre-francais/accueil_enseigner.php

This belongs to the French National Television channel, TV5MONDE. The site offers teachers of FFL a collection of tools, services and resources. TV5MONDE works in association with educational specialists of FFL to design activities and exercises.

- ❖ www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/secondary/languages/resources/curriculum/index.htm

This website offers Interactive Whiteboard activities for French created by the Curriculum Directorate.

❖ <http://bonpatron.com>

The 'correcteur d'orthographe' (spelling corrector) on this website explains what is wrong with the French text entered by users. It is a tool for the improvement of written skills.

❖ <http://www.lepointdufle.net/productionecrite.htm>

This website offers tools for working on spelling, formats of different texts, forum to communicate with pen pals and writing workshops.

❖ www.franc-parler.org/

This site belongs to the l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). It is destined for teachers of French in the whole world who wish to learn and to teach better. It has resources for the teachers of FFL.

❖ www.momes.net/index.html

This site is mainly for the young and it contains all kinds of interactive activities and games aimed at the learning of FFL.

❖ www.bonjourdefrance.com/index/indexvocab.html

This site has exercises and games for the acquisition of vocabulary in French in various fields such as transport, tourism, school life and family life.

It is well known that new innovations are coming up from time to time in the area of Information Communication and Technology for Education (ICTE). There is, among other products of ICTE, the Smart Board which has taken teaching and learning in the developed countries by storm. The Smart Board

also called the *Tableau Blanc Interactif (TBI)* in French is a device that combines the advantages of a touch-sensitive screen with video projection from a computer. The TBI has been commended by the few teachers in Kenya who have used it for its highly interactive nature. This is considered an advantage for learners since they are able to get instant feedback during the learning process. Unfortunately, the TBI is still out of reach for many Kenyan schools. They can, however access it by visiting the French Resource Centers in the country that are equipped with the TBI thanks to the Franco Kenyan cooperation.

2.3 Writing Skills

Nott (1994) criticizes the composition tasks given to learners in schools. He takes particular issue with the fact that the students are not encouraged to have a free hand with words while writing. He points out the lack of content, of context and of personal investment as the three problems that prevent students from mastering composition writing. Nott (1994), therefore, recommends that teaching activities should at all times give priority to a learner's individual ability and imagination with the aim of motivating a personal involvement in the learning.

Weber (1993) elucidates that a good number of ordinary writers are wary of writing because they write badly. Moreover, the types of texts they are expected to write in school do not interest them. Weber (ibid) observed that lack of confidence in writing rises when under constraint to write but is on the

minimum when the writing task is free and pleasurable.

Denis and Thiennen (1996) are concerned that the problem that most students face when they are confronted with composition writing is lack of authenticity in the texts they produce. The 'I' that is writing does not yet know him/herself before starting to write. They maintain that the learner has to first ask him/herself some questions, such as: Who is the 'I' that is writing? To whom is he/she writing? About what? Where? When? Why? For what goal? In doing this the intention and initiative to write on the part of the learner is awakened.

Chantelauve (2000) observed that the use of writing skills including anaphors, connectors and language registers by learners of FFL is usually below average. The same observation was made in Kenya by Odhiambo (2002) and Ogutu in Iraki, (2006). Hayes and Flower (1980) advise that before starting to write a narrative, the learner should first understand the question at hand. They recommend a model of the process of writing where they identify three main stages:

a) The context of the task

In this step the learner has to respond to such questions as: Why write? Write on what topic? Write under what title? Write in which context? What is the intention of this composition?

b) The knowledge one already has

The learner should have some knowledge about the theme on which he/she is expected to write, of the language and the situation of composition.

c) The real process of writing

This stage is composed of four processes: planning, real writing, reading and revision of the text. When planning, the learner conceives the ideas of the document in his/her mind before writing them down. He/she then puts the ideas briefly in a hierarchised plan. In the plan he/she will identify the effect the text is to have, for example should it have an effect of a surprise, of suspense, or of pity. With the plan, the learner is able to easily put the text down with the use of more explicit sentences. The rereading should be done with the intention of identifying any grammatical, lexical or coherence flaws. This will then be followed by revision of any flaws identified.

2.3.1 The rules of writing

As subjective as composition writing is, it does not take place haphazardly. It has to adhere to certain socially acceptable rules of the written language. While teaching composition writing, there are certain practices of writing that the teacher would like the learners to obey.

Chantelauve (2000) posits that the written language has rules that a writer should always respect. Of these rules, some are strictly standardised while others are lightly standardised. The adherence to all these rules contributes a lot to whether the written text can be understood without much constraint or not. The strictly standardized rules are those of morphology, syntax, grammar and vocabulary. The rules that are lightly codified are those of anaphors, connectors, textual progression and the register:

a) Anaphors.

Anaphors are used to create an effect of symmetry and of consistency by the repetition of a noun or group of nouns from a sentence to another by the use of lexical substitutes of different types (such as pronouns, synonyms and phrases). Ogutu, in Iraki (2006) observed in his study of students' scripts that the use of anaphors among learners of FFL in secondary schools in Kenya is below average.

b) Connectors

Connectors and other textual organizers show the relations or the logical connections between the parts of a written work. The online dictionary CNRTL defines connectors as the markers of syntax relations between two or more consecutive propositions. These connectors permit comprehension and prevent ambiguities because they link ideas and paragraphs by enumerating, adding, giving a concession or stressing. Since the audience is absent during writing, there has to be a clear and logical structure and presentation of the text to aid in the comprehension of the text.

Chantelauve (2000) observed that connectors are very rare in learners' written work and when they are there, they are used erroneously. Punctuation and division into paragraphs are sometimes randomly done.

c) Textual progression

This refers to the progression of information from the beginning to the end with a balance between new information and known information. Michelucci

(1999) insists that a story should be told as it flows in a chronological order.

d) Register

Texts differ from one another by their usages. There are narratives, recipes, and official letters, non-official letters, posters, contracts, poetry, songs and advertisements. The type of a text dictates the language register to use, the style and the structure of the text.

2.3.2 Evaluation of compositions

Evaluation of written work is sometimes a repelling process to the action of writing. Learners view evaluation as fault finding. This however should not be the case. Evaluation is a very important activity in a teaching-learning. Without evaluation one cannot objectively ascertain whether the strategies used are effective or not in attaining the objectives set. Care should however be taken not to make evaluation as the main objective for writing. Students should be motivated to view writing as a process through which they can communicate information to or seek to get information from someone and not so that someone may find fault in their text (Reilly 1988).

There are two main categories of evaluation: formative evaluation and summative evaluation. Formative evaluation is continuous and is integrated into the process of teaching since it is done with the aim of helping the learners to achieve the objectives. Summative evaluation, on the other hand, is done with the aim of establishing the attainment of the defined objectives at the end of a short or long term (Ayot, 1992).

Unfortunately evaluation of compositions in the real practice happens in a very haphazard manner. According to the testimony of a teacher, evaluation of compositions usually follows a rigid grid

“Where the learner who makes the least mistakes is privileged over one who makes more mistakes but who narrates more interesting stories. The red pen which is meant to correct ends up terrorizing those who would have had the audacity to express themselves” (Denis & Thienen, 1996: 63).

The teacher quoted above attributed this scenario to the fact that teachers were not trained to evaluate compositions. Other than lack of training, teachers hardly find any material that responds realistically to the demands of the new methodologies of teaching FFL.

The marking of compositions is not an easy task as a teacher on training in the evaluation of communication skills in 1993 at Montpellier confessed: *“from the beginning of my practice of teaching I have been faced with total disinterest and enormous boredom each time that I had to mark compositions”* (Denis & Thienen, 1996: 64).

Denis and Thienen (1996) attribute this phenomenal boredom in marking compositions to the following factors:

- Terribly and poorly written compositions
- Linguistic deficiency of writers learning a foreign language
- Lack of motivation on the part of the learners

- Uncertainty on the part of the teacher on how to mark the composition and how to award marks to such and such a composition .

Given that the teacher is not able to evaluate what is going on in the learner's brain, he/she just has the learners' performance to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used. The traditional teaching method's manner of evaluation is discredited by the way the remarks do not let the learner understand his/her errors and do not therefore contribute to the improvement of writing skills. The remarks are mainly normative (for example: good, weak, poor) rather than explicative (Reuter, 1996).

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The value of a study is in the findings and the manner in which these findings were collected, analysed and presented. This chapter gives a description of the research design, population under study, sampling procedures, study variables, instruments of data collection and the methods of data analysis used in the study.

3.1 Study Design

This study was a descriptive survey of a sample of the population. Planning for the study involved the choice of the location of study and the target population. The study design also included the specification of the issues to be studied, the careful selection and design of the research tools and the prior choice of data analysis methods.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in the secondary schools in Nairobi province. Nairobi was chosen due to its cosmopolitan nature and the high concentration of schools offering French as compared to other regions of the country. Nairobi is the capital city of Kenya. The Population and Housing Census of

2009 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics) put the population of Nairobi at approximately 3 million.⁴ The map of Nairobi is in appendix 6.

3.3 Population

The study was carried out in Nairobi province. Nairobi was chosen because, as compared to other provinces, it has the highest concentration of schools where French is taught. Data collected by the EMIS, the Ministry of Education, Kenya, put the number of secondary schools in Nairobi at 361 in 2009. Of these, 69 are public schools while 292 are private secondary schools. Data collected by the Kenya Association of Teachers of French show that of the 361 secondary schools in Nairobi, 54 offer French as an examination subject. (www.frenchinkenya.com/kenyan_schools.php?province2).

The study population were the 54 schools offering French as an examination subject in Nairobi province. The list of the schools is in Appendix 5. The schools were spread out in the districts of Nairobi province. The schools were of different categories: Day and boarding schools, public and private schools. The total number of students taking French in form three in the 54 schools was 524. Each of the schools offering French had one teacher for French. There were therefore 54 teachers for French in the province.

⁴ The study was done before the 2009 census results were released. The 2009 census results put the population of Nairobi at 3,138,369.

3.4 Sampling Grid and Techniques

First of all, the sampling of the schools to study was purposive in that only schools where French is taught were selected. In order to ensure the representation or the validity of the study, the researcher used cluster sampling of the schools whereby the schools were clustered into four different categories, namely: day public schools, day private schools, boarding public schools and boarding private schools. These formed four clusters. The eventual distribution is as displayed in figure Table 3.4.1 below.

Simple random sampling by way of balloting was used to select three schools from each of the four clusters. This totalled to 12 schools. Despite the fact that the categories were of different sizes, an equal number was selected from each category in order to harmonize any variations that might have occurred in the responses due to the inherent differences in the different categories. The twelve schools were 22% of the population. All the teachers in the twelve selected schools were respondents to the interview schedule.

School Category	Total number of schools	Frequency	Sample
Boarding Public Schools	54	17	3
Boarding Private Schools	54	8	3
Day Public Schools	54	12	3
Day Private Schools	54	17	3
TOTAL	54	54	12

Figure 3.4.1 Sampling grid for the study

After sampling the schools, selecting of students in the sample was first of all purposive since only students studying French in form three were respondents. This is because those studying French at form three are the ones who have chosen to go on with the subject up to the examination class. Having form one and two in the study would have included even those who were not interested in the subject and were just marking time to drop it at the end of form two. Form four was also left out in the study because most school administrations are apprehensive about letting the candidate class getting involved in activities that are out of the curriculum.

Simple random sampling was then used to select six respondents from each of the twelve schools to the students' questionnaire. This gave a total of 72 students in the sample.

3.5 Study variables

These variables were derived from the theoretical framework which was based on Richterich's view on the methods and materials used to teach writing in a foreign language must be motivating and should correspond to the real needs and situation of the learner.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

This study used three data collection tools as follows:

3.6.1 Teacher's interview schedule

This was a semi-structured interview. The interview aimed at establishing the strategies that the teachers used to teach composition writing, the remedies

they gave to learners who have difficulties, the resources they relied on and their suggestions on how to resolve learners' difficulties.

The interview was in three sections. The first section had questions requiring very brief responses on the teacher's personal, educational and professional details: the age, gender, length of experience, level of education and the type of school they taught in. The second section required very brief explanations about the way they taught composition writing. The last section was a set of questions that were more open since the teachers were required to give explanations and justifications to their point of view.

3.6.2 Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire aimed at establishing the learners' views on how they learnt and were taught composition writing. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first section aimed at collecting data on the personal details of the learner. The second section aimed at collecting data on the learners' experiences in the learning/teaching of composition writing, while the third section required of the learners to give their suggestions on how they preferred to learn composition writing.

3.6.3 Class observation schedule

The class observation schedule was adapted from the class observation grid found in the website of 'Cours d'initiation à la didactique du FLE en contexte Syrien' which deals with the teaching/learning of FFL.

(http://www.lb.refer.org/fle/cours/cours3_AC/evaluation/fiche_telecharger/Grille_evaluation_prof_langue_1.pdf). The grid was then modified to suit the objectives of this study. The resultant schedule aimed at collecting data on how the situation of the learner determines the instructional methods used in the teaching of composition writing in French.

The class observation schedule sought to collect data on six themes, namely: the dynamics of interactions in class, the organization of the class, the instructional methods, the aspects of writing, the teaching materials, the use of the non-verbal and the corrective strategies used in the classroom.

3.7 Piloting the Research Instruments

The research instruments were pilot tested before the actual collection of data in order to detect if there were any deficiencies and to ascertain if the survey flowed properly.

3.7.1 The teachers' interview schedule

To pilot test the teachers' interview schedule, five teachers from different schools responded to it. This led to the revision of some questions to collect data about the teachers' opinions too.

3.7.2 The students' questionnaire

The researcher first did a pre-test of the questionnaire among five students from a school that had not been sampled but similar to the sampled schools.

The pilot test helped in establishing the clarity and comprehension of the questions to the students in the intended way. The pilot test also helped to ensure the content validity to the study.

3.7.3 The class observation schedule

The classroom observation schedule was pilot tested during one lesson in a school that was not in the sample. The schedule was then found to be adequate to collect data on the situation of learning and the instructional methods used in class. It was then adopted for the study.

3.8 Administration of the Research Instruments

This is a description of the composition of the research instruments and how they were administered to the respondents of the study. Before administering any of the three instruments, the researcher sought official permission to conduct the research in the schools from the Ministry of Education.

3.8.1 The teachers' Interview Schedule

After making necessary adjustments on the interview schedule, the researcher made an effort to create a rapport with the teachers in the twelve sampled schools and explain to them the objective of the study. She then requested them to avail some of their time to respond to the interview questions as completely, as objectively and as honestly as possible.

3.8.2 The Students' Questionnaire

The researcher first got official permission backed by an introduction letter to schools to conduct the research. She then solicited the teachers' aid in getting access to the students and following up the completion and collection of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were then given to the learners to fill during their free time. This was found to be better than having them fill out at a sitting because then they would be constrained by time and the data may not be well representative of the real situation. The questionnaires were collected from the students after two days.

3.8.3 The class observation schedule

The twelve teachers earlier interviewed were requested in advance to allow one of their composition writing lessons to be observed. This was well arranged to ensure that the students acted as in any normal lesson as possible. They were assured that they were not under any ulterior investigation but that the presence of the researcher was for research purposes and the results were to be confidential. During the lessons, the researcher positioned herself in such a way that she could observe virtually all occurrences in the class. The researcher also made her presence to be as less distractive to the goings on in the class as possible.

3.9 Methods of Data Analysis and Presentation

This was a descriptive survey. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using the three research instruments: a teachers' interview schedule,

a students' questionnaire and a classroom observation schedule. The raw data collected using these instruments were coded on the computer using the SPSS software. Coding the data in terms of variables was guided by the objectives of the study. Using the same software, univariate data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics: frequency and percentage distributions in the form of graphs, pie charts and tables.

The data analysis was used as a basis for making conclusions and discussing the situation of instructional methods used for composition writing in secondary schools in Kenya.

CHAPTER IV: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Composition writing is a critical skill to master when learning a language, especially if one intends to use this language in either, or both, social or professional communication. This study's main objective was to investigate the instructional methods for composition writing in French in secondary schools in Nairobi with the goal of improving the teaching of composition writing in French to students learning French as a foreign language. The study was a descriptive survey.

This chapter gives the results of the study. It begins with the description of the spatial administration of the research instrument and the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This is followed by the presentation of the results from the teachers' interview schedule, the students' questionnaire and the class observation schedule. This was done using frequency tables based on the four research questions. The chapter then concludes by giving a discussion of the implications based on the evidence coming from the data analysis.

4.1 Description of the Respondents

The respondents to the research instruments were teachers and students for French in form three in secondary schools in Nairobi. The following are the demographic characteristics of the teachers and students who responded to the interview and the questionnaire, respectively.

4.1.1 The Teacher- respondents

There were a total of 12 schools in the sample. A total of twelve teachers, one from each of the schools in the sample, were sampled for the interview schedule and the researcher managed to interview all of them, therefore having a response rate of 100% among the teachers.

The teachers in the study were all, except one, aged above 30 as is evident in Figure 4.1.1. Majority of the teachers (53.8%) fell in the age bracket of 30-39 years.

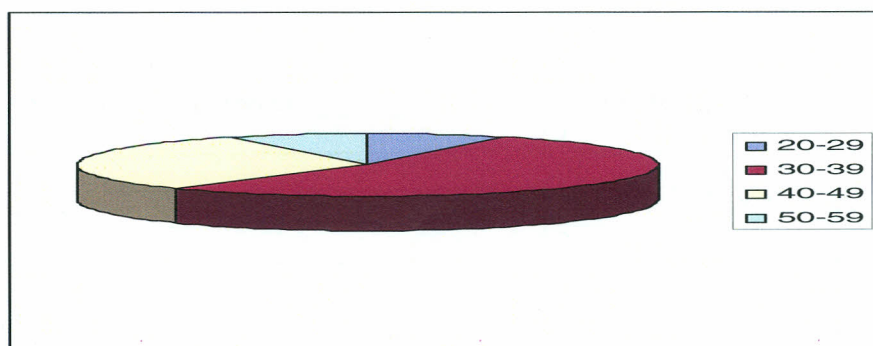


Figure 4.1.1 Distribution of the teacher-respondents by age

As figure 4.1.2 shows, more than half (69.2%) of the teacher-respondents were female with the male being 30.8%. This is the general trend in urban schools in Kenyan where there are more female teachers than male teachers.

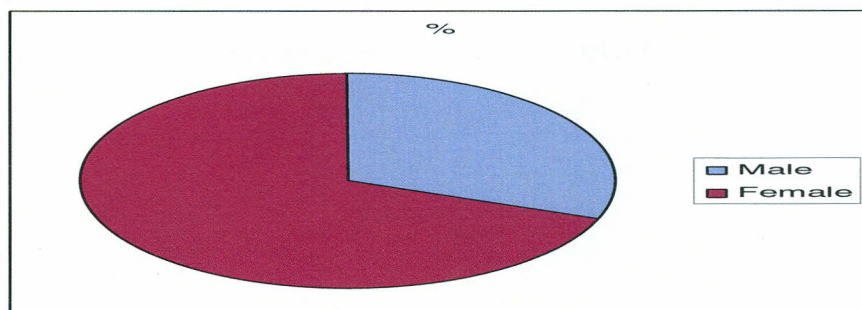


Figure 4.1.2 Distribution of the teacher-respondents by gender

The data collected revealed that all the respondents had at least a Bachelor's degree in education. The two who had a master's degree had a Bachelor of Education as their first degree. Table 4.1.1 below shows the distribution.

Highest level of education	Frequency	%
B.ED	9	75
MA	2	16.7
M.ED	1	8.3
Total	12	100

Table 4.1.1 Distribution of the teachers interviewed by the highest level of education

Of the teachers who responded to the interview, only one had teaching experience of less than five years. In fact 91.7% had experience of at least 10 years as Table 4.1.2 shows.

Period teaching experience	Frequency	%
4 yrs and less	1	8.3
5-9 yrs	0	0
10-14 yrs	7	58.3
15-19 yrs	2	16.7
20+ yrs	2	16.7
Total	12	100

Table 4.1.2 Distribution of teacher-respondents by period of teaching experience

Evidently, all the Form three French classes are small since they were all less than forty students. This can be explained by the fact that French is an optional subject and only a fraction of the students study it. Of the teachers interviewed, only one (8.3 %) had a class of more than 20 students. In fact half of them had classes of less than 11 students as figure 4.1.3 below reveals.

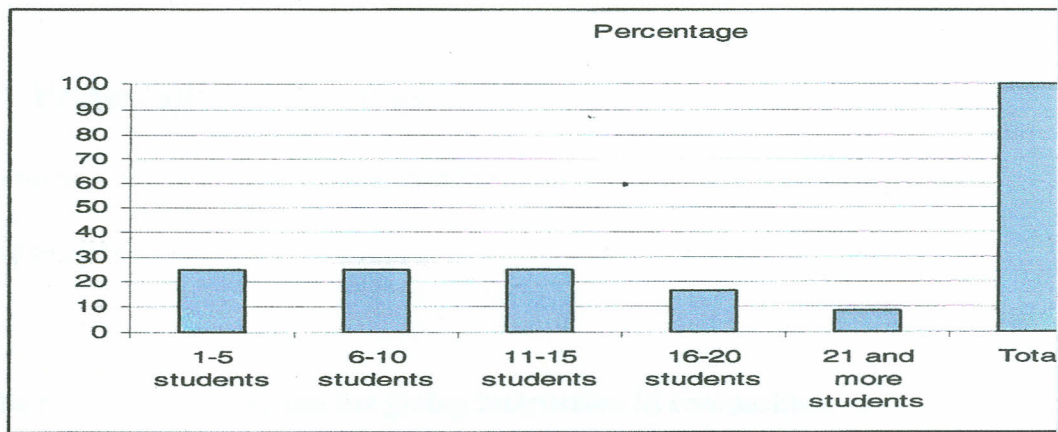


Figure 4.1.3 Distribution of teachers by the size of class they each

4.1.2 Student-respondents

Of the 72 questionnaires that were dispatched to the schools to the form three students of French, six in each school, 65 were filled out and returned, giving a response rate of 90.3% among the students.

Table 4.1.3 below shows that more than three quarters (78.5%) of the students fell in the age bracket of 16-17 years which is actually the right age for Form three. Between the youngest and the oldest student there is only an age difference of five years, making the respondents almost homogeneous in terms of age. The table further reveals that there were slightly more male students than female students.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
14-15 years	3	4.6
16-17 years	51	78.5
18-19 years	11	16.9
Total	65	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	30	46.2
Male	35	53.8
Total	65	100

Table 4.1.3: Distribution of the student-respondents by gender and age

4.2 Presentation of Findings

The presentation of findings was done based on each of the research questions using frequency tables.

4.2.1 The methods teachers use for giving instruction in composition writing

The concept of Instructional methods in this study was taken to mean any activity the teacher initiated in the classroom with the aim of leading the learners to learn composition writing. The data to answer this question was collected using the teachers' interview schedule. To answer the question on methods of teaching composition writing the interview schedule collected data on the frequency of teaching composition writing in a week, how the teachers gave composition writing tasks/ exercises to students and the instructional methods they used during a composition writing lesson.

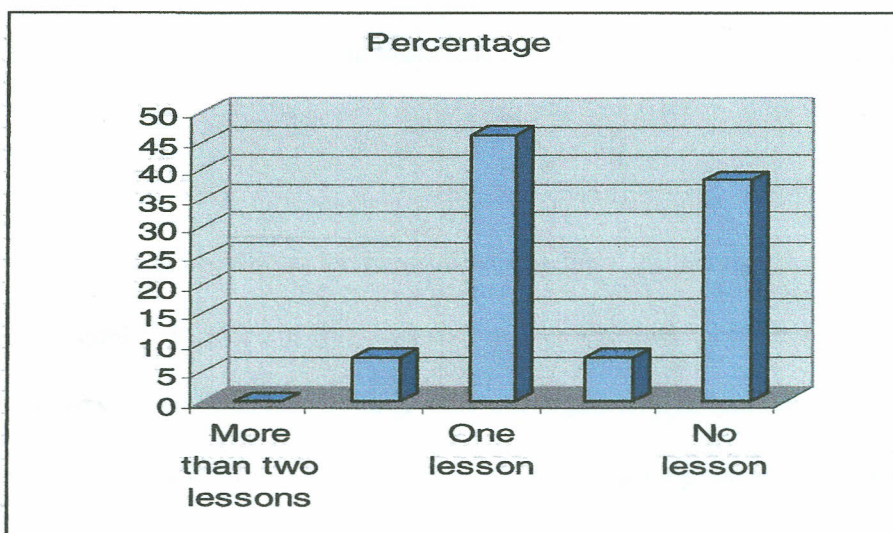


Figure 4.2.1: Frequency of teaching composition writing in a week

Each lesson in secondary school lasts 40 minutes. French in form three is taught for four lessons in a week. As shown in Figure 4.2.1, only one teacher said that he taught composition writing for two lessons in a week but on further probing he said that he taught during a lesson and gave the other lesson for the students to write a composition. Out of the twelve teachers interviewed 46% taught composition writing during a lesson in a week. It however turned out that 38% of the teachers interviewed did not teach composition writing at all. One even wondered aloud: “You mean composition writing can be taught! How?” She thought that composition writing was so subjective and so individualized to be taught in a class of many different views. She however said that if she was to teach composition writing, it would just be to give a structure of a functional composition and let the students write for themselves.

Since composition writing is part of the syllabus and is also tested in the examinations, there has to be a way the teachers engage their students to write compositions even if they do not teach it. That necessitated the researcher to find out what types of writing tasks teachers give the students either in class or as homework.

Table 4.2.1 below shows the kinds of writing tasks teachers give to students. It is evident that giving a title to write on was the most popular task used by teachers for composition writing since out of the twelve teachers interviewed 92% of them used it. Other popular tasks were giving students a phrase to

begin a composition, giving a saying to write on, letting the students choose for themselves what to write on and giving a phrase to end a composition given that out of the twelve teachers interviewed 69%, 69%, 61% and 53% respectively used them.

Writing Tasks	YES	NO	TOTAL
Give a title to write on	12	0	12
Give a phrase to begin with	9	3	12
Give them a theme or a saying to write on	9	3	12
Students' own choice	8	4	12
Give a phrase to end with	7	5	12
Give a picture or a series of pictures to write on	6	6	12
Summarize a story	5	7	12
Give them a story for them to retell in other words	5	7	12
Make them listen to music/song to give a context to write on	1	11	12
Introduce a smell of something to provoke a context to write on	0	12	12
Show a film to narrate or provoke a context to write on	0	12	12
Explain a context for them to write on	0	12	12

Table 4.2.1: Types of writing tasks which teachers give to students.

In order to get more data on the instructional methods used by teachers, they were asked to describe the class activities they used to guide their students into writing. They were unanimous that a composition lesson was not like other lessons of grammar, listening and orals since for the better part of the lesson the students were working individually in silence. Some teachers, however, tried to introduce group work or class discussions to initiate sharing of ideas.

Instructional methods	YES	NO	TOTAL
Give a model composition for them to imitate	3	9	12
Give them a format/ structure to follow	8	4	12
Give vocabulary and expressions to use	8	4	12
Give leading questions that build up a composition	7	5	12
Students are completely independent	4	8	12
Students work in groups	5	7	12
The whole class discusses	2	10	12

Table 4.2.2: Instructional methods for composition writing in French

As shown in Table 4.2.2 above, the most popular method for teaching composition writing was giving a format for students to follow and giving vocabulary and expressions for students to use given that of the twelve teachers interviewed 62% use the two methods. Giving leading questions whose answers build up to a composition was also another popular method with 54% of teachers using it.

4.2.2 The Resources for instruction in composition writing

The concept of resources in the study was taken to mean any support material or aid used to teach composition writing other than the traditional blackboard and chalk. These are teaching learning materials used in a classroom setting or outside class. To get the resources used in composition writing, the teachers' interview schedule, the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation schedule were used to collect the data.

In the teachers' interview, the bilingual dictionary of English/ French was the most popular resource used with 10 out of the 12 teachers (83%) using it. Story books or class readers were another very popular resource with seven out of the twelve teachers (58%) of the teachers using them. However in this new age of technological advancement, no single teacher used computers or the internet to teach composition writing. This is summarized in Table 4.2.3 below.

Resources for writing	Yes	No	Total
Bilingual dictionary	10	2	12
Story books	7	5	12
Pictures	6	6	12
Audio material (tapes, cassettes, radio, ...)	3	9	12
Audio-visual materials (Television, Video, film,	1	11	12
Computer for typing	0	12	12
Internet	0	12	12
Real objects (food, furniture, animals, plants, ...)	0	12	12

Table 4.2.3: Resources used by teachers in teaching composition writing

As can be seen in Table 4.2.4, among the students too, the bilingual dictionary was the most used resource. In fact, the students used the bilingual dictionaries more often than the teachers advocated. While the teachers availed story books for use the students did not use them as much. There are a few students who used the computer and the internet, probably on their own initiative since no teacher used them.

Resource	Yes (Frequency)	No (Frequency)	Total
Bilingual dictionary	54	11	65
Other compositions	18	47	65
Story books	14	51	65
Film	6	59	65
Music/song	4	61	65
Conversation	4	61	65
Computer	3	62	65
Internet	3	62	65
Pictures	3	62	65
Posters	2	63	65
Grammar books	2	63	65

Table 4.2.4: Resources used by students for composition writing

4.2.3 Problems that the teachers and the learners face in the teaching/learning of composition writing

Problems that the teachers and the learners face in the teaching/learning of composition writing in the study meant anything or anyone that was an impediment to making the students excel in writing good compositions. These could be inherent in the process of teaching/ learning as well as in the actual writing. To answer this question on the problems teachers and learners face the teachers' interview schedule and the students' questionnaire were used to collect the data.

Table 4.2.5 below displays the kind of problems the teachers faced in the teaching of composition writing in FFL. Most teachers sited the students' poor performance in writing as the main problem in teaching composition writing. They found the students' poor performance as demotivating and discouraging.

The students' poor performance was given in details with the next question on what the students' difficulties in writing were. Four of the teachers however admitted that lack of proper teaching strategies was one of their problems. They wondered how one could teach composition writing. They decried lack of course books dealing with composition writing. Three teachers also lamented about the limited time. Most of the time, they said, is spent on teaching grammar therefore leaving very little or no time at all to teach composition writing.

Problems teachers have with teaching writing	Yes	No	Total
Students' poor performance	9	3	12
Lack of teaching strategies/methods	4	8	12
Limited time	3	9	12
Lack of resources	2	10	12
Marking objectively	1	11	12
Subjectivity of compositions	1	11	12

Table 4.2.5: Difficulties teachers face in teaching composition writing

One teacher felt that he did not know how to mark objectively given that each composition was so subjective and personal. "Does one mark the grammar or the communication of the message?" he wondered. He felt that stringent marking discourages some students from writing.

Students' difficulties in writing	Yes	No	Total
Verb tenses	11	1	12
Spelling & accents	8	4	12
Limited vocabulary	7	5	12
Use of English sentence structures	7	5	12
Coherence (flow of ideas)	5	7	12
Lack of creativity	2	10	12
Lack of interesting expressions	1	11	12
Poor in orals	1	11	12

Table 4.2.6: Teachers' views on students' difficulties in writing

Table 4.2.6 above summarizes the teachers' responses on what the students' difficulties in composition writing were. The nine (69.2%) teachers who sited the students' poor performance as a problem talked of students writing compositions full of all kind of mistakes. Teachers were almost unanimous that the students' major problem was the use of incorrect verb tenses and grammatical structures. Spelling mistakes, limited vocabulary and syntax problems were the other common mistakes among students mentioned by the teachers.

Unlike the teachers who felt that the students' major difficulty was of a grammatical nature, the problem that the students mentioned most was the difficulty to use proper symbolic expressions, to have a proper flow of ideas and use of a wide vocabulary. Only 21 out of 65 students felt that the use of correct verb tenses was a problem to them. This can be seen in Table 4.2.7.

Area in composition writing that is problematic	Frequency	Percentage
Spelling	15	23.1
Verb tenses	21	32.3
Vocabulary	25	38.5
Paragraphing	3	4.6
Grammatical structures	12	18.5
Proper flow of ideas	31	47.7
Use of symbolic expressions like proverbs	41	63.1
Use of link words	9	13.8
Introducing	6	9.2
Concluding	6	9.2
Giving titles	8	12.3

Table 4.2.7: Areas of difficulties in composition writing for students

In order to have a concrete view of the mistakes students make in writing, the study sampled two compositions from one of the 12 schools on the sample which were in response to the composition task below:

*Observez cette photo attentivement. Ecrivez ce que vous pensez de la personne sur la photo? Ecrivez la description en 200-220 mots! (Observe this picture attentively. Write what you think of the person in the picture. Write the description in 200-220 words.)*⁵



Two composition scripts were written by two Form three students in Our Lady of Fatima Secondary School, Nairobi.

Composition 1

Mon ami intéressant⁵

Le person^{1/2} dans la photo s'appelle Jean-Paulin Dupont. Nous rencontrons^{2/3} de⁴ la première⁵ fois dans l'école secondaire et nous nous avons connaissons^{3/6} et nous avons été³ les amis. Quand nous vivons dans l'école, (notre école était internelle.⁸) il aimait monter les arbres et faire le dodo⁸ la⁵. Il faisait les⁹ gymnastiques dans l'école.

Maintenant, il est mon voisin. J'habite dans un appartement² dans la deuxième^{1/5} étage et il habite sur la mur⁷ de cette appartement^{2/10} et lui chambre¹¹ est près⁵ de la fenêtre de ma chambre et dans nuit⁴, nous bavardons beaucoup. J'ai lui demande⁸ pourquoi est-ce que vous vivez la⁵ et dans cette appartement¹⁰ il ya⁸ beaucoup des⁸ salles dans qui¹² on peut vivre" mais il me reponde⁸ que parce que il¹³ a beaucoup des⁸ amis, il ne veut pas les visiteur²⁷.

Sa vie est tres⁵ interressante². Premièrement², il habite près⁵ de la roue⁷ et sa vie n'est pas privée. Et puis, il ne mange pas dans son □ maison¹⁴ parce que il¹³ ne peut pas faire la cuisine dans □ son maison¹⁴ et c'est pourquoi il mange dans un restaurant toutes les fois. Sa chambre est de la deuxième étage⁷ de notre appartement² et la cuisine est de la dixième étage⁷ et quand il va faire le dodo⁸, il monté⁶ le mur.

The above composition scored $10/15$ marks. The nature of the mistakes is numbered with the key below:

1. Gender of noun
2. Spelling
3. Tense of verb
4. Preposition
5. Accent
6. Auxiliary verb and verb conjugation
7. Vocabulary

8. Syntax
9. Article of noun
10. Demonstrative adjective
11. Possessive adjective
12. Relative pronoun
13. Elision
14. Gender of possessive adjective

Composition 2

QUELLE VIE !!!

Il est noir, Il habite sur un mur dans la rue. Il est creatif⁵ parce que dans cet maison¹⁰ Il y a le lit sur un mur et la chaises⁹ et Il très bonne¹ mur. Il aime ecoutez⁸ la musique et rester⁷ beaucoup. Il a un grand radio¹ et un télévision¹ aussi. Il aime la pop musique⁸. C'est dommage parce que Il¹³ n'y a pas la⁸ femme, Il n'a manger pas dans en un mur⁸, Il vas a l'hotel^{5/6}. Il est tres⁵ avare aussi⁸, je le¹⁵ dire⁶ que il¹³ trouve un maison⁹ et il n'accepter pas⁸. Il dire que Il¹³ aime habiter sur un mur beaucoup⁸.

Il n'aime pas les⁹ enfants parce que les enfants sont embêter⁶ beaucoup⁸. Il n'aime pas les visiteurs⁹ aussi parce que Il¹³ n y a pas l'argent⁹ quel Il⁸ acheter la nourriture pour les visiteur². Il peur les⁸ gens beaucoup⁸, il n'aime pas associates⁷ avec les gens. Il aime habite⁸ seul.

Il n'aime pas marcher beaucoup⁸, il rester⁷ sur un mur chaque temps⁷. Pendant l'hiver Il visiter⁶ la rue pres^{4/5} son mur. Il ne parler⁶ pas beaucoup avec les gens. Quand les gens voir⁶ mon ami Ils s'ont amusons^{3/6} et ils pense⁶ que Il¹³ est malade, mais non il ne pas¹⁶ malade, il aime habite⁸ comme ça. C'est un bon vie¹, non ?

The above composition scored ⁸/₁₅ marks. The nature of the mistakes is numbered with the key below:

1. Gender of noun
2. Spelling
3. Tense of verb
4. Preposition
5. Accent
6. Verb conjugation
7. Vocabulary
8. Syntax
9. Article of noun
10. Demonstrative adjective
11. Possessive adjective
12. Relative pronoun
13. Elision
14. Gender of possessive adjective
15. Pronoun
16. Missing verb

4.2.4 The corrective measures that teachers use to remedy poor composition writing

As shown in Table 4.2.8 below, the teachers' main remedial measure for poor writers was making them to repeatedly write compositions with the hope that the more they write the more they learn and correct their mistakes. Some teachers (38.5%) gave the poor writers model compositions to imitate. Six out of the twelve teachers made the poor writers to read more story books so that they may get used to correct sentence structures and how to have a progressive flow of ideas.

Remedial measures for writing	Yes	No	Total
Frequent practice in writing	11	1	12
Providing reading materials/ story books	6	6	12
Use of sample (model) compositions	5	7	12
Teaching grammar topics like verb tenses	4	8	12
Giving individual remedial help	4	8	12
Pointing out mistakes from previous compositions	4	8	12
Exposing students to French-speaking environment	1	11	12
Teaching vocabulary	1	11	12

Table 4.2.8: Remedial measures used by teachers for composition writing

The students' views on the teachers' role in aiding them to write good compositions is summarized in Table 4.2.9 below. Their views were diverse; only a minimal number, two out of 65 students (3.1%) did not respond to this question. Some respondents (10.8%) felt that the teacher needed to motivate the learners to have a general positive attitude towards French. A substantial number (27.7%) were of the opinion that they had to write frequently in order to write well.

Students' suggestions on teachers' help	Yes	No	Total
Allow for frequent practice	18	47	65
Initiate more oral activities	9	56	65
Give remedial lessons to students	8	57	65
Motivate the learners more	7	58	65
Use audio-visuals	6	59	65
Give sample compositions	5	60	65
Initiate competitions in writing	4	61	65
Teach more of grammatical structures	3	62	65
Translate for students	3	62	65
No response	2	63	65

Table 4.2.9: Students' suggestions on how the teacher can help in composition writing

The students were asked how best they could be aided to write good compositions and they had a wide range of suggestions, but the most commonly chosen was to be given story books to read as can be seen in Table 4.2.10. These suggestions had a bearing on the teachers' involvement except 9 (14%) of the students who suggested that students should have an initiative to practice speaking more so that they may also know how to express themselves in writing. One student even suggested that the students should have a positive attitude towards French for them to be able to write well in the language.

Students' suggestions on how to remedy composition writing	Yes	No	Total
To read story books	18	47	65
Practice spoken	9	56	65
Be given sample compositions	7	58	65
Write many compositions	7	58	65
Be allowed to use dictionaries	7	58	65
To be taught grammar	4	61	65
To be allowed to write compositions of their interest	4	61	65
Teachers to mark leniently	3	62	65
To be given guidelines	3	62	65
Students to have a positive attitude towards French	1	64	65

Table 4.2.10: Suggestions on how to remedy difficulties in composition writing

The use of the three research instruments proved satisfactory in collecting the data as intended by the study. The five objectives of the research were attained and the findings displayed earlier responded to the five research questions. The instructional methods used in the teaching of composition writing in FFL were found to be wanting in the sense that very few teachers used creative methods or techniques that involved all the five senses of the body. As for the resources used by both the teachers and the learners, there was found to be a discrepancy between the resources the teachers used in teaching and the ones the learners used in learning.

The problems and difficulties that the teachers faced in teaching composition writing in FFL reflected that the learners' difficulties posed the greatest challenge to the teachers. Repeated or frequent writing of compositions topped the list of corrective measures teachers' use on their students to lead them to proper composition writing in French. These findings are concrete evidence that there is the need to improve on the instructional methods for composition writing in FFL.

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter first of all gives a summary of the findings as presented in chapter four, based on the research questions. Discussion of the findings in the light of existing knowledge in the area of composition writing follows the summary. These are followed by the researchers' recommendations with the intention of making the teaching of composition writing in French a more productive endeavor.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was mainly concerned with how teachers gave instruction in composition writing in French in secondary schools in Nairobi. The goal was to provide an objective explanation of the need for more effective instructional techniques and methods for composition writing in French. Twelve schools were sampled. In each of the twelve schools, six students were sampled as respondents to the students' questionnaire. One teacher from each of the twelve schools was a respondent to the teachers' interview schedule. There was a 90.3% response rate among the students and 100% response rate among the teachers.

The data collected was taken through classification and coding. Frequency tables were run for each variable revealing certain trends in the

teaching/learning of composition writing in French. What was evident is that there was a general lack of motivation in both the teaching and learning of composition writing. This is reflected in all the four of the six themes selected for data analysis, namely: teaching methods and strategies, teaching/learning resources, difficulties in teaching/ learning composition writing and remedial measures for composition writing. The following is a summary of the findings.

Of the twelve teachers interviewed, six (50%) said they taught composition writing in French at least in one of the four lessons in a week. Further probing led to the finding that the students were just given a title or a context to work on and then the books were collected at the end of the lesson for marking. The teachers' input was very minimal and in some cases lacking once the title or context had been given. Thirty one percent of the teachers decried their lack of strategy in teaching composition writing as one of their challenges. This reminds us of the question one teacher on the sample asked during an interview: "You mean composition writing is taught! How is it taught?"

Of course, all language skills that are tested should be taught. They are all learned skills. In reference to Krashen's Monitor Theory that differentiates language acquisition from language learning, it can be said that French being a foreign language does not allow for the learners to go through natural communicative situations which lead to language acquisition. Instead learners of FFL have to go through a conscious learning process. This therefore means that they have to be taught to do error correction (Krashen, 1982).

There was a notable discrepancy between the teachers' use of resources in class to teach composition writing with the students' preferred learning resources. While most of the students (75%) preferred the audio-visual resources to composition writing, only 25% of the teachers used the audio-visuals. The teachers gave reasons for their hesitance to use radio, film, computers, the Internet and radio-cassettes to the constraints of time. The use of learning resources or materials is of great importance in the process of teaching/learning. The use of resources in instruction helps to achieve various objectives. To start with, they provide valuable opportunities for foreign language learners to maintain the learnt language skills by providing set induction for communication as well as providing support and reference points for certain writing mechanisms. (Reilly, 1988).

Teachers face a lot of difficulties in teaching composition writing. This is reflected in their lack of motivation to teach it since none of the teachers interviewed had confidence or enjoyed it. A high percentage of teachers (75%) attributed this to the students' poor performance. The teachers reported that students had a wide variety of difficulties and since there were individual differences, it proved difficult to correct all of them in a classroom situation. This pointed to the lack of strategy in handling the difficulties. With only a third of the student-respondents affirming that they enjoyed composition writing, the students too, evidently, lacked motivation to writing compositions.

A big number of teachers (91.7%) were of the opinion that frequent practice in writing would be a good remedial measure. Their argument was that the more

the students wrote, the more they learnt new vocabulary and the more they internalized writing skills. What was disturbing, however, was that only a third of the teachers used the students' own productions as the reference for remedial measures.

5.2 Discussion of the Findings

Looking at the findings of the survey in the light of Richterich's view that the methods and materials used in teaching writing in a foreign language must be motivating and should also correspond to the real needs of the learners, the research found the actual methods and materials used on the ground wanting.

The needs of the learners were studied using the students' questionnaire in asking the reasons why the students chose to learn French. Of the students surveyed 75% said that they chose French because they loved it and would like to communicate fluently in both written and spoken French. This result is in tandem with other researches which posit that the majority of those who choose to learn French do so for the love of the language (Richterich, 1974; Nott, 1994).

As to whether the materials and methods used in teaching composition writing were motivating, the investigation was done using the teachers' interview schedule as well as the students' questionnaire. The teachers questionnaire sought to find out the methods and materials the teachers used. On the other hand, the students' questionnaire sought to find out the students' preferred

learning methods and materials. It was evident that the teachers did not use a variety of methods. A majority of the teachers just used the traditional method of giving the students the general format of a composition and let them do the rest of the work without the teacher's instruction. Only 16.7% involved class discussions while 41.7% used group work.

It was reflected in the data collected that the resources used in teaching/learning composition writing were not creative enough. The teachers are yet to bring into their classrooms a creative variety of resources involving all the five senses. It would be useful to come up with resources of all kinds in a manner to stimulate the students marshal all their senses in writing.

While most of the teachers were of the opinion that the students' difficulties had to do with grammatical structures, most of the students felt that their difficulties stemmed from their inability to have consistent flow of ideas and to use symbolic expressions like metaphors and proverbs. There is need for the teachers to understand the students' difficulties and design remedial measures based on the same. Richterich (1972)'s argument that the content and methods used in the instruction of writing in a foreign language should respond to the learner's needs is importance in solving this problem. When the teacher takes as his/her point of departure the learners needs then he/she would strive towards having remedial measures aimed at helping learners out of their difficulties.

Having witnessed the challenges both the students and the teachers face in teaching/learning composition writing, the remedial measures used by teachers should be apt in reversing the situation. A survey of the remedial measures used by the teachers reveals a very minimal level of constructive help, with only a third of the teachers opting for pointing out to the students their mistakes in their previous compositions to be corrected. Against the background of the subjectivity of composition writing, the more productive corrective measures would be to use the students own productions. It is from these that the teacher would get a picture of each individual student's difficulties and therefore help each on how to overcome his/her challenges.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings of this study had implications on the design of teaching programmes, design of teaching/learning materials, and the practice of teaching as well as for further research. The following recommendations address these implications.

Expectedly, going by the findings of this study, the methods and resources used in the teaching/learning of composition writing in French in secondary schools have to be improved. Basing the argument on Richterich (1974)'s recommendation, the students' needs, motivation and situation should be taken into consideration when selecting the content, designing objectives and preparing the instructional methods in the teaching/learning writing in a foreign language.

As earlier explained in the theoretical framework, the needs of the learners have to be put into consideration when selecting the content for composition writing. These could be individual needs or group needs. It is understandable that the classes may not be homogeneous in terms of but the teacher may focus on group needs for classroom situation. The teacher may then give extra work to each individual student to cater for individual needs. Examples are writing letters, E-mails and postcards to friends and pen pals for the need of communicating with the French speaking community.

Writing is viewed as a difficult feat to accomplish because it is not practised in synchrony with its real uses in real situations of communication (Chantelauve, 1998; Gombert, 2005; Nott, 1994). The texts written should make sense to the students and should be able to be replicated in a real situation. Writing should not just be limited to writing prose form compositions. There are several things to write such as jokes, post cards, advertisements, poems, e-mails, placards, posters, telephone text messages, prayers and instructional manuals. In this case authentic documents like advertisements, posters, newspaper articles and recipes can be used as sample texts.

The strategies (methods, tasks and resources) used to give instruction in writing should be able to develop or to sustain the already existing motivation to excel in the language. From the study it was apparent that the teachers lacked the strategies to face the students' challenges in composition writing. Consequently, the teachers need to be empowered. To this end the preparation

of teachers should include equipping them with the skills to design the proper teaching strategies for the right situation and for the right recipient. This calls for a review of the teacher education curriculum for those preparing to teach French as a foreign language. With the appropriate teaching skills the teacher will not find him/herself helpless before students who are struggling with writing.

Apart from new programmes for teacher students, there is also dire need for in-service courses for continuing teachers to arrest the apathy that is already in the field. The in-service courses should among other things address the pertinent issue of helping the teacher to help the learners to be good writers. Having a general positive attitude of the learner as a potential good writer is half way to bringing the learner to be a good writer. In so doing, the teacher would be motivating the learner to have the desire to write.

As Reuter (1996) argues, writing should be linked to other activities of free expression like art and music so as to create the desire and need to write. This resonates with the call to involve foreign language students in co-curricular activities like French club, drama, music and drawing competitions.

In order to the situation of learning conducive to the learning of writing in FFL it would be important to ensure that positive cultural attitudes are fostered and the language maintenance techniques are used in the instruction. These can be done by continued and consistent use of computer-aided instruction and

regular written communication with the francophone (Stern, 1988).

Foreign language learning, just like any other discipline requires the use of a variety of resources to maximize on learning. The teacher is called upon to be very creative and innovative in order to come up with a variety of resources for set induction. The use of resources that are stimuli to all the five senses would not only be thought-provoking but would also create interest in writing. For example an aroma, a sound or a visual item that would invoke an imagination or a nostalgic memory and in turn create the desire to write.

Writing should also be taught in synchrony with other language skills, which are, listening, reading and speaking so as to allow the creation of context and the generation of ideas. To alleviate the problem of grammatical errors, the researcher recommends for synchronising the teaching/learning of grammar, reading, speaking, listening and writing as opposed to isolated teaching of grammatical topics. This would help the learners to be able to apply the grammatical rules to writing. They therefore will not just look at grammar as some Scientific or Mathematical rule but as a means to logical and comprehensible communication. On top of that, there should be synchrony with reading works whereby there is sharing of vocabulary, textual register, writing skills and civilization. In this background therefore, there should not be lessons that are just purely for composition writing. All the four language skills should be tackled within a lesson.

During the survey, the teachers decried the constraint of time as one of the reasons why teaching composition writing was a challenge. In this light, writing should not be confined to the classroom situation alone. Learners can be exposed to writing in various fora or settings such as writing workshops, inter-school writing competitions, writing clubs, write articles to magazines, writing to pen pals through letters, telephone texts or e-mails as well as posting comments on the internet.

Thanks to the rapid evolution of teaching methodology for FFL, there have been quite a number of instructional aides in the teaching and learning of FFL. A good example is the inception of free websites for learning all the language skills in FFL. Seven of the common ones were listed in chapter two.

This study having focussed basically on the instructional methods used for composition writing in FFL at the secondary school level, a number of issues may have been raised. More research that would explain in greater detail the factors in the area of the learning of composition writing in FFL would be welcome. This would contribute in enlightening an area that is at the moment still inadequately researched in the Kenyan context. This would help to improve the curriculum design, the choice of content, and the conception of course books and any endeavour that may affect the mastery of writing in FFL.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

The area of the teaching/learning of writing in FFL is very wide. The recommendations above just pertain to the teaching methods and strategies used in secondary schools in Kenya. Due to constraints of time and resources, this study was unable to research on all the issues that came up during the study. There is still a lot more that needs to be researched on, not only specifically on the issues that came up during the study but on the entire area of writing in FFL. It is therefore suggested that further research should be done on the following areas:

- The relationship between the teacher's qualifications and the strategies they use in teaching writing in FFL. This could offer some objective information on the differences in competence in teaching between teachers of different qualifications and how this contributes to the student's performance.
- The kinds of texts or compositions that learners are more interested in writing and how the teachers motivate them in their areas of interest. This would offer some insight on how attitude towards writing contributes to performance in writing.
- Considering that the study population was only urban, the results would have been more representative if the population included rural schools. It is recommended to have further studies on the same area but with bigger sample sizes and more cross-sectional representation of the whole country.

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APPENDIX 1

TEACHERS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Age: _____
2. Gender _____
3. Period of teaching experience: _____
4. Your highest level of education: _____
5. In which institution did you train? _____
6. How many students do you have in: Form3? _____

SECTION II

7. Which language skill do you feel most confident to teach? Give reasons for your choice.

listening comprehension

reading comprehension

oral expression

writing expression

grammar

Give reasons for your answer: -----

8. How much time do you dedicate for the teaching of compositions in a week?

9. How do you give writing tasks to your students?

- Writing a title
- Giving a phrase to begin with
- Giving a phrase to end with
- Showing a picture/drawing or a series of pictures/drawings to create a story
- Introducing a smell to give a context within which to write
- Introducing a sound to give a context within which to write
- Showing a film to narrate on and to give a context within which to write
- Making them first listen to music to give a context within which to write
- Giving a context
- Giving a theme or a saying to write a narrative about
- Students choosing their own topic to write on
- Any other activity (ies) that you use to give a narrative writing task*

.....
.....

10. Which teaching methods do you use for teaching composition writing to your students?

- I write a model narrative which they have to imitate.
- I give the format/ structure of a composition that they should adhere to.
- I give the vocabulary and expressions to be used in the composition.
- I give leading questions whose answers will form a composition.
- I let the students come up with their work with complete independence.
- I let the students work in groups.
- I let the whole class participate in composing by putting together their ideas.
- Mention any other method that you use:*

.....
.....

11. Which resources do the students use to write a composition?

- () Bilingual dictionary
- () Pictures
- () Computer (word perfect, typing)
- () Internet
- () Story books
- () Audio materials (e.g. radio, cassette)
- () Audio-visual materials (e.g. Film, video)
- () Mention any other?

.....

SECTION III

12. Which are the three main difficulties that you face in teaching composition writing?

-
-
-

13. (a) Which difficulties do your students have in composition writing?

-
-
-
-
-

(b) Which are the remedial measures you take with your students to help them improve composition writing?

4. Type of school: Boarding school Day school
 Public school Private school

SECTION II

5. Do you enjoy composition writing tasks? Yes No

Give reasons for your answer:

.....

.....

6. Of the following language skills which one do you like learning the most?

- () Listening comprehension
- () Reading comprehension
- () Composition writing
- () Oral expression
- () Grammar

Explain why.

.....

7. (a) Of the following writing skills do you find any problematic? Yes No

(b) If yes, which ones?

- () spelling
- () tenses of verbs
- () vocabulary
- () paragraphing
- () grammar
- () ensuring proper flow of ideas

- using symbolic expressions like proverbs
 - punctuation
 - using link words to connect phrases, sentences and paragraphs
 - introducing
 - concluding
 - titling
 - any other*
-
-

8. Which resources do you use to help you write a composition in French?

- bilingual dictionary
 - story books
 - other compositions
 - a film
 - music/songs
 - computer (to type)
 - internet
 - posters
 - pictures or a series of pictures
 - Mention any others*
-
-

Thank you for your co-operation

SECTION III

9. Give your suggestions on how composition writing could be made easier for students learning French as a foreign language:

10. Give your suggestions on what the teacher should do to help you master writing in French better.

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 3

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION GRID

Criteria	Observation	Remarks
<p>1. Classroom interactions</p> <p>What interactions are there between the teacher and the students and between the students themselves?? Are the interactions encouraging to the students ?</p>		
<p>2. The organization</p> <p>Is the lesson sequence made clear from the beginning? Does the lesson answer to the objectives of the sequence? Is each section well covered ?</p>		
<p>3. Teaching strategies</p> <p>Which Instructional methods are used? Are the methods learner-friendly? Does the teacher alternate the methods from individual to collective ones? Is there a degree of learner autonomy?</p>		
<p>4. Aspects of writing</p> <p>Which aspects of writing does the teacher bring to the attention of the learners? How</p>		

<p>does he/she do it ?</p>		
<p>5. Learning materials</p> <p>Which learning materials are used? Are the materials well prepared before the lesson? Are the materials well used ?</p>		
<p>6. Use of non-verbal and movement in class</p> <p>Is the teacher using an agreeable tone? Which gestures does he/she use in class? Does she/he move round the class ?</p>		
<p>7. Correction strategies</p> <p>Does the teacher encourage the learners to do self-correction? Does the teacher encourage the learners to correct their colleagues? Does the teacher do correction during the lesson? Is there homework?</p>		

APPENDIX 4

LIST OF SCHOOLS OFFERING FRENCH IN NAIROBI

DAY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

HIGHWAY HIGH SCHOOL
HURUMA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
JAMHURI HIGH SCHOOL
KAHAWA GARRISON SECONDARY SCHOOL
KAYOLE SECONDARY
OFAFA JERICHO HIGH SCHOOL
OUR LADY OF FATIMA SEC SCH
OUR LADY OF MERCY SECONDARY SCHOOL
PARKLANDS ARYA GIRLS
PARKLANDS BOYS SECONDARY SCHOOL
PUMWANI SECONDARY SCHOOL
ST.TERESA'S GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL

DAY PRIVATE SCHOOLS

AGA KHAN HIGH SCHOOL
AKIBA SECONDARY SCHOOL
ANANDA MARGA ACADEMY
ARYA BOYS SECONDARY SCHOOL
COMPUERA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
JARMAT GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL
KAREN SOUTH SCHOOL
KIANDA SCHOOL
ST. DOMINIC'S SAVIO SECONDARY SCHOOL
ST. HANNAH'S BOYS HIGH SCHOOL, KAREN
ST. MARTIN'S GIRLS SECONDARY KIBAGARE
ST. MARY'S SEC SCHOOL
ST. NICHOLAS SENIOR SCHOOL
STRATHMORE SCHOOL
LORETO CONVENT , VALLEY ROAD
LORETO CONVENT MSONGARI
STEPHJOY SCHOOL

BOARDING PUBLIC SCHOOL

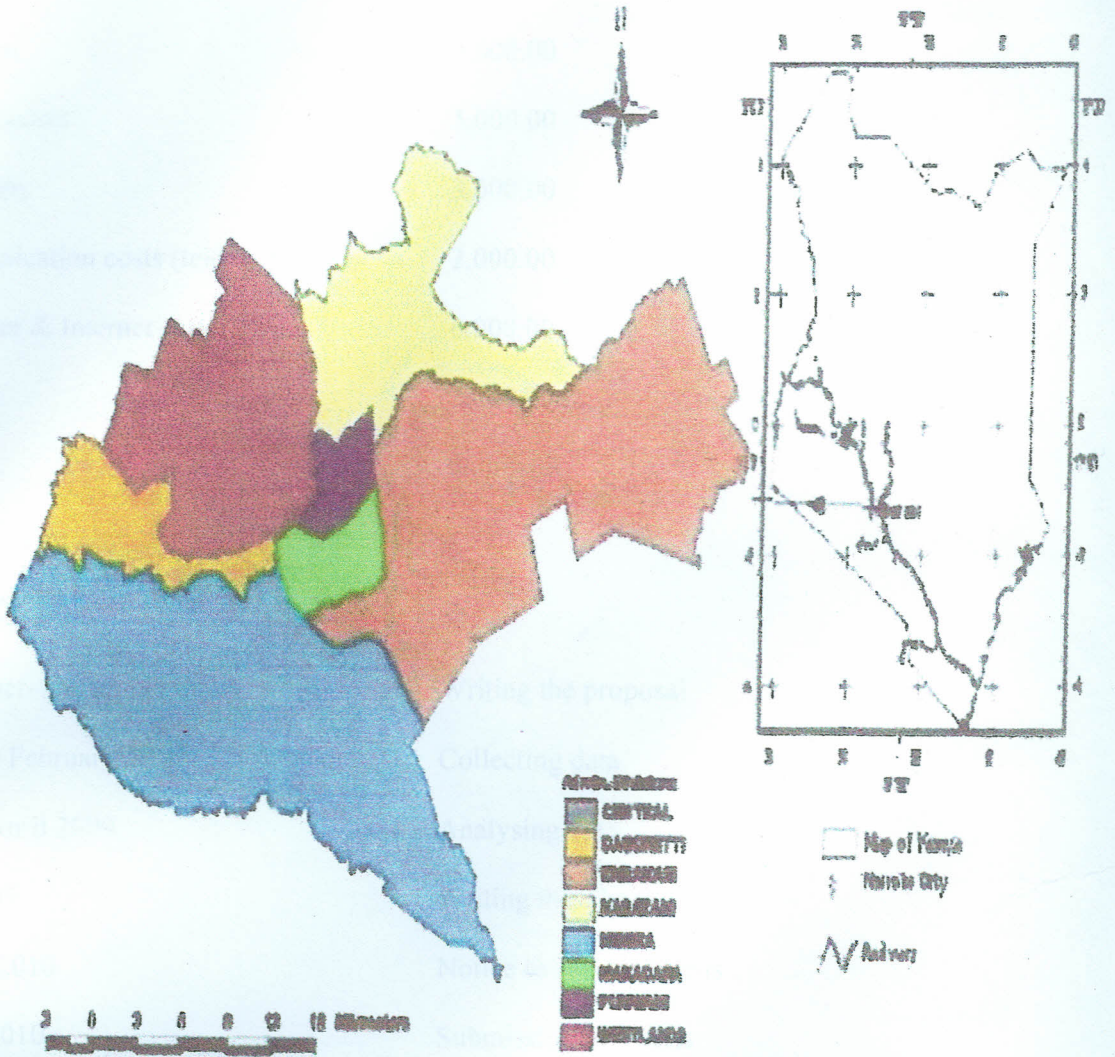
AQUINAS SECONDARY SCHOOL
BURUBURU GIRLS' SEC SCHOOL
DAGORETTI HIGH SCHOOL
HOSPITAL HILL HIGH SCHOOL
KENYA HIGH SCHOOL
LENANA SCHOOL
MOI FORCES ACADEMY
MOI GIRLS SCHOOL NAIROBI
MUHURU MUCHIRI SECONDARY SCHOOL
NAIROBI SCHOOL
NGARA GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL
PANGANI GIRLS' SCHOOL
ST. GEORGE'S SEC SCHOOL
STAREHE BOYS CENTRE
STAREHE GIRLS CENTRE
STATE HOUSE GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL
UPPER HILL SECONDARY SCHOOL

BOARDING PRIVATE SCHOOLS

BROOKSHINE SCHOOL
KARENGATA ACADEMY
KITISURU BOYS HIGH SCHOOL
LE PIC HIGH SCHOOL
RIARA SPRINGS ACADEMY
ST. CATHERINE'S MOUNTAINVIEW ACADEMY
ST LUCIE KIRIRI GIRLS SECO SCH
SUNSHINE SECONDARY SCH

APPENDIX 5

THE MAP OF NAIROBI



APPENDIX 6

BUDGET

Stationery	5,000.00
Books	10,000.00
Transport	5,000.00
Printing costs	5,000.00
Photocopy	3,000.00
Communication costs (telephone)	2,000.00
Computer & Internet services	6,000.00
Binding	2,000.00
TOTAL	38,000.00

CALENDAR

September- December 2008	Writing the proposal
January- February 2009	Collecting data
March-April 2009	Analysing data
May 2009	Writing the Thesis
January 2010	Notice to submit Thesis
March 2010	Submission of Thesis
September 2010	Defence of Thesis
September- October 2010	Corrections to the Thesis
June 2011	Graduation