

Influence of Time allocated for Teaching of Integrated English on Learners' Achievement of Linguistic Skills in Public Secondary Schools in Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Despite the efforts made by teachers of English in enhancing the performance of English in Kenyan secondary schools, there have been persistent challenges in teaching thus students' learners' achievement of the linguistic skills is compromised. The aim of this paper was to determine Influence of time allocated for teaching of integrated English on Learners' Achievement of Linguistic Skills in Secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. The study utilized descriptive survey research design using mixed methods approach. A sample size of 251 teachers and 134 heads of languages department was used. Purposive, Proportionate and simple random sampling techniques was used to obtain the respondents. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedules and classroom observations. The validity of the instrument was tested through expert judgment while reliability was achieved using Cronbach Alpha. Quantitative data was analysed by use of frequencies and percentages. Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Qualitative data was analysed thematically and presented in narrations and quotations. The study found out that time allocated for teaching of integrated English had a positive association with learners' acquisition of linguistic skills in secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya ($r=.492$; $p=.000$). Thus, a large amount of time allocated/utilized by teachers in teaching integrated English leads to enhanced reading, listening, writing and speaking skills among learners. The study recommends that adequate time need to be allocated for the teaching of integrated English. This can be achieved through teaching of the integrated English during the weekends and holidays as a way of early syllabus coverage.

Key words: *Time allocated, Teaching, Integrated English Language, Learners' Achievement, Linguistic Skills*

INTRODUCTION

The integrated curriculum body is rooted in the progressive education program of 1930s. It is extolled as a move-away from the memorization and presentation of isolated facts to a more constructivist understands of learning which values in-depth knowledge of topics. This is seen as a curriculum organization geared towards teaching for transmission and considerate learning (Mbithe, 2014). The introduction of the integrated English curriculum in Kenya was done alongside the 8-4-4 education system introduction in 1985. The Kenya Institute of Education (KIE, 2002) sees integration as amalgamation of two independent but related entities allowing for enrichment of each other. KIE further notes that through acquaintance to literature, students have an opportunity of improving their linguistic skills. Furthermore, an enhanced knowledge of the language improves the student's obligation of literally materials (KIE, 2002).

Integration, as stated by Hungyo and Kijai (2009), is language instruction where all the four skills in English take place at the same time and with student, teacher and setting as playing their roles in the learning. This shows that language skills should not be taught or focused in a separate manner by focusing on a single skill at a time, but rather they should be combined and incorporated so more skills can be focused at a time. It is to be recognized that incorporation of skills does not, in any way, put weight on the shoulders of learners. Rather, it is the most proficient way to guarantee the best of results by the learners. Language integration is more like a package deal where one skill cannot be separated with the other. It is a whole language approach to language teaching. Even if a course deals with one language skill for instance, reading, writing or speaking; all the other skills need to be incorporated and dealt with (Gjendemsjo, 2013).

According to Manyasi (2014) the Ministry of Education in Kenya demands that English language need to be imparted by adopting the integrated methodology. This comprises a situation where the instruction of English language and Literature in English is done as one subject in the secondary school syllabus. The Kenya Secondary School Syllabus clarifies the matter of integration as amalgamation of two independent but inter-related subjects so as to augment and enrich both entities. Moreover, acquaintance to literature enables the students to enhance their linguistic skills. The students will not only augment their terminology but also learn to adopt the use of language through various ways. Moreover, an enhanced language skill will improve on the students' obligation of literary materials.

Development of written communication is among the competence aims of the Upper Secondary School English subject curriculum in Norway and in common with other countries feedback and assessment for learning (AfL) have been encouraged in Norwegian schools (Gamlem & Smith, 2013; Røyeng, 2010). Feedback has been employed in formative assessment to promote the development of students' writing skills and AfL has been defined as a classroom practice that involves dialogue and feedback loops between teachers and peers during subject specific problem solving (Gamlem & Munthe, 2014). New digital technologies open up opportunities by providing automated feedback and specifically for enhancing the development of students' writing skills in English (Winerip, 2012).

Nordin (2017), considers writing as a skill that can be improved by writing, and states that this is a process that involves research, reviewing and reorganizing thoughts on a piece of paper. In other words, how and where the expressions should be established, the order in which they should be

placed and the parts that a meaningful whole should consist of are the main factors that need to be known for a good written expression (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). In addition, writing has three dimensions: cognitive, affective and kinetic. The cognitive dimension is the mental process of interpretation of the acquired information, sensations and observations. The affective dimension is the simplicity, fluency, attractiveness, succinctness and readability of writing. Kinetic dimension is the coordination of muscle movements in using notebook, paper, pencil and writing (Köksal, 1999). Writing, which constitutes an important domain during both mother tongue and second or foreign language learning, requires skills rather than knowledge.

According to Dechant (2013), reading is the process of interpreting a written text. This interpretation requires two things: recognition and perception. Recognition is the recognition of letters and words and is a sensory activity. The recognition activity is followed by the perception of the material in the brain. During perception, this material is both organized, attached meaning, and linked to previous knowledge (Ybarra, & Green, 2003). Accordingly, reading can be defined as the process of extracting meaning constructing his own from texts as a result of mental processing of the symbols taken through sensory organs. During reading, the individual makes a connection between his/her prior knowledge and the information presented in the text. The individual combines their prior knowledge with the information presented in the text and reaches a new idea (Celik, 2018). Therefore, reading has a significant role in language development.

It is clear that oral skills development, which is one of the requirements of the communicative approach, is important for the learners, as well as the ability to express oneself in writing and to translate thoughts into writing in the target language (Mart, 2018). In foreign language teaching, writing skill, which is seen as the last stage of language skills and thought to be the most difficult skill, requires the use of foreign language in writing correctly and in accordance with the rules (Demirel, 2017). This skill can only be improved by practice. It is thought that reading, which is thought to be combined with writing in practice, will improve the writing skill by providing development of thinking. As Öz (2011) states, “writing skills are directly related to reading skills.” It is aimed that learners in foreign language teaching actively use the information they have gained in the classroom with writing activities and express their thoughts in a foreign language in writing (Güzel & Barın, 2013). These goals can be achieved through various writing activities.

When reading is done, students will acquire language input. Reading will help learners to learn from what others have written (Hudson, 2007). Well-written reading materials will set a model to see structure and vocabulary use (Hudson, 2007), and learners will transfer the text structures they have learnt into their own writing. Reading will enable learners to internalize how vocabulary and structures function in the text. “Students are also exposed to language patterns that help them to see the many and complex ways that sentences and paragraphs can be put together” (Vandergrift, 2007, p.265). Apparently, a good command of grammatical structures will help students build on writing skills.

As noted by Chastain as quoted in Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016) the aim of listening skills is to understand the linguistics at ordinary speed in an unconscious situation. Moreover, Hamouda (2013) pointed that listening as a skill is very significant in the acquisition of understandable input. In addition, Pourhosein and Ahmadi (2011) articulated that listening play a significant part in the communication procedure. These researchers noted that listening is considered as the most vital

skills among the four important parts of communication skills. Ohno (2011) contends that linguistic skills are the capability to identify and yield the characteristic linguistic structures and to efficiently use them during communication and the capability to assume linguistic forms including words, sound and sentence structure. It is concerned with the acquisition of the linguistic code itself which includes syntax, lexicon and semantics. On the other hand, Canale and Swain as cited in Ohno, (2011) noted that grammatical skills is a key concern for any communicative method whose aims include providing students with knowledge of how to establish and prompt precisely the exact connotation of sounds. They trust that having knowledge of these guidelines is important in interpreting sounds for social connotation, particularly where there is a low degree of transparency between the literal meaning of a sound and the speaker's meaning.

Group discussion is considered to be one of the best approaches of learning speaking in foreign language. It is deemed to assist learners in improving their speaking skills. In a group, the learners have opportunities of using English among themselves and practice with their peers. The process of practicing speaking among students and their peers increase their confidence in speaking some words without worries. Besides that, learning in group will improve their vocabularies mastery (Argawati, 2014). In addition, Zyoud (2016) role play is a familiar procedure that is typically applied in classroom to improve students' speaking skill. In role plays, learners are assigned roles and put into circumstances that they may ultimately encounter outside the classroom. Since role plays emulate life, it helps students to develop real life speaking skills by imagining and assuming the roles where they create a pretend situation, and they pretend to be some different persons. The problem of poor teaching of Integrated English has persisted (Otieno, 2003). Anyanzwa and Otunga, (2007) and Barasa, (2005) postulated that the merging of English and Literature causes serious problems that lead to confusion, reduction in time allocation and resistance. In addition, lessening the number of lessons as a result of integration is double tragedy because the content is too much thus completion of syllabus is impossible. Thus, the aim of the current paper was to establish the influence of time allocated for teaching of integrated English on learners' achievement of linguistic skills in secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The research used descriptive survey design using mixed approach methods. Mixed methodology is the blending of two or more approaches in a research study resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The study was mixed methods in a single research which permits for pragmatism. The study targeted all the 724 teachers of English teaching Form three students in 206 secondary schools in Bungoma County. In addition, the study targeted all heads of languages department in all the 206 secondary schools. Form three teachers of English were specifically targeted for the purpose of this research because, it is at this level that set books are fully introduced according to the syllabus and thus the teacher is tasked with the responsibility of teaching the skills appropriately using integrated approach.

The sample size formula for this study is Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as quoted by Kasomo (2001) where a sample size of 251 teachers and 134 heads of languages department was obtained. The researcher stratified the respondents into the six administrative units; Bungoma Central sub-county, Bungoma East Sub- County, Bungoma West sub-county, Bungoma North sub-county, Bungoma south Sub- County and Mount Elgon Sub- County making Bungoma County. The

researcher further employed stratified sampling technique to select the respondents from each of the administrative unit. Thereafter, simple random sampling was used to choose Form Three teachers of English involved in the study from each of the six administrative units. In addition, HODs in every selected school were selected purposively to take part in the study.

Questionnaires, interview schedules and classroom observations were the main data collection instruments used in this study. A pilot study was carried out in a neighbouring Kakamega County to establish the reliability of the research instrument. The content and structural validity of the instrument was tested through expert judgement while reliability was tested using test-retest method. A correlation coefficient of equal or more than 0.70 was considered adequate to allow the researcher proceed with the study as per the recommendations of Creswell (2013). The quantitative data from the questionnaire was first subjected to preliminary processing through validation, coding and tabulation in readiness for analysis with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data was thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives. Data analysed was presented by use of tables and figures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper was to investigate the influence of time allocated for teaching of integrated English on learners’ acquisition of linguistic skills; reading, writing, speaking and listening. To achieve this objective, the teachers of English were requested to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale items on effect of time factor in the adoption of integrated English approach. The outcomes of the analyzed data are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Effect of Time Allocated for Teaching Integrated English on Acquisition of Linguistic Skills*

Statement	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree		Overall Percentages
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Completion of syllabus is impossible since the content is too much	40	16.9	43	18.1	63	26.6	91	38.4	65.0
The merging of English and Literature has caused reduction in time allocation for teaching of both subjects in one	24	10.1	22	9.3	123	51.9	68	28.7	80.0
Teaching of literature and English grammar has resulted in heavy workload for both teachers and the students	37	15.6	47	19.8	92	38.8	61	25.7	64.5

There is lack of adequate time for instruction and examination features of English and literature in a more applicable manner in secondary schools	61	25.7	23	9.7	73	30.8	80	33.8	64.6
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Table 1 shows that 93(38.4%) teachers strongly agreed that completion of syllabus was impossible since the content is too much, 63(26.6%) teachers agreed and 83(35.0%) teachers were in disagreement. The results showed that majority (65.0%) of the teachers of English in secondary schools in Bungoma County noted that completion of syllabus of integrated English was impossible since the content was too much. This is attributed to the fact that despite the integration, no extra-time was allocated for English subject. This was found to be consistent with other researchers’ findings such as Anyanzwa and Otunga, (2007) and Barasa, (2005) who pointed out that the merging of English and Literature caused serious problems that led to confusion, reduction in time allocation and resistance. In addition, decrease in the number of lessons due to integration was double tragedy because the content is too much thus completion of syllabus is impossible. Further, 123(51.9%) teachers agreed with the statement that the merging of English and Literature had caused reduction in time allocation for teaching of both subjects in one, 68(28.7%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement while 46(19.4%) disagreed with the view. The responses pointed out that majority (80.6%) of the teachers in public secondary schools had the opinion that the merging of English and Literature had caused reduction in time allocation for teaching of both subjects in one. This implied that the time that was allocated for literature and English language has been merged into one leading to reduction in time allocated for the teaching of integrated English as noted by Anyanzwa & Otunga, (2007) and Barasa, (2005).

In addition, 92(38.8%) respondents agreed with the statement that teaching of literature and English grammar had resulted in heavy workload for both teachers and the students, 61(25.7%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement and 47(19.8%) teachers of English disagreed with the view while 37(15.6%) teachers of English strongly agreed with the statement. The responses showed that majority (64.5%) of the teachers of English believed that integration had resulted in heavy workload for both teachers and students. This has resulted in use of pedagogies which does not allow students to acquire linguistic skills. This supports an earlier argument of Barasa (2005) who noted that integration had resulted in heavy work load for both teachers and the students. Barasa further noted that teachers had neglected the weak students and only moved on with fast learners. Therefore, teachers of English felt that more hours needed to be devoted to the instruction of English language in the Kenyan Secondary Schools.

Similarly, 80(33.8%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that there is lack of adequate time for instruction and examination features of English and literature in a more applicable manner in secondary schools, 73(30.8%) teachers agreed with the statement, 61(25.7%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement while 23(9.7%) teachers disagreed with the statement. The responses showed that majority (64.6%) of the teachers of English in public secondary schools in Bungoma County believed integration had resulted to lack of adequate time for instruction of integrated

English hindering students' performance. This supports the work of Anyanzwa & Otunga, (2007) and Barasa, (2005) who all noted the merging of English and Literature causes serious problems that lead to confusion, reduction in time allocation and resistance. In addition, Massey (2008) time is a crucial element especially when dealing with integrated curriculum. The researcher observed that connection between steps in the lesson was not clearly emphasized, learners were not continually motivated during the lesson and lesson conclusion was not appropriately done as per integrated English guidelines. The teachers rushed through the lesson so as to complete the syllabus within the stipulated time lines. Regarding document analysis, it emerged that the teachers were doing contrary to what they had prepared. This was attributed to lack of adequate time for the teaching of integrated English.

On interviewing HODs it emerged that effect of time management on the acquisition of linguistic skills was an issue. They confirmed that most of the teachers were not able to complete the syllabus on stipulated time. The integrated English consumed a lot of teaching time as compared to other subjects and therefore time allocated for the teaching of Integrated English need to be increased. According to Yao & Sibert (2017) time is a crucial feature for the effective execution of any curriculum. Other researchers such as Anyanzwa & Otunga, (2007 and Barasa, (2005) pointed out in their studies that decrease in the number of lessons due to integration is double tragedy because the content of integrated English is too much thus completion of syllabus is impossible. This was further found to be consistent with the findings of Magoma (2016) who found out that limited time allocated to integrated English curriculum hampered the implementation of the program as expected. From the study findings, time allocated for teaching of integrated English need to be increased to allow for effective teaching including completion of syllabus.

The Correlation between time allocated for teaching of integrated English Approach and Achievement of Linguistic Skills

The aim of this paper was to establish the influence of time allocated for teaching of integrated English approach and achievement of linguistic skills in public secondary schools in Bungoma County, Kenya. Pearson Correlation analysis was used test the influence of the attribute on achievement of linguistic skills. The results of the analysed information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Correlation Coefficient Between Time Allocated for Teaching of Integrated English Approach And Achievement Of Linguistic Skills*

	Achievement of Linguistic Skills
Time Allocated	r=.492** p=.000 N= 237

Table 2 shows that time allocated for teaching of integrated English had a positive association with learners' acquisition of linguistic skills in secondary schools in Bungoma County (r=.492; p=.000). Therefore the null hypothesis of this study was rejected and the alternate accepted showing that time allocated for the teaching of integrated English in public secondary schools positively influences learners' achievement of the four linguistic skills. This shows that an increase in time allocated to the instruction of integrated English could result in an effective acquisition of linguistic skills by learners. However, Magoma, (2016) pointed that limited time allocated to

integrated English curriculum was among the reason that teachers noted as a hindrance for implementing the integrated English curriculum program as expected.

Discussion

On effect of time factor on the adoption of integrated English approach in achievement of linguistic skills, majority (65%) of the teachers of English in secondary schools in Bungoma county noted that completion of syllabus of integrated English was impossible since content was too much. This is attributed too the fact that despite the integration, no extra time was allocated for English subject. Further, majority (80.6%) of the teachers in public secondary schools had the opinion that the merging of English and Literature had caused reduction in time that was allocated for teaching of both subjects in one. This implied that the time that was allocated for literature and English language has been merged into one leading to reduction in time allocated for teaching integrated English.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The paper concludes that time allocated for the teaching of integrated English in public secondary schools in Kenya influence learners' achievement of the four linguistic skills of English. Thus, a large amount of time allocated/utilized by teachers in teaching integrated English leads to enhanced reading, listening, writing and speaking skills among learners. The study recommends that adequate time need to be allocated for the teaching of integrated English. This can be achieved through teaching of the integrated English during the weekends and holidays as a way of early syllabus coverage.

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