

**Relationship between methods of teaching as an aspects of CLT and the performance in English among pupils in lower primary classes in Kenya**

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**Abstract**

The present study assessed the relationship between methods of teaching as an aspect of CLT and the performance in English in Kenya. Integrated Skills Approach Theory was used in the study. The population of the study was 2,562 teachers of English and 9,342 class three pupils. Stratified simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select 255 teachers and 340 class three pupils respectively. The study adopted the Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods design. Research instruments were: questionnaires for teachers of English; English test for class three pupils; Interview schedule for teacher of English and classroom observation schedule for lower primary classes 1, 2 and 3. The study found a statistically significant, though weak, positive correlation ( $r=.214$ ,  $n=228$ ,  $p=.001$ ) between method of teaching and performance in English. Teachers of English should include time for practice of content in lessons and stick to the language policy to reinforce Methods of teaching in lower primary classes. This would enhance the teachers' skills for implementing communicative needs of the learners and eventually would boost performance in English.

**Key words:** *methods of teaching, CLT, performance, English, Kenya.*

**1.0: Introduction**

English as an international language is spoken by at least 750 million people and it is widely used more than any other language (Thurumalari, 2003). It is also used as the language of instruction in numerous other countries where it is a foreign language. These countries include former British colonies in Africa and Asia (Zaline, 2014). In countries where English is used as an official language and it is foreign, its speakers develop competence in it through learning. The language policy in Kenya requires that the medium of instruction in lower primary classes, one to

three, be the language of the catchment area while English and Kiswahili should be taught as subjects. In upper primary classes, four to eight and secondary schools, English should be used as a medium of instruction and taught as a subject as well (Kenya Review of Constitution, 2010).

In the African context, Adeyemi (2012) in Botswana established that teachers' product oriented method to teaching writing resulted into learners' inability to compose, lack of ideas, inadequate vocabulary and general apathy to composition. It means that CLT principles were not used that could have developed writing in processes for mastery of accuracy and fluency in writing. In Tanzania, Allen (2008) notes that in primary schools teachers lack good command of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. This is an indication that pupils' competence in English is low given that the teachers have such weaknesses. The approach most preferred currently in the teaching of English is Communicative Language Teaching (Khomutava 2006; Newby 2003; Olga & Savignon 2005 and Richards, 2006). This approach entails first, designing tasks which appropriately integrate the learning skills and second, making learners perform these tasks in a purposeful way to ensure that they acquire language for communication (Dorney, 2009).

This study was grounded in the Integrated Skills Approach Theory which was advanced by Hymes in 1966. According to this theory, all the skills speaking, listening, reading and writing are developed in an interconnected way and interdependently in social contexts, to promote English competence. The development of every single skill is not separated from the development of all the other skills. They are all developed in unison so that speaking and listening stimulates reading and writing, reading and listening supply material and information for speaking and writing and support them, while speaking and writing reinforce the language material to be used for further development of reading and listening skills.

In Vietnam, Mai Ngoc (2012) established that the teaching of grammar in that context is influenced by testing based on linguistic competence rather than competence in language use. On the same note, Badger and Yan (2008) established that the choice of methods is between Grammar Translation, Audio-Lingual and Communicative Language Teaching. In Kenya, Ombati et al (2013) established that students had low interest in English grammar, specifically had problems in: use of phrasal verbs, use of auxiliaries, punctuation marks, poor handwriting and had their mother tongue interference in their English grammar. Jue Xia (2010) established that the teacher observed planned well and the lesson proceeded smoothly, with authentic and vivid communicative environments and activities relating the language form to language learning. In African context, Douglas Mastin and Vogt (2013) in Mozambique indicated there are differences in language socialization and early vocabulary development in Rural and Urban contexts. Wanjiru and Miheso's (2015) study found that the first group benefited in sorting out problems related to questions related to the topic in question. Athiemoolam and Kibui (2012) study established that learners within this context of study experienced difficulties attributed to: lack of background knowledge, impoverished reading culture, inadequate experience, exposure to the manifold contexts in which reading occurs and poor teaching methods. Pysarchyk and Yamshynska (2015) add that integrating reading and writing skill ensure possible development of language skills for students to show their communication competence relying on a written or an oral text. In Japan, Kondo (2007) showed that the degree of required semantic elaboration was high in the first task, the sentence writing group. In Botswana,

Adeyemi (2012) study established that their product oriented approach resulted into learners' inability to compose, lack of ideas, vocabulary and general apathy to composition.

Nduku (2004) on analyzing errors from the English placement test for the students' entry to a university establishes that even university students lack in language structure and vocabulary development. Owiye (2005) in Siaya, Kenya notes that illiteracy levels and inadequate teaching/learning materials result in primary learners' wastage and thus influence poor performance in KCPE examination. Inadequate provision of learning materials that results in KCPE poor performance in Kenya is also echoed by Agwanda (2002); Bundi (2012); Nkatha (2013); Snow, et al, (2009). Thus in class three, Wasanga and Kyalo (2007) establish that the performance by pupils' test papers on listening, speaking, reading and writing in Kenya, is far below the Desired Competency Level (DCL). Low achievement in English is a problem in public primary schools in Siaya County. This is evidenced by the downward trend in performance in literacy in English as established in the background. Objectives of lower primary syllabus for English in Kenya, as discussed in the preceding section show that learning of English is to be developed during the first three years of primary education. Siaya in Kenya has relatively low academic achievement in English which indicates an issue in the learning of English in spite of the use of CLT. The present study assessed the relationship between methods of teaching as an aspects of CLT and the performance in English among pupils in lower primary classes in Siaya county of Kenya. Onchera and Manyasi (2013) study on functional writing skills in secondary schools in Kenya, establish that teachers have different understanding of functional writing skills.

## **2.0: Research Methodology**

The study adopted Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods design which is a mixed methods approach to explore the aspects of CLT for teaching/learning English as per the objectives of the study. The method employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. Qualitative approach provides the in depth explanations of current status of the phenomena under study, while quantitative approach provides hard data needed to meet required research objectives and test research questions or hypotheses (Creswell, 2014). They were 2,562 lower primary teachers of English and 9,342 class three pupils. It was from the lower primary classes, one to three, where observations were made on the use of methodological principles in developing English competence in learners. A sample size of 340 pupils was involved. For interviews, the researcher sampled 12 teachers of English of class three randomly from the 85 sampled public primary schools to obtain qualitative data. The sample size of 12 was considered appropriate because, according to Ritchie et al (2003), for qualitative sample sizes, the recommended samples range from 10-30.

The questionnaire used in this study was responded to by teachers of English-classes one to three, because they are responsible for the implementation of the English curriculum. The questionnaire had closed ended questions based on a 4 Likert Scale procedure for mean rating. The researcher had interview schedule which was used to obtain qualitative data from 12 teachers of English. Reliability of Teacher of English Questionnaire (TEQ), English Test for Class Three Pupils (ETCTP), Classroom Observation Schedule (COS) and Interview Schedule for Teacher of English (ISTE) was determined through a pilot study of 18 teachers and 24 pupils as respondents. They were drawn from one school in each sub county to enhance dependability of the instruments (Creswell, 2014). The schools in which piloting were done were excluded from the research sample in order to avoid response set, distortion of data and subjectivity of responses. The study used Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis because the data were paired observations computed

on continuous scale measurement and the relationship between the variables was expected to have linear correlation. Qualitative data from Classroom Observation Schedule (COS) was analyzed using thematic analysis as per the objectives of the study.

### 3.0; Findings & discussion

To investigate whether there was any statistical significant relationship between methods of teaching as an aspect of CLT and the performance in English among pupils in lower primary classes, the null hypothesis was tested. To do this, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed, with combined scores on methods of teaching Language structures. Vocabulary, reading and writing as independent variable and performance in English as dependent variable. The scores of the independent variables were computed from frequency of responses and converted into continuous scaled data by computing mean responses per respondents, where high scale ratings implied improved perceived use of the teaching methods. However, the dependent variable was computed from a written standardized achievement test administered to measure skills learners mastered in the English language. The marks for each individual pupil in all the skills tested were summed up and converted into percentage. The p-value was set at .05, the null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value was less than .05 but it was accepted when the p-value obtained was greater than .05. Table 1 shows the correlation analysis results in SPSS output.

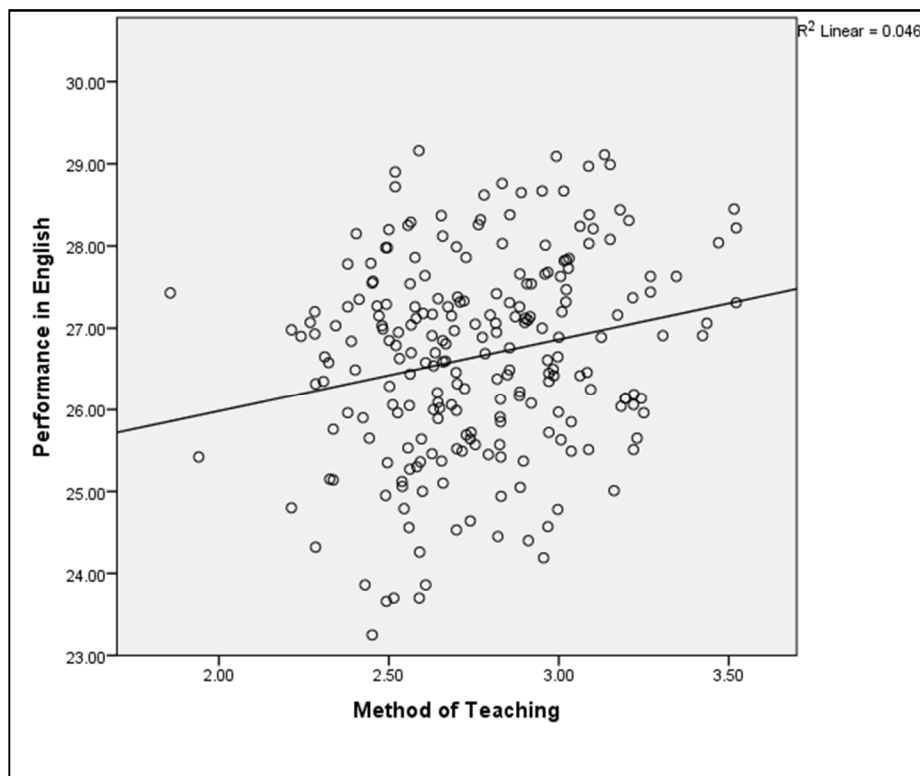
**Table 1:**  
*Influence of Method of Teaching on Performance in English*

		Performance in English	Method of Teaching
Performance in English	Pearson Correlation	1	.214**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	228	228
Method of Teaching	Pearson Correlation	.214**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	228	228

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the study show that there was statistically significant positive correlation ( $r=.214$ ,  $n=228$ ,  $p=.001$ ) between method of teaching and performance in English, with improved method of teaching resulting into improvement in performance in English language and vice-versa. Given that the relationship was statistically significant, the hypothesis that, “*there is no statistical significant relationship between method of teaching and performance in English*” was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. It was therefore, concluded that improved method of teaching has positive relationship on performance in English language among the learners in lower primary classes.

To further illustrate this relationship, a scatter plot was generated as shown in Figure 1.



**Figure 1:** Influence of Method of Teaching on Performance in English

The scatter plot indicates that there were some faint evidence of a positive correlation between method of teaching and performance in English. It is indicative that the pattern of dots seems to slope from lower left to upper right, a sign of a positive correlation between the two variables. The line of best fit (trend line) further reveals that there was correlation between the two variables. The scatters tend to concentrate in the vicinity of the identity line, meaning the relationship was real and not by chance. To estimate the level of influence of method of teaching on performance in English, a coefficient of determination was computed. This was done using regression analysis and the results were as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:**

*Model Summary on Regression Analysis of Influence of Method of Teaching on Performance in English*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.214 <sup>a</sup>	.046	.042	1.18791

a. Predictors: (Constant), Method of Teaching

The model shows that use of method of teaching accounted for 4.6%, as signified by coefficient  $R^2 = .046$ , of the variation in performance in English among lower class pupils. However, to determine whether the use of methods of teaching was a significant predictor of performance in English, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed as Table 4.8.

**Table 3:**  
ANOVA –Influence of Teaching Method on Performance

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	15.320	1	15.320	10.857	.001 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	318.914	226	1.411		
Total	334.234	227			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance in English

b. Predictors: (Constant), Method of Teaching

From Table 3, it is evident that teaching method was a significant predictor of performance in English among the learners in lower primary [ $F(1, 226) = 10.857, p = .001$ ]. This further confirms that teaching method significantly influence performance in English language among the learners in lower primary. In addition, the study sought to establish the relationship between individual aspects of teaching methods (Language Structure, Vocabulary, Reading and Writing) as indicated in Table 4.

**Table 4:**  
Correlation between Aspects of Teaching Method and Performance in English Language

		Methods of Language Structure	Methods of Vocabulary	Methods of Reading	Methods of Writing
Performance in English	Pearson Correlation	.218**	.164*	.149*	.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.013	.024	.024
	N	228	228	228	228

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings of the study show that there was statistical significant ( $p < .05$ ) positive correlation between performance in English and the four aspects of teaching methods. To explain further, the moderate result of the extent of mean and standard deviation results of Language structures, mean=2.95, SD=0.73; Vocabulary, mean=2.88, SD=0.34; Reading, mean=2.90, SD=0.37 and Writing=2.89, SD=0.40, which looked fairly good, and the good result from the interview with teachers, sharply contrast with Classroom Observation Schedules results. In the actual teaching it was observed that *Tusome Program* approach, the method of teaching used in lower primary classes brought out the theme of integrated skills approach in teaching the content areas of each lesson taught in class 1, 2 and 3. This was delivered through a pattern that contained the skills in 'I do, We do and You do' approach which had teaching content of language structures, vocabulary, reading and writing in a thirty-minute lesson. Lesson plans used by teachers were uniform in each class across the sampled public primary schools observed. It was further observed that teachers of English adopted the method of teaching where pupils imitated the teachers as they learnt in class. Nakata (2006) concurs and acknowledges that vocabulary acquisition requires continual repetition for effective vocabulary learning.

From the qualitative findings, it was also reported that teachers used written exercises as a method of teaching English language. *This aspect* contains many *exercises* for learners to practice the various aspects of *written English*, including spelling and punctuation. There are a number of

texts to correct or complete, and suggestions on how to improve all the *writing* skills. Most participants were of the opinion that they used written exercises to enhance teaching and learning of English in classroom during lessons. Some respondents said that:

*In my lessons, I give several vocabulary exercises that the pupils have to use to make sentences. I mark the books thereafter and this has helped me a lot to realize improved academic performance.* (Teacher, 8)

*The pupils are taken through composition writing though this is not very frequent because the pupils are very many and we concentrate on the upper primary pupils.* (Teacher, 6)

*By guiding pupils on use of written exercises, we have been able to have increased output in terms of teaching and learning English which has been measured by their achievement in English language.* (Teacher, 12)

From the interview excerpts with the participants, it can be concluded that the teachers of English majorly utilized the written exercises to enhance the teaching and learning hence the academic achievement in the English language. This finding agrees with RTI- USAID (2008) that emphasized that teachers should teach reading focusing on scope (what), sequence (when), and instructional model (how). This Early Grade Reading Program points to a comprehensive approach based on five essential components: phonics, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, reading fluency, comprehension and vocabulary.

It also emerged that reading comprehension was another teaching method used in lower primary classes. *Reading comprehension* is the ability to process text, understand its meaning, and to integrate it with what the reader already knows. The Fundamental skills required in efficient reading comprehension are knowing meaning of words, ability to understand meaning of a word from discourse context, ability to follow organization of passage and to identify antecedents and references in it, ability to draw inferences from a passage about its contents, ability to identify the main thought of a passage and the ability to answer questions in a passage. Most participants reported that they used reading comprehension as a way of teaching English language in class during lessons. Some respondents said that:

*During English lessons, my learners practice many times to read passages for comprehension. This helps in identification of new words in each passage in context. Learning a new word improves the learners vocabulary hence increased academic achievement in English.* (Teacher, 3)

*As lessons progress, we read the passage for comprehension and I nominate a pupil to read aloud each sentence, while the others listen, they then repeat the sentences. This has increased pupils ability to pronounce words and improve on speaking skills.* (Teacher, 11)

*After reading a passage for comprehension, the pupils are guided on how to summarize the story in order to have increased capacity to master the language.* (Teacher, 9)

From the interview excerpts with teachers of English, it can be concluded that, most teachers' utilized reading passages for comprehension as a way of teaching English and this has helped the pupils to learn how to master the art of listening, speaking, reading and writing the

language. This eventually enhances communicative competence espoused in integrated language skills approach theory.

#### **4.0: Conclusion & Recommendation**

The findings of the study show that there was statistically significant positive correlation between aspects of CLT (i.e., methods of teaching; activities and tasks; teaching/learning materials; role of the teacher and role of the learner) and performance in English. The questionnaire responses in the aspects of CLT showed high mean integration of the 4 language skills in language structures, vocabulary, reading and writing which indicated good implementation of CLT. The interview schedule with teachers of English on implementation of the integrated skills approach in English lessons also reflected teachers as good implementers of CLT as they integrated the four language skills in the classroom lessons by enhancing learning of English. Therefore, teachers of English should include time for practice of content in lessons and stick to the language policy to reinforce Methods of teaching in lower primary classes. This would enhance the teachers' skills for implementing communicative needs of the learners and eventually would boost performance in English.



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