

Challenges Facing Implementation of Integrated English Syllabus in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira County: A Case of Manga Sub-County, Nyamira County

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Abstract: English as a language plays a very vital role in the language situation in Kenya. The teaching of English in secondary schools has undergone changes and various approaches have been adopted, the most recent being the integrated English approach. This is aimed at realizing improved learner performance. It is evident that still the learners' performance in English has not significantly improved. The specific objectives of this study were to find out to what extent practicing teachers were trained to teach the integrated English Syllabus and evaluate the materials used to teach the integrated English syllabus. Descriptive survey design was used. The sample size comprised 45 teachers, 291 students, and 6 quality assurance and standards officers (QASO) totalling to 342 respondents. The instruments used were a questionnaire, an interview schedule and an observation schedule. The study revealed that the preparation of teachers in the teachers training institutions was a setback given that the two subjects are handled separately, or even with other subjects. Further, it was found out that the materials and other learning resources used to handle the integrated syllabus did not reflect integration. Based on these findings it was recommended that the training of teachers in teacher's training colleges and universities should be done interactively to enable them understand the concept of integrated teaching approach.

Keywords: Integrated English syllabus; integrated learning resources; interactive teacher training.

INTRODUCTION

The Integrated approach to teaching of English was introduced in secondary schools in 1985 (MoE, 1985). According to this approach, English and Literature are to be taught as one subject. Language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing are taught in literature where a teacher for example can generate a descriptive essay from a novel, testing skills and literary skills such as poetry and oral skills are taught in Language. The complete integration of English Syllabus poses a challenge to teachers of English for it affected the whole process whereby implementation required teachers with total integration skills. Complete Integration as stipulated in the K.I.E Syllabus involves several levels. The curriculum level involves the use of knowledge, ideas and concepts primarily from literature which is closely related to language and from other school subjects to teach English. Second level, entails a combination of reading, writing, listening and speaking skills during English language lessons. Third level is a combination of different learning resources seen as graphics and dimensional materials. Fourth is the methodology level

which is a combination of different language teaching methods such as Grammar Translation, Direct Method, Structural Approach, Situational Approach, Audio-lingual method, Functional Approach and simulation. Fifth is the Technique level which is a combination of different teaching techniques such as: Verbal Exposition, Use of examples, Questioning, Reinforcement, Set Induction and Stimulus Variation. Finally, we have the Effort level which is the support from teachers of other subjects than English in maintaining correct English language usage among students [1].

Teachers are expected to have a good mastery of language and also a clear understanding and appreciation of literature and be able to teach each as a function of the other. Most teachers of English lack these integration skills because universities train language and literature as independent subjects and as such, their approach in teaching the two is different from the secondary school approach where these subjects are integrated. The teaching and learning resources, strategies and even the content at secondary

school level changed as a result of the integration thus proving more challenging to teachers of English.

Despite the fact that English language plays a central role in the country not only as an important subject but as the medium of instruction, students continue to perform poorly in the language in the National examinations [2-5]. The K.N.E.C report [5] in particular indicated that most of the questions attempted were performed poorly by candidates in the K.C.S.E English language papers. This could have been due to the poor implementation of the integration of English syllabus. The results of K.C.S.E (2012) indicated that on average there was dismal performance nationally in English with the mean standard score being 37.65 %. The previous national mean standard scores were: 39.70% (2007), 33.78% (2008), 39.21% (2009), 38.68% (2010) and 36.42% (2011). The K.C.S.E (2006) report in English identified poor teaching methods as a reason for poor performance in integrated English Syllabus. Records in the sub-County Director of Education's office in Manga sub-County indicate that there has been dismal performance in English Language. This study investigated the challenges facing implementation of Integrated English Syllabus in Manga sub-County.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were to: find out to what extent practicing teachers were trained to teach the integrated English Syllabus and Establish whether the materials used to teach integrated English syllabus address the integrated approach.

RELATED LITERATURE

Teacher training and the integrated English Syllabus.

The teachers' initial training in teaching of the integrated English approach is crucial for the implementation of the integrated English Syllabus. According to K.I.E [1], one of the aims for teaching English as a subject is for learners to use a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary correctly. It recommends that learners be given ample opportunities to express their ideas and opinions freely. This can be achieved by giving learners opportunities to practice language through speaking or writing. M.o.E, (1992) asserts that what is expected of any individual teacher is constrained by the teacher's own level of expertise particularly at a time of considerable methodological innovation. The teachers cannot be expected to put new methods into practice unless they are thoroughly familiar with both the principles and the details of the methods during training. The teachers' mastery of language learning methods and techniques of language teaching are critical to the teacher's effectiveness and efficiency. Therefore, the effectiveness of the teacher

depends on his or her initial training and understanding of the subject matter and pedagogical practices.

Ineke, H.et al., (2009), noted that some of the teachers, in their study, evaluated their competences at the start as insufficient. With this, they expressed their feelings of insecurity that is lack of self- confidence, rooted in their unfamiliarity with specific topics and/or new teaching methods at the start of the innovation. Those teachers, who evaluated their competences at the start as insufficiency later, with the qualification sufficient, expressed their improved feelings of self-confidence as a result of learning and practicing new topics and activities in the classroom.

Research done by Okwara et al., [6] in Busia found out that the teachers face challenges in the implementation of English syllabus as a result of their preparation for Secondary schools which is not based on the integrated approach. Both public and private universities and tertiary institution prepare teachers for English or literature with other subjects. When posted to schools, they are expected to teach the two as integrated; lack of adherence to the syllabus is another constrain on implementing the integrated language curriculum. Okwara et al., [6] further indicated that in some schools, the current syllabus was not available and as a result, teachers in such schools went about the business of teaching using the course books without making references to the syllabus. This made teaching to be out of gear with what was required because the teacher followed the objectives of the course books which are not integrated rather than the objectives of the syllabus.

New language teaching methodologies such as those in the integrated English approach are alien to teachers of English. This implies that teachers are expected to understand this curriculum well before implementation in order to meet the challenges. The methods suggested for teaching pronunciation assumes that the teacher is (or can be) a speaker of the model variety of English and is therefore capable of providing the students with skill for distinguishing the pronunciation of particular vowels. This implies that most teachers use one type of skill only instead of the integrated approach in which all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) within one particular lesson [7].

The Kenya National Examinations Council syllabus, (2003) recommended that as a result of the introduction of the integrated syllabus, more hours were to be devoted to the teaching of English Language and Literature in the secondary school curriculum. The integration of Literature and Language assumes that teachers have mastery of language, a clear understanding and appreciation of Literature, and are

able to teach effectively. This means that teachers are expected to teach Literature using various aspects of Language such as grammar, comprehension, summary, composition, speaking, listening, reading and writing and literary texts. On the contrary, teachers of English still teach the aspects separately and expect the learners to do the integration [6].

K.N.E.C syllabus, (2006) further states that, while some people have expressed concern about the integration of Language and Literature, it is important to realize that Literature provides genuine and expressive samples of Language in context. It helps the students to gain familiarity with many different linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode. Reading Literature articles such as novels and plays provide a rich context in which learners can acquire new vocabulary and knowledge of the rich possibilities of language use. As a result, teaching oral literature in isolation is not only boring but also tends to produce learners who lack communicative competence. However, the teaching of the various skills of English separately remain the practice of many teachers of English.

Presently, there is scanty literature on the teachers of English's training and understanding on integrated approach. Literature review indicates that they separately teach various skills of English. Use of the integrated approach in the learning of English is expected to enhance learner's performance and achievements in Kenya Certificate of Secondary education exams. However Manga sub- County has continued to record poor performance in English language for the last 10 years. This made it critical to understand this study to find out to what extent teachers of English language in Manga Sub- County were trained to teach the integrated English syllabus.

Integrated English syllabus teaching Materials

The integrated approach to teaching of English was introduced in secondary schools in 1985. According to this approach, English and Literature are to be taught as one subject. The integrated approach to the teaching of English involves using Literature to teach English and using English to teach Literature. The two subjects have a symbiotic relationship. The teaching of English cannot be separated from that of Literature because Literature is the material for English and English is used as the medium of writing Literature. The two subjects complement each other. In order to teach language, one has to use scientific, journalistic and other materials. Consequently, it is imperative to assess the materials used in implementing integrated English syllabus in secondary schools to provide data that may be useful to policy makers and curriculum developers.

Teachers have found themselves with a lack of suitable materials, either because materials are not available [8, 9] or because they do not reflect changes in the curriculum [8, 10, 11]. Muutu, (1993) concurred with Omollo, [12] on the materials used to implement integrated English course are not integrative in the selected secondary schools in Nairobi and Kisumu provinces. The two researchers agreed that the implementation of integrated English course is because of the teachers' lack of knowledge on using teaching materials interactively in class and the teachers' dominance of classroom activities and their negative attitude towards the use of integrated English approach. Kaina, [13] points out that many teachers who are not prepared to teach both English and Literature spend more time in their areas of competence and overlook the other.

Local textbook production has not necessarily been a satisfactory solution on suitable materials for teaching integrated English Syllabus. Hogue, (2009), points out that textbook writing committees are led by academicians with little experience of teaching at secondary level. The solution in China has been to use co-operation between local education departments and publishers and overseas publishers and textbooks writers [8]. Even where books do exist, they may not be available to the students' study [9]. Moreover, teachers may need training to use the new books; otherwise they continue to employ previous methods to the teaching and learning of integrated syllabus [14]. Where textbooks are inadequate, teachers often lack the time and expertise to develop appropriate materials for teaching and learning (Li, 1998). Yet good materials may have an important role to play as they can become the 'de facto' curriculum. As Nur, [14] points out, where there is lack of qualified teachers, 'textbooks appear to have a strong positive impact'. The textbook is clearly not the only resource that may be lacking in secondary schools, the use of audio-visual aids, such as TV and Radio which are unavailable in rural schools can also be used, [15].

The teachers in Li's, (1998) study complained that there was insufficient funding for the equipment and facilities needed for learner-centered teaching, a point also echoed by Inal, [11]. In his study Minae, [16] on selection and utilization of instructional resources by the teachers of English in Muranga county, he found out from all teachers from his study that there is a shortage of instructional materials. A shortage of textbooks is a hindrance to effective instruction because some students may not access the few text books that are available. This would be a problem especially to the slow learners [16]. This study was carried out to pinpoint whether or not materials used to teach integrated English Syllabus address the integrated approach.

Achoki, [17] observes that the availability of resources (textbooks) does not necessarily translate into effective teaching of a subject. Adequacy and integration of the resources is more important in achieving the later. However, Ann, (2011) notes that if the teacher is incompetent, the provision of these resources would be wasteful. It is therefore necessary to ensure that before these resources are provided, teachers are equipped with the relevant knowledge to enable them to handle the integrated English Syllabus.

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira County, Manga sub-County, Kenya. Manga sub-County was chosen for this study as one of the sub-counties in the country like many other

districts where there has been poor performance in English in the Kenya Certificate of secondary Education. Stratified and simple random sampling was used to get the number of schools, teachers while quality assurance and standards officer was purposively sampled. 45 teachers were selected, 1 QASO and 291 students. This study used questionnaires, interview schedules, and lesson observation schedule as primary data collection research instruments. Document analysis was used to collect secondary data for this study.

STUDY FINDINGS

In-service Training for Teachers of English

Data from the teachers’ questionnaire concerning in-service training of teachers of English indicated that:

Table 1: Response on In - Service Training of Teachers of English

Response on in-service training of teachers of English	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	40.0
No	27	60.0
Total	45	100.0

When teachers of English were asked if they had attended any in-service training on integrated English Syllabus, 18(40%) out of 45 teachers said that they had attended while 27 (60%) out of 45 had not. This implies that in-service courses were not well attended to by the teachers of English and Literature. There is need for professional guidance which was not provided and the teachers were not sponsored for such professional meetings by their principals. It also implies that guidance given by the facilitators is inadequate since it was offered by their fellow teachers who were handpicked by the organizers and had no clear understanding of integrated English Syllabus.

In-service teachers’ education would be useful in addressing some of the shortcomings of practicing teachers as related to the integrated English approach. The in-service teacher education gives the practicing teacher with the latest innovation in the subject area curriculum. As a result, the teacher will be able to meet the new demands in his/her area of specialization as well as new approaches and methodology intended to enhance teaching and learning process. The M.O.E (1992) asserts that what is expected of any individual teacher is constrained by the teacher’s own level of expertise particularly at a time of considerable innovation.

Materials used to teach integrated English Syllabus

The second objective of this paper was to establish whether materials used to teach integrated English syllabus address the integrated approach. Data

from the students’ questionnaire revealed as recorded in Table 2:

Data from Table 2 indicates that 270 (98.2%) out of 291 students disagreed that their teachers used a combination of different learning resources to teach English, whereas 9 (3.1%) out of 291 students indicated that the teachers of English do not use a combination of different learning materials. This implies that most of the teachers do not use a combination of different learning materials when teaching the integrated English Syllabus. This could be due to the fact that the learning materials do not reflect integration. These findings are in line with those of [9, 18] who found out that teachers have found themselves with a lack of suitable materials, either because materials are not available or because they do not reflect changes in the curriculum. This finding is also in line with Ong’ong’a *et al.*, [19] who argued that the English teaching involves use of a combination of different learning resources such as graphics and three dimensional materials.

The study revealed that 273 (93.8%) out of 291 students disagreed that the materials used to teach English language reflects English and literature as one subject, while 3 (1.0%) agreed. This indicates that textbooks and other materials like audio and visual material used in teaching integrated English Syllabus do not reflect integration. The books are also not structured in a manner that there are many learning activities to make the lessons integrated. Two text books, ‘Head Start English for Secondary Schools’ and ‘New Integrated English’ in all schools were found to be in

use in English Syllabus. The study was conducted in form two and three and text books for the same classes were studied. The 'New Integrated English' text book for form three and 'Head Start' Secondary English for form two were used in the sampled schools that were studied. The analysis revealed that the two text books have been organized in such a way that the content of each unit captures the listening and speaking, reading comprehension Grammar, usage and writing. Further

analysis revealed that though they captured the four skills they did not reflect integration. Hu, [18] pointed out that there should be cooperation between educational departments, publishers and textbook writers. Therefore, the teachers need to be incorporated in the authoring or they may need to be trained to use new books, otherwise they continue to employ previous methods to teaching and learning of integrated English Syllabus as stated by stated Nur, [14].

Table 2: Information on Material Used to Teach Integrated English

Statement	Agree		Undecided		Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
My teacher of English uses a combination of different learning resources to teacher.	9	3.1	12	4.1	270	92.8	291	100
The textbook and other materials used reflect English language and literature as one subject.	3	1.0	15	5.2	273	93.8	291	100
There are enough resources for teaching English language and literature as one subject.	9	3.1	6	2.1	276	94.8	291	100
Watching of English programs on the Television helps me improve my listening and speaking the language.	38	13.1	12	4.1	241	82.8	291	100
My teacher of English language makes use of charts and pictures during the English language lesson.	21	7.2	12	4.1	258	88.7	291	100
Role playing, mimicking (dramatization) during the English language lesson helps us in speaking the language.	18	6.2	30	10.3	243	83.5	291	100
Reading of English language newspapers, magazines and novels has improved my reading skills.	15	5.2	195	67	81	27.8	291	100

Though materials are available for English language and literature, 276 (94.9%) out of 291 respondents from the students' questionnaires indicated that they are not enough and not integrated as one instead they exist in isolation of the other. The study findings are in line with Li's, (1998) who noted that teachers complained of insufficient funding for the equipment and facilities needed for learner-centered teaching, a point also echoed by Inal [11]. In his study Minae, [16] on selection and utilization of instructional resources by the teachers of English in Muranga county, found out from all teachers from his study that there is a shortage of instructional materials. A shortage of textbooks is a hindrance to effective instruction because some students may not access the few text books that are available. This would be a problem especially to the slow learners.

Other resources like TV that can be used to teach integrated syllabus are not accessible to the learners because of their social classes. For example 241 (82.8%) out of 291 said they do not watch television whereas 38 (13.1%) out of 291 access television. Though the programmes are accessible to

some, mother tongue interference or lack of language interest by learners may be of little help in improving listening and speaking skills in English language. Those running the television programme may not be fluent. Responding to the use of charts and pictures during English lessons, 258 (88.7%) out of 291 students said that their teachers of English use charts and pictures whereas 33 (7.2%) out of 291 said they do not. The study found out that the teachers are not trained properly on the use of this resources and the problem lies in teachers' training. The teachers could lack time for preparation or are just lazy. The school management may also not be in position to avail the material to the teachers.

Data from the interview schedule with H.O.D 1 in school 2, said 'The four teachers in the department of English taught a section of the syllabus in which he or she was competent'. In form two, one teacher taught grammar and oral literature; and another teacher taught poetry and composition. In form three, one teacher taught poetry and functional skills; another grammar and comprehension; and another set- books and oral literature'. This practice does not enhance the concept

of integration as each section of the syllabus is dealt with in isolation of the other.

From observations in form two and three where sixteen lessons were observed, the researchers noted that specialization was a common practice despite the fact that some Heads of Departments knew what integration is all about. The teachers dealt with individual sections of the syllabus without any reference to the other relevant section of the same syllabus. For example, the following areas were taught by teachers of English syllabus in independent of each other: poetry, composition, functional writing, oral literature, grammar, and comprehension and set books.

Information from the teacher's questionnaire revealed that the integrated English Syllabus is wide and more time should be allocated or restructured in terms of content. This corresponds with 83.5% (243) out of 291 students respondents who said that role play, mimicking (dramatization) during English lessons does not help them in speaking the language whereas 6.2% (18) out of 291 were in agreement. This could be because of time and these activities may not be reflected in teaching materials. The reading of newspapers, magazines and novels was discovered to be of no use by 27% (81) out of 291 while 67.0% (195) out of 291 were undecided. If these supplementary learning resources have not been integrated in the course books then learners may not find them useful. Ong'ong'a *et al.*, [19] points out that the technique level is a combination of different teaching techniques such as verbal exposition, use of examples, questions, reinforcement, set induction and stimulus variation. This supports the findings of this study.

Data from interview schedule with H.O.D 2 and 5 stated that 'some books were not adequately prepared. The K.I.C.D Integrated English course books are sketchy since they lack the details of essential aspects of integration such as oral literature and poetry'. The books that are more adequately written should be provided by K.I.C.D and other authors to teach integrated English syllabus. Such books would ensure quality in the teaching and learning process. Integrated quality in books can only be realized if the teachers who are implementers are involved in the authoring'. Data from lesson observation revealed that some teachers use lecture method so that they can cover a lot of content for the sake of the examination. They based this on lack of time which to the researcher's opinion compromise depth and breadth on content coverage. Lack of enough time to cover content makes the syllabus unmanageable for the teachers and student. The teacher further said that lack of time to exhaustively integrate the syllabus. The other group revealed that materials used in teaching did not bring on integration effectively. These findings were confirmed by Njeru & Orodho, (2009) who found

out in their study that most teachers of English country wide offered extra tuition in order to cope up with the broad integrated Syllabus to be covered within stipulated time and this has adversely affected teaching and learning process in schools. Ngo'ng'a, [20] in his study observed that Kenya school leavers continue to perform poorly in English due to poor teaching methods or strategies used during the implementation of integrated English Syllabus.

Lack of enough textbooks and set- books for integrated syllabus was identified as a problem, lesson observation in the teaching of integrated English and an interview with H.O.D Y revealed that. There was no integration of any aspects reflected in this text-book. The students shared the a few available text- books. This problem was blamed on poverty which is a hindrance on the side of parents and school to buy books for students. The study was in line with Li's (1998) where the teachers complained that there was insufficient funding for the equipment and facilities needed for learner-centered teaching, a point also echoed by Inal, [11]. In his study on selection and utilization of instructional resources by the teachers of English in Murang'a County, Minae [16] found out from all teachers from his study that there is a shortage of instructional materials. A shortage of textbooks is a hindrance to effective instruction because some students may not access the few text books that are available. This would be a problem especially to the slow learners [16].

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Some of the teachers who teach integrated syllabus were not taught to integrate English and literature at colleges and universities. English and literature were taught separately (independently). This shows that the teacher's professional training is inappropriate. However, teachers felt the implementation of integrated English syllabus is critical to the initial training. Therefore, they advocated for in-service course to enable them understand integrated English Syllabus better than before. The concept of integrated was not comprehensively covered during in-service course. They participated well on the individual aspects of the integrated English course. These aspects are equally discussed separately. In relation to the teaching of integrated English Syllabus, most teachers and the heads of department did not fully classify the concept of integration. Classroom observation shows that most of the lessons were not integrated. All the lessons in integrated English Syllabus were taught independently.

Some aspects (topics) of integrated syllabus were problematic to some teachers to present to the students during the teaching –learning process. These aspects such as speech work, poetry, interpretation of

some set-books. The study found out that there were inadequate textbooks and set books for the integrated syllabus. There was no integration of any aspects reflected in this text-book. The students shared the a few available text- books. The teachers of English faced a problem in integrating English and literature since the syllabus for integrated syllabus is not itself integrated. This clearly shows that English and Literature is not one subject because the textbooks have not reflected the integration of the two in accordance with the syllabus and progressive content.

RECOMMENDATION

The syllabus for English should reflect integration alongside with the teaching and learning materials. The tests and examination used to assess and evaluate learners at all levels, whether oral, continuous assessment, end term examinations or K.C.S.E should be designed in such a way that they reflect student's achievement in English and literature, and in the integrated areas of these two subjects. There is need to allocate enough time to integrated English syllabus if all the aspects of the syllabus are to be handled effectively.

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