



An Analysis of Instructional Strategies in Teaching Oral Literature in Kiswahili among Selected Secondary Schools in Bungoma County

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Abstract: Teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili is an issue that has put teachers, students, scholars, and all the stakeholders in general on their toes. This issue has been a challenge to all stakeholders because the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili for several decades in this country was neither given the prominence it deserves in the educational curriculum nor in book publishing. There was a need to carry out this study to determine the level of preparedness among teachers of Kiswahili. The target population involved all teachers that have undergone professional training. Data in this study was gathered through classroom observation, interview, and questionnaire and document analysis. From the data that was analyzed, it was revealed that majority of the teachers were not prepared well in colleges, universities and even in the field to teach oral literature in Kiswahili.

To cite this article

[Kituni, W. C. (2016). An analysis of instructional strategies in teaching Oral literature in Kiswahili among selected Secondary Schools in Bungoma County. *J. Middle East North Afr. sci*, 2(3), 38-44]. (p-ISSN 2412- 9763) - (e-ISSN 2412-8937). <http://www.jomenas.org>. 5

Keywords: Oral literature, teaching, Bungoma County, stakeholders. Instructional strategies.

1. Introduction:

The teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili is an issue that has put teachers, students, scholars, and all the stakeholders in general on their toes. This issue has been a challenge to all stakeholders because the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili for several decades in this country was neither given the prominence it deserves in the educational curriculum nor in book publishing. This neglect was not confined to Kiswahili alone. The same applied to oral literature in English.

Even though oral literature in Kiswahili has of late begun being given more consideration as a subject in school and colleges, it has been taught in almost all educational systems since independence. Even if this was the case, oral literature in Kiswahili didn't come out very clearly in previous systems of education. In addition, the teaching strategies that were being applied had some shortcomings. According to Kobia (2003), the teaching of topics of oral literature in Kiswahili for a long time has been done without adherence to a clear policy. Lack of a clear policy and lack of seriousness when teaching oral literature in Kiswahili is what made the researcher undertake this study in order to establish its position now in secondary schools.

The Ominde Commission of 1964 recommended Kiswahili to be a compulsory subject but despite this, oral literature in Kiswahili was taken

as an item or subject that was there just to pass the time. This commission further recommended that there was no problem of using one lesson every day for storytelling in class one, two, and three of primary schools.

Chimerah and Njogu (1999) portray how oral literature in Kiswahili was not given consideration after independence. According to these scholars, oral literature was taken to be an item of entertainment purposes and hence was not given any serious consideration. They further argue that previously oral literature in Kiswahili was not given emphasis in schools and colleges because it was not being examined at the national level. In line with this, it is evident that before independence, there wasn't any emphasis as regards teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili.

The situation wasn't any better immediately after independence since oral literature was made an optional subject and it didn't come out as an independent subject in the secondary school curriculum. According to Wamakonjio (1985), oral literature as an academic subject appeared for the first time in the English syllabus in 1980. In this context, it is evident that oral literature in English benefitted but not oral literature in Kiswahili.

It is important to note that the very first 8-4-4 syllabus that was prepared by K.I.E. (1985) just mentioned oral literature once. Other than that, the



objectives of the first syllabus didn't mention anything to do with teaching and learning resources of oral literature in Kiswahili. It is evident from the beginning that curriculum developers didn't put much emphasis on the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili.

It is evident from the foregoing information that teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili previously lacked proper organization since different genres appeared in different skills. There is a very high indication that teaching oral in Kiswahili lacked clear guidelines and policy. According to Shitemi (2006), oral literature in Kiswahili was in most cases taught through language lessons, compositions, and written literature. This information adds to the earlier assertion that teaching oral literature in Kiswahili had not been given enough attention in the curriculum a situation that made the researcher carry out this study to analyze the teaching strategies employed in teaching oral literature in Kiswahili in secondary schools.

An examination of the K.I.E. syllabus (2002) that is currently in use reveals that oral literature in Kiswahili has been incorporated and will be examined nationally at the secondary school level. This decision has led to the emergence of challenges that affect the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili. Shitemi (2006) mentions that there is a problem of how to handle topics of oral literature during Kiswahili lessons in secondary schools. She asserts that this problem cannot be solved if teachers are not well prepared.

Teacher preparation in universities and teacher training colleges is an issue that is to a large extent affecting the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili. Many teachers who were diploma holders trained in the 1980s were not given the background as per the requirements of the new syllabus even if they were taught oral literature in Kiswahili. In addition D.T.E syllabus K.I.E. (1981) continues to show that in the methodology unit oral literature in Kiswahili was not taught. Emphasis was laid on the teaching of tales, proverbs, riddles, narratives among others.

Ipara (2006) points out the problem that is facing teachers. He argues that his investigation had revealed that although some teachers had welcomed the decision to incorporate oral literature in the syllabus others do not like it and see it be very difficult. He adds that the negative attitude towards oral literature has its basis in the teacher training colleges. He reveals that diploma teachers were the ones who were taught oral literature but at the university level, oral literature was optional and hence a number of teachers were not taught oral literature. It is evident from the foregoing information that teachers from universities were not well prepared to

teach oral literature in Kiswahili. In addition, an examination, of course, descriptions of various universities reveal that teachers are just given general concepts on oral literature but methods and strategies of teaching are not handled.

In addition, to the shortcomings in teacher trainer colleges and universities, there is no evidence that teachers were prepared while in the field through seminars, workshops, and symposiums before implementing the new curriculum that was reviewed in 2002. Ipara (2006) suggests that teaching can be improved by giving refresher courses to teachers who are in the field in order to sharpen their teaching methodologies. This situation prompted the researcher to analyze instructional strategies used to teach oral literature in Kiswahili in order to determine the present state in secondary schools.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Implementation of the reviewed curriculum (2002) was done with haste. It is evident that implementation of reviewed curriculum was done without piloting and this is likely to have made teachers encounter so many challenges in teaching oral literature in Kiswahili.

Other than that, there is no evidence that practicing teachers in the field were given or subjected to enough preparation before implementation of the new curriculum. This is a very delicate situation bearing in mind that some teachers were not taught oral literature while in college. Oral literature was not given emphasis since it was an optional unit in some of the universities.

During the annual heads meeting that was held in Mombasa in 2005, head teachers asked the Ministry of Education to organize workshops and seminars that will give an insight of the new syllabus and language subjects. It is evident from this plea of head teachers that teacher preparation to handle the new syllabus is wanting and hence the need to investigate the issue.

The head teachers complained about the new areas like oral literature and sociolinguistics which were introduced. Their concern was on how they were to be taught and their format in the national examinations. This complains of head teachers is enough proof to show that teachers of Kiswahili were not given adequate preparation to handle new aspects and units of the syllabus.

In addition, most of the researches that have been carried out about oral literature have been targeting different areas but not its teaching. This has created a big gap in the oral literature field that was given emphasis in the reviewed curriculum of 2002. It was important for research to be carried out in order for teachers to have a clear understanding of oral literature in Kiswahili.



In line with reasons indicated earlier, the researcher has no information as regards any other research that has been undertaken about instructional strategies of teaching oral literature in Kiswahili in Bungoma County and hence the reason why he has undertaken this research.

3. Objective of the Study:

This study was guided by the following objective: To determine the level of preparedness of teachers teaching oral literature in Kiswahili.

4. Justification of the Study:

It is evident that when you are undertaking a new concept there is a possibility of being faced with challenges. Oral literature in Kiswahili has been given attention and will be examined at the secondary level in KCSE of 2006. This is likely to affect teaching and hence the reason why the researcher decided to carry out a study to investigate instructional strategies employed to teach oral literature in Kiswahili within secondary schools in Bungoma County.

Due to the newness of the subject, there is a possibility of a challenge arising on how to handle some topics of oral literature in Kiswahili. This statement gave the researcher the impetus to unearth challenges that may affect strategies used to teach oral literature in Kiswahili. It is the hope of the researcher that the study will give solutions to some of those challenges.

On the basis of the fact that oral literature in Kiswahili is a new phenomenon, there is a shortage of publications on strategies of teaching it. Hence, there is a need for more research that will go a long way to improve its teaching. Lack of enough reference books affects the growth and development of this genre. This research was meant to ignite researchers to undertake further research in oral literature in Kiswahili. Oral literature in Kiswahili has been given a new face and emphasis in the new curriculum.

It is, therefore, common knowledge that much hasn't been undertaken as regards research and teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili. In addition, teaching subjects call for specific methods or strategies. Kiruhi (1981) together with Okombo and Masanjila (1994) agree that every subject has its own uniqueness and has to be handled in its own unique way though there is a lot of interrelationships. This research, therefore, was undertaken to come up with suitable strategies that will improve the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili.

5. Research Design and Methodology:

5.1. Study Area:

This research was done in Bungoma County. The researcher settled on this area due to several

reasons. The first one is that KCSE Kiswahili national results for the whole county have not been impressive in the recent past based on the records available at the District Education office. The researcher also wanted to analyze instructional strategies used to teach oral literature in Kiswahili in order to see how teaching is conducted after the curriculum review of 2000.

In addition, the researcher observed that the target population from which he got his sample was big enough to portray various characteristics. It was therefore taken that the sample from the whole district could enable the researcher to examine all the variables that were identified for this research. In this research, teachers of diploma and degree of different experiences were used. This study area was also chosen since no other research that is known has been conducted on instructional strategies used in teaching oral literature in Kiswahili in Bungoma County.

5.2. Sample:

The target population for this research involved all Kiswahili teachers who were given training and graduated. The researcher used teachers from 131 public Secondary Schools within Bungoma County. (Records from Bungoma District Education office)

Reports that head teachers submit to the Education office every end of the month indicated that there were 272 teachers of Kiswahili who had qualified and graduated. This research targeted eighty (80) teachers who teach form one, two, and three only. The researcher used teachers of the mentioned classes on the basis that instructional strategies used to teach oral literature in Kiswahili are applied at all levels. Form four teachers were not used in this study since most of them were concentrating on revision for the purpose of the examination. According to Cheptabok (1999), students of form four are not suitable for research because most teachers give them many questions for revision for the purpose of the examination.

5.3. Sampling Procedure:

This study adopted a two-stage sampling procedure. The first one involved the stratified sampling technique while the second involved the simple random sampling technique. The stratified sampling technique was used to organize teachers on the basis of strata. Teachers were grouped into four strata on the basis of qualification and experience. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) explain the importance of the stratified sampling method. They argue that it enables even the smallest sample to be incorporated in the research which could have been left out if other methods could be used.

On the basis of qualification, the researcher established one stratum of Diploma holders and

another of Degree holders. Experience as a criterion was used to establish two or more strata. One composed of teachers with less than 12 years teaching experience while another comprised of teachers of more than 12 years teaching experience. The researcher used the criteria of 12 years because it was not possible to get enough diploma teachers who had taught less than five years. This situation rose from the reason that most colleges that were offering diplomas were converted into universities. See table one below:

Table 1: *Distribution of target population within Bungoma County.*

Strata	Information of strata	Total no of teachers	Percentage	Total sample	Sample percentage
I	Dip<12	28	10.52%	8	10%
II	Dip>12	60	22.55%	16	20%
III	Dig<12	100	37.59%	33	41.25%
IV	Dig>12	78	29.32%	23	28.75%
Total		266	100%	80	100%
		Number		Number=	
		266		80	
		(100%)		(30.1%)	

The second sampling procedure involved the simple random sampling technique. This was used to select a representation sample of 80 teachers who participated in this study from a population of 266 teachers. This comprised 30.1 percent of all teachers that were targeted. This selection was done on the basis of the views of Tuckman (1988) who argues that a sample of 257 and more of respondents is representative and able give enough data that can be reliable.

In order to select a representative sample from each stratum the researcher based on the list of names of teachers from every stratum. The researcher wrote names of teachers from every stratum on small pieces of paper. The researcher ensured that the small pieces of paper were uniform and thereafter folded them in a similar way and put in four cartons according to the strata. Thereafter the researcher picked the number of names required from every stratum.

5.4. Research Instruments

The researcher used the following instruments in this study: Questionnaires, observation, and interviews. According to Warwick and Linger (1975) researchers are expected to use instruments that are reliable and cheap.

5.4.1. Questionnaire

The researcher used this instrument to collect data. Cohen and Manion (1980) indicate that the use of a questionnaire is the best form of a survey in carrying out an educational inquiry. Kothari (1985) adds that the questionnaire is taken to be the backbone of an inquiry. He stresses that it should be prepared very carefully.

The questionnaire of teachers was divided into three sections. Kerlinger (1978) observed the lack of responses in this questionnaire method and hence the researcher never overlooked this weakness or shortcoming during data collection. He minimized this problem by delivering and collecting all the questionnaires personally.

5.4.2. Observation

An observation guide was used to collect data during the actual teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili. This was necessary to verify responses from questionnaires and the interviews schedule and related instructional practices. Observation provides a conceptually adequate analysis of a classroom life based on factual recording and description. This was according to Stubbs (1976). One single stream was observed in cases of schools with more than one stream whose teachers would have been interviewed.

5.4.3. Interview

According to Mutai (2000), an interview can be able to mean a questionnaire that is administered orally. Instead of writing a response, a researcher gives an explanation of the required response by way of interacting with the respondent. The researcher employed this method since the interview can capture all the information that can't be captured by the observation method according to Warford (2001). Warford goes further to explain that the interview allows the researcher to analyze and come up with what cannot be seen through observation.

The researcher visited schools and arranged with teachers about the day and time of the interview. This instrument was used by the researcher to collect information as regards the following aspects: Background information about teachers, their professional training, and experience. The second section was about teacher preparation. This instrument was used to determine if teachers were taught oral literature during their training or not. Other than that, this instrument was also used to establish if teachers were prepared through seminars, workshops for any other course before implementing the revised curriculum.

5.5. Data Collection and Procedures

The research was conducted after the researcher getting a permit from the Ministry of Education. The researcher visited the selected schools in person to give the teachers the questionnaires and an introduction letter that was requesting them to participate in the research. It was estimated that a period of two weeks would give enough time to the respondents to fill the questionnaires without affecting their daily programs. At the end of the given period, the researcher personally collected the questionnaires from the teachers. The questionnaires were collected on the day the researcher observed the lessons and conducted the interviews.

The researcher collected timetables for the lessons to be observed before the exercise. The researcher requested teachers to allow him to attend their lessons without informing them of the specific day. This was purposeful to avoid a situation where a teacher would thoroughly prepare for a lesson than usual. This could easily affect the results. The researcher was introduced in class before the lesson and this was done to remove any anxiety among students because of the stranger in class. The researcher attended a forty minute lesson in the selected schools. During this research, every aspect was recorded at the time of its occurrence.

The interview method was also used to collect data. Teachers were interviewed in their departmental offices or at a quiet place. Some of the teachers who were used during observation were the same that were used during the interview. This exercise took between forty and forty-five minutes after the lessons.

5.6. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequencies and percentages.

This study employed the tabulation method which is a process of transferring data from data gathering instruments to a tabular form in which they were systematically examined. Tables were used in the data presentation. A table is a systematic method of presenting statistical data in vertical columns and horizontal rows according to some classification of subject matter. From the analysis of data, the researcher was able to interpret the findings and draw conclusions.

6. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Findings:

6.1. Preparation of teachers in colleges and universities.

The researcher used the interview method to determine if teachers were trained to teach oral literature in Kiswahili while in colleges and universities. The researcher observed that 100% of

diploma teachers below 12 years' experience received training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili. The study revealed that 27.27% degree holders of a teaching experience of less than 12 years were trained on how to teach oral literature in comparison to 21.73% of a teaching experience of over 12 years who never received the training. It is evident from this research that all teachers who were diploma holders received training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili as compared to only 25% of the degree holders who received training in the same course.

It was also revealed that 47.5% of teachers who received training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili confessed that it had given them a good foundation that enabled them to teach without any problem. On the other hand, 52.5% of teachers who didn't get training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili complained that they encountered problems when teaching oral literature in Kiswahili. These teachers informed the researcher that they were forced to use a lot of time to read and research in order to prepare well and be ready for presentation. Others said that they were not sure on the best instructional strategy and approach that was required when teaching oral literature in Kiswahili and consequently this affected their performance.

7. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations of the Study:

7.1. Teacher preparation in colleges and in the field.

According to the Ominde Commission of 1964, production of teachers that were well educated and competent was the greatest contribution that the government could give to schools. The Commission further explained that even if the greatest problems in Kenya were the few numbers and teacher competency, continued improvement of teachers was important in efforts of improving education. Despite the recommendations of the Ominde Commission the policy about teacher preparation in colleges was still an issue that was worrying.

This study revealed that 52.5% of teachers who were used in this study never received training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili. All diploma teachers that were used in this study received training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili. In the universities, some teachers never received training in oral literature in Kiswahili since the course was optional in some universities. This research revealed that generally the total number of teachers who didn't receive training on oral literature in Kiswahili is higher than those who received in universities.

The results of this study are a course to worry as regards teaching oral literature in Kiswahili. The teachers who constitute 52.5% that didn't get training on how to teach oral literature in Kiswahili

acknowledged that they do get problems when teaching oral literature in Kiswahili. In addition, 10.25% of diploma teachers with a teaching experience of over 12 years claimed that the training they received had taken a long time and that it was not in line with the new syllabus.

The results of this study reveal that the new curriculum that was reviewed was implemented with haste without preparing teachers well. The teaching and learning of oral literature are bound to be affected if the key stakeholders lack basic skills in teaching the same course. These views are supported by Sifuna (1980) who insists that teachers who lack relevant training cannot implement the curriculum effectively. In addition, basic training alone in colleges is not enough to give a teacher enough professional training. Due to the changing social and cultural environment under which a teacher does work, there is a need for a teacher to receive regular refresher courses and training (The Republic of Kenya, 1995).

Professional workshops, seminars, and symposiums are important because they open up the teachers' ability to interpret the syllabus and improve performance in class. This study revealed that the Ministry of Education didn't organize adequate professional activities and programs before implementing the reviewed curriculum. This research revealed that 56.25% of all teachers who were used in this study didn't receive any preparation to teach oral literature in Kiswahili while in the field.

Table 2 shows that 47.5% of teachers attended seminars whereas 52.25% did not. Only 35% of teachers attended workshops as compared to 65% who didn't.

In summary, these statistics show that a very small percentage of teachers were prepared before implementation of the new curriculum that incorporated the teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili. Some of the teachers interviewed informed the researcher that they didn't get any invitation or communication as regards professional activities. This information sends some fears considering the fact that some of the teachers didn't undertake the course of oral literature in Kiswahili while in university.

Proper implementation of the curriculum requires quality assurance officers to give advice and direction. It is interesting in this study that only 24.4% of teachers were visited by quality assurance officers. It is evident from this data that many teachers didn't get any guidance from quality assurance officers. It can be deduced from the information given that the Ministry of Education has shown some laxity in performing its obligations. There is a danger that oral literature may not get proper guidance if quality assurance officers will not play their roles effectively.

The foregoing results reveal that many key stakeholders who are teachers were not well prepared before implementation of the curriculum. It is difficult for teaching and learning to take place effectively if teachers are not well grounded on the foundation to handle or teach oral literature in Kiswahili.

7. Conclusion:

The results of the study indicate that teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili is an issue that requires urgent intervention. The picture being portrayed from this research is that teachers haven't done well as regards teaching of oral literature in Kiswahili.

It was revealed from this study that training in colleges and universities alone aren't sufficient for teachers as they implement a new curriculum. It also came out clearly that teachers in the field lacked seminars, workshops, and any other relevant training before implementation of the new curriculum.

6. Recommendations:

The following recommendations were made with a view of improving teaching oral literature in Kiswahili. Training of teachers in universities needs to be reviewed to be in line with the current needs and vision 2030. The oral literature course in universities needs to be made compulsory because all teachers will be expected to teach oral literature while in the field. In addition, the teaching methodology course needs to improve in order for teachers to identify best methods of teaching oral literature in Kiswahili.

The study also recommends that quality assurance officers should be distributed in all districts so as to ensure that they reach all the teachers. There is a need for quality assurance officers who are well conversant with oral literature to visit several schools in order to identify challenges that affect teachers when teaching oral literature in Kiswahili. Some of the challenges could be addressed in well-organized seminars, workshops, and symposiums. Such arrangements will give teachers hope and remove the uncertainties facing them as they teach oral literature in Kiswahili. The seminars and workshops should be well organized in order to reach many teachers in identified areas. It is important for the seminars and workshops to involve experts in order for them to be of relevance to the teacher.

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Received January 25, 2016; revised February 3, 2016; accepted February 5, 2016; published online March 1, 2016.

Appendix

Table.2: *Attendance of Professional activities.*

Professional activity	Participants	Diploma <12	Diploma >12	Total	Degree <12	Degree >12	Total	Total of degree and diploma
Seminars	Attended	3(37.5)	10(62.5)	13(54.16)	13(39.39)	12(52.17)	25(75.75)	38(47.5)
	Didn't attend	5(62.5)	6(37.5)	11(45.83)	20(60.6)	11(47.8)	31(93.93)	42(52.5)
Workshops	Attended	1(12.5)	8(50)	9(37.5)	9(27.27)	10(43.47)	19(33.92)	28(35)
	Didn't attend	7(87.5)	12(60)	19(79.16)	24(72.72)	13(56.52)	37(66.07)	56(70)
Symposiums	Attended	1(12.5)	2(12.5)	3(12.5)	2(6.06)	1(4.34)	3(5.35)	6(7.5)
	Didn't attend	7(87.5)	14(87.5)	21(87.5)	31(93.93)	22(95.65)	53(94.64)	74(92.5)
Training on job	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	80(100)
	Didn't attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	80(100)
All activities mentioned	Attended	0	0	0	0	0	0	80(100)
	Didn't attend	0	0	0	0	0	0	80(100)