

Learning resources used in the Teaching of Kiswahili Oral Literature in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper is a report of a study that was undertaken to establish learning resources that are used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature in secondary schools in Kenya. The study had four objectives, first to find out the adequacy of learning resources available for teaching of Kiswahili oral literature. Second, to investigate and report on the state of affairs as regards learning resources for teaching Kiswahili oral literature in our schools. Third, to assess methods that are used by the teachers to assess the learning of oral Literature in Kiswahili. Fourth, to make recommendation on strategies which could be employed to improve the learning resources used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature in secondary schools. This research adopted descriptive survey design. In total, twenty-seven Form Two Kiswahili teachers took part in the study. The research study reported that most schools had learning resources that could be used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature, the notable ones included, textbooks for teachers and students, reference books, chalkboard and chalk materials, teacher made handouts, Kiswahili newspapers and magazines cuttings and pictures, charts, audio tapes and posters, pupil researched topics, notice boards and television. When the frequency of use was checked it was established that availability of learning resources did not automatically lead to their use. The research study further realized that most Kiswahili oral literature learning resources were supplied by schools, students, teachers and parents. Very few learning resources were acquired through donations or on loan. Finally, the paper suggested and discussed various recommendations on strategies which could be employed to improve the learning resources used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature in secondary schools.

Key words

Learning Resources, Kiswahili Oral Literature

INTRODUCTION

Kiswahili is one of the key subjects taught in the Kenyan secondary school curriculum. The government acknowledges the importance of Kiswahili as a national language. Hence it is one of the compulsory subjects taught and examined both at primary and secondary school levels of education (Mackay report 1981).

In the Kiswahili secondary school syllabus (1992) there were four skills taught in Kiswahili language. These are: Listening & Speaking; Grammar; Vocabulary, and Reading and Writing.

In this syllabus (1992), Kiswahili oral literature was only highlighted through various branches of oral literature in Kiswahili. This subject area was not examined save for poetry, which was a section of the literature paper examined at the end of the secondary school education in the KCSE examination. Furthermore, the syllabus did not make any recommendations on the methodology and learning resources to be used in the teaching of poetry. This resulted in poor performance of Kiswahili subject in the KCSE examination.

In the year 2002, the Kiswahili secondary school syllabus was revised by the Kenya Institute of Education and some of the previously taught skills like vocabulary were not among the skills to be taught. This was because it was felt that vocabulary was taught in every lesson and in all other skills taught. The skills to be taught were still four as listed below:

- i. Listening and speaking
- ii. Grammar
- iii. Language use
- iv. Reading and writing

In the listening and speaking skills, there emerged a sub-section named listening and investigating. This sub-section dealt with Kiswahili oral literature in depth and even went ahead and gave suggestions on methodology and learning resources that could be used by teachers during instruction.

For the first time, the secondary school syllabus required Kiswahili oral literature to be taught in a systematic way. Kiswahili oral literature teachers thus had a lot of work to do in this initial implementation stage of this subject area. Therefore, for learners to derive maximum benefit from the study of Kiswahili oral literature, educators have to be specifically careful about the organization of their students' learning experiences so that learning can be useful to them. This is because it is through oral literature that our national heritage can be passed on to the young generations.

Oshungbehun (in Luvisia, 2003) argues that there are three pre-requisites that determine good quality education. These include physical facilities, competent teachers and adequate and relevant instructional resources. Many governments find it easy to provide the first two, but fail to give

Statement of the Problem

sufficient consideration to the third factor, namely media resources, which play a key role in promoting and enhancing quality teaching and purposeful learning.

The government of Kenya seems to have concentrated more on quantity more than quality education. Enrolments in secondary education rose from 30,000 students in 1963 to over 862,907 students in 2003 (Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005). Several development plans have shown that Kenya has been allocating, in the past decades approximately between 30 and 40 percent of her national budget to education. However, between 60 and 70 percent of these funds have been directed towards the payment of teachers' salaries (Eshiwani 1993), who at the same time are not yet adequate and are also poorly remunerated.

It was against this background therefore, that the researcher saw the need to nurture at an early stage, the teaching and learning of Kiswahili oral literature, through making learning processes interesting to the students. This could be done through variation of teaching methodologies, sourcing materials from our varied and rich cultural heritage and use of appropriate learning resources. This view-point was echoed by Kochar [1991] who stated that, the foundation of all learning consists of clearly representing to the senses, sensible objects so that they can be appreciated easily.

Therefore, with this in mind, the researcher hoped that the findings conclusions and recommendations to be made by this study would go a long way in contributing towards the systematic teaching of Kiswahili oral literature.

There has been a nationwide outcry about the performance of Kiswahili in national examinations both at primary and secondary

school levels. This trend has persisted in our secondary schools for some years as shown

in Table 1:

Table1 Students' Performance in Kiswahili paper 102/3 [2000-2005]

Year	Candidature	Mean grade	Standard deviation
2005	295,301	37.57 (+0.32)	14.04
2004	221,286	37.25 (-5.74)	13.18
2003	204,428	42.99 (+7.23)	13.13
2002	197,122	35.76 (+1.14)	11.93
2001	193,820	34.62 (-7.42)	11.72
2000	180,886	42.04	14.0

[Source: KNEC year 2005:12-13 and 2003: 14-20 KCSE examination report]

The KNEC report shows that many candidates performed poorly in Kiswahili paper 102/3, which is the Kiswahili oral literature paper. This is where Kiswahili oral literature is examined. Given this scenario, it is evident that there was a problem, which lead to these poor results, because in the year 2000 mean score in the Kiswahili literature paper 102/3 KNEC KCSE examination was 42.04, in 2001 34.62, 2002 it was 35.76, in 2003 it was 42.99, in 2004 the mean was 37.25 and in 2005 it was 37.57. From the above data, it can be seen that in the period of six years, the mean score had been below the average mark, hence students were not performing well.

Going by this scenario, it was evident that there was a problem, which had led to this type of results. It had been considered a bigger problem by the Mackay report (1981), which noted that; although Kiswahili was a national language, there were many university graduates who could not communicate in Kiswahili Mackay (1981).

The researcher wanted to find out whether this scenario could be checked from the beginning of the systematic implementation of the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature as stipulated in the revised secondary school syllabus.

Ministry of Education officials have partly accused teachers of not using appropriate methodology and not availing and using instructional resources for teaching of Kiswahili. This was based on the assumption that teachers in our schools had apparently abdicated their responsibilities as educators and had been reduced to instructors programmed to dispense knowledge only as required for examinations (Bennars, 1993).

On stressing the importance of learning resources, Confucius noted that usually the wise man guides his students rather than pull them along, he urges them to go forward and does not suppress them, and he opens the way rather than take them to the place. If his students are encouraged to think we call the man a good teacher (Matiru et al, 1995).

Kiswahili oral literature is one of the ways that can be used to attain the sixth goal of education that is promoting respect for our varied cultures. This research therefore sought whether teachers of Kiswahili oral literature had taken up the challenge as stated by Confucius, because lack of use of appropriate learning resources could contribute towards the poor performance of Kiswahili. It should be noted that the changes and expansion in education have been rapid and are unmatched with the rate

at which teachers are employed and learning resources availed in the schools. This is echoed in the Sessional Paper No. 1 (2005), which states that; the teachers' factor is important in explaining poor performance in examinations and that although majority of teachers are graduates, they are arts oriented which results in shortage especially in Mathematics, sciences, English and Kiswahili.

Teachers were expected to implement this new syllabus requirement without any induction or training. They were faced with the task of developing appropriate instructional methods and materials in a field that they had ignored for a long time. This same teachers had been teaching Kiswahili which had not been producing good results. Against this backdrop this study set out to systematically investigate and report on the state of affairs as regards learning resources for teaching Kiswahili oral literature in our schools.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to establish learning resources used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature in secondary schools in Uasin-Gishu District. The philosophical justification for this study rested on the need to avail and use learning resources in teaching Kiswahili oral literature. This study aimed at enabling the subject become more practical and enjoyable to teach and learn by use of learning resources among other techniques used in teaching, this could only be possible if schools are supplied with relevant learning resources, which can be used by teachers during instruction.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research adopted descriptive survey design. Descriptive design is concerned with making accurate assessment of the

The government of Kenya through the Kenya Institute of Education is working with other stakeholders to ensure that appropriate learning resources are available in the market for procurement by schools to enable the learner internalizes the skills learnt in class. This study therefore aimed at making the teaching of oral literature more practical and enjoyable to teach and learn by use of learning resources among other techniques of teaching. This could only be possible if adequate and appropriate learning resources were made available and used in teaching.

According to Sheldon (1994:7), in many countries, both research data and more anecdotal observation indicate an erosion in the general quality of education provided to learners as defined in traditional terms of inputs (teachers, facilities, books and supplies), out-puts (literacy and completion rate, achievement scores) and processes (the nature of the teaching – learning act). A final and perhaps most important doubt, concerns the narrowness of the traditional vision of what good education is and what it is meant to achieve. It can be argued today that good education given by the state to its school-going generation can only create impact if appropriate learning resources are used in teaching.

Kiswahili is Kenya's national language (Mbaabu 1978) and it is only through Kiswahili oral literature that Kenyans can preserve their rich and varied culture. One way of achieving this is through using learning resources in teaching Kiswahili oral literature to enable the teachings impact positively on the students' mind.

incidence, distribution and relationships of phenomena.

Sampling targeted twenty-seven secondary schools from which one Form Two

Kiswahili oral literature teacher, from each participating school was chosen to take part in the present study. In total, twenty-seven Form Two Kiswahili teachers were selected. Form Two Kiswahili oral literature teachers were preferred because Kiswahili oral literature had just been introduced into the secondary school curriculum and it was hoped that being the second class to be taught, the teachers had gained enough

experience in teaching this subject area and therefore, the sample could yield better results.

Two research instruments were used in this study. One was secondary school teacher's questionnaire (SSTQ). Another instrument was a student interview schedule [SIS], who's main purpose was to ascertain the correctness of responses in the questionnaire given by Kiswahili oral literature teachers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research study reported that most schools had learning resources that could be used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature, the notable ones included, textbooks for teachers and students,

reference books, chalkboard and chalk materials, teacher-made handouts, Kiswahili newspapers and magazines cuttings and pictures, charts, audio tapes and posters, pupil researched topics, notice boards and television.

Table 2: Available of learning resources

NO	LEARNING RESOURCE	FREQ	%
1	Text books for teachers	27	100
2	Text books for students	25	92.6
3	Reference books	25	92.6
4	Kiswahili newspapers & magazines, cuttings and pictures	19	70.4
5	Posters	15	55.6
6	Charts	21	77.8
7	Chalkboard and chalk material	27	100
8	Teachers made handouts	22	81.5
9	Maps	13	48.1
10	Resource people and places	14	51.9
11	Community resources	10	37
12	Realia (real objects)	10	37
13	Kiswahili journals	6	22.2
14	Exhibits (displays)	6	22.2
15	Films	4	14.8
16	Audio tapes	16	59.3
17	Library (with Kiswahili oral literature material)	12	44.4
18	Audio cassette recorder	6	22.2
19	Models	4	14.8
20	Pupil researched topics	18	66.7
21	Room	8	29.6
22	Costumes	7	25.9
23	Pictures	8	29.6
24	Television	16	59.3
25	Notice board	4	14.8
26	Video cassette recorder	19	70.4

When the frequency of use was checked it was established that availability of learning resources did not automatically lead to their use. This was because for example 77.8% of schools had charts but only 59.3% were used in teaching. 59.3% of schools had

audiotapes but only 29.6% were used in teaching. 25.9% of schools had costumes but only 7.4% of them were used in teaching.

These findings therefore agree with the observations made by Tucker (1986),

Rodwell (1986) and Okapala (1982), where they concurred that the number of teachers who used learning resources in teaching were very few and that most teachers were

reluctant to avail and use them despite knowing the impact they have when used during instruction. This is shown in Table 3.

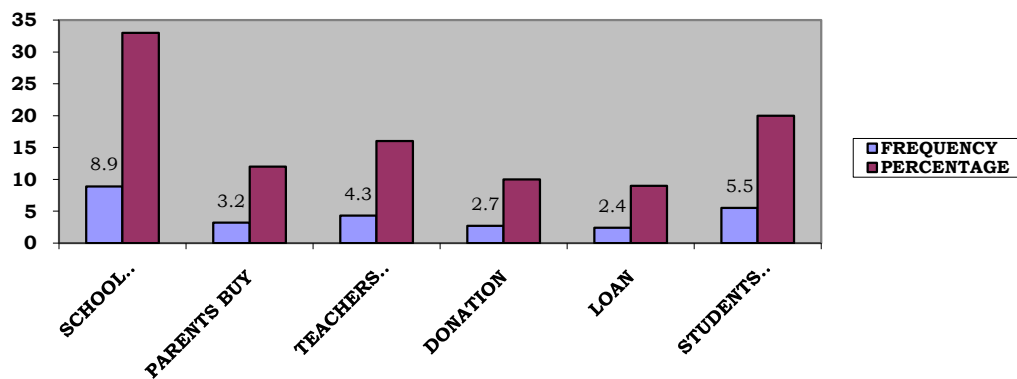
Table 3: Frequently used learning resources

NO	LEARNING RESOURCES	FREQ.	%
1	Text books for teachers	27	100
2	Text books for students	25	92.6
3	Reference books	25	92.6
4	Kiswahili newspapers & magazines, cuttings and pictures	25	63.0
5	Posters	17	40.7
6	Charts	11	59.3
7	Chalkboard and chalk material	16	100
8	Teachers made hand outs	27	81.5
9	Maps	22	37.0
10	Resource people and places	10	51.9
11	Community resources	14	37.0
12	Realia (real objects)	10	37.0
13	Kiswahili journals	10	14.8
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24	Television	11	40.7
25	Notice board	2	7.4
26	Video cassette recorder	16	59.3

The research study further realized that most Kiswahili oral literature learning resources were supplied by schools, students, teachers

and parents. Very few learning resources were acquired through donations or on loan.

Figure 1: Method of acquiring learning resources



These findings are echoed by Cardemill (1991) and Heyneman et al (1984) as they observed that most classrooms lacked

learning resources because developing countries devoted a very small proportion of school expenditure on teaching resources.

From the above findings the following discussions can be made:

The research study shows that most schools had learning resources that could be used in the teaching of Kiswahili oral literature, the notable ones included, textbooks for teachers and students, reference books, chalkboard and chalk materials, teacher made handouts, Kiswahili newspapers and magazines cuttings and pictures, charts, audio tapes and posters, pupil researched topics, notice boards and television.

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CONCLUSION AND REFERENCES

Basing on these findings, it can be concluded that the basic learning resources were available in schools. These included the chalkboard and chalkboard materials, textbooks, reference books and teacher made handouts, these were the traditional resources easily found in schools and hence

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teachers over-relied on them for teaching. The other learning resources are available in low percentages, hence were rarely used for teaching. This could be attributed to lack of in-service training to remind teachers on the importance of using learning resources when teaching Kiswahili oral literature.

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