The University of Nottingham
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Towards the Reader-Text Interactive Approach to Teaching Imaginative Texts: The Case for the Integrated English Curriculum in Kenya

by

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Abstract

In this thesis the concept of Interactive Approach (IA) to the teaching and learning of imaginative texts and language is addressed in the English as a Second Language (ESL) context. As the title suggests the focus of the study was the Integrated English Curriculum (IEC) in Kenya. Although this curriculum was introduced twenty years ago, little has been done to bring about the envisaged integration between the English language and literature at the classroom level.

The first chapter describes the background to and the rationale for the study. The second chapter addresses the research setting and explains the current English curriculum in Kenyan secondary schools. The related literature is reviewed in chapter 3 with a special focus on the pedagogical relationship between language and literature and the case for or against integrating the two components. In chapter 4, the methods used during data collection and analysis are presented.

The findings of the study as described in chapter 5 affirm that there is the continued use of Traditional Approach (TA) to teaching imaginative texts despite the IEC being in place. This was found to be attributable to the lack of relevant training and the overwhelming focus on examinations by the education system as results from teachers show. The use of the proposed Reader – Text Interactive Approach (RTIA) was positively received by learners as shown by their responses to the interactive exercises.

On the basis of these findings, the thesis concludes that there is an urgent need for educators to re-think the way teachers of English are trained in the country and redesign the IEC

curriculum materials so that these take into account the integrated curriculum. It is further recommended that RTIA be adopted because the approach was found to have the potential of ensuring that the IEC becomes a reality at the classroom level in Kenya secondary schools.

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Dedication

TO MY WIFE
For your never ending love and selfless endurance

and

TO MY MOTHER
For sacrificing in poverty to educate me

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List of Acronyms Used

IA:	Interactive Approach
IE:	Integrated English
IEC:	Integrated English Curriculum
KCSE:	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KIE:	Kenya Institute of Education
KNEC:	The Kenya National Examinations Council
MoE:	Ministry of Education
RTIA:	Reader- Text Interactive Approach
TA:	Traditional Approach
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
TRRA	Transactive Reader-Response Approach
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
CBE	Curriculum Based Establishment
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
SMS	Short Message Services

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this introductory Chapter will highlight the initial concerns that provided the basis for the present study. It will briefly address the theoretical and educational background to the research problem; offer a rationale and justification to the study; delineate the aims and objectives; scope and significance of the study; provide a background to the limitations to the study; and lastly the definition of terms used throughout the work will be given.

1.1 Background to the study

> When students *listen* to the teachers' instructions and explanations, when they *express their views*, and *answer questions* and *carry out tasks and activities*, they are not only learning about language but also putting the language that they are learning to use.
>
> Tsui (1995)

The above quotation captures what lies at the heart of an interactive lesson, with the roles of both the teacher and the learners clearly stated: although the teacher has to give *instructions* and *explanations*, and the learners have to listen, the latter must also be allowed to express their *own* views and be guided into carrying out *tasks* and *activities* that would make them put the language they are learning into use. Like Tsui (1995), many other literary educationists are agreed on this need for learner involvement in the learning process (Mbugua, 2003; Marcie and Kasper, 2004; and Delanoy, 1997). According to these proponents, the teacher's role should be one of encouraging and enabling learners to explore literary texts through a reader-oriented, interactive approach to literary texts and not to take up the teacher-knows-it-all *stance.*

This need for interactive approach is particularly felt in the language learning process, especially in ESL contexts where learners have no opportunity to acquire the English language as is the case with the native speakers of the language (Nunan, 1989). Indeed in situations where the target language is seldom used outside the classroom, and the students' exposure to English is therefore limited to the classroom, the kind of input and interactive activities that are made available becomes particularly important (Clark and Zyngier, 2003: 340). There is need for students not just to learn about the language but to be able to practise using the same language. The same argument should apply for imaginative texts: students should not just learn 'about' texts; they should be able to put the interactive skills acquired in the course of handling imaginative texts to good use (Carter and Nash, 1990:29).

Based on my own experience of teaching English language and literature at the secondary school level in Kenya for over a decade, and taking into account the arguments contained in the reviewed literature, it is apparent that many teachers still teach 'about' set texts - set books recommended by the Ministry of Education (MoE) for examination purposes - with major emphasis being on content and the need for the learners to be aware of what examiners require of them (Lumala, 2003).

My study is thus based on a demonstrated need to improve the teaching and learning of the Integrated English Curriculum (IEC) in secondary schools in Kenya through increased learner involvement and learner interaction and accessibility to the imaginative texts (Ngong'a, 2001, and Kioko, 2001 among others). This need is particularly based on the fact that although the English language and literature were combined into one examinable subject in the mid 1980s, a lot remains to be done to make this integration

fruitful. Performance in KCSE examinations remains poor as reflected in the various KNEC reports reviewed (KNEC 1991; 1993; and 2000).

The motivation for this study is further hinged on the view that English is an international language whose mastery is vitally usefully. In particular, the English language is very important in Kenya's education system. As a medium of instruction in schools, English is an important subject both in the curriculum and as a service subject. In addition English is the official language in the country; hence making it imperative that the school leaver acquires a good mastery of the language in a variety of professional, commercial, academic and day-to-day transactions in the Kenyan and indeed the international environment.

The importance of English is not true just for Kenya but for many other countries in the world today. In fact, the demand for English language usage and English language education has increased exponentially over the years, with the language being widely accepted as the major medium for international communication (Wills, 1981: 41). Nunan (2001: 605) points out that, today English permeates every part of our livelihood. "It is the language of business, technology, science, the internet, entertainment, and even sports," the writer asserts. Llurda (2004) on the other hand alludes to the fact that language researchers and educators are increasingly embracing the fact that English is spoken by more people as an L2 than as a mother tongue. Because of the important role the language plays, English as a subject has changed and become more-wide ranging and exciting (Eaglestone, 2000) to measure to these changing demands.

Although Students of English in ESL contexts may never leave their own countries (quite rare in the modern world), they still need English for business purposes, for higher

education and for interaction with foreign visitors in their own backyard as explained above.

In Kenya, English is taught not just as a core subject, but also the language is the medium of instruction across the curriculum, right from primary school level through to the university (Kioko and Muthwii, 2001:201). Apart from other modern languages such as, German, and French, the rest of the subjects are in fact taught and examined in the English language.

Besides its importance in the education sector, the English language has been assigned the status of an official language in the country. Thus, the language is used in government, in law, formal businesses and in international affairs (Eshiwani, 1993).

It follows that the language is not only useful to the learners while at school but also, and most importantly, once outside school. It is critical therefore, that English is taught in such a way that learners are able to master and internalise the much-needed practical language skills for their day-to-day communication upon completing school. This is one of the major objectives of English Language teaching in Kenya, especially at the secondary school level as clearly stated in the IEC secondary education English syllabus:

The school leaver will require good English in a large variety of professional, commercial and day to day transaction in the Kenyan and international environment. In the teaching of English therefore, emphasis should be on the acquisition of communicative competence and not simply on the passing of examinations. In fact, becoming proficient in the language is a life-long goal.

(KIE, 2002:3)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The current 8-4-4 system of education was introduced in Kenya in 1985. As the name suggests, under this system one takes 8 years in primary, 4 in secondary and at least 4 more at the University level if an individual meets the entry requirements. Since the introduction of the 8-4-4, English as an examinable subject at the secondary school level combines both language and literature. This is unlike in the previous education system, 7-4-2-3, (7 years in primary, 4 years at O-Level, 2 for A-Level and at least 3 years for a Bachelor's degree at the University). While 7-4-2-3 lasted, English Language and Literature in English were taught and examined as two separate subjects at O-Level. Literature in English was by then optional where as English language was a compulsory to all the students at this level. While English language was taught right from Form 1, Literature in English was taken only by few of the senior pupils at Form 3 whom teachers felt were capable of handling the subject at a higher level (Ngong'a, 2001).

Critics of the former education system argued that by making Language compulsory and Literature optional, the 7-4-2-3 system did not accord all learners an opportunity to visualise language in context and therefore did not, prepare them adequately for the practical use of language after school (MoE, 1992). The experts in the Ministry upheld the view that since the two subjects are mutually related , separating them only resulted into fragmented knowledge and duplication of work for the teachers. The IEC syllabus is emphatic about this fact. "It is important to note that literature is part and parcel of language learning" (KIE, 1992:45).

The teaching of language through literature is not a unique approach to Kenya. As recent studies reveal (Yimer, 1990; Talif, 1991; Timucin, 2000; and Sivasubramaniam, 2004) there has been a growing interest in this approach in many countries where English is taught either as ESL or EFL, among them Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. However, the move towards integrating literature in the language classroom dates back in the early 1980s through the works of among others, Brumfit (1980) and Tomlinson (1980). The latter posits that "if literature is well taught, it can help pupils to become broad-minded, perceptive and capable of constructive criticism" (Ibid. p. 87). He calls for increased learner involvement in the learning process as a basis of improving the teaching of literary texts.

In his study already referred to, Timucin (2000) carried out an empirical exploration of the activity-based approach in the teaching of literature in Turkish schools. He found out that the integrated approach comprising language-based approaches to Literature significantly led to increased levels of students' motivation and involvement. It is this interconnectivity between language and the study of literary texts that the IEC secondary school syllabus in Kenya aims at achieving. Considering Timucin's (2000) findings in Turkey, the present study sought to examine whether a similar approach would lead to greater learner involvement in the learning of imaginative texts in Kenyan context.

Some of the strongest claims for the integrated approach to language and literature teaching have been made by Widdowson (1975), Brumfit and Carter (1986), Carter (1988), Short and Candlin (1988), Sawyer et.al. (1989), McRae (1991, 1996), Stevens and Brumfit (1991), West, (1994), Pope (1995), Tomlinson (1997) and Hall (2005), among others. These are some of the key proponents of the language-based approach to the teaching and learning of literature as highlighted later in Chapter 3. In general

however, the central theme among these writers is the notion that we can not *divorce literature from language teaching.*

Does the above generalization imply that the integrated approach is the most suitable for teaching English language and literature in ESL contexts? In terms of the language, Duff and Maley (1990:6) maintain that literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers and text-types at many levels of difficulty and hence would be worthwhile being considered when one is teaching language. Lazar (1996) concurs with this view maintaining on her part that "literary texts are a rich source of classroom activities that can prove very motivating for language learners" (p.773). Literature, she argues, calls for a personal response from the learners and encourages them to draw on their personal experience. By so doing, students become more personally interested in the process of language learning and can begin to own the language they learn more fully.

Literature has no rival in its power to create natural repetition, reflection on language and how it works according to Heath (1996: 776). The writer asserts that students can not be expected to write excellent examination essays of *argumentation* and *illustration* unless they have practised these forms through and through and given multiple opportunities to reshape their views with immediate audience feedback. The greatest benefit of teaching literature to language students in the ESL context according to Heath is "the focus literature lessons can ensure on language. Awareness of language, how it works, what one word can do in affecting meaning, and how creative we can be pushes linguistic accomplishment" (p.778).

Using literature as a linguistic resource involves starting from the fact that literature is language and can therefore be exploited for language learning purposes (Carter and McRae, 1996: xxi). But not everyone is in the agreement with the notion that literature is "an ideal vehicle for illustrating language use" as put by Mackay (1986:198). In Malaysia for example, where the approach is strongly taking root, the English language class had for a long time been separate from the Literature lesson, with the two being treated as independent subjects - emphasis being placed on the 'study of literature for literature's sake' (Ali, 1995:54). The argument was that students should take literature only when they feel that they could cope with the 'language of literature'.

An assumption was arguably put that the language of literature texts was different from the language found in the English language lessons. If this were so, one would wonder how much of the text learners have to understand before reading gives rise to productive linguistic responses. Are we to assume that our linguistic ability does not contribute to and benefit from our productive understanding of literary texts? Similarly, is the language found in literary texts markedly different from that in English language texts? These are seminal questions, which any discussion on the language-literature nexus in the classroom has to address without undue bias.

In Luxembourg, where the English course is also based on the integrated approach, Campill (1992) points to some causal connection between the decline in pupils' progress in English as a language and the introduction of literary studies into what had so far been 'exclusively' a language course. In Campill's opinion, literature was never meant to be a servant to language teachers and the subject ought not to be used in the language teaching process. While this may be the case, Campill does demonstrate how the combining of

English language and literary studies in Luxembourg has led to the decline in pupils' progress. In any case, even without integration, it may be argued that learners would still be able to indirectly improve on their English language by studying literature. A formalised approach therefore would only help to ensure a structured approach to teaching both English language and literature.

There may be two key factors that may easily work against the integrated learning between English language and literature. First, the syllabus if not implemented properly and second, when as a result learners perform poorly in the subject in the countries where the approach has been adopted. The IEC in Kenya secondary schools is a case in mind. The performance of English in the KCSE has been dismal over the years (KNEC, 1992; Muya, 1993). The declining standards have by all means gone against the expectations of the MoE when the IEC was launched (MoE, 1987).

A number of factors have been adduced for being behind the declining performance in the subject. According to one school of thought, the very idea of having to integrate language and literature was 'tragic'. In his article "The tragedy of literary studies", Kabaji (2003a) says:

"The worst tragedy that happened to literary studies was the scandalous merging of Literature and the English Language at the secondary school level in the 8-4-4 system."

(*The East African Standard* Newspaper, 04/05/2003)

In Kabaji's view, the former education system in Kenya where Literature was separated from English Language had the advantage of exposing students to a wider variety of literary works and offered a "solid foundation to students for literary studies at the University" (Ibid.). But the 8-4-4 system exposes students to only one play, one novel, and an anthology of short stories, bits of oral literature and "snippets of poetry". In his opinion therefore, the new approach disadvantages literature in terms of scope and time. For him, it was apparently tragic for Literature and English language to have been integrated at the secondary school level in the 8-4-4 system. But just like Campill (1992), Kabaji appears to assume that English language benefits at the expense of Literature under the IEC language. The problem is that the writer does not back up his arguments with any research findings as to why he thinks it was 'scandalous' to have had the English language and literature integrated into one examinable subject. What is the way forward? Kabaji does not propose the way out of this 'tragic' decision. Though the learners' performance in the subject has been wanting over the years, a sheer condemnation of the IEC is no solution to the problem and does not help improve the teaching of the subject in any way.

Partington (2003) writing on the same subject does concur with Kabaji and goes on to label the IEC as the "false-forcing together of language and literature under the umbrella of 'English'" (*The East African Standard* Newspaper). This he says has squeezed the provision of KCSE literature into a short space of timetabled time. The choice of words used by this writer is worth considering: were the two subjects – English language and Literature – "forced" together as Partington would like us to believe? And had the allocated time been adequate, would the integrated curriculum have met the learners'

needs for both language and literature or is the problem beyond time alone? Given such there is need to establish the place the skills acquired go beyond the class. Literature is not taught just for the purpose of KCSE examination. The syllabus is clear on this. Like Partington, Kabaji too does not provide the theoretical and practical basis for his overt condemnation of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools.

These arguments by Kabaji and Partington are indicative of the fact that no proper research has been conducted to determine what ails the integrated curriculum in Kenya. However, the criticisms serve to demonstrate a growing acknowledgement of the need to re-evaluate the way the IEC is handled in Kenya, and particularly at the classroom level. The critics claim that there is no basis for integrating the English language and literature is however marred by the lack of the empirical study to back up the critics' views of the integrated curriculum in Kenya. Hence the present study seeking to get teachers' views on a cross-section of factors which either facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of the English syllabus in the classroom. The study goes further by piloting possible approach that could see to the practical implementation.

The two writers appear to consider literature as entirely autonomous of language and that it is not in the interest of learners that the English language and literature are integrated. But many writers view the relationship between language and literature teaching from a more practical perspective, demonstrating that it is possible to marry the two components with greater benefits for the learner. For instance McRae (1996) emphasizes the need for interaction between the reader and the text and a more open approach to handling representational language in literary texts instead of focussing on the traditional perception of literary texts as being simply "plot", "style", "themes" and

"characterisation" which seem to obtain in many secondary schools in Kenya today. There is need in this sense to find out why teachers are still inclined towards the traditional approach to teaching imaginative texts despite the changes in the curriculum. The reasons for this can help redirect future efforts in the implementation of the IEC.

As a teacher of English in Kenyan secondary schools, I had no problem with the reasons advanced by the MoE to integrate language and literature. However, implementing the curriculum as required by the Ministry was a different matter. The question of integrating English language and literature remained distant, more theoretical than practical. But for the name, both English language and literature for all purposes seemed to be two separate entities in many respects. Today teachers still stand in front of the classroom and dictate notes on plot, themes, style and characterisation based on the literary works being offered. Grammar, writing compositions and comprehension passages permeate the language classes. English examinations in the KCSE have also continued to treat the two components separately with little evidence of integration (Kioko, 2003). Understanding how the subject is being implemented in the classroom is essential. The issues of concern here are:

a. Can integration between the two areas be practical and mutually beneficial as originally anticipated when the teaching approach and examinations remain entirely unchanged?

b. What methodological approach would help bridge the gap between theory and practice in the classroom?

The last question above stems from the fact that over the years, there has been no deliberate and systematic attempt by curriculum developers in Kenya and teachers alike to either enable students to develop language awareness through literature or heighten their literary awareness through language, in spite of the 'Integrated English Course'. This is a key problem for this study: were the critics right in viewing the IEC as sheer lumping together of two subjects? This study underscores the fact that to some degree changes in syllabus design should result in changes in the teaching approach employed by teachers. If the introduction of the IEC has to be of value, learners in Kenyan secondary schools ought to be given an opportunity to broaden their views through the study of imaginative texts. What are the long-term expected outcomes of studying literature in the light of the integrated approach?

The current research further takes cognizance of these divergent views and is driven by a need to improve the teaching and learning of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools. In seeking to address some of the above questions, this research placed emphasis on the need to involve learners in the handling of imaginative texts in the classroom in a way that would facilitate a practical approach to teaching the English language and literature as required by the syllabus .The study aimed at making a case for the proposed RTIA as an appropriate alternative to the Traditional Approach (TA).In this context the TA to handling imaginative texts in the classroom. This was done in line with the syllabus objectives of the IEC. If the proposed approach shows that if well implemented, the IEC is not the mere threading together of two unrelated subjects but a valuable blend which "gives students greater motivation and enhances better retention of principles of effective speaking, listening, reading and writing" (Brown, 2001:233).

1.3 Rationale and Justification for the Study

Ever since the introduction of the IEC in Kenyan secondary schools, performance in the subject has continued to decline. This is according the MoE (*Daily Nation*, 28/02/2002). In an article entitled "Secondary Education in a Crisis", a *Daily Nation* staff writer Aduda (200) observes that "The performance in English, the official language and a prerequisite to most of the professional courses, is dwindling, with the average national score being 31 per cent" (*Daily Nation* Newspaper). The writer fittingly argues that the country can not afford to carry on producing high school graduates "who cannot *write* or *express* themselves articulately in the English language." This view is also confirmed by KNEC's annual reports (1991-2000) as illustrated in Table 2.3 in the next chapter.

Given this scenario, one may ask: why has performance been declining? It is of concern that high school graduates are said to be unable to write or express themselves articulately in English after being in secondary school for four years, leave alone the eight years in Primary. Could this deteriorating performance be attributable to the Integrated English syllabus per se as some critics have argued, to the teachers' inability to implement the syllabus or to lack of opportunities for students to be involved in the learning process? These questions arise from Kioko's (2003:6) contends that "ever since the inception of the 8-4-4 'integrated' English syllabus, teachers' attitudes towards the integration have been in whole negative." This has the effect that the teachers may not necessarily be implementing the IEC as expected.

Long (1986:42) draws our attention to the fact that the "teaching of literature has lacked a consistent methodology for presentation to non-native speakers". According to him, the teaching of literature to non-native speakers would be more meaningful through

interaction and learner responses to the text. Teachers' notes and commentaries designed for passing literature examinations as is the practice in Kenyan secondary schools today is regarded as 'second-hand response' by the author (Ibid, p.43).

But looking through the texts recommended by the MoE, I find surprisingly little about the expected meeting point between language and literature and how these two components ought to be integrated at the classroom level. It is important that teachers have clear guidelines as to how to facilitate interaction between these components and equally get learners to play an active part in the learning of either component, unlike if the long term objectives of the IEC have to be achieved.

Though there is in some quarters perceived resistance to integration as already pointed out above, the reviewed literature in this thesis overwhelmingly points to the fact that an interactive approach to the teaching of English language and literature is the way forward to teaching and learning imaginative texts (Brumfit and Carter, 1986; Long, 1986; Short and Candlin, 1989 and McRae and Vethamani, 1996). Literary studies which do not focus on students' responses as highlighted by Carter (1982) do not help teachers and pupils to "articulate effective and individualised responses to literary works". Similar sentiments are equally brought out by Long (1986) who maintains that both literature and language teaching involve the development of a *feeling for language*, of responses to texts – in both written and spoken discourse.

Considering the persistent poor results posted by candidates in the KCSE English examination, as demonstrated in the next Chapter, there is notable evidence pointing to a widening gap between the 'theoretical pronouncements as outlined in the IEC syllabus

and the actual practice at the school level" (Eshiwani, 1993:155). This gap ought to be bridged if IEC is to be successfully implemented. The present work is to be seen as a step in this direction. Among other objectives, the study sets out to determine whether integration between language and literature is workable in the face of critics who have dismissed the integrated approach without giving it a chance to be operationalised.

The case for this research therefore is twofold. First, the study proposes to examine and describe the impediments to the integrated English syllabus in Kenya secondary schools as is the case currently. Secondly, it sought to demonstrate and try out materials based on my proposed Reader-Text Interactive Approach (RTIA) to teaching imaginative texts in the classroom in the context of the IEC. Here the objective was to determine whether the integrated approach can indeed be implemented and to demonstrate the possibility of improving learners' language awareness as an interface between language and literature teaching. I hope that heightened language awareness and increased sensitivity to language use would help them become more interested in the subject leading to not only better performance in the examinations in the long run but most importantly, enabling them to be more articulate and critical in using English long after leaving school as set out in the English syllabus (KIE, 2002).

1.4 Research Questions

This study aimed seeking answers to the following five key questions:

1. To what extend are teachers of English in Kenyan secondary schools qualified and hence able to effectively implement the IEC in the classroom?

2. From the teachers' opinion, what are the major impediments to the effective implementation of the IEC in Kenyan secondary schools?

3. What are some of the predominant pedagogical techniques teachers employ in handling imaginative texts in the context of the IEC?

4. How do the learners in the selected schools respond to the teaching approach proposed by the study?

5. To what extend would the proposed teaching approach suit the Integrated English syllabus in Kenya Secondary Schools?

1.5 Aims and Objectives of the Study

As in many EFL/ESL contexts, the teaching and learning of Literature in English in Kenya secondary schools is considered a laborious task (Tomlinson, 1994). The learners' experience of imaginative texts mainly comprises answering difficult questions based on 'difficult' texts or on texts they have hardly interacted with. At times, the teachers actually set the questions so as to compel the learners read the texts in preparations for examinations. This makes the reading of creative texts seem punitive instead of bringing about enjoyment as stated in the syllabus! The case here affirms the view that in the teaching profession, as aptly observed by Nunan (1989), there seems to be an insurmountable gap between theory and practice.

The present study may be generally viewed as a bridging exercise project. As pointed above, this study is designed to try-out with materials in class, identify teachers' views about the IEC and to assess the overall practicality of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools. By having teachers attend the lessons with me during the data collection, I hoped to demonstrate to them how the proposed *integrative* approach in the context of interactive, *learner-centred* activities at the classroom level as opposed to the over trodden *examination* and *input-oriented* teaching of imaginative texts they are used to. With the help of selected texts, this thesis sought to show that it is possible to bring learners on board in our classrooms, get them talking *about* and *with* texts, and simply enjoy studying literary texts without the domineering presence of the teacher in front.

The analysis of the results and discussion of implications in chapters 5 and 6 focuses on what the students actually did with the set tasks and how they did it rather whether they were 'right' or 'wrong' as it was made it clear to the learners that this was not going to be a 'test' session. The outcome of the learners' tasks is viewed in terms of what they were able to do with the texts and the impact this has on their learning of both language and literature.

More specifically, the aim of this research study was to assess the possibility of a practical learner-centred approach to the implementation of the IEC at the secondary school level in Kenya. The research sought to verify the capability of Kenyan learners to creatively interact with imaginative texts with heightened awareness and increased sensibility to the writer's diction without the approving nod or disapproving scowl of the teacher. Appropriately, Gibbons (1979) says that such ability would help them become capable of responding more fully and accurately to the richness and complexity of

literary writing in both prose and verse without having to overly rely on their teachers for 'correct' responses to a text. In so doing, I hope that the findings of this study would be able to invigorate the teaching of imaginative texts in Kenyan secondary schools and to bring to reality the practicality of the IEC. Against this background, the following were the basic objectives of my study. The research set out to:

a. Identify the current impediments to the successful implementation of the IEC in Kenya

b. Try out materials in the classroom to determine the suitability of the RTIA to handling imaginative texts in the Kenyan secondary school context

c. Describe learner responses to the interactive activities based on selected imaginative texts

d. Get teachers' input on a cross-section of issues that would obtain if there has to be an effective implementation of the IEC in the classroom.

e. Make recommendations based on my findings on how best the Integrated Approach to teaching English language and literature could be successfully implemented in Kenyan secondary schools

f. To add to the existing literature in the field of the learner-centred approaches to teaching imaginative texts in ESL contexts.

The more theoretical and long term aim of the study was to open up literature in English, to show that imaginative texts can be accessible to learners if handled through the RTIA, and this way to encourage both learners and teachers alike to be consciously active of what they read and to take part in the creative process of reading imaginative texts in the classroom.

The educational innovation of the study is the proposed Reader-Text Interactive Approach which is aimed at working against learner passivity in the classroom by placing a premium on learner involvement in the learning process.

1.6 Scope and significance of the study

The teaching of literature to achieve integration with English language in the IEC in Kenya is at the core of this study. The study examines the TA that is predominantly in use today vis-à-vis the proposed RTIA as a practical methodology for the teaching and learning of imaginative texts. The research was carried out in secondary school context as it is here that mastery of the English language - both written and spoken is crucial.

The TA sees literary texts as a body of knowledge which has to be imparted to the learners in a way that they know "what is important" for them and can be reproduced in an examination set up (Carter and Walker, 1989). This was the approach popularly in use before the IEC was introduced by the government. But such methods of teaching literature have done little to develop the students' skills in handling literary texts. The approach has resulted to a culture where learners are heavily dependent on teachers and commentaries on set books commercially known as "examination guide books" (Kabaji, 2003b)

Surprisingly, though TA focuses largely on giving students the relevant detail for examination purposes, the subject remains one of the poorly performed in the KCSE. Neither the teachers' notes nor the notes taken from guidebooks seem to have helped to ameliorate the situation given the continued dismal performance of learners in the

subject. The problem therefore is one of implementation rather than the integrated curriculum.

While the study seeks to move away from teacher-centred examination-oriented teaching of literary texts to learner–centred and activity–oriented learning, no testing is undertaken as prove of RTIA is can be tailor made to prepare candidates for examinations. Instead, learner responses are collated and used to prove that if provided with a "way-in" into imaginative texts through an interactive process, Kenyan learners have the capacity and a sufficient level of language awareness to respond creatively to any text.

1.7 Limitations and assumptions of the study

This study had a number of limitations both in terms of theory and during the actual implementation in the field. I also made a number of assumptions based on the research setting. In the two sections that follow, I highlight some of the limitations and the said assumptions.

1.7.1 Limitations of the study

Like any other work of research, the present study has a number of limitations. One of the possible limitations of this study is the generalizability or otherwise of the findings. Kenya has seven provinces but the study focussed on only two of the provinces in this study: Western and Nyanza. Although the MoE had permitted the research to be carried out in three provinces, it was logistically impossible to visit all of them. The validity of the findings however lie in the fact that all public secondary schools in Kenya follow the same curriculum and teachers of English undergo the same training course in public

universities prior to being employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Hence the results of the findings in this work essentially mirror the views of majority of the teachers and students in secondary schools in Kenya with regard to the teaching and learning of the English language and literature.

Another obstacle to the present study entailed costs. The fact that the study was carried out in Kenya while the researcher was studying in the United Kingdom resulted in huge expenses being incurred. Since the sampled schools were spread far and wide in the two provinces, it was very expensive moving around. Matters were made worse by the fact that one school had to be visited at least twice to complete the classroom exercises and to collect the teachers' questionnaires. This inevitably meant more costs on transport and accommodation. As a consequence, the study was confined to a manageable sample of secondary schools instead of visiting all the provincial schools in the two provinces.

On the other hand, the ideas recorded in this study are those of individual teachers from the sampled schools. The temptation to acknowledge these teachers in discussing the findings was compelling yet the fact that the respondents had been assured of confidentiality raised a limitation based on ethical issues. I would have been delighted to provide a list of the schools that took part in the study but this would have meant indirectly disclosing the identity of the teachers in these schools at the time of research.

To demonstrate the working of the RTIA in the classroom situation, I used two texts – a poem and a prose extract. Given the time constraints, the texts selected were short with two simple interactive exercises in the classroom. It is supposed that the texts would suit many other learning activities, such as those proposed by McRae and Vethamani

(1996:140-144) but this was not plausible within the confines of this research. The two exercises were considered adequate in lighting the way for a more integrative approach to the IEC in our schools. Should RTIA be found suitable, the other interactive activities could be systematically introduced to schools through teacher in-service programmes. I give further examples of such texts in my discussion and an extension activity in Appendix 6.

1.7.2 Assumptions of the study

This study has made a number of assumptions in terms of the curriculum and the theoretical background of the proposed pedagogical innovation. These include the following:

a. This study assumes that both the text and the reader are interdependent and that any reading process should take cognisance of the dual role of the reader and the text. This assumption is based on the fact that the reading process is an active interaction between the readers and texts (Carrell and Eisterhold, 1988).

b. Written and spoken languages often bear a relationship to each other; to ignore that relationship is to ignore the richness of language. Often one skill will reinforce another: for example, we learn to speak in part by modelling what we hear, and we learn to write by examining what we can read (Duff and Maley 1990:234).

c. It is also assumed that the activity-based approach to teaching imaginative texts allows for the integration of language skills while enhancing literary awareness. Through carefully selected interactive text-based tasks, it would be difficult not to

involve at least three of the four language skills as the students will be required to read, discuss, solve problems, analyse words, and write down their responses.

d. At classroom level, this study made the assumption that the learners had some linguistic competency sufficient to enable them interact with one another and to take part in the given interactive activities based on selected literary texts.

e. One methodological assumption of the study was that studying the language of the literary text will help integrate the language and literature components in the syllabus more closely unlike the TA which is separatist in content.

1.8 Definition of Terms

In this study, a number of terms are used which need to be defined at the outset although the fuller meanings will emerge in the literature review chapter and through their usage in the rest of the work. These terms include:

a. Imaginative Text

b. Integration, Integrated Approach and Integrated English Curriculum

c. Literature and literature with a small 'l'

d. Traditional Approach and the Reader – Text Interactive Approach

These four key issues are briefly defined as follows:

a) Imaginative Text:

A 'text' according to Moody (1983:19) is "a verbal artefact (more or less deliberately created), which is available in a tangible form of study, analysis and evaluation". But like

many words, the word 'text' does not have a single, fixed meaning which one can just pick out of a dictionary. Hence any individual definition such as this one offered by Moody or even the one found in the dictionary will be context-bound aimed at helping the reader understand the word in a particular way. Indeed, a new meaning of the word 'text' as in the sentence: "Please *text* me as soon as you arrive in Nairobi" where someone is being asked to send a short message commonly known as SMS, on the mobile phone, may not yet be in the dictionary. It is thus important to note that at any one time a word may mean different things to different people.

In the context of this thesis, the term "imaginative text" is used generally to refer to all literary works set aside for the purpose of teaching and learning literature at the secondary school level. In the Kenyan case, these means the novels, plays, short stories, poems and oral literature materials prescribed by the Ministry of Education for the purpose of achieving the goals of the IEC. In this thesis the term "imaginative texts" is used interchangeably with "literary texts", "set books", and "creative works"

b) Integration, Integrated Approach and Integrated English Curriculum:

The verb 'to integrate' means to put or bring together parts previously regarded as separate so as to form one whole. According to the *Oxford Compact Thesaurus,* the term 'integrate' could be used interchangeably with terms such as "merge, fuse, consolidate, unify, and desegregate" (Waite, 1997:466). By extension, the term 'integrated' would therefore mean consolidated, or combined into a unified whole, undivided. For integration to occur, the component elements have to combine cohesively and harmoniously.

By 'Integrated Approach' I refer to the MoE's decision to combine both the English Language and the Literature in English in to a single examinable subject at the secondary school level. As brought out in the subsequent two chapters, the approach presupposes similarity between the two components and requires that the teaching of one component should be useful to the other. Thus the IEC brings together the two components as spelt out in the KIE English syllabus.

c) Literature as opposed to literature with a small 'l':

The term 'literature' has a number of different meanings depending on the user's intention (McNab et.al, 2001). In this research, I use the term variously with a capital 'L' and with a small 'l' to refer to the body of imaginative texts that students have to study at school level.

"Literature" with a capital 'L' is used in this study to refer to an independent subject area, formerly taught and examined independently from the English Language as was the practice in the 7-4-2-3 system of education in Kenya until 1985 when the IE Syllabus came into effect. On the other hand, "literature" with a small 'l' is used in this study to refer to the imaginative/creative texts taught at the secondary school level as a component of the IEC (after Mc Rae 1991). This component is taught and examined as an integral part of the English language syllabus.

d) Traditional Approach (TA) Vs The Reader-Text Interactive Approach (RTIA)

By TA I refer to a teaching strategy that mainly focuses on the examination, the teacher is central to the learning process and was used when Literature was taught as an independent subject. The RTIA is a pedagogical approach that aims at involving the learner in the process of studying literature through interactive activities and marrying language with literature. The aim is to acquaint the learners not just with the literary knowledge about the texts but with the linguistic skills that are in use in such texts.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background to the study, discussed the justification and outlined the objectives of the study. The research questions, possible limitations to the study and assumptions made have been highlighted. The study has concluded with the definition of certain terms considered pertinent to the study. In the next chapter, the focus shifts the research context: a detailed description of the English curriculum in Kenya secondary schools.

Chapter 2: The educational context of the research

2.0 Introduction

In order to understand the educational context of this research, a general overview of the education system in which the study was undertaken is necessary. In this chapter, a brief summary of Kenya's education system is given. This is followed by a detailed discussion regarding the place of English language in Kenya's education system and the Integrated English course syllabus and course objectives in particular. Because of the emphasis placed on examinations in Kenya at all levels of education, I have included a short treatise on the nature and scope of the English examination in the KCSE. The chapter concludes with a focus on the teething problems facing the IEC and hence providing a pedagogical rationale for the present study.

Currently, Kenya follows a national curriculum under the 8-4-4 system of education. Some private schools however follow the British Education system and therefore offer A-levels in their curriculum. But these are few and far between. The official curriculum is decided on by the MoE through the KIE. English, Mathematics and Kiswahili are compulsory subjects at the secondary school level. Other subjects include Sciences, Humanities, and Technical and Applied studies. All subjects in these categories are optional in Forms 3 and 4 and are only taken by candidates based on given guidelines from the MoE and KNEC.

Three issues run through this chapter: why the MoE decided to integrate the English Language and Literature in English at the secondary school level; the best way teachers can bridge the gap between teaching the IE with a view to ensuring children pass

examinations on one hand, and teaching with a view to imparting life-long language skills as stated in the syllabus on the other; and finally the role of teachers in the implementation of the integrated curriculum considering the fact that they have often been blamed for the poor incessant results in the subject (Kioko, 2003).

2.1 An outline of the education system in Kenya

The history of Kenya's *formal* education system can be seen rightly in three phases: colonial, post-colonial and current trends. But it has to be noted that Kenya had an education system even before the arrival of the Europeans. This was traditional African education, whose key role was to train individuals to fit into their societies as useful members. Eshiwani (1993) avers that this kind of education provided the individual with skills, knowledge and values relevant to the day-to-day needs of the society. The teaching and learning took place informally and was mainly by word of mouth. Speaking and listening were the key linguistic skills one needed in order to communicate with others. Formal education, where the learning and teaching takes place in a school setup, was initially ushered in Kenya by Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. Basic reading and writing skills were first introduced in the English language programme in the country around that time (Ibid: 87).

Missionary education aimed at spreading Christianity, and had as its cardinal objective the need to enlighten Africans so that they could read the Bible and assist in spreading Christianity and the Western civilization to fellow Africans (Kivuva, 2003). There was need for the Kenyan Africans to be taught how to *speak, read* and *write* in English to enhance communication with missionaries and later colonial administrators. In view of

this the approach of teaching employed simply called for memorisation, recall and repetition of words without paying much attention to meaning (Ibid.). Missionaries controlled education to about 1911 when the colonial government stepped in.

The colonial legacy consisted of a racial system of education, education for exploitation of African labour and resources. This kind of education lacked comprehensive and integrated programmes for Africans. It is therefore not surprising that education was one of the areas that received immediate and deserved attention following Kenya's independence from Britain in 1963 (Eshiwani, 1993).

Since independence, there has been and there continues to be a rapid expansion of education in Kenya (Table 2.1 below refers). As a consequence, the country has witnessed momentous changes to her educational policy in order to meet the wider national goals and the ever growing demand for education.

Table 2.1: Education Enrolments in Kenya- 1960 -1995

	Enrolments	1960	1970	1978	1986	1995
Primary	'000s	781	1428	2995	4702	5536
	Gross Ratio	47	58	91	94	85
Secondary	'000s	20.1	129.8	370.5	457.8	632.4
	Gross ratio	2	9	18	20	24
Tertiary	'000s			9.9	21.8	41.8
	Gross Ratio	0	1	1	1	2

Source: Appleton et al (1999)

For instance, in 1960, there were only 781,000 pupils in primary schools but by 1995, the number had reached a staggering 5, 536,000, representing 608.8%! There were 20100 students in secondary schools in 1960 and in 1995; this number had soared to 632,400

accounting for an increase of 304% in enrolment over the years. There is no doubt that significant increase has also been registered at tertiary levels. This enormous increase in school enrolment consequently puts a lot of pressure on teachers at every level and calls for a corresponding increase in the number of teachers per school.

In the early years of independence like Uganda and Tanzania - her neighbours - Kenya relied mainly on foreign designed curriculum leading to Cambridge and London General Certificate of Education Examinations, and hence foreign syllabuses (Ngong'a, 2002). Later on various changes were made to the education system. The structure was changed and the 7-4-2-3-system was adopted – seven years of primary, four years of lower secondary, two years of upper secondary, and three years of university (see Table 2.2 below). A common curriculum was introduced in all Kenyan schools following the new changes.

Table 2.2: The 7-4-2-3 System of Education in Kenya

Level	Duration	Qualification
Primary	7 years	Certificate of Primary Education (CPE)
O-Level	4 years	Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE)
A-Level	2 years	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (KACE)
University	Minimum 3 years	Bachelor's Degree

Source: Eshiwani (1993)

A number of reforms have subsequently been undertaken in the education sector to ensure that the education system is in line with the changing national development goals. Changes in education are normally carried out by the KIE under the auspices of the

Ministry of Education. Established in 1964, the Institute has been instrumental in the preparation of new curriculum materials, revision of existing courses' content to match syllabus changes, co-ordination of programmes particularly in in-servicing of teachers and in initiating and promoting innovative practices that can improve the quality of education in the country (MoE, 1987).

The MoE through the KIE is charged with the responsibility of implementing all government policies relating to education. The Institute designs and produces the official curriculum for all public schools. It is the responsibility of the Ministry too to evaluate and harmonise changes to the educational curriculum as need arises. One of the major changes ever introduced in Kenya's education system since independence was the radical shift from the 7-4-2-3 education system to the current 8-4-4 system in 1985. This change had in particular far-reaching implications for the teaching and learning of English language and Literature in English as the subjects were known then.

Under the 7-4-2-3 system, the English language and Literature in English were taught and examined as two separate subjects. The former was compulsory for all learners both at Primary and at secondary level up to Form 4. The subject mainly focussed on the structural patterns of language involving speaking, listening, writing, grammar and comprehension. Literature in English was on the other hand optional and was only introduced to 'interested' students at Form 3 before they sat for their O-Level examination in Form 4. The consequence of this previous design was that learners hardly had enough time to read, appreciate and enjoy literary texts they were studying. All they did, as was observed in an earlier research (Lumala, 2003) was to "cram notes given to them by teachers in readiness for examination" (p.48).

The rationale for the present system was contained in a booklet provided by the MoE towards the close of 1984 (MoE, 1984). Eshiwani (1993:173) discusses in detail the various reasons that necessitated the shift from the 7-4-2-3 to the 8-4-4. First, the challenge for national development called for a change of the system, and the 8-4-4 was seen as a suitable response to this challenge, fully involving the youth in the country's endeavour to develop. The system was expected to fill in gaps that the previous education system did not (that is, responding to the needs of the country and its people).

Second there was a need for a more relevant curriculum. The 7-4-2-3 curriculum was viewed as not catering for the needs of most of the pupils enrolled. The country required a practical-oriented curriculum that would offer a wide range of employment opportunities and not just 'white-collared jobs'. Third, the 8-4-4 system was to ensure equitable distribution of education resources, such that all students had a chance to excel in national examinations regardless of their origin, creed, or race. Last but not the least, the new system was expected to ensure that students graduating at every level had some scientific and practical knowledge that could be utilized for self-employment, salaried employment or further training (Sifuna and Otiende, 1994; Eshiwani, 1993; MoE, 1984).

From the onset, the 8-4-4 system placed greater emphasis on practical and technical education as provided for in the McKay Report (1981) and was aimed at curbing the *examination-centred* teaching. To bring about this desired quality of education, across-the-board changes in the school curriculum were undertaken. Subjects were redesigned and developed to fit in with the philosophy and spirit of the new system: to make

learning as practical as possible (MoE, 1984). The secondary education in Kenya thus aims to:

a. lead to an all-round mental, social, moral and spiritual development of the learner;
b. prepare the leaner to make a positive contribution to the development of society;
c. enable the learner to choose with confidence and cope with vocational education after school;
d. build a firm foundation for further education;
e. ensure parity in the cognitive, psychomotor and affective skills for all students at this level in the country; and
f. lead to the acquisition of attitudes of national patriotism, self-respect, self-reliance, cooperation, adaptability, sense of purpose, integrity and self-discipline, respect and consideration for others, loyalty and service to home, society and the nation.

In order to accommodate the newly introduced technical subjects in the secondary school curriculum, some traditional subjects were combined into one examinable subject. One such move of relevant to this study was the combining of the English Language and Literature in English into the Integrated English Curriculum (IEC). But this change, while welcome, "came without being piloted in schools and teachers were hardly prepared, let alone consulted, for the radical decision" (Eshiwani, 1993: 179).

Given the short period between deciding to change the education systems and the time the new system was in place; there is no doubt about the fact that the Ministry did not adequately prepare teachers to handle the new changes to the curriculum nor is there any known evidence to show that teachers were given clear guidelines on how to integrate the two components at the classroom level other the syllabus than explaining the importance of integrating the two components and setting out objectives for the same. Consequently,

the Integrated English syllabus poses a significant challenge to the English teachers in the country. This is because a by Kioko and Muthwii (2001:207) observe, "It is the teacher's responsibility to work out ways of harmonising the teaching of English language and literature in the integrated approach to the teaching of English".

Unlike in other countries where curriculum change took place following many years of trialling and evaluation, (Braslarsky, 1999) it took a hurried political decision to change the education system in Kenya. In New Zealand, for instance, prior to 1991 when the country undertook curriculum reform, there had been continuous reviews many years throughout the 1980s (MoE- NZ, 2006). In addition, individual syllabi were also reviewed from time to time. This ended with the comprehensive curriculum revision implemented in the 1990s and continues to be revised to date. In the Kenyan case, the final decision was arrived at in 1984 and by 1985 the new system was already being implemented. The syllabus and books were quickly published and distributed to schools for mandatory implementation the same year. It is conceivable therefore that pedagogical problems being experienced today and the resultant poor performance by candidates in IEC in the KCSE by candidates can possibly not be avoided.

2.1 The Place of the English Language in Kenya's Education System

The prevailing language learning policy in Kenya recommends that at lower primary school level (Standards 1 to 3); the language of the learners' catchment areas is to be used as the medium of instruction (UNESCO/IRA, 2004). In view of this, schools in rural areas use mother tongue at this level, Kiswahili is used in urban areas and English in high-class schools, commonly known in Kenya as "Academies".

English language which is taught as a subject in lower primary becomes the language of instruction at upper primary (Standards 4 to 8), in secondary schools, tertiary colleges and at the university level. The primary English syllabus is set to enable all pupils to "acquire sufficient command of English in both spoken and written forms" by the end of the course (Ibid. p.7). On joining secondary schools, the learners are expected to be able to communicate fluently, follow subject courses and textbooks with ease and be in a position to read for pleasure and information in using the English language.

It is at the secondary level that learners are introduced to literary works. Before the demise of the former East African Community and with it the East African Examination Council, the approach to Literature education and assessment at secondary schools in the region was the same. The teaching and learning of Literature as a subject was not tied to the study of language and was only taken up in the third year of secondary school education (Mbaabu, 1996). As with the other two East African countries, Literature was optional in Kenyan secondary schools while the English language was compulsory. Five periods of forty minutes each were devoted to Literature each week at O-Level. For the two years (seventy two weeks) of study at this level, students thus spent two hundred and forty hours studying imaginative texts. Those who excelled in both the English Language and Literature in English were then expected to study Literature in English at A-Level where the English Language was not taught

With the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya and hence the IEC, further changes in the secondary school literature curriculum were effected (Ng'onga, 2002). The recommendation of the KIE in the syllabus is that literary studies should

commence in the first year of secondary education (Form 1), two periods of 40 minutes each (1 hour 20 minutes per week) should be devoted to literary studies. In the upper classes (Forms 3 and 4), four periods (2 hours 40 minutes) are recommended to be set aside for the study of the examination set books. Part of the problem that this study sought to investigate is whether the time allocated for the IEC in general is in fact adequate, and to find out how many of the 8 lessons allocated for English on the school timetable are set aside for the literature component by teachers.

In choosing to combine the English language and literature, the expectation was that, for example, a reading task will motivate a speaking and listening lesson, generate some items for grammar, lead to a measurable writing task besides developing various comprehensive skills. For these expectations to be realized, textbooks for the integrated syllabus were expected to take into account linkages (Kioko, 2003).

But why integrate? How did the MoE come to the decision that an IEC was suitable for Kenya secondary education? To answer these two questions, it is imperative to note that although the integrated course came into being following the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education, the Ministry had as early 1980 wanted to address the issue of teaching the English language and Literature as one subject. The Ministry had then posed a seminal question, "Is English one subject or two, i.e. Language and Literature?" (MoE, 1980). In responding to this question, the contributors to the Ministry's official handbook (MoE, 1980: xii-xiii) were emphatic about the significance of reading in the learning of not only language but of all other subjects in the school curriculum, stating as follows:

> We encourage the reading of literature throughout the secondary school for two vitally important reasons: the first is that literature is a source of

cultural knowledge...and has the capacity to enable young Kenyans to see themselves better in the world as a whole. The second reason is that wide reading would contribute greatly to fluency...and understanding of concepts in all fields of secondary education. The unique role of the language and literature teacher (and we believe he should be the same person) is to inculcate enduring human values as a necessary part of the solution of problems that man faces today....English teachers in Kenyan secondary schools must learn to use imaginative and appropriate literature from Form I onwards as the major means of learning the English language.

Apart from just contemplating the interrelationship between English language and literature, it is evident that the Ministry had aptly acknowledged the need for one teacher to teach both the English Language and Literature in English with a view to integrating them. The Ministry also appreciated the fact that the learning of Literature would be important in the learning of Language. We can therefore justifiably conclude that integrating the two subjects was as early as 1980 seen as vital even though it had not been given the name nor a pedagogical framework as it later happened.

The production of *A Handbook for Teachers of English in Secondary Schools in Kenya* by the KIE (1987) gave the name to the approach that had already been advocated for. The handbook sought to concretise the Integrated English Curriculum introduced earlier in 1985. Unfortunately this handbook neither gave adequate guidance to the teacher on how to integrate nor did it explicitly state what the term "integration" means in the context of the new curriculum. The closest it comes to defining this concept is by way of

explanation as to how the new syllabus should be implemented: "the integration of both language and literature in its broad sense implies that the same teacher will teach the same class both language and literature as a compact unit" (KIE, 1987: ix). This statement does not say much on what the teacher is expected to do. What if the teacher had no knowledge of one of the two subject components? This would mean one of the components would suffer at the hands of such a teacher. What does "compact unit" here mean?

It is obvious the Ministry was struggling to come to terms with the new curriculum design. In fact, as Kioko (2003) fittingly argues out, some of the words and phrases in the introduction of this handbook paint a negative picture of integration. Phrases such as "the teacher of English will be *forced* to...", "this onerous and difficulty task placed on the teacher of English is exacerbated by..." only succeed in painting the integrated English course as a burden to the teacher and not one he or she is trained to implement with ease at the classroom level.

Nevertheless, the current syllabus must be credited for acknowledging the interdependence in the teaching and learning of English language and Literature. The introduction to the KIE secondary English syllabus clearly states what *integration* means and the breakdown of the components shows complete integration. The syllabus defines the term 'integration' as "merging two autonomous but related entities in order to strengthen and enrich both" (KIE, 2002: 3). Through exposure to literature, reckons KIE the learners will improve their language skills:

> They will not only enrich their vocabulary but also learn to use language in a variety of ways. Similarly, an improved knowledge of the language

will enhance the learner's appreciation of literary material. Integration means no language skill should be taught in isolation. Listening, speaking, reading and writing skills should complement each other.

According to this syllabus, it is essential that some literary skills are covered in the teaching of listening and speaking, some in the teaching of reading and some in the teaching of writing. The teachers are further encouraged to be "very innovative as they think of the best ways of utilizing both literary and non-literary material to help the learner acquire grammatical competence" (KIE, 2002: 5).

As already observed following the introduction of the IEC, literature became a compulsory aspect of the English course. This as argued out in Chapter 3 is justifiable as there is sufficient theoretical basis for such an IA and there exists evidence of a positive correlation between studying literature and the learner's performance in English language in ESL contexts (Ndyatura, 1978 is a notable case).

One significant challenge to the new curriculum is that it is the teachers' responsibility to work out ways of harmonising the teaching of English language and literature. There is hardly any evidence to show that teachers were well prepared prior to the introduction of the new curriculum. There is further no research focused evidence outlining any possible impediments to this curriculum. It is with this in mind that this present study set out to identify the would-be limitations to the IEC and factors that have made it relatively hard for teachers to effectively implement the English syllabus and the basis of the IA.

2.3 The syllabus and the course objectives

The secondary school cycle of the 8-4-4 education system was introduced in schools in January 1986, following the adoption of the new system in 1985 at the primary school level. The development of the four-year secondary education was undertaken by the KIE which as earlier pointed out, designs syllabuses, publishes key classroom text books and decides which examination set books are to be studied for the KCSE Literature paper. The main objective of the secondary cycle, dubbed "Broad-based" by the Ministry (MoE, 1992:45), is to prepare the learner for self-reliance, training and further education. The curriculum is however said to have been designed to cater for the majority of students for whom secondary education will be terminal (Ibid.)

English, being a medium of instruction in Kenya school, is indeed a very important subject both to the general school curriculum and as service subject. For this reason the secondary school syllabus states that "fluency in all aspects of the English language will therefore enable the student to perform better in all other subjects" (MoE, 1992:45).There is no better way to achieve this fluency than to let them interact with the language through practical and creative tasks.

The MoE (1987) says the IEC is designed to fit in with the overall 8-4-4 secondary school syllabus. The revised syllabus (KIE, 2002) points out that those students who master English reap many academic, social and professional benefits. In the school setting, it is argued "proficiency in English will make the learning of other subjects much easier" (Ibid: p.3). The point being made here is that the learners' mastery of English language skills is not an end in itself as it were but has greater implications both at school

level and to the individual's participation in the wider society. Hence the teaching and learning of English should be channelled towards these ends.

The aims of language teaching in Kenya, as is characteristic with many other ESL countries (see Talif and Jayankaran, 1994) are generally defined in terms of four basic skills: speaking, listening (understanding speech), reading and writing. The syllabus emphasizes that language work should be contextualised so that vocabulary and grammar should as far as possible arise from a text and be developed by writing exercises (MoE, 1992). According to the KIE curriculum, there should be no such thing as a stand-alone vocabulary teaching lesson. Vocabulary is "best acquired in context through listening, speaking, reading and writing activities" (Ibid: p. 46) it is emphasised. This advice to the teachers implicitly signals the desired recognition of learner-based activities in contributing to the goals of the IEC at the secondary school level.

Specific language components are spelt out which need to be covered over the four years of secondary education. These are as follows:

a. Listening and speaking

Listening and speaking skills both play an important role in the social and academic life of a student. The IE syllabus recognizes this view with its assertion that an individual "who listens and speaks effectively is able to receive and respond to information appropriately" (KIE, 2002: 5). The two skills are also seen to contribute significantly to the development of reading and writing skills. It is thus expected that teachers of English at the secondary school level will make every effort to help the learner to acquire and

continually refine the two skills to enable each learner to interact with others effectively and confidently.

The syllabus further states that oral work should be used to help learners develop confidence in their ability to express themselves in English provide an opportunity for self-assessment of mistakes they make in spoken English, and lay a basic foundation for their studying of literature. Teachers are constantly advised not to concentrate on small errors of pronunciation that may affect confidence and interest in the language but instead to emphasize overall fluency in connected speech.

The "Speech work" section appears at the beginning of every Unit in the KIE published class text, *Integrated English: A Course for Secondary Schools,* running from Form I to Form 4. During the first two years, listening and speaking lessons mostly focus on major problem areas of pronouncing English words arising from the various ethnic languages spoken in the country. It is thus considered important for teachers to set aside time each week for oral practice with a view to encouraging pupils to have confidence in expressing themselves in English. It is expected that different sounds are practised through speech drills, debates, dramatisation and discussions. In *Integrated English: A Course for Secondary Schools, Pupils' Book 1,* for example, teachers are informed and invited to make use of materials on problematic sounds resulting from Mother Tongue Interference available from the Educational Media Service at the KIE. These materials include audio and video cassettes on debates, dialogues, impromptu speeches, and interviews.

At Forms 3 and 4, it is envisaged that the learners will have demonstrated some improvement in their pronunciation so that more emphasis is laid on general speech work rather than individual sounds. Learners at this level are expected to use a wider range of vocabulary in their speech and to show more confidence in expressing themselves intelligibly in English. In particular, the syllabus states that the learner needs to be "prepared for practical situations such as interviews, talks, discussions and speeches in general," (KIE, 1992:57).

b. Grammar

According to the KIE (2005:5), the chief objective of teaching grammar is to help students "understand how language works and to use it correctly and appropriately in different contexts." It is emphasized that whereas learning how rules operate is useful, it is even more important to know how to use the language in real-life situations. In other words, a learner who has mastered grammar is able to apply the rules to communicate in acceptable language forms with ease.

It is argued that grammar is best learnt as a structural framework for language, and therefore grammatical terms and structures should be taught in context. According to the syllabus, the grammar component of the language course should help the students to understand syntactical and structural elements such as "words, phrases, clauses, tenses, and parts of speech" (Ibid., p. 50). The expectation is that the study of grammar would help the learner to express him or herself clearly and vividly. This should also train him to "accurately and completely understand what s/he hears and reads."

It is assumed that most of the grammar work at Form 1 and 2 will have been dealt with in the primary school but at a lower level. In Forms 3 and 4, focus shifts to more advanced structures building on work covered in the junior forms. However, at this senior level, more emphasis is placed on using grammar arising from context.

c. Reading skills

The ability to read fluently is considered vital both in school and for life. Reading is considered as a very important component of language learning at all levels of secondary education. This is because reading helps in information gathering and learning of concepts. Through reading, the learner is exposed to new vocabulary, new sentence structures and different registers. According to the syllabus, reading also acquaints the learner with varying models of language use.

In this regard, teachers are called upon to devise strategies that will make reading interesting and fulfilling. It is recommended that reading skills be developed through the study of literature. At the secondary school level, reading is divided into two sections: intensive and extensive. The former aims at enhancing the learners' ability to read, comprehend extracts, and remember the important elements of a passage, poem or dramatic extracts. Extensive reading on the other hand enhances the gradual development of both linguistic and literary skills.

d. Writing skills:

Writing is an advanced skill that has wide-ranging implications for the way we think and learn. Writing also encourages learners to be organized, logical and creative in the way

they think. Learners should be helped to acquire skills that will enable them to express their ideas clearly and effectively in writing.

The syllabus places a lot of emphasis on encouraging the learners to achieve competence in writing using the language structures they have learnt. It is the teacher's responsibility to design tasks that will lead to gradual development of the learner's writing ability.

Significantly, the place of literature in this integrated syllabus is explicitly stated:

"It is important to note that literature is part and parcel of language learning. Reading can help the learner to develop vocabulary use and sentence structure. Literature also helps learners to appreciate their cultural values, as well as those of others" (MoE, 1992: 45).

The introduction to the revised English syllabus (KIE, 2005) makes this much clearer. It is pointed out that the integration of English language and literature is for the mutual benefit of both components. It is further noted that teaching language structures in isolation is not only boring, but also tends to produce learners who lack communicative competence.

In view of these general aims, the syllabus sets out the work that should be covered at two levels: Forms 1 and 2 and later Forms 3 and 4 with varying degree of content. Generally, and in line with the aforementioned national objectives of education, it is expected that by the end of the 4-year course the learner should be able to:

a. listen with understanding and speak fluently in English in a variety of contexts;

b. read intensively and extensively;

c. write clearly and correctly for a wide variety of purposes and functions;

d. use effectively the main structure of English by writing logically and coherently on a given topic;

e. understand a passage by following its content, arguments and narrative sequence and be able to infer information, meanings, attitudes and intentions and present such information in a variety of ways;

f. use correctly and effectively a wide range of vocabulary mastered during the course;

g. demonstrate acceptable habits both in spoken and written communication;

h. recognise technical and specialised registers in language and attain some facility in their usage;

i. identify and appreciate his cultural foundations as expressed in both oral and written literature;

j. understand and appreciate the literature of the peoples of East Africa, Africa and the rest of the world;

k. relate literature to his everyday experience;

l. show a deeper insight in the appreciation of literature in English by applying his creative and critical thinking;

m. maintain the habit of wide reading for information, pleasure and as a firm foundation for language improvement;

n. make effective use of English in the study of other subjects in the curriculum and in the development of further learning; and

o. appreciate the importance of English as a tool of fostering understanding among the peoples of the world.

There is a sense in which these objectives clearly illustrate the Ministry's endeavour to engender integration between English language and literature at the classroom level. Objective h) and m), in particular, are indicators of the Ministry's justification for the Integrated English Curriculum. But it is one thing to have clear objectives and to spell out the case for integration. It is all together another thing to have this syllabus implemented in the desired manner in the classroom. The perpetual poor performance by learners in the KCSE examination raises the issue of effective implementation of the curriculum.

2.4 Guidebooks

Due to a number of factors surrounding the teaching of literary works in secondary schools, many learners heavily rely on guidebooks (Mwangi, 2002a and 2002b; Mboya, 2002). Guidebooks refer to commentaries or booklets written by literary critics on selected texts with a view to supplementing the teacher's notes. They provide summaries and notes on key issues expected of candidates in the KCSE English literature paper. The issues covered by guidebooks are always the same: plot, themes, characters and characterisation, and stylistic devices found in the set books.

Every time the Ministry of Education has prescribed a new set of examinable texts, writers have hurried to come up with guidebooks. As a result teachers and learners alike have in some way or other relied on such books as they prepare for KCSE examination in the selected literary texts. Indeed, very few students ever sit for the KCSE English Paper 3 (Literature in English) before reading some guidebook of one kind or another (Ng'onga, 2002). The reality of this fact is best captured in the words of Professor Helen

Mwanzi in her justification for writing a guidebook for one of the KCSE examinable anthologies as presented by Kabaji (2003b):

> I know teachers are doing a good job out there but I also know that students need a guide book they can refer to on their own. I thought that we have students who do not have teachers for one reason or another. Such students need a real useful guidebook, which can help them...come the exams, they should be at home.
>
> *(East African Standard, 30th March 2003)*

From this assertion, it is unmistakable that guidebooks are necessary not just as a reference resource but most importantly to 'help' as many candidates as possible to pass the examination. A writer of a guidebook sees the teacher in terms of giving students notes about the set books and in the teacher's absence, the guidebook can play that role. The irony of this is that writers of guide books make no mention of the importance of the literary texts being studied except for isolated quotations as would be needed in examinations. Because of their very examination-oriented nature, guidebooks have ended up enslaving students instead of allowing them the opportunity to interact with the actual texts. There is an overwhelming sense of 'correctness' and 'finality in the guidebooks that not even teachers are prepared to go against the views held by the authors of such guidebooks. If they help learners pass examinations, then why not? After all, 'good teaching' is measured by the number of students passing the national examinations in a given subject, according to KNEC (2000).

What has encouraged the over-reliance on guidebooks is the fact that in many secondary schools, there are hardly enough set texts. Students are required to buy their own books yet majority of them can not afford. The schools that can afford may have three to four

pupils sharing a book. Thus, many students in Kenya end up sitting their KCSE without ever having read the texts but the guidebooks and teachers' notes. Given the focus on the plot of stories or a text, characterisation, themes and style in all KCSE literature examination papers, one can not rule out the possibility of learners sitting for and passing an examination without actually reading the recommended texts.

The main limitation of guidebooks is that they seem to go against the very tenets of the IE syllabus. They do not give room for the learner to practice the four skills of teaching English at this level except for writing in the form of copying notes. The communication process is one way and *non-interactive*. All students need do is to memorise the commentaries and the notes given by the teachers in time for the examination.

At the same time, guidebooks are likely to encourage rote learning. This entails memorizing something "by heart, exactly as it appears in a textbook or in teachers' notes" (World Book International, 1992:89). Te achers test the students' learning by asking them to reproduce the given notes as exactly as presented to them in class. Such a teaching strategy hardly leaves room for learners' creativity and originality in their response to literary works and hence goes against the spirit of the integrated curriculum.

It is no wonder there have been complaints by Kenyan university lecturers on the rising cases of regurgitation and memorization among their students – rather than information processing and creativity with language (UNESCO/IRA, 2004: 8). It appears that while candidates may perform well in examinations and qualify for university education, their proficiency in English remains wanting and calls for measures at secondary level to reverse the trend.

2.5 Teething problems with the Integrated English Curriculum

Although the IEC was introduced with the main aim of improving learners' fluency and mastery of English, this has not been the case. Performance in the subject has remained poor over the years as explained in the next section. The IEC has met with a lot of criticism (KIE, 2002), with some educationists calling for its' being scrapped (Partington, 2003; and Kabaji, 2003). A number of arguments have been advanced for this claim.

First and foremost, it has been argued that the current curriculum was introduced in a hurry and not enough attention was given to the teachers' ability to implement the radically different syllabus (UNESCO/IRA, 2004 and Kioko, 2001). Second, it is noted that the training teachers had received was not adequate enough to enable them implement the integrated approach to teaching the two components.

My own professional training as a teacher of English at the secondary level may attest to this fact. Though we were required to study both English language and Literature while training as teachers at the university, one finds that our course reflected nothing closer to integration. We were taught English in the English Department, Literature by the Literature Department, then the Teaching Methods for Literature by the Literature Specialists in the Department of Educational Communication and Technology and English Special Methods by the English Methods specialists in the same department. Simply put, we were trained in two different subjects to go and teach them as one subject at secondary level! This still remains the practice in all our public universities (Muiruri,

2002 and Jaolo, 2002).This necessitated the current study's concern with teacher's qualifications in relation to their predisposition towards the IEC.

Teachers' inability to effectively handle the integrated syllabus at the classroom level is to this extend not entirely their mistake but goes back to the training they received at the teacher training institutions. In fact, Jaolo (2002) rightly postulates that university lecturers, while blaming secondary school teachers for ill-preparing learners for further education, have themselves contributed to the decline in literature education in the county. This has been through discouraging student teachers from reading anything else but the lecture notes. As teacher-trainees, we were made to value to reproducing the lecture notes in examinations almost flawlessly. Notably, the writer avers that students who try to demonstrate that they read beyond the lecturer's notes are often punished by being awarded very low scores in University exams. The concern here is whether a teacher-trainee who has undergone such form of rote-learning can be expected to be any different once in his classroom teaching.

The current study took into cognizance the fact that majority of the teachers of English at the secondary level in Kenya today went through this kind of training. Their views and opinions on how the IEC could be effectively and successfully implemented would thus be significant. The extent to which teachers are prepared to handle the integrated curriculum is particularly an important aspect of this thesis. This goes back to the fact that whenever results have been released and showed poor performance in English, it is teachers who have often been blamed for the low standards.

As already pointed out, the 8-4-4 was launched hurriedly and without adequate preparation of teachers (Kivuva, 2003). The readiness of teachers to handle the 8-4-4 curriculum was particularly important in the case of teachers of English. This is because the IEC required that a teacher handles both language and literature and hence making new for classroom teaching skills.

But teachers are not the only hindrance to the effective implementation of the IEC. At the end of the four-year course, candidates are awarded one grade for English in KCSE examination. But just like in the teaching, KNEC has over the years differentiated between the English language and literature examination papers. The concern here is that a candidate who is good at literature for example may have his or her grade affected by the low score in English language and vice-versa. The final grade for English would be a true reflection of the candidate's ability if the two components – English language and literature - were wholly integrated.

The time allocated for English on the school timetable is another issue worth considering. According to the syllabus, teachers are called upon to divide the time allocated for English "well enough to be able to cover each aspect of language and literature adequately," (KIE, 1992: 47). There are six periods on the timetable in Forms 1 and 2 and eight periods a week in Forms 3 and 4. Each period normally lasts 40 minutes. It is suggested that in the lower forms, language takes four periods and literature two. In upper Forms, it is recommended that language and literature be allocated four periods each. No rationale is given as to why the language component should have more lessons than literature in Forms 1 and 2. It is this kind of shortcoming that gives rise to criticism such that voiced by Partington (2003) when he argues that under the IEC, the language

component is given greater priority over literature because of the its perceived relative importance. At best this differentiation should not be there. The two components should be fused and teachers allowed the discretion to plan lessons from an integrated approach.

This brings into mind the issue of timetabling. Is the timetable reflective of the need to integrate language and literature? Are there separate lessons for English language and literature? If so, how many of the weekly lessons are allocated for either? It is the Ministry's wish that the same teacher handles both language and literature in each class. Is this the practice in fact? If not, how does this impact on the implementation of the IEC? Do the teachers have any biases for either language or literature? These are questions that provided a basis for the feedback from teachers. Their person responses go a long way in shaping the recommendations ultimately made by the study.

It must be pointed out, however, that even if the teacher training programmes, the textbooks, the selected literature texts, the school timetable and examinations get 'integrated', the actual work of integration has to take place in the classroom where the learner has to be involved. It is what the teacher does with the texts during a lesson that would help enhance learner awareness of both the language and literary skills as outlined in the syllabus.

At the launch of the new syllabus effectively, there was the need not only for pre-service training, but more importantly in-service training opportunities for teachers of English already in the field. Teaching is a career that needs constant development (Nunan, 2001), particularly where new changes are introduced in an education system. Professional development in such a situation would involve opportunities for teachers to attend

seminars and conferences, where they would share ideas with one another from the vantage point of classroom experiences. The challenge, as aptly put by a recent World Bank (World Bank, 2005), is generally not the availability of newly trained teachers but improving the quality of the available teaching force in terms of qualifications, experience and competence.

A component of student-centred learning should ideally be an integral part of teacher-training programmes, so that teachers learn to give students more learning opportunities in the classroom in the light of the IEC. This would help such teacher-trainees see the importance of a participatory, nay interactive approach, to teaching and learning of language and literary texts in the classroom.

Indeed as clearly stated in the English syllabus, the IEC in Kenya calls for a teaching approach that combines linguistic skills and literary texts in a close association with each other. Given the fact that the learning of imaginative texts calls for the learner's ability to interpret and respond to texts using language (Widdowson, 1978), teachers use of the traditional approach as later discussed in chapter 3 appears not to take into account the current syllabus requirements. Unless teachers embrace the spirit of the new syllabus and hence adopt suitable classroom pedagogy, the possibility of improved performance in the KCSE English examination may remain a mirage for many students for a long time.

This conclusion is based on the fact that under the traditional way of teaching imaginative texts, the learner's freedom to express any genuinely personal opinion is curtailed by the teacher's unassailable presence. Partington (2003) confirms this view

and adds that under the present arrangement in Kenya's secondary schools, students are not allowed to deviate from certain responses as they answer literature questions.

It is not surprising that despite the official policy by KIE advocating for the teaching and learning of both language and literature from an IA, actual classroom practice and the examinations administered appear to be an adherence to the old separatist approach rather than integrative approach: 'divide and pass exams' kind of situation. As observed earlier in this section there still appears a clear-cut distinction between the language and literature both on the timetable and teaching in schools. Hence this study which, as stated in the objectives attempts not only to bring out the bottlenecks to the IEC from the teachers' point of view, but most importantly illustrates a pedagogical approach in the classroom that could help bridge the gap between language and literature, teachers and learners, and significantly learners and texts within our education system.

2.6 The English examination in the KCSE

The importance of examination in any education system can not be overstated. In Kenya, the secondary school leaving examination is in form of a national examination (KCSE) sat for by all candidates at the end of the four-year secondary education cycle. The examination is set and administered by the KNEC .The Examination Council is the only body formally entrusted with the national assessment of learners at all levels, including tertiary institutions but for Universities.

According to KNEC, the KCSE English examination sets out to test the "candidates' understanding of the conventions in use as well as the candidates' capacity to apply them

in their attempt to convey meaning," (KNEC, 1992; 1). This implies that the candidates must not only be able to recognise the tokens of language and how they have been employed by others (in factual and literary usage) but they must be able to demonstrate adequately their own mastery of the application of similar skills in communicating their own views, ideas, feelings and responses. Underlying this expectation is the assumption that learners have been actively involved in learning and applying these skills while learning English during their 4-year course.

KNEC has organised the English examination in three different but related papers. This, the council, says is to be able to give the candidates ample opportunity to display their linguistic knowledge and capabilities in various ways. The three papers are:

English 101/1- The Composition Paper

English 101/2- The English Language (Summary, Comprehension and Grammar)

English 101/3- Literature in English (Examining literary awareness of the candidates in The Novel, Poetry, Short Stories, Drama and Oral Literature).

These papers test the candidates' knowledge of "grammatical, communicative and literary skills of the language. These include the candidates' ability and capacity to comprehend the input stimulus and instructions thereof as well as productive skills" (KNEC, 2001: 1).

As illustrated in Table 2.3 below, performance has English is generally below average over the years. It has been constantly pointed out by KNEC in its annual Examination Reports that this negative tendency in he subject needs to be checked. To do this the

Council has annually pointed to the – teachers' curriculum areas that require serious attention (KNEC, 1998)

Table 2.3: Mean Scores in KCSE English Examination from 1989 to 1999

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
No of candidates	131,805	133,897	134,876	136,522	140,825	142,211	139,780	155,148	156,714	168,398	172,883
Mean Score (%)	28.45	24.10	25.15	32.45	32.80	28.15	27.80	31.90	34.63	34.12	31.30

Source: KNEC KCSE Examination Reports (Various).

From 1989 when the IEC was first examined to 1999, the highest national mean score recorded in KCSE English examination was 34.63% in 1997. Five years had their mean scores below 30% with the worst average mean score having been registered in 1990 with just 24.10%. According to the examination council, (KNEC, 1990; 5) the poor performance in English was mainly due to the following factors:

1. Inability by candidates to infer meaning from the context and to explain the meanings of phrases integral to the meaning of the texts;
2. Narrow vocabulary range;
3. Lack of exposure to wide reading and
4. Candidates being generally ill-prepared for the examination.

The literature paper is reported by the council to contribute significantly to the poor performance in the subject. Given the thrust of the present study, a closer look at how the literature paper fairs on in the KCSE examination is considered necessary at this point.

The literature paper tests a number of literary abilities and capabilities. It focuses on the candidate's:

a. awareness of the various genres and their specific demands;
b. awareness of the development of plots, themes and the terminologies required in the discussion; and
c. capacity to comprehend and answer questions on various literary works.

To measure these abilities, learners are tested in five areas of literature at the end of their Form 4.Table 2.4 below shows individual question performance in the five areas tested in the paper:

Table 2.4: The mean scores in KCSE Paper 101/3 in 1997

Question Genre	(1) The Novel	2 (a) Short Story	2 (b) Short Story	3 (a) Drama	3 (b) Drama	4 Oral Lit.	5 Poetry
Mean Score	9.25	2.40	2.71	3.15	3.73	9.98	5.48
Maximum Score	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

. *Source:* KNEC (2000: 12*)*

From the table above, it can be seen that oral literature posted the highest average score of 9.98 marks out of a maximum 20 marks during the year. Questions on the Short Story genre were the worst performed with a mean score of 2.55. Drama and Poetry similarly recorded poor scores in the examination that year. The same weak results obtained in the 1998 examination with candidates performing badly in nearly all the five genres as can be seen in Table 2.5 below

Table 2.5: The mean scores in KCSE English Paper 101/3 in 1998

Question Genre	(1) The Novel	2 (a) Short Story	2 (b) Short Story	3 (a) Drama	3 (b) Drama	4 Oral Lit.	5 Poetry
Mean Score	3.94	3.78	4.61	4.33	4.39	2.92	7.65
Maximum Score	20	20	20	20	20	20	20

Source: KNEC (2000: 14)

The performance in this paper was still below par especially with regard to questions focussing on The Novel, with a significant drop in Oral literature (from 9.98 out of 20 the previous year to 2.92 out of 20 in 1998) and the Short Story.

In an effort to curb the poor performance, KNEC advises that "teachers should attempt to cover all aspects of the syllabus and in addition drill the candidates in examination techniques" (KNEC, 1990; 5). The council further avers that if performance seems dismal, this may have to do with among other things, the preparedness/ and /or preparation of the candidates. "Year in year out we have pointed out that the candidates come to the examination without thorough knowledge of the texts under examination" (KNEC, 1998; 8). Teachers are blamed of having ignored to teach examination techniques and of "selective teaching omitting certain genres" (Ibid, p.9). In fact, the KNEC insists that candidates need to be reminded of examination techniques every time, as part of the teaching process.

Following continued dismal performance in English in general and the literature paper in particular, the Council recommends this "Teachers should ensure that candidates have read and re- read the prescribed texts and that they know their text well....." and warns

teachers to desist from the habit of "question spotting" (KNEC, 2000; 17). Implicit here is the fact that teachers are to be held responsible for the negative results of their students. Indeed as pointed out by UNESCO/IRA (2004), it appears that teachers teach literary texts mainly for examinations. And if this is it appears to be so the case yet students continue to perform below par, then this TA is questionable, and perhaps inappropriate. There must be a limitation in the way the teaching takes place. The over-emphasis on rote learning can mostly result in "the lack of creativity, communicative competence and independence among learners" (Ibid: p.6). At the same time, because of the overwhelming emphasis placed on the need to pass examinations, students read less, and most of them no longer read for pleasure.

2.6 Conclusion

It is clear from this chapter that English plays a pivotal role in Kenya's Education System. While the IA to teaching both English language and literature came in place following the adoption of the 8-4-4 system was welcome, performance in the IEC continues to be below average. There is clearly an overwhelming emphasis on pupils' performance in examinations and teachers have had to bear the brunt for the dismal results.

Unfortunately, because of this significance placed on final examinations, teaching priorities are dictated by the desire to complete the syllabus and to get the candidates ready for the examination. As a consequence, all too often students end up "leaving school unable to communicate orally in English even if they have managed to pass the examination" (Wills, 1981; 43).

It is apparent that teaching of literary texts mainly for examination has not brought about the anticipated mastery of the linguistic and literary skills. There is therefore a justified need to rethink the way this aspect of the curriculum is handled at the classroom level. The RTIA is one step in this direction.

Chapter 3: Review of Related Literature

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to review the related literature with regard to how the teaching of imaginative texts in ESL contexts is linked to English language learning, taking into consideration how such an approach could be made viable in the context of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools.

In particular, I will examine what has been said about using learner activities in the teaching of creative texts in schools. Text selection is a key element in this research. A review of possible criteria for text selection is therefore addressed here. Although the research did not entail testing of pupils, the interface between classroom teaching and the demands made of pupils in examinations is addressed. This is because I hold the view that meaningful teaching would most likely result in improved performance among learners. Finally, research studies related to the interactive approach to teaching imaginative texts undertaken in other countries are reviewed and relevant issues highlighted.

3.1 Why Literature in Language Teaching?

For decades now, there has been and continues to be a growing advocacy of the use of literature in the language teaching (Widdowson, 1975; Brown and Yule, 1983; Ellis and Tomlinson, 1980 Barrow and Milburn, 1986; and Carter and Long, 1991, among others). In a number of countries for example Turkey (Timucin, 2000), Malaysia (Talif, 1992) Hong Kong (Chan, 1994), Luxembourg (Campell, 1992), and Kenya (Kioko, 2001) literature has come to be generally linked with the English language curriculum albeit

with varying degree of success. In other countries (as in Malaysia), the English language class has been separate from the Literature class with the two areas being treated as independent subjects – with an emphasis on "the study of literature for literature's sake" (Ali, 1995:54). In this case, it is argued by Ali that students should take Literature only when they felt they could cope with the "language of Literature". This begs the question: is the language taught in the language classes different from the language used in literary texts? Is it to be assumed, for instance, that a literature student need not make recourse to the linguistic repertoire acquired in the language lessons and vice-versa? The single probable answer to both questions is 'No.'

Today it is widely acknowledged that literature has an essential relationship with our daily experiences and uses language as its vehicle of communication (Talif, 1992). But the relationship between language and literature is best described by Wellek and Warren (1963: 22) who indicated that "language is the material of literature as stone or bronze is of sculpture, paints of pictures, or sounds of music" If language is the material for literature, it is important that the study of literature should draw attention to language use more than anything else. This seems to have been the basis upon which the MoE in Kenya pegged its decision to integrate the two subjects.

This view is emphatically echoed by Alam (2002:123) who contends that "the teaching of language at intermediate and advanced levels can benefit from greater integration of literary study and language study." It makes sense from a Kenyan perspective when the writer argues further that the task of postcolonial language pedagogy in ESL contexts should be to break free of ill-advised divides created between language and literature, to pay more attention to language in its most alive form as embodied in literary texts. To try

to teach the English language without any connection to literature in English and vice-versa is doomed to failed, concludes Alam. But the traditional distinction between 'what' is and 'what is not' literature restricts the teaching and learning of literature to factors beyond language (After Ellis, 1987):

- *history*: information about the times in which the work is set;
- *author*: Information about literary movements and the life and times of the author;
- *structure*: This entails focus on literary techniques, form and type (often referred to as style);
- *themes*: ideas or information expressed or provoked by the literary text; and
- *characterisation*: who the people in the story are and what they do or say

Of those these are important issues to think about but from IEC, the issues do not add value to integration. Ellis's views on the relationship between the English language and literature echo similar sentiments by Brumfit and Carter (1986), Long (1986), and are also echoed by Eaglestone (2000). In their treatise of this subject, Brumfit and Carter (1986) argue that literature can encourage the ability in the students to infer meanings by interacting with the text. Later Bassnett and Grundy (1993) added their voice to this school of thought by stating that:

> When we teach literature, what we are actually teaching is highly skilful language usage, and as we read literary texts we can study the ways in which a craftsman can shape language and make it richer and more powerful. When we teach English, we are not only teaching language but we are also teaching students about what language can do. (p.7)

Through the study of literature, it is argued by the two authors and many writers on the subject (West, 1994; McRae 1996, and Walsh, 2003 to name a few), the learner has the opportunity to search backwards and forwards in the text for linguistic clues which would

help him or her to decipher the content of the text. Walsh (2003) particularly emphasizes that interaction is central to teaching and learning in L2 classroom context. He points to the currently held and pretty well-documented view that learning (in a formal L2 classroom context) occurs through talk which is jointly done by teachers and learners (Widdowson, 1987; Harmer, 1987; and Lee, 1998). He further emphasises that the quality of teacher talk being more important than its quantity.

Hence in a number of ESL contexts, teachers would benefit from the use of literature to assist the development of oral and written competence in the English language by facilitating greater learner involvement than is the case today. Imaginative texts if handled carefully should be able to offer immediate context for exemplification and discussion of linguistic items and how these items do contribute to the overall meaning of a given text.

On his part, Long(1986) sees the relationship between language and literature teaching as one involving the development of sensitivity to language and how words are weaved together to arrive at meaning. In this case, it appears to me that teaching literature as a 'dry' subject without paying attention to the writer's use of language would inhibit learner creativity and consciousness and reduce their interest in the reading process.

Literary texts offer an unlimited resource of authentic, unmodified language for the learners to be exposed to, adds Evangelia (2003). This exposure to language in creative use along with the negotiation of meanings potentialities of the texts as envisaged in an interactive lesson assist learners to expand and appreciate their level of language awareness. In the process, it is further hoped that the learners would be able to develop

their language competence and become acquainted with the use of words much more freely to create desired meaning. Through their involvement with the text, the students learn to express their feelings and thoughts and to share them with their fellow learners on a regular basis.

As the language used in literary texts does not necessarily conform to the conventions of English grammar and syntax, the argument that learners are exposed to the deviant language of many literary works has been put forward (Jaolo, 2002). Literary works may use deviant language, but on the other hand, it can also be argued that the exposure to deviant language leads the learners to expand their language awareness and hence make them conscious of what is standard and non-standard means of conveying an idea. At the same time, it must be recalled that deviancy is relative depending on the context and the users. For example, an advert on a city transport bus in UK goes:

Dnt b wstfl

This is a marketing strategy to pass the message that people should find out what time the bus is expected at a particular stage instead of wasting time standing at a bus stop. Now the phrase 'Dnt b wstfl' certainly does not conform to the conventional English spellings we know! But the objective of the advertisement is to draw the reader's attention and arrest his interest in decoding this strange message. The satisfaction that comes with knowing what the message is certainly makes one hid the advice: 'Don't be wasteful!' and text the company to find out time for next bus. Hence not what is written but how it is written and why makes all the difference here. The same could be said of the deviant language in literary texts. To know that the use of a particular word is peculiar implicitly means the reader knows the normal usage.

The hallmark of learner interaction with the text and amongst them about the text is that through this involvement, they learn to express their feelings and thoughts uninhibited and to share these with their fellow learners. Making them talk about the text they are studying brings them closer to understanding without worrying too much about the 'unfamiliar' words or what the teacher has to say as they can share many ideas on their own.

That the MoE in Kenya understands the value of an integrated approach to teaching English language and literature is not in doubt. As already pointed out, the Ministry came up with a syllabus that clearly addresses the need for integration and spells out what teachers should be doing and at what level. But it is one thing to come up with notional aims and objectives of what should constitute the teaching of English language and literature; it is altogether another to put policy precepts into practice. The issues involved for any effective implementation of a curriculum innovation are far less simple than the writing of a syllabus can achieve. What goes on in the classroom ultimately marks the success or failure of such an innovation.

This brings us to the question of 'approach'. The syllabus calls for an 'integrated approach' to teaching the two components. The importance of an Approach (or method) is, according to Moody (1983:23), to provide a "framework, or sequence of operations to be used when we come to actualities." There is need to consider what framework is in place to facilitate the realization of the objectives of the IEC, if there is any.

3.2 Approaches to Teaching Creative Texts in the Classroom in ESL contexts

The teaching of creative texts in the classroom can be viewed from two perspectives: the traditional approach that sees literature as a closed entity and now the growing tendency to language based approaches that recognise the stated linkage between language and literature. Efforts to embrace the latter approach have met with resistance in some countries where the TA remains entrenched. In other countries such as Kenya, the integration between the English language and literature remains theoretical. In the next section, I take a closer look at the prevailing TA vis-à-vis the proposed RTIA to teaching two components.

3.2.1 The Traditional Approach (TA)

The TA to teaching literature entails a focus on the teacher. This approach views the teacher as the "active transmitter of knowledge and the students the passive recipients" (Timucin, 2000:51). The approach emphasizes the notion that the text is a body of knowledge which has to be imparted and conveyed to the students to be memorised and reproduced when the situation, usually in the form of examinations, requires it (Carter and Walker, 1989).

Here the burden of communicating the course content resides primarily with the teacher (Felder and Brent, 1996) who has to plan for the lesson by reading the text and then making summary notes for the learners. In class, the teacher asks the class to read the text either silently or aloud in turns. Once the reading is over, the teacher then leads the class in key aspects of the text which he considers 'important' for the learners to know if they have to pass their examination at the end of the four-year course at the secondary level.

He would then end the lesson by giving individualised assignments to test learners' understanding.

Hardly are the students given opportunities to be active participants in the lesson. Their views only come in form of asking a question, which rarely happens in the case of Kenyan learners' context for fear of being reprimanded by the teacher. Hence the teacher does everything and learners look up to him or her to tell them what they ought to 'know' about the literary text being studied. Getting students to respond to teacher questions, even just to indicate problems in a comprehension or grammar session, is a problem many teachers face under the TA.

In his article entitled "And now for something not completely different: an approach to language through literature", Tomlinson (1998) describes a rather illuminating version of a teaching methodology - one where the teacher and the students do not seem to communicate meaningfully, with the teacher being the 'dominating expert' interrogating diminished learners on literature, a subject they think is hard and at a great distance from their lives. This is an interesting analogy with the teaching of literature at secondary level in the Kenyan context.

Often as Tomlinson (1998:177) puts it, the teacher has studied the text or has some notes from a guidebook or seminars on 'what examiners look for' and so knows the 'right' answers- what is expected in examinations; the learners are reluctant participants in their quest to pass examinations and have to accept everything given to them by the teacher as the gospel truth! The consequence of such a teacher-centred, examination-pegged, approach is failure by the system to engage the learners' minds or to interest them in

reading literature. The teacher's interpretation and emphasis is often from his or her own perceptions. Learners have to merely receive and be prepared to regurgitate the teacher's thoughts when asked in an examination. This passive learning is not suited for the Integrated English syllabus.

Traditionally, literature is defined by genre (novels, poetry, short stories, plays), by time periods (Elizabethan, Victorian, Twentieth Century), by nationality (British, African, American), or by quality (traditional and classics). In an article "Literature: a broader distinct definition", Talif (1992) argues that such fervent definition of literature though justifiable from the traditional view point of literary criticism, do not negate the fact that language is at the core of literature not. The writer thus proposes that the study of literature should be viewed as an approach to reading which entails not just interaction between the teacher, the text, and the reader (in this case the learner) with attention being paid to how the writer uses language to convey the message. The potential implications of such a premise are best understood by looking at the current practice of teaching imaginative texts in many countries, and in Kenya in particular

Based on the traditional definition of literature such as those outlined above,, teachers often impose strict limits on the kind of input they give to the learner, and the expected output when handling literary texts in the classroom. There is little room for manoeuvring, as will be demonstrated later in chapters 5 and 6 with every single lesson geared towards examinations. No chance seems to be available for the learner to view the texts from his or her own standpoint. The end result is that the learner's attention observed by Widdowson (1978) is hardly directed to language aspects arising from the literary texts being studied. This makes it difficult, if not near impossible, for the pupils

to develop an ability to respond to any unfamiliar text in an authentic way. All the time they have to depend on the teacher. In the absence of the teacher, the school leaver is likely to become incapacitated linguistically.

Under the TA, there is a general presupposition that the study of literature calls for a proper mastery of the intricacies of language and an inherent interpretive ability on the part of the learner as to be able to decipher the writer's message and how he brings it out. TA is strongly pegged upon stylistic analysis of literary works. Stylisticians, according to Brumfit and Carter (1986) and Brumfit (1991) are opposed to having the learners interact with the texts saying that this may only work with the most 'able' and 'linguistically proficient' students. They opine that stylistic-analytical approach provide a principled method by which reading can be developed. It is of course important to recognize the fact that some students may need analytical skills in order to understand a text. But it is vitally significant to question whether there can be an analytical response to a text in the absence of a personal interaction with the text. Would an interactive approach make any text more accessible and hence easy to explore unlike when the TA is employed? Thompson (1987) seems to answer this question when he argues that imaginative texts have the capacity to evoke emotional response and hence making the writer's feelings easy to decipher. It is this evocation of the reader under the guidance of the text which is usually ignored in the traditional literature classrooms.

From my experience as a high school teacher in Kenya for more than ten years, and from my preliminary visits to schools before my actual research, I found out that many students depended on teachers' notes and guidance in their study of literature. Under this arrangement, literature learning is seen as a content subject with facts to be memorised,

any debate about the text being peripheral. As a teacher, I ensured that my students knew the general plot of the text and could chart out aspects of style, themes, and characters in the text. It did not matter if they could be able on their own to do this with another text. The most important thing was that they were able to recall what I highlighted as important to them. Examinations came first. And often my teaching took the form of comprehension passages, whether I was teaching poetry, plays or the novel. The format was always the same: "Why? Who? At what point?" were the usual questions I would ask the learners before giving them the 'all important notes'.

Indeed, perhaps the only time the learners came closer to being involved with the text is when they had to read out aloud one paragraph after another around the class. There were only a few copies of the texts for so many learners. Following the reading, I would give my 'informed' comments, highlighting 'important' issues in the text – what examiners look for, to be precise. Then learners would take down the notes; underline the important excerpts in the text as directed by the teacher. Finally the lesson ended with a take away assignment, either to discuss the main theme highlighted in the reading, identify the writer's use of literary devices or analyse the character traits of two or more characters appearing in the read text. Basically, this is the approach that has been and still is in use in Kenya despite the introduction of the IEC upon the establishment of the 8-4-4 system of education. This justifies the need to rethink this long standing practice in the face of the current syllabus requirements.

The overwhelming focus on examination (in itself not taking into account the IA) as a basis for teaching imaginative texts, with the teacher playing a central role in ensuring text comprehension has in more ways than one killed creativity among learners; it has

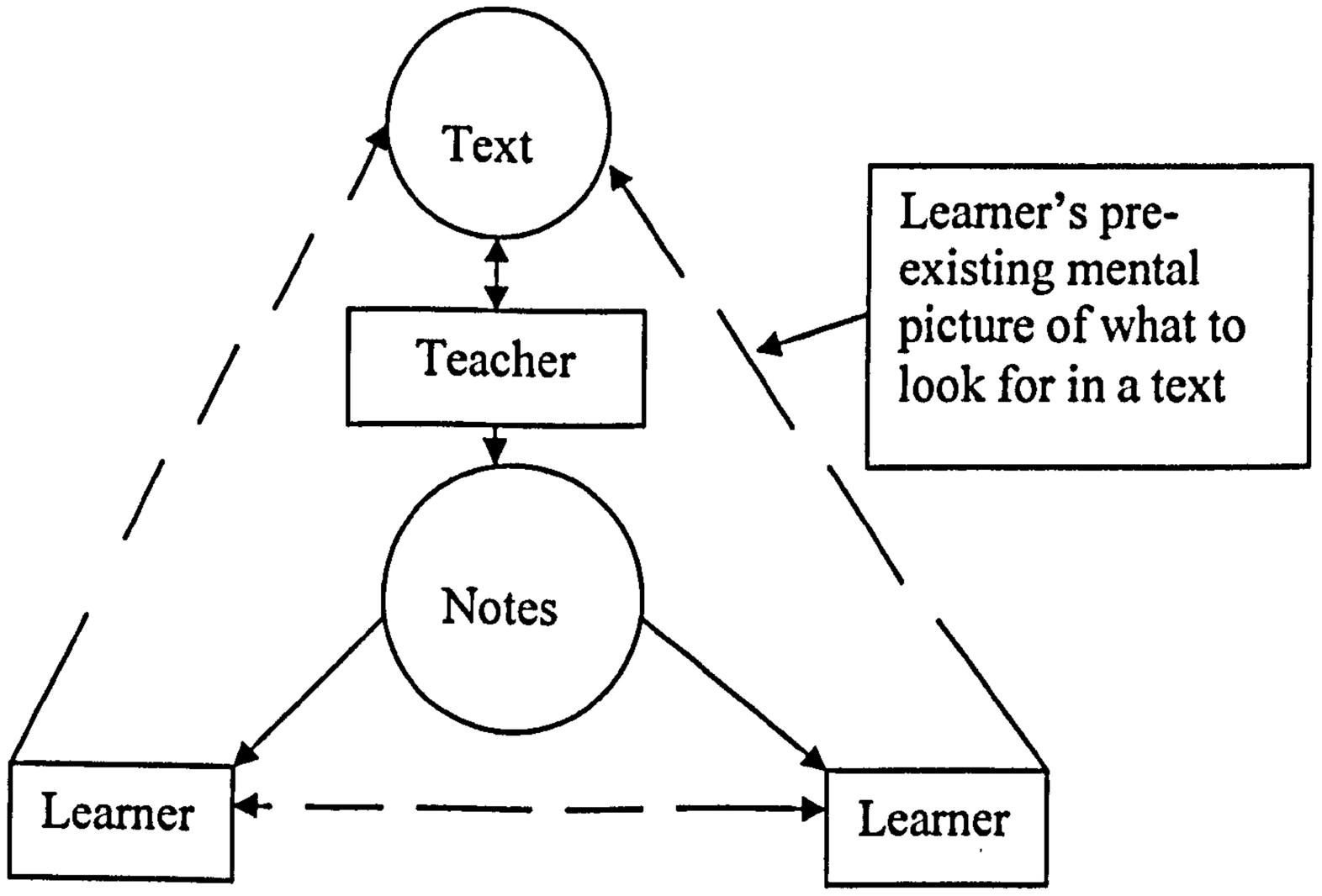
killed thinking as it emphasizes rote rather than participatory learning as already noted in chapter 2. The formal and serious manner in which lessons are conducted has meant there is no 'playing around' with words (Brumfit, 1983). Learners are not accorded room to ask, "What if...?" There is no opportunity to think the *unthinkable*. Statements such as "if asked in the exam to..." are not uncommon. In a nutshell, the TA requires that the learner *knows about* the text as per the dictates of the teacher and the expectations of the KNEC.

The security of the known and already trodden methods is often very attractive (Kioko and Muthwii, 2001). Could the teachers be hesitant to try out something new in their classrooms to make the IEC a reality or are they simply victims of circumstances? At the same time it would help to understand why teachers would rather read for the learners and give them notes to enable them pass the examinations without focusing on the integrated dimension of the syllabus. Indeed, because of the importance of passing examinations, learners end up being conditioned to look for specific things every time they open a novel, play or read a poem: Who is the persona? Who are the main characters? What message does the writer bring out? What literary devices does he or she employ in conveying his message? What are the main events – the plot? The learners' perception of the prescribed texts is thus blurred by the teachers pre-existing expectations as to why they should read at all. Figure 1 below best captures the relationship between the teacher, the text and the learners under the TA. The teacher reads the text first, then presents his views in form of notes he has used over the years with different groups. Where possible, learners are given an opportunity to read the imaginative texts around the class but with a fixed mind on certain specifics as conditioned by the subject 'master'

Giltroy-Scott (1983:3) offers the best summary as to why teachers may wish to continue making use of on the TA even in the face of curriculum change and hence a need for matching pedagogical approach:

> It seems likely that the current emphasis on academic knowledge about texts, the dependence on critical authority (e.g. guidebooks), the popularity of 'bazaar' notes...are to a great extent the result of an underlying sense of inadequacy in the face of the text. Students do not know how to approach the text and teachers how to present it in any other way other than what they are used to.

Figure 1: The place of the text, the teacher and pupils in the TA to teaching Imaginative texts.



There is thus a real need to understand, in the Kenyan context, why teachers are often blamed for the poor results in English and explore possibilities of changing the role of the teacher in the classroom from that of the "genius master" to a facilitator through increased learner participation in the study of imaginative texts at secondary school level.

3.2.2 Reader-Text Interactive Approach (RTIA)

> When authors are writing, they are creating literature. When we give learners poems or short stories, we are giving them texts. If we help and encourage them to respond experientially to what they read then they can create literature from the texts too.
>
> (Brian Tomlinson, 1998).

In the above quotation, Tomlinson makes an interesting distinction between literature and text. The latter is a product of the former. At the heart of literature is creativity, he says. In this regard it is imperative that learners are encouraged to respond to literature with feelings towards what they read so as to enjoy the literary texts. Rodger (1983) holds a similar view arguing that students of literature need above all else a gradual, patient and systematic training in how to read literary works to enable them develop communicative awareness and linguistic competency.

For effective reading, readers have to invest something of theirs into the experience. Viewed in this light, reading can be an "active rather than a passive process" (Neville and Pugh 1982: 43); one in which readers engage in a dialogue with the text and the author. Hence, the reader interrogates the texts and himself before arriving at meaning. Such interaction between the reader and the text manifests itself for example when the reader questions the text, expresses approval or disapproval of the text ,accepts, rejects or relates what is being read to their own experience.

It is through this interactive process that learners as readers are able to move away from reading as a mechanical process to reading as a thoughtful process as proposed by Southgate et.al. (1981).This interrogative reading gives the reader an opportunity to

contribute his own experiences and thoughts towards what he or she is reading. (Faire Lough, 1992)

Benton and Fox (1985) aptly describe the process of reading a story, for example, as an "imaginative collaboration between the reader the author, from which a secondary world is created" (p.18). They indeed describe the process of reading as being like a journey during which, en route, the traveller pictures, anticipates and retrospects, interacts and evaluates!

The TA to teaching literature places the teacher at the centre of learning rather than the text and the learner. The practice in Kenya as already highlighted is that the teacher plans for the lesson by reading through the text and then making summary notes for the learners. In class, a typical lesson entails the teacher asking students to read the text either silently or aloud in turns. Once the reading is over, the teacher then leads the class in key aspects of the text which he considers useful for the learners to know about the that is, if they are keen to pass their examination at the end of the four-year course at the secondary school level. He would then end the lesson by giving individualised assignments to assess learners' understanding of the text (cf. The DVD clips on TA, Appendix: 12).

Hardly are the students given opportunities to participate effectively in the lesson. Their views only come in form of asking a question, which rarely happens in the Kenyan context for fear of being reprimanded by the teacher. And getting students to respond to teacher questions, even just to indicate problems in a comprehension or communication is a problem that many teachers face in a way. The approach my not be yielding better

results because the teacher is not an absolute repository of all knowledge. This approach by and large does not conform to the basic principles that underpinned the introduction of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools (KIE, 2005).There is need for a pedagogical approach therefore that would enhance interaction in the classroom first among pupils themselves and then with the teacher about the text. This stand point is best summed up in the words of Rodger (1983: 48) thus:

> ...students will never learn to understand literature if left to read literary works in the same way they read newspapers, magazines and textbooks. Now will they acquire the special skills and abilities required for literary competence if their classroom role is that of mere passive receptacles for information and received critical opinion doled out *ex cathedra* in lectures.

The fundamental purpose of literature, Rodger (Ibid.) goes on to argue, should be to teach students to discover literary significance for themselves in the *process* of reading. This implies *guidance* and *control* by the teacher, which in turn unavoidably implies dialogue between the teacher and learners on one hand, and between learners themselves on the other with and about the texts.

The proposed reader-text interactive approach (RTIA) seeks to place both the learner and the text at the centre of learning without compromising the teacher's role. The Approach is premised on the fact that every act of reading constitutes a unique set of situational and personal circumstances (Giltroy-Scott, 1983), and which come to bear on our interaction and interpretation of any given text. As Tsui (1995) says, in order to be able to learn about a language and put what they are learning to use, students need not only to *listen* to the teachers instructions and explanations but more importantly, they need to *express*

their views through their involvement in tasks and activities. In his words, Tsui makes the following observation:

> In situations where the target language is seldom used outside the classroom and the students' exposure to the target language is therefore mainly in the classroom, the kind of *input* and *interaction* that is made available is particularly important. (P.12)

If this dialectical dimension misses from the IEC, students may not be able to develop a genuine literary and linguistic competence through four-year course.

RTIA is embedded in the linguistic-stylistic approach to teaching literature. The case for linguistic-stylistic analysis rather than pure stylistic analysis has been well documented by Pearce (1977):

> Linguistic analysis becomes an integral aspect of the process of understanding literature, a means of formulating intuition, a means of objectifying it and rendering it susceptible to investigation and, in so doing, a means of revising our initial interpretation.

An effective way to encourage learners to revise their viewpoints and to accept varied interpretations characteristic of a text would be to try and lessen the performative and evaluative nature of over – trodden approaches teaching in our schools; to get students engage in genuine communication where they are able to produce coherent discourse about the imaginative texts they are reading, bring about their own critical perceptions under the teacher's guidance.

It must be emphasized that RTIA exercises mainly seek to reduce monotony and reliance on pre-determined approaches with greater teacher and learner freedom, increased creativity and choice hence contributing to the desired educational goals of independence, autonomy and linguistically articulate school leavers. Why is increased creativity important in the teaching and learning of imaginative texts? Maley, (2003: 183), defines "creativity" as one which entails "newness, novelty, originality and immediacy." A truly creative act therefore would give rise to a feeling of pleasurable recognition on the part of others. The more our learners are given chance to think and use language in an original way, the better will be their linguistic and communicative skills.

Nevertheless it has to be emphasized that RTIA does not seek to abandon all rules pertaining to the teaching of literature as Kabaji (2003a) would have it but seeks to create a new conceptual space. There is general agreement that an important component of creativity is the ability to make connections (Maley 2003). But creativity as envisaged in the interactive approach I am proposing goes beyond connectivity. The approach seeks to encourage learners to see not just connections, but also associations, combinations, and analogies in texts. Creativity stimulates and motivates learning. It further enhances active awareness of the language and issues pertinent to the literal and literary interpretation of the text.

The idea of having learners to think about what they are reading, to bring into the text their criticality and sensitivity, and even attempt to recreate the text is certainly an important element of this process. It is to be noted, as Mbugua (2003) points out, that there are as many ways of reading an imaginative text as there are its readers, and every reader is entitled to the frame of reference with which he/she approaches the text. This is

what makes reading unique for every person who decides to engage a writer by reading the imaginative work. Mbugua goes on to argue justifiably so that every reader's unique response to what he reads is based on what he or she already knows and the experiences that have shaped his or her life and the perception of issues.

As such, we can not interpret a work of art in a similar way even if we read it at the same time and under the same roof. We can only accept other people's view points based on shared reasoning. This is where teacher's guidance and control as proposed by Pearce (1977) above comes in handy. Subjective impressions can be exchanged, verified, modified, enriched and finally pooled in a genuine and cooperative effort to arrive at the optimal interpretation of the text - one in which the greatest number of subjective responses is correlated with the large number of demonstrable textual data if the teacher adopts a facilitator's position.

RTIA as proposed here gives learners an opportunity not just to 'hear' about texts but also to acquire an *awareness* of the text focussing on the language being used by the writer to communicate his creative ideas. Learners have a chance to speak about the text, listen to others in the interaction, and depending on the activity, negotiate meaning and arrive at a suitable compromise. It is the teachers' responsibility to see to it that the interaction is purposeful and directed towards achieving set lesson objectives.

RTIA is in a sense closely related to Thompson's (1987:58) transactive reader-response approach (TRRA). The only difference is that while TRRA places greater emphasis on the reader's response, RTIA places greater emphasis on the reader, the interactive reading process from which meaning is derived, plurality of meaning potential (Carter

and Nash, 1990; and McRae, 1996), and self-growth from participation in the reading process. Accordingly, under this approach, it is expected that the teacher should function more as a facilitator rather than as a judgemental authority whose word is law, right or wrong. He or she would be expected to place greater premium on the learning rather than plain *instruction.*

When looked at as a subject of study, literature can be seen as an activity involving and using language. The claim "the study of literature is fundamentally a study of language in operation" as put by Widdowson (1975) is fundamentally based on the awareness that literature is an example of language in use, and is an excellent context of creative language use. Indeed, studying the language of literary texts as *language in operation* is said to enhance the learners' appreciation of aspects of the different levels of language usage (O'Sullivan, 1991).

Because of the perceived tendency that literature is hard, often teachers in ESL contexts such as Kenya handle the texts from a uni-dimensional approach, with a sense of finality in their own opinions. This leaves the learner on the side-line, to merely 'receive' and reproduce way forward the teacher's notes when asked in examinations.

Indeed, for years Literature remained an optional and revered subject in Kenyan secondary schools. The IEC made it possible for all students to study literary texts. The problem remains one of implementation'. But under the proposed RTIA, it is hoped the study of imaginative texts would be more practical, encourage less teacher talk and greater learner involvement. The approach seeks to engage learners to respond to imaginative texts in "linguistic, sensory and affective ways" (Tomlinson, 1998:178).

In this sense, linguistic inadequacy, often seen as the main stumbling block in the literature classroom, would be addressed with more opportunities to talk and write about the texts by learners. This way, they get guided in responding experientially to what they read instead of simply being told what the teacher thinks the text is saying! If asked to read through to the end of the text as often is the case in Kenya secondary schools, pupils will only mechanically read the texts and will gain little more than a few words and a grade (often a weak one) in the KCSE. Why would involving learners in reading texts interactively be useful? This is because readers of any text are not "exclusively observers of texts. They are in some measure 'creators'" (Carter and Nash, 1990; 175). Indeed, in most texts, the writers' choice of words provides a noticeable stimulus for creative and playful responses. It is therefore vital that teachers provide opportunities for students to make connections, to perceive significant analogies in a text, to make new 'texts' out of original texts.

Initial research in language awareness has shown increased motivation resulting from activities, especially task-based activities, which foster the learner's involvement which allow learners time and space to develop their own affective and experiential responses to language, especially to its contextual meanings and effects (Rutherford, 1987; Ellis, 1998 and Carter, 2003).

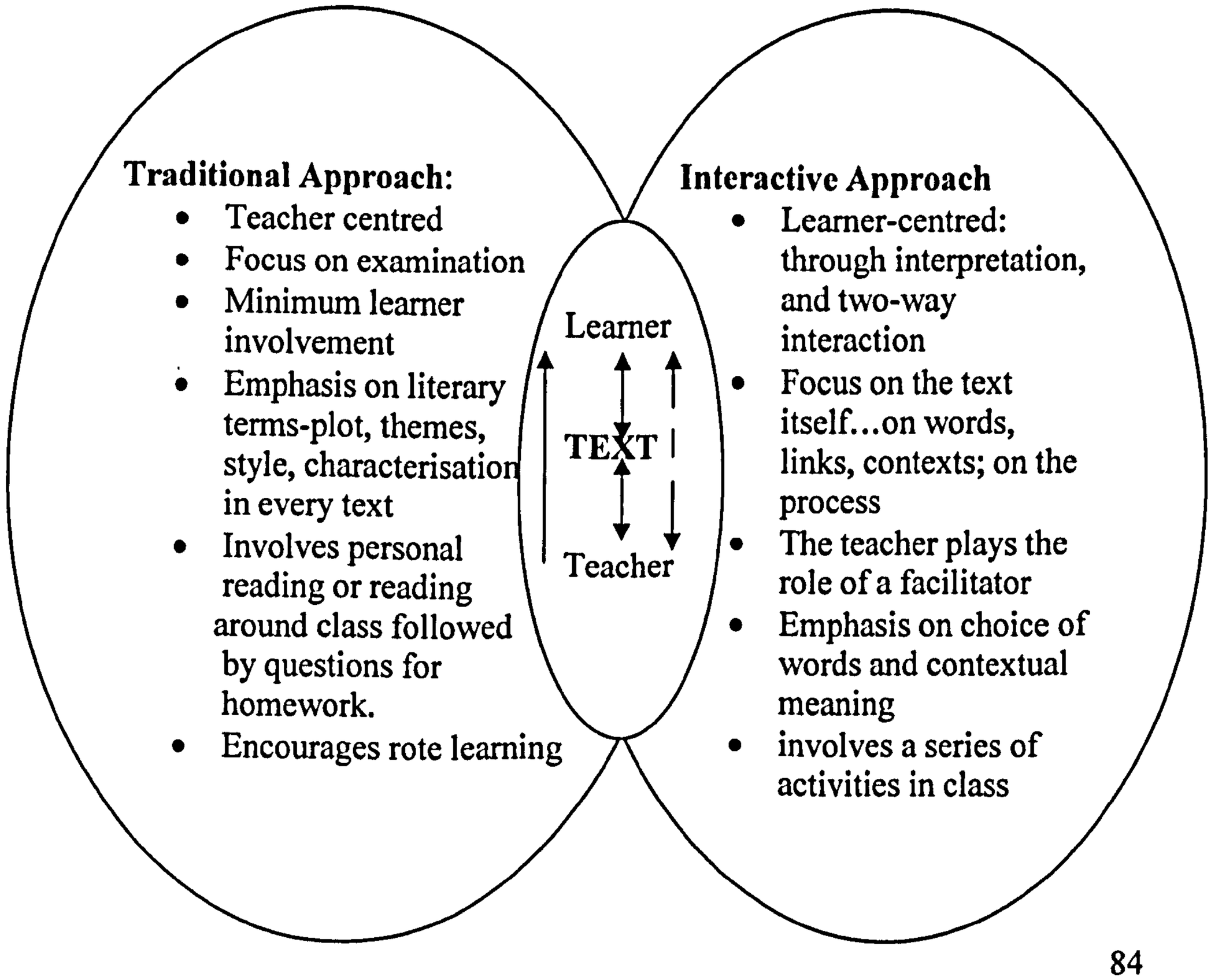
Arising from the above discussion, it may be concluded that the intended outcome of the RTIA is to make the learning of imaginative texts simple, practical and interesting. The Approach sets out ways in which the learning of literature is playful yet engaging. This is a view supported by Pope (1995:1) who argues that the best way to understand how a

text works is to "play around with it, to intervene in it in some way, and then to try and account for the effect you have done." We need to get students to speak up, to think aloud, and justify their views. In this way, it is anticipated that the RTIA would help make literary texts – poetry, short stories, and novels – a lot more accessible to pupils due to its practical and hands on dimension.

3.2.3 The TA and RTIA contrasted

As seen in Figure 2 below, in handling imaginative texts, the focus should be more on *process* than the facts, on students' interaction with texts, on their opinions and interpretation rather than received and established 'interpretation' of texts as set out by the teacher (cf. McRae and Vethamani, 1996). The contrast between the TA and the RTIA can be summarily illustrated diagrammatically thus:

Figure 2: Comparison between the Traditional and Interactive Approaches to the study of literary texts



This interactive approach gives the reader more tools to handle the more 'traditional' questions. It does not ignore them; rather, it reaches them through "more careful, aware reading and helps the learner to answer any questions about the text in a fuller way" (Ensslin, 2004). This is because, unlike the TA which dissects a text into plot, themes, style and characterisation, the RTIA's focus is on *how* a text expresses what it says, with the aim of reaching an inclusive understanding of *what* it says and *why*. The TA focuses more on *what* the text says and less of *how* it says, yet ironically learners are expected to have transferable skills between language and literature based on how language functions.

The traditional idea is that there are some basic things the learners need to know 'about the text' before they can sit for national exams. These 'basic things' such as plot, themes, style and characterisations have to be pointed out mostly by the teachers. Walsh (2003) thinks that this should not be the case arguing that classroom interaction based on the imaginative texts is inarguably central to the teaching and learning in L2 classroom contexts. He evokes the currently and well-documented view that language learning (in a formal L2 classroom) occurs best through talk which is constructed by teachers and learners. According to McRae (1988) and Kuamaravadivelu (2001, 2003), teacher talk should primarily aim at creating and maintaining classroom communication process among learners rather than dictating notes to them.

On their part, Duff and Maley (2000) give three different reasons to justify the use of literary texts in the ESL classroom: linguistic, methodological and motivational. In terms

of language, literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers, and text-types, the two authors say. The fact that literary texts are by their very nature open to multiple interpretation means that only seldom will two readers' understanding of/or reaction to a given text be 'uniform' even if they have the same criteria. This ready-made opinion-gap between one individual's interpretation and another's can be bridged by use of interactive activities as a methodology. And since literary texts so often touch on themes to which learners have personal responses from their own experiences, such texts end up being pretty motivational to the pupils, it is concluded.

Interactive responses to a text have the capacity to engage learners in the process of reading and re-reading imaginative texts (Benton, 1986; Brumfit and Carter, (1986) with ease. Such responses facilitate fuller investigation of what a text means to us as readers. For the learners, Brumfit and Carter maintain that this approach would help them focus on what has been referred to as the 'how' of a text using the 'what.' It does seem therefore that TA could provide a useful spring board for the RTIA.

Understanding literature is not an innate process like the case in L1 acquisition. Readers according to Beavis (1995) have to use certain tools to find meaning and appreciate the beauty of an imaginative text, whether consciously or spontaneous. Eaglestone (2000) emphasizes that rather than read in a vacuum, we take our ideas, our tendencies and preferences in to and out of a text. That interpretation does not take place in vacuity is not in doubt. It has to be noted that even under the traditional stylistic analysis of texts we influence and get influenced by what we read.

The consequence of this view is what I have earlier referred to earlier: no interpretation of an imaginative text can be said to be neutral or absolutely objective. People are different to a greater or lesser degree, and have been shaped by different experiences. And because of this difference, there simply cannot be 'one correct' way of reading an imaginative text. The 'correctness' in my view is contained in the conclusions arrived at from a variety of viewpoints based on the text. Every opinion, every standpoint, should in some way be considered

According it is the teacher's responsibility to help learners to respond experientially and linguistically to what they read. There is need to enable learners to acquire more than rudimentary knowledge of a few words about a text, enough to gain a grade in the KCSE. Learners need to get involved fully in the learning process if they are to achieve life long skills as anticipated in the integrated syllabus objectives as outlined in chapter 3.

By advocating for RTIA, this research does not deny the usefulness or importance of examining the candidates on their level of awareness regarding the plot, characters, themes and styles of literary texts, nor am I opposed to the teachers providing guidance to the learners in form of notes in preparation for examinations. The approach under proposal simply seeks to place the text at the centre of studying literature and to be able to bring about a practical fusion between language and literature learning at the classroom level as students prepare for the KCSE Examination in line with the KIE recommendations.

3.3 Selecting Creative Texts for Classroom teaching:

The selection of creative texts for use in language teaching contexts has been said to be "difficult, controversial and pretty subjective" McRae (1991). But text selection remains a key plank in the effective teaching and learning of literary texts. Indeed the road to success in using literature in ESL classrooms, according to McKay (1986), rests with the literary works that are selected. Like Pearson (1985; 17) crucially points out, "many children are put off reading ...because of the poor quality of materials that they are expected to read". To overcome these initial difficulties, it is imperative to identify clear criteria that can be the basis for selecting texts that would lend themselves easily to meaningful classroom interaction and still meet the goals and objectives of the secondary school English syllabus. What of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet?

Why do we need to think about selecting texts? As is the case in many EFL/ESL contexts, the literature component of the IEC is regarded as a "laborious tedium" (Tomlinson, 1994 and Bolitho 1995). The learners' experience consists mainly of being 'compelled' to read difficult texts and to answer equally difficult questions based on the text(s) they had hardly interacted with. Hence my concern, what texts should our students be exposed to? And how do we ensure that the learners enjoy reading imaginative texts instead of seeing literature lessons as being meant merely for passing examinations? Marindi (2006) says that Kenyan learners equate literature learning with "torture they have to go through just to pass exams", (*Daily Nation* Newspaper). Should this be left to go on? Or even be ignored?

There are thousands of imaginative texts available on the market today, with many new titles being released into the market every year. This plethora of material makes it

imperative for teachers of English in ESL contexts to be in a position to make informed and appropriate choices when selecting texts to use in the classroom. The criteria for such a selection depend on a number of factors. In this section, an attempt is made to evaluate these factors and some of which formed the basis to selecting of texts used with students during the field research in Kenya.

One school of thought sees text selection in terms of the prevailing context, learners' needs and interests. Rubdy (2003) is a significant proponent of this view. His claim is that the selection of materials (texts) should involve matching the given materials against the context in which they are going to be used and the needs and interests of the teachers and learners who are to work with the texts. This necessarily calls for strategic decisions based on informed judgement and professional experience of the teachers. In this regard, both teacher and learner factors are essential in deciding on the texts. But this is a difficult premise to work with. Using contexts, individual needs and interests of teachers and learners would mean each school has its own materials (Ohanya, 1982) a tall feat to achieve in a national curriculum set up!

Since materials are influential stimuli for generating learning, a more dynamic approach would be one which selects materials for their latent ability not only to engage the learners' and teachers' attention and effort, but also to draw substantial contributions from the teacher, the individual learner and the collective group as a whole. Rubdy sums up what he considers to be the essential characteristics of good materials worth being selected for classroom teaching as thus: All good materials have potential for flexibility adaptability and relevance to the changing needs, goals and interests of the modern-day language learner, (Rubdy, 2003: 38) Flexibility and adaptability are indeed integral

aspects of worthwhile materials. But the teacher's ability to exploit these qualities in line with syllabus requirements in a text is equally important. This is crucially important in ESL contexts, asserts Rubdy (2003).

Text selection is about deciding which poem, which story, which part of a novel, to handle in the classroom during a particular lesson. As correctly pointed out my McKay (1986) it is pointless to select a text which is "extremely difficult on either a linguistic or a cultural level for the learners as this will have few benefits. Our choice of the texts we handle in the classroom will determine immensely the success or failure of our lessons. The available literature abounds in factors that one has to consider while selecting any text.

Unfortunately, these factors are not familiar to many Kenyan teachers. This is because the onus of selecting texts lies with the Ministry and not teachers. Hence in the subsequent section I focus on what teachers need to know regarding text selection. I am inclined to consider this in detail since this may bring about a fairly new practice for teachers. In general, when selecting and preparing to teach an imaginative piece of writing, it would be useful to think of the learners' level of language ability, what they have or are likely to have experienced in terms of the content of the text and how their awareness level is likely to generate classroom interaction among them when reading a given text. (Pearce, 1997).

3.3.1 Factors Influencing Text selection

In Kenya, as is the case in many other countries, the choice of which texts to use in literature lessons is hardly done by the teachers. The MoE, through the KIE, decides on which books should be used in schools as set- books for examination. This is particularly so at Form 3 and Form 4 level where students are preparing for their KCSE examinations. At the junior level (Forms 1 and 2), the KIE has only advised teachers on what sort of books can be used as class readers but left the final decision on which texts to use for teachers to make but no guidance is given on text selection. Although the MoE is opposed to it as per its advice: 'Past prescribed texts for Form 3 and 4 should not be indiscriminately issued to Forms 1 and 2" (KIE, 1992:55) –it is not surprising that most teachers still go ahead and begin teaching pupils in the lower classes literature set books all in the name of trying to complete the syllabus in time for the examination. This is because majority of the teachers if not all, may not be aware of text selection procedures. Two matters arise from this: the role of teachers in text selection, and how they can select sub-texts from the prescribed texts for effective teaching and learning of imaginative texts at the two levels.

Contestable though this may be, the texts prescribed by the MoE may not necessarily be appropriate with certain groups of learners, given their age, interests, and social background. Such texts may require to be manipulated in order to generate the required interest in the learners and stimulate learning. Teachers, therefore, should be able to play a role in selecting texts and designing classroom activities that would allow learners to read texts more productively and creatively. Llurda (2004: 314) emphasizes the need for teachers in ESL contexts to incorporate instructional materials and activities that are rooted in local contexts and their learners' lives.

The idea of the Ministry being responsible for deciding on which books to teach is anchored in the curriculum developers' need to teach literature mainly for content and examinations. Students have to sit for the same examination at the end of their 4-year course and as such, uniformity in the syllabus is essential. Preparing students early enough for examination saves time and last minute pressures for the teacher. However, this traditional, examination-based approach to teaching literature appears to me to go against the grain of integrating language and literature teaching as set out in the 8-4-4 English Curriculum. As pointed out in chapter 2, the aim of the secondary school English syllabus is to increase total fluency in listening, speaking, reading and writing the language. Effective implementation of the IEC is certainly crucial in determining whether this overall aim is realised or not.

The fact that the selection of imaginative texts for use in the language teaching can be difficult, contentious, and quite subjective is incontestable. Though I give some specific reasons why I selected the two texts used in this research later, there are some general factors that teachers wishing to use literary works as a resource for language teaching could find worth considering. The ultimate goal for any choice made is that the text should be learner-centred, allowing the learners' involvement in the learning process.

One major contributor to what to consider when selecting texts for interactive analysis is McRae (1991). The writer outlines numerous factors that should be born in mind when selecting a text for use in a classroom set up. These range from accessibility, level of difficulty, presence of a story, the possibility of text grouping among others. The specific

factors while selecting the texts used for the study in Kenya are discussed later in chapter four. However, the following are some of the general factors one can bear in mind when selecting texts for teaching:

a) Type

The secondary school syllabus and KNEC have isolated five main areas of literary study and testing at the KCSE level. These areas include poetry, novels, short stories, plays and oral literature. Consequently, in choosing a text, a teacher has to think of the genre it belongs to .This will determine the sort of activities that would go with the text. A verse text would require different tasks from a short story or prose text, for instance.

b) Accessibility

According to the MoE, the IE Syllabus has been developed for learners who have been exposed to English as a subject throughout their primary schooling and to whom English language has been the medium of instruction since Standard 4. The syllabus therefore builds on the basic structural features of the language already acquired. But going by the persistent poor standards of English in National Examinations, this is not always the case, especially when one considers the learning of literature.

Imaginative texts in a second language can be hardly accessible to students unless well presented. Poor text selection can make it even harder for learners to access the text, to understand it, to interact with it. As has been argued elsewhere in this work, there is no easy or hard text: A reading text can be easy or difficult depending on how the text is

presented. For any selected text, the main aim should be to make the students get through the text to the end. McRae (1991) has outlined a number of ways which can aid in making texts accessible by learners.

- He proposes listening while reading. This, the writer contends, ensures that students follow the text to the end. This is very important especially in cases where students associate creative texts with difficult vocabulary. Some texts, such as poetry, gain more meaning when delivered verbally rather than being read silently. Listening while reading dispels any fears about the text and diminishes the kind of 'hold-ups' caused by finger reading, the writer argues. Finger reading is common with lower Forms in Kenya and any measures aimed at controlling the habit should be worth considering. The student gains a great deal if s/he can get through to the end of the text.

- Often literature teachers would go to class and issue a text to students to read without any clear tasks. This is bound to lessen accessibility. There is need for careful instruction as to what the student is expected to do with the text. Texts selected should be able to lend themselves to the teacher has set or the lesson objectives tasks.

- The context in which the text is presented is also important. The teacher should endeavour to contextualise the text, to make it relevant to the syllabus under requirement instead of just presenting a text out of the blues! There should be some interconnectivity between the selected texts and the course. This way, it will be easy to develop and sustain learners' interest in the creative reading lessons.

c. Difficulty

For most students of English as a second language, there is a general belief that imaginative works are 'difficulty', more so for poetry (Kioko, 2001). My students, for example, believed that poets set out to deliberately use 'hard' vocabulary so that it is not easy to understand what they have written! How untrue! If this were the case, then there would have been no point writing the poem in the first place. It is this misleading conviction that has contributed to mute classes with the teacher doing all the 'donkey work' in most Kenyan secondary schools. But this is not just unique to Kenya. As seen in the Malaysian context, it is believed that literature uses 'special' language and can only be taken up by students who are 'very good' at language (Talif, 1991).

This need not be the state of affairs bearing in mind McRae's (1991) contention that the level of difficulty should not only be pegged on the language and content of the text but also the tasks that go with the text. He says, "The level of text that can be used depends very much on what the learners are asked to do with the text rather than on any inherent grading problems" (1991:48). By this, he means that when selecting texts, the focus should not be primarily on the type of text but more importantly on learning tasks that would go with the text. Tasks may be easy or complex for the same text. For example, if the teacher's intention is to develop technical skills - comprehension, question and answer, and summarising - then closed texts will be recommended. However, if the aim is to promote reading with interactive understanding and response, then open texts and tasks would be ideal. The latter type of texts is suited for the RTIA as the approach can be used with any class, whatever the learners' linguistic capability.

McRae further advocates for juxtaposition of texts, as a means of increasing learners' awareness and interaction saying that such a comparative approach helps them adduce more information from the texts than at first would have been possible. He therefore argues that learners should be directed to compare points of view and the different ways of presenting the same ideas. This would make them air their own opinions much more freely than when they are made to see everything from the teacher's point of view.

But Mc Rae is not the only one who has addressed the question of text selection in the teaching of imaginative texts. Collie and Slater (1987), for instance say that the suitability of a text depends on each particular group of students - their needs, interests, cultural background and language level. The two writers recommend that texts should be chosen which are relevant to life experiences, emotions or dreams of the learner. From this perspective, teachers should consider whether a particular text is able to arouse personal involvement by stimulating the learners' interest and provoking strong, positive reactions from them. If the text is not only meaningful but also enjoyable, reading is more likely to have a lasting and beneficial effect upon the learner's linguistic and cultural knowledge valuable for the overall understanding of the text.

Collie and Slater (Ibid) also consider the level of difficulty as an important factor in text selection. However, unlike McRae (1991) who places emphasis on tasks, the two argue that language difficulty has to be considered as well. They contend that in choosing a creative text, it is important "to choose a text which is not too much above the students' normal reading proficiency" (Collie and Slater, 1987:6). The trouble is that they do not specify what they consider to be the "normal reading proficiency"; nor do they explain

what entails "difficulty language". This is left to the teacher who has to make reasonable judgement of his own context. Such a judgement without clear guidelines may easily lead to poor text choice. What will be "too much above" or "just right" for the students?

Echoing such concerns, Carter and Long (1991) fear that unsuitable texts would lead to learners' disinterest in literature at an early stage. Careful selection would result in appropriate texts that may motivate learners to come back to the subject later in life. They also point out that general availability of the printed text, how representative the text is, and the level of learners' familiarity are some of the factors that should determine whether or not a text is selected. The two writers further advice on the length of the texts thus:

> Though a complete work is often set for study, it must be very rare indeed for it to be completely 'taught'. Typically, the teacher selects pivotal points of the text, and comments on or asks questions about these. The more the extracts the better as this offers the students the much needed skills to handle literary texts on their own
>
> Carter and Long (1991:144).

It is also argued that by Carter and Long that there is a greater likelihood of involvement on the part of learners with environments with which they can easily identify. Locally relevant integrated language and literature materials will offer rich opportunities for this to happen. Similar sentiments are echoed by Kioko and Muthwii (2001).

The importance of students' interests in text selection is underscored by Lazar (1993:48) who argues that it is best to select materials which are in line with the major interests of the students. To her, a reasonable amount of time spent on a regular basis with a class should allow the teacher to assess the students' interests with ease. She also proposes the following factors that she says should be taken into when choosing a text for the classroom:

a. Age of students

b. Their emotional and intellectual maturity and their hobbies

c. Their cultural background: She observes on this that learners' cultural background, and their social and political experiences and expectations will help or hinder their accessibility to a text. Since the learners have to interact with the text, and share their ideas and opinions, it is essential to place the text and related tasks within their linguistic proficiency. If the language of the text departs strikingly from the usual norms of language use on account of cultural factors, the students may not be able to cope with the text avers the writer.

On this note, there is need that teachers pitch their texts within the learners' linguistic proficiency (arguably essential for effective interaction). Lazar (Ibid: 53-4) has come up with five important questions teachers and curriculum developers need to ask themselves before selecting a literary text for use in the classroom.

- Are students sufficiently familiar with the usual norms of language use to recognise when these are subverted?

- How much of the language in the text will students be able to infer?

- Will students find it useful and enjoyable to study the text, or will they feel de-motivated by the difficulties of the language?
- Even if the language of the text is extremely difficult, will the students be motivated by other factors to study the text?
- Is the text too specialised in its language to be relevant to the type of language students require to learn on the course?
- Availability of texts is another key factor echoed by Lazar. This is includes not only the variety but also how easily the text can be available to learners.

d. Length of the text - how long or short a text should be is dependent on the amount of time available. It is important for the teacher to consider whether a text would still be meaningful if only a part of it is read. If so how much background information will you need to give to the students to make it intelligible? Is this always necessary?

e. Exploitability: teachers need to consider what kinds of tasks they can devise to exploit the text. In other words, how open, how flexible is the text? Does it lend itself easily to different classroom approaches?

f. Relevance to syllabus: This should be a guiding principle in text selection.

Hopefully some of these factors have been the basis for the selection of various set books made by MoE when coming up with set books. The KIE has not however disclosed the guidelines it considers important when selecting texts for schools. I can only presume that relevance to syllabus is the key factor they bear in mind and even this is contestable when one bears in mind the IEC. At the individual level, teachers are implicitly expected to link the chosen texts with the language part of the syllabus yet there are no materials to support this linking in the classroom and in the language text book series written by KIE

3.4 Text and Learner Factors?

No work of art has wisdom or enjoyment in itself. The greatest poem or story ever written is only printed words on a sheet of paper until someone reads and reacts to it.

It is clear from above that, there are various factors that a teacher may consider when selecting any text to use in the classroom from a language-based approach as demonstrated above. Based on the various points of view, I decided to split the factors into two major categories: *text factors* and *learner factors*. By text factors I mean questions we must ask about the text itself while learner factors focus more specifically on who the learner is. This duality, is however, not explicit considering that answers about the nature of the text are dependent on the nature of our learners and vice-versa. The following summary of both text and learner factors provides the guidelines upon which I based my choice of texts used in this research.

3.4.1 Text factors:

a. Openness: How accessible is the text? Can the text be easily exploited?

b. Level of difficulty: does the language used in the text match learners' linguistic proficiency? In other words are learners able to examine the language used in the text using their linguistic repertoire?

c. Comparability: Can the selected text be compared to another text of the same subject?

d. Ability to create interest in the learner: the text chosen need not just be in line with the learners' interests; instead, it should also be one which can create and sustain interest in itself.

e. Availability of the text: What kinds of texts are available? Are they easily accessible by learners? How cheap or expensive are they?

f. How long is the text? Does the length fit in within the available time?

g. How relevant is the text to the syllabus? Is the text contextualised, relevant to the subject under discussion?

3.4.2 Learner factors

a. What is the learners' language proficiency? Can they take part in a discussion about the texts?

b. Their age: different texts will appeal to learners of different ages ranging from the junior classes to the senior classes. An overly simplified text - both in terms of language and content - will not interest senior students unless the tasks are complex. The opposite is true of complex texts among junior learners.

c. Emotional and intellectual maturity: this is closely linked with the age factor. Creative texts capture certain emotions. This requires a certain level of intellectual capacity to discern.

d. Hobbies, interests and sensitivity: One's interests and sensitivity would account for our reactions to the content of the text .Hence the differences in responses from different readers.

e. Socio-cultural background and political expectations of the learner. A text that portrays anti-cultural and politically insensitive content in relation to the learner's context is likely to be inaccessible. Hence care must be taken when selecting a given text on the basis of he socio-cultural issues addressed by the author.

Indisputably, the choice of the appropriate text should be a major concern for the teacher; yet apart from text selection, how the teacher presents the lesson is equally important. Like what McRae (1991) says about level of difficulty, what makes the difference is less the text and more its treatment by the teacher.

3.5 Handling Creative Texts in the Classroom

No work of literature has its meaning or beauty overtly stated by its creator, the writer. It is with this in mind that the activities we select in the course of handling literary texts in class that should be those that can facilitate the learners' access creative responses to the selected texts. Selecting the suitable text is only the first step. An equally important issue is how to deal with the selected texts in the classroom. There is no one standard approach to working with literary texts in the classroom. How we approach a particular

text depends both on the nature of the text as well as the nature of learners and the teacher. (Tomlinson, 2003)

Assuming that a teacher has carefully chosen a text, we have to ask ourselves what issues should be the focal point while reading the text. How can we approach a given imaginative text in order to allow for language - literature integration and bring out its full meaning potential? These are issues not adequately addressed by the Kenyan syllabus today. There is no advice to teachers on how a text can be approached to develop interest and enthusiasm in reading among learners. Hence the continued over reliance on the TA as pointed out elsewhere in this chapter. For examination purposes, it is quite appropriate for a teacher to zero in on issues such as plot, characterization, setting, authors intention, stylistic devices and general literary criticism. But to acquire life – long skills, there is more to do with imaginative texts than just reading them for examination purposes.

It is not enough to have learners know about the story and what the author brings out. They have to be involved in the text; to notice why the author has used a given word and not an alternative; to see the links between ideas and the contexts. Significantly, this linguistic approach gives the reader extensive tools to handle the more 'traditional' questions. McRae and Vethamani (1996: xiv) believe that such an interactive approach, which allows intensive text awareness "helps the reader to answer any question about a text in a fuller way." Whatever the teacher does with the text, as in the case of the selected texts discussed later in chapter 5, the central point, should be on how a text expresses what it says, to reach a fuller understanding of what it says, and why.

One useful and important way of studying a particular imaginative text, whether prose or verse, is to begin by examining its *diction* - the kind of words that make up the text (Gibbons, 1979).The rationale for this is that the writer of any text, creative or otherwise, chooses certain words from possible alternatives. These words that the author deliberately selects are clearly the means by which he communicates his meaning to the reader. Diction is one of the most important distinctive features of a text which calls for attention. By removing one or two words, and asking pupils to insert in their own, it is easy for them to see how meaning changes just by changing a word in the text.

Gibbons (1979; 2) has outlined a number of questions that one ought to bear in mind when looking at the diction of a text:

- Are words obscure or are they in common use?
- Are the words precise or vague?
- Are they detached or infused with feelings?
- Are they evaluative or studiedly neutral?
- Does the author repeat certain words?
- Are many words nouns or adjectives?
- Do most of the author's words have only one meaning in their particular context or do they have several shades of meaning?
- Is his or her diction elevated or down to earth, or a mixture of both?
- Does he use the words in their literal senses, by and large, or does he use them metaphorically?

In making a general assessment of the author's diction, and hence the learners', we may usefully bear in mind the above questions as outlined by Gibbons (1979; 2). Words, as put by Widdowson (1983:11) are "variables which take on different values in context." These values, one may add, are subject to the reader's own values, social experiences and his or her level of language awareness. It is vital therefore that we tap the all encompassing individual experiences to come to an understanding of what a literary text is all about.

Another way of handling texts in the classroom is to focus on *four levels of a text* as discussed by Moody (1983:24). The four levels are:

a. *The grammatical level of the text:* This level focuses on the organization of units of expression both within the sentence, and between sentences. The reader is invited to look at aspects of grammar such as idea connectors, the time signallers, the adjectives which carry feelings, the adverbs which describe how things happen among others. An awareness of these would not only help with the general interpretation but also enabled the reader to identify with the writer's stand point.

b. *The lexical level of the text:* This includes not only the denotations and connotations of words, and lexical groups, but also questions of register, style, figurative language.

c. *The structural level of the text:* Here, Moody argues that apart from the sentence structure, one has to look at the overall organization of the text, the sequencing of events and what the writer would like to mainly draw attention to.

d. *The cultural level of the text:* Here, at the semantic level, the concern is with the content, the 'message', what is presented, or stated, or implied by the text in relation to the cultural context of the reader as well as the text.

3.6 Related researches

As observed in chapter 1, many studies have been carried out in recent times to investigate the suitability of the language-based approaches to teaching literature in ESL contexts (Talif, 1991; Chan, 1994; Giner, 1998; Timucin, 2000; Sivasubramaniam, 2004; and Than, 2005 to mention but a few). Though set in different countries, these studies conclude that there are overwhelming advantages to teaching language through literature in ESL contexts as opposed to the traditional approach- which places more emphasis on the teaching of literature as a content subject. Notably, none of the various studies have ever been carried out in Africa. For instance, Talif carried out his study in Malaysia, Chan in Hong Kong, Timucin in Turkey and Than in Thailand. This study in Kenya would be the first of its kind.

3.7 Conclusion:

In this chapter, explanation has been offered justifying the link between language and literature teaching. Two approaches to the teaching of imaginative texts in ESL context - the current TA and the proposed RTIA - have also been described with the limitations being highlighted. The chapter has also looked at various factors to bear in mind during text selection and how the selected texts' would successfully be handled in the classroom. It concludes with researches showing that there have been similar studies in

other ESL contexts. In all there is sufficient evidence to support RTIA as a practical framework for the implementation of the IEC in Kenya secondary schools.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

4.0 Introduction

Punch (2005: 63) defines a research design as "the basic plan for a piece of research" that highlights four main areas – the strategy, the conceptual framework, the study population, and tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing the data. Before undertaking any research in the field, therefore, it is useful that issues such as locating where to conduct the study, how to delimit the respondents, the research instruments and how the researcher plans to analyse the resultant data are addressed. In the sections that follow, I explain in detail the procedures followed to obtain the required data and information. First, the study setting is described, giving reasons why and how the area was chosen. The sampling techniques used to identify the study sample are then explained. This is followed by the explication of the research instruments used and measures taken to ensure the research tools were valid and gathered the relevant information. Finally, I explain the procedure followed to collect the data and the methodology used to analyse the research outcome.

4.1 Conceptual Framework of the Research Design

This research takes the form of a survey combining both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The decision by the researcher to amalgamate the two methods was based on the desire to come up with comprehensive findings which have internal consistency and which could easily be cross-referenced for validity and reliability (Kerlinger, 1983).

Mixed methods are becoming increasingly significant in educational research and evaluation (Giannakaki, 2005). The case has been made that using both qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study can help explain various aspects of the phenomenon under investigation, providing a more holistic understanding of it, and resulting in better formed conclusions (Davies, 2000; Koul, 1988 and Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998).

In this study, the mixed method was employed for complementary intents. Here, my objective was to use the results from the quantitative strand to elaborate, enhance and illustrate the results from the qualitative aspect of the study and vice-versa. Giannakaki (2005:323) reports having used such a design with an aim of increasing "the interpretability and meaningfulness of the empirical findings of a primarily quantitative study." Although my study was not experimental in nature, the use of quantitative methods was found useful in presenting closed-ended questions and hence using figures to quantify the data collected.

Lindeman (1971) outline three other purposes of using mixed-method designs apart from the question of complementarity. These are triangulation, initiation and expansion. Triangulation refers to the "simultaneous, but independent use of qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine exactly same phenomenon, with a view to testing the existence of convergent or consistent results" (Ibid. p. 330). Initiation on the other hand seeks to discover areas of non-convergence in the results emerging from the two methods, in order to suggest areas for further study.

In this study, quantitative methods were used to describe teachers' perspectives on the current approach to teaching imaginative texts, and a blend of both quantitative and qualitative methods to illustrate the practicality of the proposed RTIA as a suitable method towards the successful implementation of the IEC.

Creswell (1994) give very specific reasons for conducting either qualitative or quantitative study. The writer says that one of the chief reasons for the conducting of qualitative study is exploratory. The method is used where not much has been written about the topic or population being studied, and the researcher seeks to listen to informants, and to build a picture based on their ideas. This is one of the reasons I had when I focused on the teachers through the open- ended questions in my questionnaire. No known research of this kind has been conducted ever since the inception of the IEC to understand what really goes on in the classroom. Although teachers have been held responsible for the poor performance in the KCSE English examination, their opinions have hardly been sought as to why the IEC continues to produce dismal results.

The findings on the qualitative dimension of the study were crucially illuminating when compared to the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires. The qualitative data from classroom activities was corroborated with the learners' responses to the given tasks add to the validity of the findings. Results from the teachers questionnaire about the learners were later checked with what actually happened in class when learners were presented wit the two tasks.

The nature of my research was 'descriptive' in the way Selinger and Shohamy (1989) used the term. That is, I sought to describe naturally occurring phenomena without

experimental manipulation and the study had a "narrower scope of investigation" (P.24). The actual fieldwork consisted of two focal points only: a description of the current situation and the views of teachers regarding the IEC was one of the focuses. The learners' involvement in the classroom interactive activities based on the RTIA formed the other focus. The teachers' responses to the questionnaire and the learners' undertaking of the activities, their responses and general feedback are described in detail using descriptive statistics wherever appropriate.

4.2 Study Setting

This study was carried out in the western part of Kenya (See the Administrative Map of Kenya, Appendix: 11). Since English language and literature have already been integrated at the secondary school, it was my interest to find out how the IEC is being implemented and to test the workability of the proposed approach, given that there was no record of a similar study ever having been conducted ever since the IE syllabus was launched in 1986.Kenya was chosen because of its relevance to the researcher and it offered a suitable ESL context.

It is a requirement in Kenya that one obtains a permit before carrying out any research in the country. In my case the Ministry approved that I could carry out my research in three of the eight provinces. These were Western, Nyanza and Rift Valley. However due to logistical and temporal limitations, the field study was narrowed down to two provinces: Western and Nyanza. The two provinces were chosen for two main reasons. First the choice was made on the understanding that the researcher was more familiar with the area and its infrastructure having worked in one of the two provinces as a teacher. The two provinces being geographically close made it possible for me to gain access to all of

the sampled schools with less difficulty. The familiarity with the chosen provinces also helped to cut down on operational costs and to make the research process manageable since I could not access all the provinces in their totality.

Secondly, Western and Nyanza provinces were selected on account of their rapid expansion within the secondary school sector compared to the Rift Valley Province. The two provinces are endowed with many provincial schools which made it easy for me to get the required sample of schools.

There were two major categories of respondents whose feedback is analysed in chapter 5. These were:

- Form 4 students (final class for secondary schooling) in the selected provincial secondary schools
- Teachers of English at the Secondary School level in sampled schools.

However, since I could not carry out research in schools without the approval of heads of schools and heads of English Departments, I had brief informal interviews with the school authorities, which helped me gather general background information about the schools used in this survey.

4.3 Sampling procedures

Effective pedagogical research and evaluation can not be carried out divorced from the field of action: the classroom. Hence I had to use Secondary schools in the two chosen provinces in order to carry out the study with pupils at the classroom level.

However, given the many secondary schools in either of the provinces, I used stratified random sampling procedures to identify the sample schools. In doing this, I took into account Bryman's (1988:35) argument that samples may be selected basing on "convenience (for example, proximity of the researcher) or on the basis of strategic considerations." The idea of sampling is to get what O'Leary (2005:86) says "a snapshot" of what is actually going on in the schools.

For the purpose of this study only schools in the two provinces authorised by the MoE were considered. Thus the location of the school, the type of school and the school size were major factors that were considered when stratifying the school before randomly selecting the required number from the sample. By so doing, I hoped to avoid any bias while at the same time ensuring that the findings were capable of being replicated in any other part of the country.

The research sample consisted of 60 teachers of English found in twenty of the selected secondary schools and a total of 800 students. This sample was randomly selected and is geographically stratified across the two provinces.

4.4 Selection of Schools

Schools in Kenya can be categorised in various ways: we have Public and Private schools on the basis of ownership; Boarding and Day; some are mixed girls and boys, others have girls or boys only. But the most important classification is based on the schools' pupils' catchment area National Schools admit top performing pupils from primary schools all over the country; Provincial schools are restricted to top pupils in the whole province

while District Schools are mostly day schools and whose intake fairly localised, with pupils coming from nearby homes.

For the purposes of the current study, we focussed on provincial schools. This category of schools was considered appropriate because it represented learners who were neither weak (as to join local District schools) nor excellent in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE) as to enable them to join the much-coveted National Schools. Learners who join provincial schools would have scored comparatively same range of marks in the KCPE and are usually above average performers. With this kind of entry behaviour, which is normally above average, it was assumed that the learners in these schools would not find it difficult to take part in the research exercises. The use of Form 4 students as the target groups in the selected schools was an added advantage as they were much more confident in their use of language, given that they were preparing for their final secondary schooling examination before joining university or other tertiary institutions. The schools selected for the study were distributed across the two provinces as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4.1: Distribution of Sample Schools in the two Provinces

Province	**Number of Schools by Type**		
	Boys' Schools	Girls' Schools	Total
Western	6	6	12
Nyanza	4	4	08

Western Province had 4 more schools than Nyanza because it has comparatively better performance in KCSE than Nyanza Province and had a high ratio of provincial schools to the latter, if size is taken into account.

After selecting the required sample from each of the two provinces, the schools were grouped into administrative units as shown above and a sketch map showing the location of each of the selected schools was sought. For ethical reasons, the sketch map and the list of schools used have not been appended herein. During the actual research, I dealt with schools in one province before moving on to the next.

4.5 Selection of Teachers

To avoid bias and to ensure I obtained a true picture of the state of teaching English in the sample schools, it was decided that all teachers of English in each of the 20 schools be taken as the population sample for the study. This meant that as much as possible, individual teachers gave truthful answers to the questions asked knowing that the researcher could easily counter-check the responses of teachers in the same school. This helped to further ensure the reliability of the findings as teachers gave a true picture of what was happening in their respective schools. In total, 60 teachers ended up responding to the questionnaire as will be seen in the next chapter.

4.4 Development and use of Data collection instruments

This study sought to address specific issues related to the handling of the IEC in the classroom. Research questions focussed on teacher qualification in relation to the way their classroom practice, impediments to the effective implementation of the integrated

curriculum in Kenya secondary schools, the place of the learner in relation to the study of literary texts, and of course to assess the practicality or otherwise of the proposed interactive approach to the teaching and learning of the imaginative texts in the classroom.

In this respect, the collection of reliable data was very important. By data I mean the factual information especially information organized for analysis, reasoning or decision making. To get reliable data depended on the precision of the research instruments used. The principal causes of errors in the gathering of data through survey procedures are given by Faddy (1993:2) as often being the respondents' failure to understand questions as intended and in cases where the respondents are unwilling to admit to certain attitudes or behaviours. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the questions are unambiguous and that to assure the respondents of absolute confidentiality. It was found useful to focus questions more on what the teachers were capable of doing rather than what they could not do.

For this study, a number of data collection instruments were used. Before I decided on these instruments, basic consideration of the 'who? where? how? and what?' questions were a crucial part of he planning process. Various potential methods were considered bearing in mind the constraints and resources needed to carry out the field work. Finally I settled for the questionnaire, classroom tasks, observation and video recording. To collect data from teachers, I used a questionnaire. Sharma et.al. (1983) say that the questionnaire is a fairly reliable tool for gathering data from large and scattered social groups. I chose the questionnaire because I needed to get teachers' views from different schools across three provinces. More importantly, the questionnaire fitted in well with the mixed

method that I adopted for my research. The open-ended questions in the questionnaire provided data for qualitative analysis while closed-ended questions were summarised, tabulated and descriptive statistics used present the findings.

The teachers' questionnaire (Appendix 1) was divided into two distinct but related sections. Section I consisting of 12 items, was purposed to obtain the background information of the respondents and the organizational structure pertaining to the implementation of the IEC in schools. This section was not only necessary as a means of assisting the researcher to describe the respondents who participated in the study but was found particularly useful in capturing the extent to which teachers understand the overriding ethos behind the integrated course. Here, information on the average number of students per class, teachers' workload, teaching arrangements in terms of who teaches what in a particular class, number of periods allocated for English language and literature on the timetable in lower and upper Forms, was found relevant. Knowledge about these issues helped to add to the meaning and in some cases explain the findings from the closed-ended questions in the subsequent section as already pointed out.

Section II of the questionnaire had 9 closed-ended items directed at various aspects salient to the integrated approach, the proposed RTIA, and the teachers' current experiences in the classroom. The following specific issues are addressed by the closed-ended questions:

a. The case for the IEC

b. The teachers' understanding of the expected interplay between English language and literature given the present syllabus;

c. The selection of literary texts to be studied and the role of teachers in this process;

d. How teachers how the literature texts in the classroom

e. Problems encountered by teachers, if any, in the course of implementing the IEC.

4.5.2 Classroom-Based Exercises

Apart from the teachers' questionnaire, I had two classroom-based interactive exercises which I carried out with learners in the classrooms. The two exercises were a crucial component of this study as the information obtained formed was core to the present work: providing the evidence that the IEC can be implemented in the classroom through a non-traditional interactive approach. The selection of the texts used and the activities employed were all designed with a view to finding out whether and how the proposed RTIA would work with learners in a classroom context. Here I was concerned with three major issues:

a. The students' willingness to work in groups focussing on the set task for each text.

b. Actual participation in carrying out the tasks contained in two activities.

c. Discussion and feedback about the tasks undertaken

The two interactive exercises entailed one poem that had gaps and required learners to work in pairs or groups of three to fill in the blank spaces with what they considered the most appropriate word(s). A similar task is proposed by McRae and Vethamani (1996:6). The poem, "Peter Piper Prattles" by Susan Naligwa was chosen mainly for two reasons: it had immediate and inherent relevance to the Kenyan learners in terms of its social cultural content and the apparent political overtone. The other reason is that the poem had been used as a KCSE question in the literature paper of 2004(see Appendix...). This meant that it was relevant and appropriate to the Form 4 students who took part in the

study. To my advantage, many teachers, as it turned out, saw the research exercises as useful since the tasks fitted in well with their desire to revise some of the past papers 'just before the mock examinations' which were about four months away. Further reasons for this activity are given in the next chapter when the findings are analysed.

The second exercise was about reorganising jumbled sentences taken from Chinua Achebe's *A Man of the People* into two meaningful paragraphs. The students were given nine sentences which were randomly arranged and told to work out which sentence should come first and work through to the last sentence. In this task, they were also told to separate the write-up into two paragraphs. As later explained in chapter five and six, the focus here was not on the correctness of the ordered sentences but their awareness of idea connectors and cohesion.

I must point out that during these exercises, I also used the participant researcher method playing the role of the facilitating teacher and a researcher simultaneously. The normal class teachers, who were always with me took the back seat and only assisted me to distribute the activity sheets and once in a while provided minor guidance to learners. The advantage of this strategy is that I was able to demonstrate to indirectly the regular teachers the working of the new approach in the classroom while at the same time undertaking the research.

4.5.3 Observation

In complete participant type of research, the observers become participating members of the group of interest without revealing their identities or research goals to the group. (Grabe and Stroller, 2002) Timucin (2000: 170) points out that this type of research has a

number of methodological problems: first, he says researchers may become so self-conscious about revealing their true selves that they may easily lose the research perspective. Second, it is difficult for the researcher to decide what to observe because he/she can not evoke responses in behaviour and must be careful not to ask questions that might raise suspicions of the persons being observed. Lastly, recording observations or taking notes is impossible on the spot; these have to be postponed until the observer is on his/her own.

In participant-as-observer type of research, observers become participants during the treatment of the group by revealing their identities and the goal of their research. This is the method adopted in this study because just like in Timucin's case, I was also exploring the suitability of a new pedagogical approach with learners and I needed to find out their motivation and interest in the new approach.

Here, the researcher is able to ''discern ongoing behaviour as it occurs and is able to make appropriate notes about its salient features'' (Cohen and Manion, 1994: 110). This method was considered more practical and best suited to this present work as I needed to make myself clear to learners why I was doing what I was doing.

It is easy to overlook observation as a potential data collection method (O'Lerary, 2005:119).Yet observation allows one entry to the real world. It offers access to both verbal and nonverbal data. Herzog (1996: 37) distinguishes between three main categories of observation studies: causal, field and systematic. Causal observation refers to "informal observation aimed at getting ideas for a more serious study to be done later." Field observation, on the other hand, refers to in-depth observation of a social system

through one's senses with the goal of understanding how the system works. However, it is systematic observation that has immediate relevance in this study. Systematic observation as defined by Herzog (1996:41) refers to the "observation of a small number of carefully defined behaviours in a particular setting for the purpose of testing specific predictions about relationships among variables." Here, predetermined criteria in form of observation schedule for instance, related to behaviours, actions and phenomena in general are used to collect data in an orderly manner.

As was in my case, in systematic observation, the time frame is relatively short. The outcome is a test of a limited set of predictions made in advance. I had only two days with every set of students in each of the twenty schools I visited and so the quantitative data collected from every school served to reinforce the overall findings rather than to define the individual behaviour of learners in each school.

To observe the learners' overall motivation and interest in this new approach I used a structured observation checklist which I adapted from Timucin (2000) (cf. Appendix 9). This observation checklist was used to assess the overall class motivation generated by the materials in use, as manifested by the levels of learners' interest, enthusiasm, activity, persistence with the task, giving feedback about the task and general enjoyment during the lesson. Each item was scored on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Observations were made when each of the two activities were drawing to a close. A daily total score of each school visited was produced (Peacock, 1997: 146-147) and the results compared for a general conclusion to be reached.

4.5.4: Video Recording

One problem associated with participant - as - observer method is the fact that it is fairly subjective impressionistic as pointed out in my limitations. As the learners interacted with the texts and among each other, I video-recorded what was going on and occasionally went to different groups to observe what was going on. I had earlier bought a video recording camera and familiarized myself on how to use it .Because the learners were so engrossed in their work, the recording did not distracted them nor influenced the outcome of their responses. To ensure that my biases did not blur my observation findings, I made video recordings of lessons delivered by regular teachers using what I earlier described as the TA and later classroom sessions with students undertaking the activities based on the RTIA. The findings were further validated by students offering their opinions on the approach. These again were video-recorded to authenticate the conclusions made from the learners' responses to the Exercises.

4.6 Administration of Research Instruments

To undertake any educational research in Kenya, one needs to obtain permission from the ministry of education. The first step towards this end was an introductory letter to the Ministry from my Supervisor confirming that I am a registered PhD student at the University of Nottingham. This enabled me to process a research permit appearing in Appendix 10. Following my being granted the research permit, the MoE gave me a research authorisation letter copied to all the three Provincial Commissioners and Provincial Directors of Education in the three provinces where I was permitted to conduct my research. This gave my work not only a legal status but more importantly a

formal backing by the ministry of Education. The authorisation did not however bind me to undertaking my study in all the three provinces.

At each provincial headquarters, I was given a list of all the schools having provincial status. After sampling the schools, as described earlier, a timetable for visiting the various schools was drawn up as follows:

January – March2005 – Visit selected schools in Western province

May – June 2005 – Visit selected schools in Nyanza province

To get the teachers complete the questionnaire, the researcher personally visited all the 20 schools selected for the study. In each of the schools visited, permission was obtained either from the head teacher of his/her deputy in order that the teachers may be allowed to respond to the questionnaire and for the researcher to undertake classroom-based activities with learners during the school sessions. Because I had the official permit and the authorisation letter from the MoE requesting schools to allow me carry out the study, the administrators were co-operative and readily authorised the Heads of English department to provide me with all the necessary support in collecting the required data in the schools. It must noted that in cases where the head teachers were teachers of English as well, as was the case in five schools, they willingly accepted to complete the questionnaire and encouraged the rest of the teachers to do the same.

My personal presence during the actual fieldwork was beneficial in three ways. First, this helped in establishing rapport between me and the respondents. This further gave me an opportunity to emphasize the confidentiality of all the responses that teachers were to provide. Lastly, my personal visit to the schools guaranteed a high return of the

questionnaires. In fact, I got back all the questionnaires that I ever gave out to the teachers in various schools. Since I administered the classroom exercises myself, I had the opportunity to inter-marry the various data collection methods and to pay particular attention to details unlike if I would have used a research assistant.

Further more, the fact that I personally facilitated the interactive activities in the classrooms had other advantages. First, I did not have extra resources to employ research assistants. Using teachers in these exercises would have called for time and permission from schools to train them in the use of the proposed approach but I neither had the time nor reason to do this. Yet having regular teachers in class during the administration of the task, I was able to both collect the data from students and at the same time to demonstrate to them the microscopic view of the proposed approach in real use. The fact that I had been a secondary school teacher of English in Kenya was directly an added advantage as it enabled me to pitch the tasks at a 'doable' level and to provide a near 'normal' learning atmosphere for the learners.

The students were told by their subject teachers that I was conducting a study aimed at improving the teaching and learning of literature under the IEC and that they were to take part in the completing given activities during the lesson under my facilitation. They were to work in pairs or groups of three.

As reported in chapter 5, the classroom activities were preceded by pre-reading activities. Then the students were required to work through the exercises, beginning with Exercise 1 on 'Filling in the Gaps' and then Exercise 2 which looked at 'Arranging of sentences into meaningful and cohesive paragraphs'.

Once they had completed each exercise – in an average of about 40 minutes – the researcher led the whole class in an oral post-reading activity focussing on the various decisions, options and the choices made by the different groups in completing the exercise. Questions such as: 'why?' 'Where else?' 'Which other word could you have used here?' were randomly posed by the researcher to the learners. These questions helped to direct the discussion about the first text. These exercises could have been followed by textual questions requiring cataphoric and anaphoric references as well as general language awareness especially with regard to the grammatical functions of the writer's choice of diction but this was beyond the scope of the present study. The questions engaged the learners in both listening and speaking skills. They were then shown the original poem and were led into comparing and contrasting their own chosen words and the original words of the poet herself. This way, learners quickly understood the poet's intentions and attitudes without being told by the teacher or even, me what the poem was all about as is often the case in TA lessons.

There was a 15-minute break between the first task and the second to enable the researcher complete the structured observation checklist. Then the second exercise was administered. This task required learners to rearrange the given sentences taken from Chinua Achebe's *A Man of The People*, a set book they were studying for the KCSE Examination, into two meaningful and cohesive paragraphs. Where it was not convenient to administer the two exercises at ago, there was room to do this on the subsequent visit to the school, which normally took place the following day.

4.7 Data Analysis Methods

There were four main sources of data for the present study as already indicated. These did not include the informal interviews I had with heads of schools and heads of English departments which were primarily aimed at getting permission to carry out research in the schools. The administrators' views were nevertheless useful in understanding how the subject was handled in the schools and in getting some vital statistics about the number of teachers of English in the respective schools, enrolment and average class sizes. The data from four ke y sources of information – the teachers' questionnaire, completed classroom exercises by students, observation checklist and video recording was analysed and presented as described in this section.

All the information from the teachers' questionnaire was summarized and analysed before being interpreted. The analysis and interpretation focussed on three of the six research questions. Responses to the closed-ended questions were tabulated on the basis of frequencies and percentages. Simple descriptive statistics and bar graphs are used to in discussing the implications of the findings.

A global analysis of the responses to the open-ended questions was undertaken and general trends summarised and reported accordingly. To give a true picture of various opinions elicited, some of the responses are presented 'verbatim' and the pedagogical nuances discussed. The findings from the open-ended questions were then corroborated with the quantitative data from the closed-ended questions before conclusions were drawn.

The two classroom activities are equally reported both quantitatively and qualitatively. A description of a typical lesson is offered and then learners' responses to the two activities presented. The first task was analysed quantitatively with a summary of frequencies showing the number of times a word was chosen by different groups to fill the given blanks being made .The top ten most occurring words were listed down as shown in Appendix 4. This is followed by a discussion of what the students had to say when they compared the original text with their own 'poems'. Samples of students written texts based on Exercise 2 are presented and the general purpose for this kind of exercise discussed. The learners' texts are then contrasted with the original texts (cf. Appendices 3 and 8) and students' opinions for any differences thereof explained.

The data from the systematic observation is both numerical as well as qualitative in nature (Herzog, 1996:42). To analyse this data, I had to summarize the results from my notes and then described the findings from the study sample. This was then followed by inferences and generalizations about the study population with a special focus on the RTIA upon which the two classroom exercises were based.

4.8 Conclusion

In the next chapter, I focus on the research findings and presentation of the same. In this chapter, a detailed explanation of the procedures followed to obtain the required data and information has offered; the study setting described, with reasons given the study area was chosen. The sampling techniques used to identify the schools and hence the teachers and the pupils who took part in the study have also discussed. This is followed by an explication of the research instruments used and the measures taken to ensure that they

were both valid and reliable. Finally, there is a description of the data collection procedures and how the data obtained was analysed and presented. It has been demonstrated that this study is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. These methods used to collect the data provided for both internal validity and reliability of findings. The instruments have been shown to have sufficient checks to verify the results from either of the two strands: teachers' responses to the questionnaires and learner's responses to the classroom exercises.

Chapter 5: Research Findings – Presentation and Analysis

5.0 Preamble

As pointed out in chapter 4, this research was undertaken in selected secondary schools in Kenya. A total of 20 public provincial secondary schools were involved, with 60 teachers of English responding to a structured questionnaire and about 800 pupils participating in RTIA exercises at the classroom level. There was feedback from teachers through the questionnaire while learners' responses were through the interactive activities undertaken during actual lessons in class. As a means of bringing the contrast between the TA to teaching imaginative texts and the RTIA, sample lessons based on these two approaches were video recorded on video clips and are briefly described in this section too. Finally there is a brief summary of the results from observation schedule.

5.1 Feedback from Teachers

The teachers' questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section I dealt with information about the respondents, the school and how the teaching of the IEC course was organised in their respective schools. Section II comprised of open- and closed-ended questions covering pedagogical issues surrounding the integrated English curriculum at the secondary school level in Kenya. The information collected in both sections is considered vital in underscoring the need for the proposed RTIA if the curriculum has to achieve its goals and objectives. Information collected through the teacher's questionnaire sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extend are teachers of English in Kenyan secondary schools qualified and hence able to effectively implement the IEC in the classroom?

2. From the teachers' opinion, what are the major impediments to the effective implementation of the IEC in Kenyan secondary schools?

3. What are some of the predominant pedagogical techniques teachers employ in handling imaginative texts in the context of the IEC?

The teachers' qualification and experience in relation to their ability to effectively implement the IEC in the classroom are some of the issues addressed in both Section I of the questionnaire and later demonstrated in the attached video recording (Appendix 12).The impediments to the effective implementation of the IEC in Kenyan secondary schools are discussed from the responses teachers gave in section II of the questionnaire .The question of heavy work load due to large numbers was further confirmed when I conducted the interactive exercise in the classrooms. Because of their inclination to the TA, and the persistent handling of the English language and literature as though they were two separate subjects, teachers overly stressed the need for learners to read the set books severally if they have to do well. Detailed findings to the research questions are discussed in the sections that follow.

5.1.1 Section I: Background Information about schools and respondents

A total of 60 teachers from a cross-section of selected schools responded to the questionnaire. Of these, 33 were female and 27 male. Among the respondents, 27% were graduates of the 8-4-4 system of education aged 21- 30 years old. 25 % had gone through the old system but had been trained to teach both the English language and Literature at the secondary school level. The remaining 48% were teachers with long experience who

had taught both in the old and current system of education and were trained to teach English language and another subject.

Teacher training is seen as an important factor in any successful implementation of any curriculum (Nunan 2001). Prior to the introduction of the 8-4-4 system of education, it was not compulsory for teacher-trainees in tertiary institutions such as universities and Diploma Colleges to take both English language and Literature as their major teaching. Only recently, from 1988, were undergraduate B.Ed students required to study studied both English Language and Literature at the university level. Yet when the new syllabus was introduced, anyone who had trained to teacher either of the components was immediately required to teach both components of the IEC.

From the responses, majority of the teachers of English were professionally qualified but for a paltry 2% who were not trained teachers. In fact, two of the latter were teacher trainees on teaching practice in one of the sampled schools. Considering the extent of professional qualification, most of the teachers would have no problem implementing the IEC. But it is a matter of conjecture whether the training received thereof matched the demands made of the teachers in the classroom set up when handling either of the components.

For instance, asked which subjects they specialised in during their teacher training, it emerged that only 58% of the respondents had qualified to teach both the English language and Literature at the secondary school level. The remaining 42% were qualified to teach either English or Literature with another different subject. This category included teachers who had trained to teach mostly English language with subjects such as

History, Kiswahili, Physical Education, Geography, Fine Art, Economics, French, Christian Religious Education, and Home Science. On this basis, it can be teachers should and can be expected to successfully implement the IEC, their teaching experience not withstanding.

5.1.2 Teaching Experience

By teaching experience I meant the length, in terms of number of years, a teacher has been teaching. As part of the background information, teachers were asked to state for how long they had been teaching. The length of teaching experience was divided into short period (1-4 years), average (5-9 years), long (10-14 years) and very long experience (15 + years). I included this aspect in my survey since a teacher's experience could influence his way of teaching and readiness to adapt to changes in syllabus design and methodology. Burke and Brumfit (1986) are of the view that teachers will exhibit different views at different times in their professional lives. Table 5.1 below shows the frequency of the distribution of 60 respondents by their teaching experience:

Table 5.1: Teachers' Experience

Years of Experience	No. of Respondents
1- 4	12
5- 9	11
10-14	17
15+	20
Total	**60**

Most teachers who responded to the questionnaire, had teaching experience of over 10 years and above (about 60%) with only 20% having taught for 4 years or less. The

implication of this is that teaching force has been around for quite sometime and should be fully aware of the IE course objectives. The continued poor results in examinations every year would suggest that the teachers' long experience has not helped improve the teaching and learning of the subject but this is an observation that needs further research to validate

Another issue that emerged from the background information was the teachers' workload in relation to the actual number of students handled in class. This aspect was included because workload and student population would affect the way a teacher would handle an imaginative text in the classroom (Muthama, 2005). Large classes would inevitably affect the size of groups and the time it would take for feedback from all learners if required.

As already explained in chapter 4, the schools selected for this study were all provincial secondary schools. This category of schools is the second best in the country with many of their Form1 intake being pupils with above average ability based on their performance in the KCPE. The maximum score a candidate can score in the KCPE is 500 marks in the five taken subjects. Provincial schools normally select pupils who have scored a minimum of 350 marks out of 500, hence an average of 70% in all the taken subjects although occasionally this may vary depending on the overall national performance in a given year.

Since provincial schools are well-established, often with good facilities and good records in KCSE performance, they tend to be over-enrolled as illustrated in the Table 5.2overleaf. On average, there were about 45 students per class in the selected schools although some had as many students as 60 per class! What emerged however is the

apparent lack of uniformity in enrolment in the various schools in the Province. This reflects either on lack of a clear policy on school enrolment by the MoE or the fact that the demand for secondary education is higher than the available secondary schools in the country. Such high numbers in the class certainly affect the teachers' workload as the respondents aptly pointed out and variations in enrolment does, put verifiable demands on teachers in different schools.

Table 5.2: Average number of pupils per class/stream

Number of pupils per class	Respondents handling such a class size
35-39	7
40-44	21
45-49	13
50-54	8
55-59	4
60+	7

N.B: *The figures represent the size of classes in each stream handled by the individual teachers in the selected schools and NOT the overall enrolment per Form per school*

The above table shows that more than half of the respondents teach in classes with over 45 pupils. It is particularly conspicuous that 7 teachers (representing 12% of the respondents) reported handling classes with more than 60 pupils at one go. The issue here is whether with such high numbers teachers can be able to effectively deal with the various aspects of the IEC that may require individualised learner attention and input or even organised group work.

Given that I visited 20 schools, these results mean that on average each school had 3 teachers of English handling about 800 pupils in the whole school. It is not surprising therefore that a number of teachers thought the workload was too heavy for them. As Table 5.2 above shows, the English teachers deal with large numbers of pupils and this might affect the way they deliver lessons. Indeed when asked about what they thought of their workload, 55% of the respondents felt their current workload was heavy with 43% feeling the workload was moderate. Only one respondent said the workload was light!

It is on this ground that a number of heads of department in several of the schools visited took issue with the current Curriculum Based Establishment (CBE) criteria used by the TSC when staffing schools saying was misleading. The CBE takes into account the number of 40-minute periods a teacher has in his teaching subject to determine the number of teachers in the subject area a school should have. The departmental heads did suggest during the informal interviews that the actual workload should be based on the number of learners one handles in each class rather than the periods. For example, if one has a class of 50 pupils, his or her workload is different from one whose class has just 30 pupils even if the two teachers have the same number of lessons.

5.1.3 Teaching Arrangement

On the basis of the integrated syllabus, teaching of both the English language and literature ought to be integrated at the classroom level. As explained in chapter 2, the syllabus (KIE, 1992:47) entrusts teachers with the responsibility of dividing up the time allocated for English well enough to facilitate adequate coverage of each aspect of language and literature components at the secondary school level. English is officially allocated 6 periods of 40 minutes each at the lower level (Forms 1 and 2) and 8 lessons in

senior classes (Forms 3 and 4). How a school distributes these lessons serves as an indicator on how the IEC is perceived and how either of the components is rated in the school.

The study found out that at Form 1 and 2, 92% of the respondents said they teach both English language and literature in the same class, with the remaining 8% saying they taught English language and another teacher handled the literature component in the same class/stream. The respondents had been given three options as follows:

A. Respondents handles both language and literature in each class he teaches;

B. Respondent handles English language and another teacher handles literature;

C. Respondent handles literature and another teacher handles English language.

They were then asked to account for the arrangement adopted to handle the subject as chosen. Those who said they handle both components at Forms 1 and 2 had a number of reasons for this. These ranged from their qualification and ability to do so, school policy on integration and the sheer lack of enough teachers to share the teaching of the two areas. Majority of the respondents who adopted arrangement 'A' above argued that this arrangement was suitable because the KIE officially requires that the teaching of the two areas be integrated. The IA as set out when the 8-4-4 English syllabus, they emphasised, require that the same teacher takes both language and literature in the same class to avoid duplication of ideas to learners and fragmented /disjointed learning.

By handling both components in one class, majority of the respondents who taught both components at Forms 1 and 2 argued that the teacher has the opportunity to check the individual learner's ability in both components. This way, it was felt, the learners overall

performance in the subject will reflect on not just their ability but also on their teachers' ability to prepare them in both areas of study. Handling the two components singly would make it difficulty for one to tell whether it is the English language teacher or the literature one who affected the learners' final score in the KCSE.

"I teach both components because I am the only one in the department who majored in both components at the university," one respondent observed. As already found out, only 58% had received training to teach both components. The by this teacher implies not just policy and the teachers' ability and professional preparedness to handle both components determining whether a teacher does so, but the number of teachers available. This is quickly contrasted by another statement from another respondent:

> "Although I am not trained to teach both components, I teach both language and literature at this level because it is the policy of the Ministry that language and literature be integrated."

This observation clearly shows a deliberate effort by schools to meet the Ministry's requirement regardless of teachers' capability and qualification to integrate the two components at the classroom level. The following are some of the reasons put forward by majority teachers to generally explain why they preferred arrangement A to B and C:

1. Handling both components is seen to be more convenient as it makes timetabling a lot easier, given that the same teacher handles both components;

2. Some respondents teach both components for lack of choice due to understaffing;

3. It was felt that the two components are interdependent. Teachers felt that it is possible to improve the learners' language skills in the creative context of literature lessons and vice versa;

4. The MoE, it was noted by the 92% of the respondents, assumes that all teachers have the ability to handle both areas effectively. So some schools have adopted arrangement A in order to give each teacher an opportunity to be abreast with the whole syllabus instead of just one component that they may have trained to handle during their training.

Whether it is out of convenience, or lack of choice due to understaffing, or simply to ensure that everybody in the department was familiar with the IEC, it is clear that the alternative A would go a long way in enabling teachers towards meeting the MoE requirement.

However, not everyone opted for this at the lower level. The 8% who said they follow alternative B argued that handling one area in a class provides for effective teaching. They maintained that when a teacher handles both components in one class, personal biases may result in either of the components being ignored. It was claimed that where one teacher handles both components, he or she is likely to devote more time on the component he or she liked and the students would end up suffering the consequences.

5.1.4 Time allocated per week for English in Forms 1 and 2

The respondents were asked to state how many lessons per week were allocated for each of the two components. The feedback shows that majority of the schools sampled set

aside 4 lessons for English language and 2 for literature in Form 1 and 2 as shown in the table below:

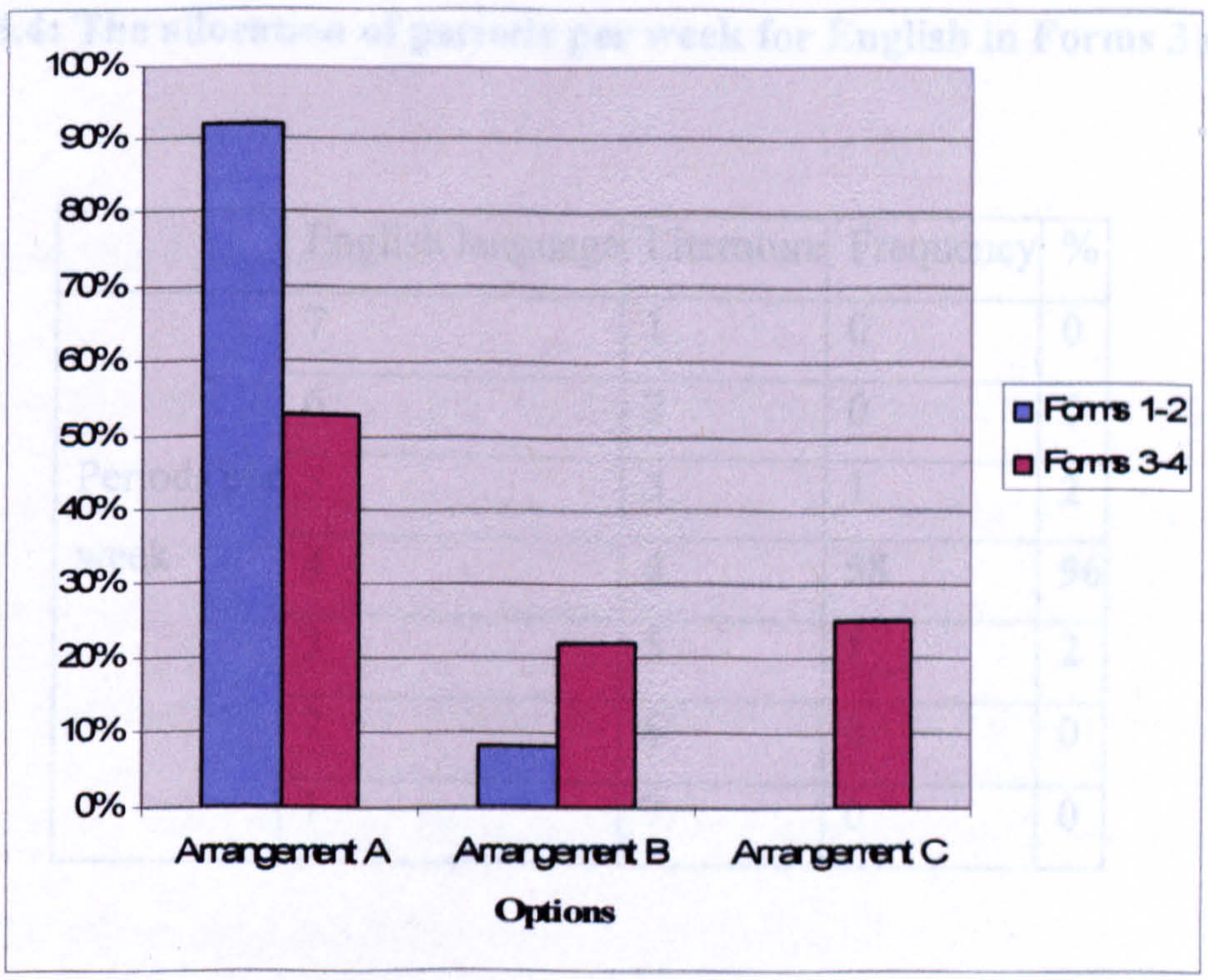
Table 5.3: Time allocated for English in Forms 1 and 2 per week

	English Language	Literature	Number of respondents	%
Lessons Per Week	5	1	8	13
	4	2	38	63
	3	**3**	**13**	**22**
	2	4	1	2

Only 13 respondents allocated the two components equal time of three periods per week. Evidence of more emphasis being placed on language is also further shown when eight respondents said they allocated 5 periods to English language and only 1 to literature as compared to the only one respondent who said 5 periods are set aside for literature and 1 for language.

The scenario changes significantly at the upper level (Form 3 and 4) in terms of who handles what in the classroom. Unlike in Forms 1 and 2 where 92% of respondents handled both components, only 53% said they teach both the English language and literature at Forms 3 and 4. Of the remainder, 22% said they teach English language while another teacher handles literature and 25% handle literature with another teacher taking the language component of the syllabus in the same class. These differences are best summarised by the bar-graph below:

Figure 3: Bar graph showing the teaching arrangements at the two levels by percentage



From this bar graph, it is evident that it's at Forms 3 and 4 levels we have one group of teachers handling only literature and the other English by almost 50 percent of the respondents. This is significant when compared to the 8% who said that they employed option B at Form 1 and Form 2.

Equally noticeable is the time allocated for both English language and literature at the upper level. Whereas more time is set aside for the language component at the lower level, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that both components have 4 periods apiece at Forms 3 and 4. This could be an indicator of the importance attached to literature at this level. This is due to the fact that the MoE requires that specific imaginative texts be studied starting in Form 3 in preparations for examinations at the end of the four-year secondary course. Table 5.4 below is a summary of the teachers' responses to the question of time allocation at Forms 3 and 4.

Table 5.4: The allocation of periods per week for English in Forms 3 and 4

	English language	Literature	Frequency	%
Periods per week	7	1	0	0
	6	2	0	0
	5	3	1	2
	4	**4**	**58**	**96**
	3	5	1	2
	2	6	0	0
	1	7	0	0

The fact that 96% of the respondents agreed that each of the two components is given four periods on the timetable contrasts sharply with the 22% who said that both components are allocated equal time at Forms 1 and 2. At this lower level, 76% of respondents allocated more time for the English language component with an insignificant 2% allocating more time for literature than language.

5.1.6 Teaching Preferences

Asked if they had any preferences between teaching either English language and literature, only five respondents said they would be happy teaching both the components of the English syllabus. This was surprising considering the fact that 58% of the respondents had been found to be professionally trained to teach both language and literature at this level. If they had an option, 25% of the respondents said they would prefer teaching the language component to literature while 67% said they would rather

teach literature instead of English language. Only 8% said they would be happy to teach both components even if they were given the choice.

5.1.7 Teaching for Examination

From the teachers' responses, it is clear that most of them understand the rationale behind the IEC. The stumbling block is that they all focus on the examination. The integrative approach would call for more time which the timetable does not have room for. Examinations and teaching are so closely intertwined in Kenya that it seems impossible to operate in either field without being constantly concerned about the other. Indeed, localised examinations such as District Mocks and the KCSE examinations were cited as exerting such considerable pressure on the teachers that they (examinations) are often instrumental in determining the kind of teaching that goes on in the classroom on a daily basis.

5.1.8: The Time Factor

One of the questions in Section I asked teachers if they thought there was enough time allocated for English on the timetable. This was necessary as a means of counterchecking their response on workload. Just 25% of the respondents thought there was enough time on the time table. Proper management of the allocated time for English, this group said, allowed their respective schools to complete the syllabus in time for the examinations as clearly put by one teacher who said they had no problem at all about time:

> "We as a school are able to use the available time to cover the syllabus before national examinations and even our students have some time left to revise past examination papers."

Thus, if the target is to go through the syllabus before students sit for their KCSE Examinations, then the time allocated was enough according to this school of thought. This called for sacrifice and tailor-made teaching, sometimes rushing through the set books.

But 75% of the respondents did not think the time allocated for the Integrated English syllabus at the secondary school level in Kenya was enough. This group gave different reasons as to why they thought the available time on the school timetable was inadequate. They took issue with having to rush through the syllabus in order to complete the syllabus before the KCSE as this did not, in their view, result in useful learning. Below are some of the reasons advanced by those advocating for more time:

1. Broad curriculum – the respondents pointed out that the English curriculum was too wide. Hence some areas such as the Short Stories and the Novel could hardly be effectively taught within the given time other than just "reading through with the learners and preparing them on how to answer examination questions."

2. Examinations – here it was argued that there are falling standards in the English examinations in the KCSE because the teachers did not have enough time to help learners internalise the literary texts. It was observed that if one had to vary the teaching approach to suit the integrated approach for better results, then one needs more time; otherwise the syllabus would remain incomplete every year.

3. Many teachers thought the literature syllabus is very wide – covering five major genres – to be covered in just four lessons every week. The Novel, Play, Short Stories, Poetry and Oral Literature were all said to be very demanding areas. The difficulty here, it was argued, is that the first three genres are only introduced to the students at Form 3 when they begin reading the prescribed texts in readiness for the national examinations.

In order to address each of these areas adequately, some respondents reported that they had been forced to "teach at lunch time, evenings, at night, and even weekends" so that they can *cover* the syllabus. Indeed, because of what they called a congested syllabus, almost all the schools that took part in this study had their Form 4 candidates in schools during the school holidays to enable them to go through the syllabus.

4. Learners' ability – it was felt by the 75% of the respondents that they needed more time because they have often been forced to teach at a slower pace since their learners had difficult internalising complicated literary works. This, they attributed to the poor language background received by their students at the primary level and the inappropriate set books recommended by the MoE

5. More attention needed for English – the respondents argued that since English is a second language, there was need for more time in learning the subject so that learners get accustomed to the intricacies of the various language skills. Learning just about the grammar tailor-made for examinations does not help learners much, the respondents maintained.

5.1.9 Teachers Responses in Section II of the Questionnaire

In this section of the questionnaire, teachers were taken through a number of issues that would primarily be important for the effective implementation of the IEC. The issues ranged from teachers perception of the integrated syllabus, to decision making about the books being studied at this level, the pedagogical approaches used to handle the imaginative texts in their schools, and finally suggestions for bettering the handling of the subject at the classroom level.

a. To integrate or not to integrate?

The first question put to the teachers in this section was regarding the appropriateness of the decision by the MoE to integrate the two hitherto independent subjects into one examinable subject. Of all the respondents only 30% agreed that the decision was right while surprisingly 70% disagreed.

Those who had no problem with this decision argued that both the English language and literature complement each other since they are mutually interrelated. Proponents upheld that good mastery of language is essential for comprehensive understanding and analysis of literary works. Language was said to benefit through learners extensive exposure to reading, listening and writing skills arising from literature lessons. They also added that literature would help enhance learners' acquisition and use of a wide range of vocabulary essential for the writing part of the language component in the IEC syllabus.

In view of these, the 30% held that literature can not be delinked from language pointing out that literature is essentially an expression of imaginative ideas through language and students have to be made to appreciate and understand this fact if their creativity and imaginative use of language is to be enhanced.

By merging the two areas, the Ministry made it possible for all learners to study literature which was optional before. This was important in producing all rounded students, those who could not just read but were capable of taking part in a reasoned argument. The proponents maintained that literature helps with developing not only interpretation skills but also a high sense of criticality, not possible in the English language alone.

Those opposed to the decision by the Ministry of Education to integrate the two areas argued that the process of integrating the two subjects it's was not done properly. They said the decision only helped to increase the teachers' workload and the curriculum has turned out to be burdensome to the learners with less time being spent on either of the components.

They also took issue with literature being made compulsory. They said this was the main cause of their students not performing well in the KCSE English examination as "some students find literature so hard that it ends up making them fail." More specifically, the critics felt that literature is a complex subject that requires logical thinking which not all of their students were capable of. In any case, it was pointed out, some students maybe gifted in one of the components and not the other and language and literature together only succeeded in making them score low marks when they could have achieved higher marks if the subjects were taught separately.

Another reason cited for the inappropriateness of the decision was to do with the time factor earlier discussed. Teachers said the syllabus was too heavy and thus learners ended up not being fully grounded in either of the components and so leaving school when "half-baked". This would seem to fit in well with the Kenyan universities' held view that secondary school leavers are linguistically impoverished!

At the professional level, the respondents argued that it was hard to expect a teacher who had not seen the IA used anywhere, not even at the university, to implement it. In all the Kenyan universities, the training treated English language as a separate subject from Literature in English and teacher trainees were even equipped with different teaching methodologies for either of these. The respondents said that as a result, they were not equipped to handle both components from an integrated approach.

Similarly, it was argued that despite the integration, there has been no clear policy from the MoE as to what needs to be done in the classroom to show that the two areas are being integrated. The examinations by KNEC were also said not to reflect an integrated approach either. This, according to the teachers, left them with no option but to teach the two areas separately.

Due to being ill-trained to handle both components, some teachers confessed that they tend to lean on their favourite component and this made the other bit suffer. This was particularly true for the 42% of the respondents who had trained to teach only one of the two components and another different subject.

b. Awareness of the interdependence between the English language and literature

Here, I asked teachers two similar questions: the first needed them to state whether they thought learner interaction with imaginative texts would lead to improvement in the various language aspects that are taught at the secondary level. The response was notably striking considering the fact 70% of teachers had earlier disapproved of the decision by the MoE to integrate the two components. The table below summarises the findings:

Table 5.5: Benefit of literary texts to learning given Language skills

Language	Yes	No	Not Sure	Total
Vocabulary	52	3	5	60
Speaking	44	15	1	60
Listening	38	18	4	60
Grammar	47	13	0	60
Comprehension	48	9	2	60
Writing	38	16	6	60

From table 5.5 above, there is no doubt that the teachers understood the importance of learning literature to the mastery of key language skills. A staggering 87% had no doubt that their learners stood to improve their vocabulary through literature, followed by comprehension, grammar, and speaking. It is telling however that some respondents did not think that listening and writing skills stood to benefit from the study of literature with only 63% saying 'yes'. This could be due to the fact that most of them give students notes to prepare them for examinations and nothing else.

On the other hand, when I asked the respondents whether they thought students' proficiency in the same language skills would better their learning of literature; a similar

result was repeated, only this time, there was a greater agreement that all the six areas were useful in aiding the learning of literature as Table 5.4 overleaf shows.

Table 5.6: The Impact of language proficiency on learning literature

Language Area	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Vocabulary	52	5	3	60
Speaking	47	11	2	60
Listening	48	10	2	60
Grammar	51	7	2	60
Comprehension	52	4	3	60
Writing	46	11	3	60

But unlike in the previous question, more respondents seem to believe that both listening and writing skills have a role to play in the learning of literature with 80% and 77% paragraph acknowledging the importance of the two skills respectively. Proficiency in comprehension and grammar was ranked highest in terms of the impact this would have on the learning of literature. These contrasts sharply with the fact that only 30% approved of the MoE's decision to integrate English language and literature.

The responses to the two questions show that a majority of the teachers clearly understood the close relationship between the learning of English language and literature. They see the interconnection between the acquisition of essential language skills and the literary skills and vice versa.

c. Level of difficult in handling various literature genres

In this question, the research sought to determine how easy or hard the various genres of literature are to the students. The results show that most learners found Poetry and the Short Stories particularly difficult. This is shown in Table 5.7 below:

Table5.7: Level of difficulty for the various genres of literature

Genre	Very Easy	Easy	Uncertain	Difficult	Very Difficult	Total
Oral Literature	10	30	5	14	1	60
Poetry	0	8	9	26	17	60
Short Stories	0	17	16	22	4	60
Plays	1	30	12	14	3	60
The Novel	0	25	19	13	3	60
Cumulative Mean %	4	37	20	30	9	100

But oral literature and the plays were found relatively easy to handle by more than half of the respondents. Cumulatively, about 41% of the respondents said their learners would find most of the five genres either very easy to handle. 20% were uncertain while 39% said a number of genres were either hard or very hard for their students. In terms of difficulty according to these results, Poetry leads, followed by the Short Stories, then the Plays, and the Novel and finally Oral Literature. This particular finding seems to confirm the trend in performance in the KCSE examination as highlighted in chapter 2.

I also asked the teachers to indicate the reasons they thought made some of their students to find any aspects of the literature syllabus hard. Several reasons emerged. These ranged from learners negative attitude towards poetry to lack of a reading culture in the country. In particular, the following arguments were put forward by the respondents to explain why some areas were found particularly difficult by students:

a. Little coverage given to some aspects, for example poetry and the short stories, due to lack of time; this meant students hardly had the opportunity to practise and internalise the essential skills;

b. Poetry is cryptic and uses terse language and hard vocabulary hence limiting the learners' understanding of the genre; and as a result, poetry remains 'alien' to most learners;

c. Short Stories, Plays and the Novel are introduced much later at Forms 3 and 4 and hence students lack a proper foundation;

d. Students from urban areas did not enjoy learning oral literature as it was 'alien' to many of them who have not had first hand experience like their rural – based counterparts;

e. Some texts such as the Novel are big making it difficult to sustain learners'' interest given that students have many other subjects to study as well;

f. Lack of a reading culture in the country;

g. The mixing of literature and language into one subject does not allow for systematic and in-depth study of literature;

h. Lack of a prescribed poetry set book means that teachers have no obligation to teach the genre;

i. Interference of 'Sheng' - a kind of pidgin arising from Swahili and English languages - commonly used by students (For some examples on Sheng with English translations refer to: http://africanlanguages.com/swahili/sheng/);

j.

j. On the whole, an overloaded English syllabus made learners to merely read for examinations and nothing more.

d. Selection of literature set books for teaching

As pointed out in chapters 3, text selection is an important element of the teaching of literature in schools. In Kenya, it is the practice that the MoE prescribes the literature set books to be examined at the KCSE level. The teachers are usually not aware of the criteria used to pick a particular set book nor are their opinions sought. Against this background, teachers were asked to say whether they thought this practice was appropriate or not. Of the 60 respondents, 85% said this was not an appropriate practice while only 15% agreed to the policy that the Ministry should continue prescribing books without involving the teachers.

In view of this, I went ahead and listed the various set books that the KIE had in the past prescribed for the forms 3 and 4 secondary levels and which had been examined in the previous KCSE including those that had just been selected for the current Form 3 and 4 students. The respondents were asked whether they would have included all or some of

the books for examination at O-Level. They were required to either tick YES, NO or NOT SURE.

The findings reveal that most teachers may not have gone for the Shakespearean plays were they to be given a chance to choose. Achebe's (1958) *Things Fall Apart* was a very highly rated novel with 77%. Ruganda's (1972) *The Burdens* was overall the highest ranked literary text with 88% saying they would select it. It was followed by two other plays written by (Imbuga 1987) *Betrayal in The City* and Aminata which had 83% a piece. (Gogol's 1959) *The Government Inspector* had 80% of the responses saying they would have picked it while Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* given the lowest ranking with just 26% saying they would include it in the KCSE literature syllabus. The table below is a summary of the findings:

Table 5.8: Teacher's preference for KCSE prescribed text

Text	Yes	No	Not sure	Total
Things Fall Apart	46	9	4	60
Mine Boy	33	18	9	60
The Concubine	44	11	4	60
The River and The Source	33	20	7	60
A Man of The People	42	14	5	60
Coming to Birth	33	22	5	60
Romeo and Juliet	26	27	7	60
The Government Inspector	48	8	4	60
The Burdens	53	5	4	60
Aminata	50	5	5	60
The Merchant of Venice	16	35	8	60
Betrayal in the City	50	6	4	60

Numerous evaluation checklists have been designed over the years to help teachers make appropriate selection of texts (Rubdy, 2003:42). From table 5.7, it is clear that teachers would certainly prefer certain works to others. Plays by African writers were regarded

quite highly apart from Gogol's *The Government Inspector*. The latter received better ranking ostensibly due to of its social political relevance to the Kenyan context.

Assessing the effectiveness and suitability of the materials should be seen in terms of the specific needs and context of the intended learners as well as how well the materials serve the teaching-learning process. This was brought out as among the reasons why teachers would select certain literary texts and not others. For example, on Shakespeare's works, most respondents felt they would not select them because of the irrelevance of context. They argued that these plays though classic, would not capture the imagination of the Kenyan student given its setting and difficult language. *Coming to Birth by* Marjorie Oludhe was said to be "dry" and unappealing in terms of literary richness and capturing learners' interest. Ogolla's (1994) *The River and the Source* was said to be too long and written with a specific Kenyan community in mind!

Those set books that teachers approved of were said to be culturally relevant and addressed contemporary issues that learners could easily identify with. Because of their accessibility, books such as *The Burdens, Aminata, Betrayal in The City* and *Things Fall Apart* were said to be "enjoyable and easy to understand given the simple English employed by the authors and the fact that they raised issues that were affecting the society even today." The same sentiments were expressed in relation to Gogol's *Government Inspector.*

On a similar note, I asked the teachers whether they thought the prescribed books they were using at the time were suitable for their learners. It was interesting that 60% of the respondents said the current set books were not suitable especially *The Merchant of*

Venice. This response corroborates with the 58% who had in Table 5.7 above said that they would not have chosen this book given chance. *Coming to Birth* is the other book that was being taught yet it was among the lowest ranked novel with 55% saying they would leave it out if they were to select books for the Form 3 and 4 literature teaching.

e. Teaching Approaches in the classroom

Question 8 in the teachers' questionnaire asked the respondents to say whether they had any difficulties with their learners to do certain things during the literature lessons. The purpose of this question was to establish whether learners would be able to take part in the RTIA if the proposed approach were to be introduced in schools. The following table is a summary of the views gathered from teachers:

Table 5.9: Teaching Approaches used by Teachers in the Classroom

Action	Yes	No	Total
Respond to oral questions	24	36	60
Raise a problem/ask a question	38	22	60
Participate in whole class discussion	33	27	60
Work in groups on a given task	18	42	60
Read the required texts on their own	51	9	60

Majority of the learners face difficulties in taking part in the lessons including reading on their own. While they could not participate in whole class discussion, the learners were said to work well in groups on a given task and that they also were good at giving responses to oral questions. This was found to be true when from my observation in the classroom during the two interactive activities.

Teachers were further given four factors considered significant in influencing their learners' in their understanding of a literary text. The four factors were as follows:

A. The reader's fluency in the target language;

B. The reader's personal experience;

C. The reader's cultural background; and

D. The reader's level of interest in the content.

The reader's level of interest in the content was considered the most important by a majority of the teachers while the reader's personal experience was found to be the least important by the respondents. Neither did respondents rank one's cultural background among the top factors. Fluency in the target language was seen as valuable if one had to access the text.

How did the candidates prepare for the KCSE literature examination? Table 5.9 below gives a brief summary of the findings to this question: Teachers were asked to rank five strategies their learners were likely to use when preparing for 1 – 5 scale, with 1 being "strongly agree" and 5 representing "strongly disagree".

Table 5.10: Preparing for the KCSE literature examination

Strategy	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Reading through the text several times	32	7	7	5	9	60
Reading carefully through teacher's notes	7	4	13	29	7	60
Reading commentaries/guidebooks on the texts	4	9	5	6	35	60
Participating in small group discussions	8	23	19	8	2	60
Taking part in question and answer sessions in class	12	19	17	9	3	60

Reading through the text several times was said to be the most commonly used approach by the students when preparing for the KCSE literature examination. Teachers did not think that reading the notes they gave out or the commentaries guided books would be suitable for preparing candidates for the examination. Just 52% of the respondents ranked participation in group discussions and taking part in question and answer sessions as being equally important when preparing for the examinations.

By emphasising the need to read the texts severally, teachers seemed to encourage rote learning. It is ironical that many teachers over 60% did not think reading guide books and their notes were useful yet the TA which they were found to be using clearly encourages giving the student a large amount of notes.

5.2 Feedback from learners' interaction with two texts in the classroom

This section was concerned with the other two research questions.

1. How do the learners in the selected schools respond to the teaching approach proposed by the study?

2. To what extend would the proposed teaching approach suit the Integrated English syllabus in Kenya Secondary Schools?

The following findings demonstrate the extent to which learners responded to the proposed RTIA. From the learners' responses, was possible to conclude whether this approach would suit the IEC in Kenyan schools.

As already noted in the literature review and later in chapter 4, the exercises used in this study were meant to stimulate learners' participation in the reading/learning process and to illustrate the potentiality of the reader-text interactive approach in the teaching and learning of imaginative texts in the IEC. The gist of the exercises entailed engaging each learner the students interactively with the texts, with fellow students, and with the teacher in the performance of specific tasks. The approach needed used allowed learners to think and respond independently to texts with the teacher playing the role of the facilitator, a mid-wife so to speak, to the interactive process between learners and the text and amongst themselves.

By working in pairs or groups of three, the learners had an opportunity to alternately say something and listen to one another; as a consequence there was generally a closer integration between the productive and receptive activities. By reading through the poem together and deciding what goes into each of the gaps, the learners were presented with an opportunity not only to intermarry language and literature but also reading and speaking. In the sub – section that follows, I will demonstrate how the two exercises were conducted in the classroom in all the 20 schools and the outcomes thereof.

5.2.1 Ice-breaking activity:

Before administering the research exercises, I gave the students the following ice-breaking activity based on the word "rose". All the learners needed to do was to insert the word "rose" in each of the blank spaces in the given sentences and then write down what they thought was the meaning of the word "rose" as used in each sentence. The sentences were based on every day issues that the students were most likely aware of.

After working in groups, we had a five minutes session talking about the different meanings of this word as the context of usage changed. What emerged was that they quickly agreed that a word can mean totally different things at different times depending on the context in which it is used and that contexts can help us to deduce the meaning of a given word or decide on the most suitable word that would match with the author's intended meaning without necessarily having to turn to the dictionary or better still the dictionary.

This exercise was intended to put the learners in the right frame of mind in order to undertake research Exercise 1

The Roses

Insert the word 'rose' in each of the blanks below:

1. Jesus _____[a] from the dead.
2. Mrs Ngilu _____[b] to the occasion and won the election
3. I _____[c] at dawn to come to School
4. Daniel arap Moi _____[d] from scratch to become the President of Kenya
5. John gave _____[e] a red _____[f] as a sign of his love for her.
6. His stomach _____[g] at the sight.
7. Parliament _____ at 6.30 last evening for lack of quorum
8. The wind _____ at night

The learners' feedback showed that they were not far off from the varied meanings of the word "rose" as used in these sentences. Below are the contextual meanings of the word which I later shared with the students:

1. Jesus **rose** from the dead - He resurrected, to come back to life
2. Mrs Ngilu **rose** to the occasion and won the election - to rise to the occasion here means to come up, take the opportunity.
3. I **rose** at dawn to come to School – woke up, get out of bed, stop sleeping.

4. Daniel arap Moi **rose** from scratch to become the President of Kenya - To move from a lower position, rank, level, etc to a higher one.
5. John gave **Rose** a red **rose** - as a sign or symbol of his love for her
6. His stomach **rose** at night - gave a feeling of nausea
7. Parliament **rose** at 6.30 last evening for lack of quorum- adjourned, ended a session
8. The wind **rose** at night – the wind increased in intensity during the night.

Clearly, this exercise would fit in with the IE syllabus as demonstrated here if time allowed, the students could be asked to write a short poem in which one word is used to mean different things. Basing on sentence number 5 above, for example, I asked students to give me any other English words that can also be used as names of people. I got numerous responses but the following five words were the most common in majority of the schools:

- frank
- joy
- faith
- cook
- mark

I explained to the students just how easy the meaning of any of these words could change depending on capitalisation and the position of the word in a sentence. I used the word "frank" for illustration purposes and wrote on the board these two sentences:

1. "I am *frank*," he said
2. "I am *Frank*," he said.

The two sentences are similar in everything except the capitalisation of 'F' in the sentence. When I asked the students what they thought was the difference between these

statements, the response was unanimous: *frank* in sentence 1 is an adjective describing the speaker as being "honest, open-minded, truthful or candid" while *Frank* as used in sentence 2 refers to the name of the speaker. The difference, the learners were easily able to explain, was due to the capital letter "F" in the middle of a sentence, which made it a proper noun in conformity with the English grammar rules about capital letters.

The above illustration provided a sufficient example of the learner's level of language awareness and did not need me to ask them what an adjective or a noun was as often happens under TA. They were aware of grammar rules and how these affect meaning. However, when I said that "frank" could also be used as a verb, most students in majority of the schools did not agree. I explained to them that "to frank" could mean to postmark a stamp on an envelope as in "The envelope had not been franked." This clearly shows that context even social – economic can determine the level of language awareness, and hence the meaning attached to the text. It is unlikely that Kenyan learners had even come across this concept of 'franking' letters.

A further illustration was worked out with the word *light*. Students were asked to give four examples in which the word 'light' means a different thing. The following three sentences were given as examples of the different ways in which this word could be used with varied meaning:

1. I'm not really hungry, but I wouldn't mind something *light;(a snack)*
2. Since his accident he can only do *light* work ;(not heavy?)
3. We were lucky; the traffic was very *light* so it only took an hour from Nairobi to Nakuru; (with little jam?)
4. We need *light* to be able to read at night. (Not darkness?)

These two demonstrations helped learners realise pretty quickly, and from their perspective too, that:

- a word can have more than one meaning;
- the meaning of a word depends on the context in which it is used rather than on the 'conventional' dictionary definition we know;
- that a word can serve as a noun, an adjective or a verb in varying contexts and one needs to be aware of this in order to attach to it the appropriate meaning.

5.2.2 Exercise 1 - Gap Filling

In this exercise (cf. Appendix 2), students were asked to complete the poem by filling in the blank space in each line with the most appropriate word. At the end they were allowed to compare their choices with those of other groups in class. The students were asked to work in groups of three wherever possible but once in a while, where space allowed they would work in pairs. Both the regular teacher and I were there to facilitate this exercise.

This text was chosen because of its simplicity in terms of language. It was also assumed that it would be familiar to learners within the Kenyan context, considering the issues that the poet addresses: inefficiency, discrimination in public places, the rich versus the poor, corruption in the judiciary. The poem had therefore the ability to inspire the learners and to spur them into interacting with each other. For the same reasons, this text was chosen because of the fact that it could create and sustain interest among the learners; its contents had local social-economic and political relevance which fitted in well with the learners' viewpoints and attitudes (Carter and McRae, 1996). For this reason, the text was found incredibly accessible to them.

Another reason for picking this text as given earlier was because of the fact that it had been used the previous year in the KCSE Examinations (Appendix 6). The poem therefore carried with it the fact that it was relevant to the learners and their participation in the tasks was not a waste of time but rather a valuable opportunity for them to see how such a poem could be made easy and enjoyable. Regular use of such an approach should equip them with the necessary skills to handle any poem in the examination.

This exercise was aimed at dispelling the notion that literary works, especially poems, make use of difficult words and follow a specific canon and therefore could only be approached in a certain way to get meaning out of it. The fact that gap-filling was found to be an easy and interesting exercise by learners was confirmed by their being able to work in groups and complete the task within the stated time. They came also came up with very many contextually suitable words to complete the blank spaces. In Appendix 4.I give the first ten most recurrent words for every blank in the exercise.

Exercise 1: Filling in gaps using suitable words

The students worked in pairs to complete the blank spaces in the poem in each of the schools I visited. This exercise followed a brief introduction focussing on possible future careers for the learners. This involved choosing between being a doctor, a school head teacher, a watchman, and an office messenger. A few volunteers were then asked to briefly explain their choices saying what they liked about the preferred careers and why not the other three. The word in bold every blank is the one the occurred most in all the responses.

All the words as can be seen in Appendix 4 chosen to fill blank 1 were adjectives. And a careful scrutiny of the responses all the words chosen refer reveals that "So what is the deal" the words refer to something big, significant. This compares well with the word "mountain" used in the original poem shown in Appendix 3. The difference however is that unlike the above adjectives, mountain is commonly known to be a noun and not an adjective. But because the students themselves had identified a word such as "key", which can also be a noun, it would be easy for the teacher to explain the symbolism contained in the "mountain deal" after this activity.

The importance of the Minister's son is underscored in blank 2. An *only* child in the African society is culturally valued and considered delicate. Hence most students going for this word. "Wicked" and "corrupt" were words frequently picked most probably because of the negative publicity associated with Ministers in Kenya. Corruption remains a vice that the country continues to fight .One striking observation from the feedback is that girls tended to use more positive adjectives such as "beloved", "dear" and "famous" to describe the Minister's son while boys were harsher, "wicked" and "corrupt" were their common choices. If one was teaching in a mixed secondary school, this could be a rich source of debate about the learners' perception of politicians in the country.

What kind of news did the Minister's son make? Once again the learners show a clear sense of social awareness in their responses to blank 3.The chosen vocabulary are necessarily very appropriate in the context and only needs expounding to bring these closer to the poet's "boiling" news. "Hot" news, "breaking" news, "sad" news, "big" news...are all phrases familiar with learners. But if a teacher had begun by asking the learners what they thought of "boiling" news in an exam situation, it is unlikely that these

words would have come out in the first instance. The image of news 'boiling' was thus easily de coded through this interactive activity.

The responses to blank 4, "How come it was not..." are worth highlighting too. All the responses given by the students in all the schools were verbs and in the past tense. Asked why, the response was obvious to the respondents: the presence of the auxiliary verb "was". This is an excellent manifestation of grammatical awareness which allowed creative intervention. Blanks 6, 9, 18 and 20 had the lowest possible choices. Almost all learners felt "eyes oozed with pus" and that "Kasajja's child *died*" because the man with the key to the "emergency" room was on leave.

Blank 7 and 12 had the largest alternative words with each being contextually suited to complete the blank. They felt the doctor lacked "expertise", "experience", "skills", "time", "sympathy", "compassion" and even competency. This powerful overflow of ideas and emotions was indicative of the learners' perception of doctors in the country and the many factors that make doctors inefficient and unfriendly in the eyes of patients.

Although experience was the most recurrent word, the rest of the words in the box (cf. Appendix 4, blank 7) are not wrong as they account for the respondents' attitudes towards learners mental images of the mothers with their babies as vividly captured in their collective responses to blank 12. The women were considered poor and hopeless state cannot be over-emphasised. The mothers were "emaciated", "desperate", "miserable" and even "pregnant". To others, the mother looked "weak" and "prayerful". Why didn't they imagine those women were rich and happy? The students were

confident that the context made them decide on the words that would most suit the blank spaces.

Arising from the various responses, a teacher could clearly see through the learners' grammar awareness, and could also use their responses as a basis for identifying and linguistic aspects that required further emphasis. This activity could also provide a basis for teaching vocabulary especially with regard to word formation.

On the whole, the responses show a high degree of ingenuity and creativity. As a way of building on this, the teacher may choose to compare some of the new poems written in class and ask the class to discuss the differences. Below I give three samples of poems selected randomly from the student's responses.

The students could be asked to narrow down on the differences and similarities in the words chosen and the class teacher could put the remaining groups in the hot seat to debate the merits and demerits of the words they picked and why as an extension activity in a normal classroom lesson.

Sample 1

HOW COMES?

1 So what is the ____*big*_____ deal?
2 about the minister's ___*famous*_____ son
3 that he makes__*breaking*_news?

4 How come it was not __*broadcasted*___?
5 when __*Meg's*___hospital bed crawled with maggots
6 and her eyes ____*oozed*_____ pus
7 because the doctors lacked ____*expertise*_____?

8 What about Kasajja's __*sick*_____ child

9 who ___*died*_____ because the man with the key
10 to the ____*medicine*_____ room was on leave?

11 *We*_ have seen queues
12 of _*desperate*_ mothers clinging to
babies with translucent skins
13 faint in _*line*_____
14 and the lioness ___*of*____ a nurse
15 commanding _____*mercilessly*_____
16 'Get up or ___*quit*_____ the line'.

17 Didn't ___*we*____ hear it rumoured that
18 the ____*judge*_____ with the white mane
and black robes
19 whose __*chamber*_____ stores the justice of the land
20 ushered a rape ___*victim*_____ out of court
because the seven-year-old
failed to testify?

21 *Well*__, I only remember these things
when I drink
22 they are indeed ___*great*_____ explosions.

Sample 2

SMALL EXPLOSIONS

1 So what is the ____*famous*_____ deal?
2 about the minister's ___ *dear* _____ son
3 that he makes__*public*_news?

4 How come it was not __*announced*_____?
5 when __*Joy's*___hospital bed crawled with maggots
6 and her eyes ____*oozed*_____ pus
7 because the doctors lacked ____*expertise*_____?

8 What about Kasajja's __*only*_____ child
9 who ___*died*_____ because the man with the key
10 to the ____*theatre*_____ room was on leave?

11 *We*_ have seen queues
12 of _*desperate*_ mothers clinging to
babies with translucent skins
13 faint in _*discomfort*_____
14 and the lioness ___*of*____ a nurse
15 commanding _____*them*_____
16 'Get up or ___*leave*_____ the line'.

17 Didn't ___*you*____ hear it rumoured that
18 the ____*judge*_____ with the white mane
and black robes
19 whose __*vocation*_____ stores the justice of the land
20 ushered a rape ___*case*_____ out of court
because the seven-year-old
failed to testify?

21 *Actually*__, I only remember these things
when I drink
22 they are indeed ___*small*_____ explosions.

Sample 3

NO NEWS!

1 So what is the ____*big*_____ deal
2 about the minister's ___*beloved*_____ son
3 that he makes__*such*_news?

4 How come it was not __*announced*_____?
5 when __*Jane's*___hospital bed crawled with maggots
6 and her eyes ____*oozed*_____ pus
7 because the doctors lacked ____*equipment*_____?

8 What about Kasajja's __*first*____ child
9 who ___*died*_____ because the man with the key
10 to the ____*theatre*_____ room was on leave?

*11 We*_ have seen queues
12 of _*lactating*_ mothers clinging to
babies with translucent skins
13 faint in _*desperation*_____
14 and the lioness ___*called*____ a nurse
15 commanding _____*heartlessly*_____
16 ' Get up or ___*leave*_____ the line'.

17 Didn't ___*I*____ hear it rumoured that
18 the ____*man*_____ with the white mane
and black robes
19 whose __*occupation*_____ stores the justice of the land
20 ushered a rape ___*case*_____ out of court
because the seven-year-old
failed to testify?

21 *Fortunately*__, I only remember these things
when I drink
22 they are indeed ___*dormant*_____ explosions.

First, each group could be asked to explain their chosen titles: why "how comes?" or "small explosions"? The class could then ask there questions about specific choices they came up with to complete the blanks.

In this exercise, the significance of the poem emerged not from what the teacher tells the learners or a critic's all-knowing commentaries in a guide book but from the learners' own working on the poem's meaning potential arising from the numerous possibilities that each member of the group thought would make up the original text.

As earlier pointed out in chapter 3, often teachers tend to preoccupy themselves with laid down classical procedures focussing on attention-riveting poetic devices such as highlighted in Section 3.2.1 teachers tend to worry too much about what the learners do not know instead of taking advantage of what they already know and building on this as happened in this task.

The RTIA exercise demonstrated above starts from the learners' ability to account for communicative effects of the simplest and most normal features such as the use of definite and indefinite articles, plural markers, use of pronouns and minor punctuation marks such as the apostrophe. They should be able to tell if a poem is set in the present or past tense. After all, it is these 'little' aspects which contribute immensely in making the meaning of an imaginative text accessible and the learning experience interesting and memorable.

This activity also involved the use of prediction as proposed by Mc Rae (1991). Whether in poetry or prose, the use of prediction plays a large part in heightening a reader's

enjoyment of the imaginative text. The discovery that a groups chosen word correlates with the original text resulted in visible satisfaction among the learners.

Suspense is an important element that writers employ to sustain our interest in what we read. In *Rosie's Walk* (Hutching, 1968), for example, Rosie the hen sets out on her walk. We visualise the fox following her. The reader can predict two things that could happen: the fox could get her or the fox could fail. From such predicted possibilities, the reading of the story gains momentum. The reader's attention is in this way held by the possibilities of what will happen next and not what is already known.

By asking them to predict or, to decide on a suitable word, learners start realising the implications of each word in the text. They come to think of what will follow and how the words they have earlier chosen could impact on the subsequent aspects of the poem. This instinctively makes them go back and forth as they read the poem and learn to review their initial thoughts. And in the process this enhances their own language awareness and literariness in terms of imagination and creativity.

Prediction also plays an important part in our understanding of creative texts. Smith (1985) defines comprehension, which most teachers often rely on while analysing texts under the TA, as a state of fulfilled prediction. "Prediction is asking questions, and comprehension is getting these questions answered" (Ibid: p.83). When asking questions, we are setting up expectations. Such expectations aid our understanding of any imaginative text we are reading as we seek answers.

A simpler post – reading activity to conclude this exercise would be to give learners a list of possible words and ask them to choose the most appropriate word to complete the blank, one of which has to be a word used by the author in the actual Poem. They could then compare their choices with the author's. The teacher could find out how many of the learners choose the author's diction. Jennings' poem "friendship" is a suitable example.

Words to choose from:

1. eyes
   smiles

2. sentences
   letters

3. giving
   friendship

4. sighs
   sings

5. thought
   awe
   kindness

6. kept
   preserved
   developed

7. glances
   kisses

Friendship

Such love I cannot analyse;
It does not rest in lips or……1…,
Neither in……2, or caress.
Partly, I know, it's gentleness

And understanding in one word
Or in brief….3….It's ……4……..
By trust and by respect and…5…
These are the words I'm feeling for.

Two people, yes, two friends
The …6…, comes, the taking ends.
There is no measure for such things.

For this Nature slows and .....7....

Elizabeth Jennings

Exercise 2: Rewriting exercise from Jumbled sentences

As earlier explained in chapter 4, this activity was primarily aimed at drawing learners' attention to text coherence and internal consistency and to illustrate the many ways the same story could have been creatively retold. As expected, this activity did not yield any response from learners similar to the original text; the various responses, as varied as the groups formed a good basis to discuss cohesion.

The various sentences on their own could be regarded as isolated events in the text (Thomas, 1998). From the various responses, it is possible for the teacher to come up with a chart that branches out the various events referred to by the text and what happens, if one event gets altered. This would not only be a meaningful source of holder's interest in the text but more importantly a useful visual focus for this exercise - one in which the learners do not look to the teacher for all the facts about the text. A spider diagram starting with the central character in the text, for instance Odili, could work as an appropriate post-reading activity.

The combination of the events as represented in the nine sentences is dependent by the links between these events. It is therefore helpful that children's attention is drawn to the links, to the cohesion markers and how a variation in the combination can and do affect the overall meaning of the text. By engaging their students in this kind of activity, teachers will not only succeed in enhancing their (learners') familiarity with the texts but also in building their confidence and creativity in the learning of literature. This is the

kind of feedback I got from the learners. That the activity could make them pay more attention to the text despite reading severally as advices by their teachers.

Another important outcome of Exercise 2 is that although the students never quite managed to sequence the jumbled sentences as in the original text, it got the class talking with each group trying to defend why they put one event before the other. It is this sense of originality, this being co-creators of the text and providing the reasoning behind whatever sequence the learners devised that is much more interesting than the correctness of the sequence itself (Thomas, 1998).If effectively used, such a task offers ample opportunity for learners to acquire persuasive and argumentative skills relevant for the composition writing tasks in the language component.

5.3 Notes from the classroom observation

Basing on the notes made from the observation schedule, the following were the emerging issues related to the two class-based RTIA Exercises:

1. After being told what to do, the learners did not require any further explanation as to who the author was or what the poem was all about. They were keen and clearly enthusiastic to carry out the exercises and immediately got involved in the exercises. There responses indicate a vivid sense of creativity in line with the central focus of both tasks.

2. The findings of this research confirm what Long (1986) stated with regard to the teaching of literature which he said would be "an arid business unless there is a response, and even negative responses can create an interesting classroom

situation" (p.42). The tasks selected not only resulted in learner involvement but that they were actually able to give positive responses as seen from the feedback. The negative or would-be unsuitable responses could be used to demonstrate to the learners how their own choice of words could affect/alter the meaning of the text and how this compares with the original text by the author.

3. Once the exercise had begun, there was minimal teacher control and involvement. Instead learners carried out the discussions in groups and were fully engaged with the texts. Once in a while a group could request for my interpretation when not agreeing but I encouraged them that the exercise did not have right or wrong answers. There was evidence of a high level of concentration in all he schools I visited.

4. In their groups, the learners were able to talk about the texts, discuss and arrive at a consensus before one of them wrote down the agreed response. There was a clear manifestation of teamwork and interdependence as they interacted and worked together.

5. The responses to Exercise 1 clearly reflect that the learners were able to pick out the tone and attitude of the poem as with regard to social discrimination in the society. It is clear from their choice of words that they felt the poet was out to decry the discriminatory treatment that the poor undergo in public institutions such as hospitals and law courts while the rich go scot-free. This was reflected in

their emphatic views about the poor in society when asked to justify why they narrowed down on certain words.

6. On the basis of the written work and their reactions when they were told words which the Naligwa had used in the original pos or the order in which sentences came in, in the original text by Achebe, there was always increased attempts by the learners to go back to the text and read again, or simply cross-check how close their own responses were to the authors choices. This they did despite having read the texts through and through as they discussed in groups. Every original word used by the poet was met with "Aaah" ... "Oooooh".... "Mmmh!" if the students had been off the mark or "Yes! Yeah!" if they were close to the word or had actually used the same word as the author's as occasionally happened.

I am not able to offer within the available space all the discussions and responses that went on during the multiple sessions I had in the 20 different schools. But arising from my observation the RTIA works in the classroom and was very much welcome by the learners.

5.4 The Video Evidence

In the three video clips shown on the attached DVD (Appendix 12) three teachers are in class with Form 4 students (the same category used for the classroom interactive activities) All the three were handling different aspects of literature set books in normal school lessons. In the first clip, teacher X is shown teaching poetry in a boys school. The lesson begins with him explaining the lesson objectives: to read through the poem "to see

something about the theme or themes, the message it has, something about how some words have been used the style that the poet has employed and also ...."

He then asks one student to read the poem aloud. The first student reads out aloud as the class listens without making any comments, the teacher asks another student to read through the poem once more. The second boy reads out, although with some pronunciation difficulties. The classroom talk recorded on video goes partly as follows:

Teacher: Let's have one of you read for us this poem.

Student: The Tortoise Song by Kisa Amateshe

Mine is slow rhythm

Through the ecstasy of life

Mine is a cautious post

amid the shouts and boos

retrieving my head

into the trunk of safety

Let the ostrich run

endless distances

To destinations which

spell unexpected doom

Let the eagles fly

their wings full of pride

To mindless skies

Which mock the giant

Mine will be a slow pace

Through tunnels of emotions

Retrieving my head

When reason fails others.

Teacher: Yeah, Wafula that is OK. Now let's have another person to read for us.

The second student reads through the poem without expressing any feeling, rhythm or tonal variation. At the end, the teacher notes that the last line is missing from the reader's script. It is important to mention here that the students had to copy the poem into their exercise books the previous day as the school did not have enough anthologies for all the learners. In many schools in Kenya today, students are required to buy their own copies of the set books.

After correcting the second reader about the missing line, the teacher then proceeds to read through the poem himself. He begins by pointing out that this poem was written by Dr Amateshe, "One of our lecturers at Kenyatta University." He then goes on to read through the poem. Clearly the statement "One of our lecturers at Kenyatta University" had no added value to the task at hand. But his third reading is comparatively better than the students; readings.

After reading the poem, the teacher then asks the class if the poem could be dramatised and the students agree in unison. But the purpose of the day's poetry lesson was "to see what (sic) the persona is, the themes, the message, some styles, the styles that come out

here, and how some words have been used," he makes this clear to the learners who are by now all ears..

He follows this up by asking the class: Who is the "persona" in this poem? And one student says "the speaker." This was an incorrect answer and thus the teacher clarifies to the class that the word persona means "the speaker, the voice." This is an indication that the student had no background knowledge of what 'persona' meant. The teacher goes on to echo the learners response without clarifying who the persona in he poem in and why it would be important for them to know this.

After thus clarifying the 'meaning' of this literary terminology, one student says the persona is "the tortoise". The teacher does not follow-up on this but goes on to ask learners to find out how many themes are brought out in the poem but remembers just in time to ask learners identify an illustration to confirm that the persona in the poem is indeed the tortoise.

He takes the class through themes, style, and identification and only manages to talk about rhyme before the bell goes for the end of the lesson. He then asks the class if they have any questions. One student asks: How does one find the meaning of a vocabulary in the poem? The teacher tells the boy that this is to be found in the context in which the word has been used. He emphasises to the learners the need to read the poem at least five times. This bit about reading the imaginative texts several times is in harmony with what the teachers said was the most important strategy students should use when reading themselves for the KCSE English Examination.

The second video clip focuses on a teacher with a large group of learners under a tree teaching Achebe's *A Man of the People*. Here once again, it is all reading aloud and at random as the teacher draws learners' attention to the important markers of themes and characterization in the novel. With a group of over 50 students it was clearly impossible to have individual learners to actually participate in the lesson other than listening almost absent-mindedly. The clip shows little effort on the part of the teacher to develop the learners' linguistic and literary skills apart from reading and listening. The teacher knew exactly what was useful and would stop the reading to emphasise this.

The above video analyses show that although presently teachers understand the need to integrate language and literature as revealed in their responses to the questionnaire, the approach was as yet to be embedded in the classroom practice. The two components were not only separated on the timetable but in the classroom too, as shown by the TA to handling the literary texts in the clips. The handling of literary texts at the classroom level was found to be divorced from the tenets of integration as set out in the syllabus. There was no evidence of systematic and planned effort towards bringing out the envisaged linkages between the two components in the teaching process. This finding is confirmed by the approaches adopted by the teachers in the two video clips described above and fits in well with the description of the TA in the figure 2 earlier in chapter 3.

In contrast the clip based on the RTIA show learners fully engaged in the learning process. In all the schools, the learners carried out the tasks without requiring any support after they were told what to do. They took in the instructions pretty quickly and got engaged with the task pretty much on their own. It may thus be concluded that through carefully selected texts and activities, literature can be used to open up possibilities for

the learners to use the English language in meaningful and creative ways. This is shown by the manner in which the learners appeared wholly engaged when given the two interactive exercises.

5.1 Conclusion.

In Exercise 1, students had the opportunity to discuss (and argue where necessary!) and negotiate on the best possible word that would suit the blank space in question. In doing so, they were guided by how suitable the word would suit not just the context but more importantly, the overall meaning of the poem. Note that up and until they had finished filling the blanks, they had not been told what the poem was all about by anyone. Yet looking at sample poems 1, 2, and 3 in this chapter, one cannot help but acknowledge the high degree of textual and meaning awareness demonstrated by the learners.

By letting learners to be in control, and not making the exercises look like a test (there was no marking involved) so that learners had to look for a score, the Exercises allowed learners to speak freely and share their ideas without fearing that they will be underscored for coming up with 'wrong' answers! Similar exercises would enable them to indirectly improve their spoken language through a formal set-up. This is because the RTIA as demonstrated by this study brings about a motivational contact with texts and increases individual learners' participation in the learning process.

The activities that went with the handling of the two texts called for skills such as prediction, connecting of ideas and words, cohesion, drawing inferences, and interpreting. Learners did not have to be told to "read through the text twice or even more" as is the case under the TA. It naturally fell upon them to keep going back to the

text(s) to confirm if what they had written earlier is in conformity with their new discoveries and this helped them either alter their earlier decision or the present one. This going back and forth as a skill would help them to develop an overall awareness of the text rather than the meaning of individual words in the poem as so often happens.

This hands-on approach in the use of these skills is a vital language learning process that fits in well with the ethos of the IEC. This is also because in the course of carrying out the chosen activities the learners were obliged to pay careful attention to the text itself rather than to what the teacher had to tell them, and were able to generate language both orally and in writing in the process of completing the given tasks.

The implications of the findings presented in this penultimate chapter are discussed in the next chapter where conclusions are drawn and the way forward considered.

Chapter 6: Discussion, Conclusions and Future Prospects

The approach adopted by teachers to handle the imaginative texts in the classrooms in Kenya today shows little evidence of an understanding of the IEC. Teachers, as revealed by the results of this study, the TA remain central in the teaching process and learners continue to depend on teachers for notes and interpretation of the literary texts. Such an approach does little to develop the students' skills in reading literary texts for themselves, or to learn how to make their own meanings (Carter and Walker, 1989).

As a result, the students are likely to continue being dependent on teachers and books on literary criticism, commonly known as "examination guidebooks", to memorise the texts for the narrow instrumental purposes of passing the examinations (Ibid: p.4), As stated in chapter 2, the very nature of the IEC calls for greater learner involvement in the learning process if the linguistic and literary skills have to be mastered, not only for the purpose of examinations but for higher education and even after one has left school.

Under the TA, the texts seem to be imposed both on the teachers and the group of learners. The consequence is that some of the imaginative texts remain distant and 'strange' to learners. Teachers seem to whisk students from one recommended text to the other, leafing through the pages with already formulated preconceived sub-headings: What the text is all about or plot, the message or 'themes', characterisation and style. Anything outside this scope is considered immaterial and a waste of time. As a result, teachers do not endeavour to make the study of literary texts interesting; the mechanical approach is likely to leave learners filled with fear and in awe when in literature classes.

6.1 Discussion and conclusions based on teachers responses.

The contribution of this study is he proposed RTIA which is shown to put more emphasis on the learner and text. The teacher is shown that there are many ways learners can be involved interactively in their study of literary texts. The findings from the teachers' questionnaire reveal the following key issues:

a. That most teachers are trained and professionally qualified to teach *at least one* of the two components. The implication of this finding is that it would be impractical for the MoE to expect that every teacher of English in secondary schools should be able to integrate English language and literature in his or her teaching. Given that nearly half of the English teachers trained to teach only one component, there is need for intensive training and short term courses to be mounted for them.

b. That there is still a heavy workload in schools for English teachers mainly due to the large numbers of students and lack of enough teachers. The CBE is flawed and needs to be revised to take into account the number of students teachers handle in class and not just the slots.

c. That the time allocated on the timetable is inadequate in the light of the integrated curriculum, according to the teachers. But on the timetable this conclusion is based on the traditional approach used by teachers.

d. That teachers were aware both the English language and literature stand to benefit through integrated teaching. Indeed, teachers agreed that language fluency is important for learners if they have to study literature effectively.

e. That the teachers are not involved in the selection of literature set books and there is need to get them involved. As shown, teachers would not have picked some of the texts recommended for the KCSE Literature paper and this might affect the way they handle such texts in class.

f. That the teachers were biased in their teaching and were likely to favour literature to language despite the IEC being in place.

Given the apparent bias towards literature by majority of the teachers as revealed in point (f) above there is an urgent need for teacher training institutions, in particular the universities to redesign their courses to meet the needs of the integrated curriculum in the country. This is crucially important because although most teachers had been trained at the University level, the findings of this study show that teachers of English at the secondary level are not fully acquainted with the methodological requirements of the IEC. This view is supported by the fact that when the students were presented by an alternative approach to learning (in the form of RTIA) poetry and the novel, they found the interactive approach interesting and refreshing. Had teachers been able to marry the two components through such an interactive approach, the aims of the IE syllabus could practically be realised.

Examinations seem to influence the way teachers teach literature texts. The focus on examinations has hardly given the learners an opportunity to enjoy studying this component of English syllabus. If this has to change, given the need for the learners to view literary texts as forms of communication (Tumica, 1995) then teachers have to adopt a new strategy; one where learners can freely interact with and bring in their own feelings to bear on the meaning of any text. This is what Goring et al (2001:20) refer to as the much needed "critical intimacy with the individual works." The two interactive activities used in this study attest to this fact. In Exercises 1, for example, poetry linked in well with the reading, writing, talking and listening skills of the English syllabus in a multiplicity of ways, hence making integration between the two components practically possible. What the task needed was follow-up activities for the teacher to reinforce these skills with more opportunities to look at texts using reader text interactive strategies.

6.2 Discussions and conclusions from the classroom exercises with learners

It was earlier pointed out in chapter 3 that creative readers bring their own experiences and language to the experiences captured by the writer in an imaginative work. In Exercise 1, the poet describes what goes on in hospitals, and brings out the issue of class and discrimination in society. Through a careful narration of events, Naligwa is able to arouse in the reader feelings of hate and disgust for the rich and empathy and pity for the needy in society. After filling in the blanks, it was clear on whose side the learners were and the teachers would not find it hard to discuss central ideas thereof

It is clear from the learners' undertaking to the task and, the words they chose, that the writer had succeeded in infusing in the poem certain attitudes, values and presented these

in a way that is easy to persuade the readers to share her stance. The learners' sample poems, with new diction were not far off either.

Given the fact that the learners enjoyed doing both tasks, it is plausible to conclude that the set tasks successfully appealed to the learners' reason and emotions. In the poem, for example, the writer does this by addressing a commonplace phenomenon in the African society, reflecting in her poem the world as the learners see it today, hence, its' access ability. The text was well selected and met the learners' abilities and interests.

The teacher could follow up this activity with tutorial questioning as I partly used during the research:

1. Which word did you use to fill the first blank? Any other words that we might meaningfully use in this context? Any reasons for your choices? What difference would an alteration of your chosen word make to your understanding of the poem?

2. Is the word that goes into the second blank a verb, a noun or an adjective? Why? This could be followed with examples of verbalized nouns. (Same question could be repeated for a few more blanks)

3. What do you think of the hospital staff? The doctors, the man with the key, the nurses? This question would help elicit individual responses to the poem.

4. In Blank 18...is it best completed with "man" or "woman"? Majority of the respondents in the students went for the former during the research. This could result in a class debate on gender equality at work places and students could be

made to write out an argumentative essay on this, hence fitting in with the IEC syllabus objectives.

5. At this point the teacher could then draw the learners' attention to the fact that a poet uses language to communicate his ideas. One may highlight a few examples of the grammatical features which the learners may already be aware of and how their use alters the meaning of the poem. For instance, a noun has a possessive case if an apostrophe, or an apostrophe followed by an s, is added to it to show that something 'belongs to' the noun (Gardiner, 2000: 5). An apostrophe alone is added to plural words that already end in s (for example: the babies' toys), otherwise an apostrophe followed by as s is added (Sally's bag, men's magazines, Juma's bicycle). Having reviewed what nouns are, the teacher could go ahead and find from the class if there is use of any nouns in the poem and whether the writer has used any possessives. He could equally ask further specific questions such as:

   - How many nouns could the students identify in either of the tasks?
   - Why how have they been used?
   - And what are we told about the identified nouns?
   - What feelings are evoked in us towards the people mentioned in the poem?

He could do the same with adjectives, the describing words. He can quickly point out the close relationship between adjectives and nouns and that our attitudes towards certain objects are mainly influenced by the way the objects are described. For example, the way

one will perceive Milton in the following three sentences varies depending on the extra information we are given:

1. Milton is a hardworking primary school teacher
2. Milton is a liar but friendly
3. Milton is a murderer!

If Milton was introduced to three different people at different times and the three met, each would have a different opinion about him. The first person would be full of praise for the 'hardworking' teacher. The second will be a bit sceptical: the teacher is friendly but can not be trusted. The last won't believe a word of the first one because all he knows is that Milton is a murderer. If a teacher were to use this example learners would be led into seeing how adjectives work to give extra information about the noun. They could then be asked to compare the adjectives they came up with those that the original text had and see if there is any change in the way they perceive the meaning of the text. Essentially what emerges is that while handling literature books, teachers have wide scale handling opportunities to integrated language skills into their lessons and vice verse

Another task on adjectives could be based on comparatives and superlatives. The teacher could discuss this in view of any emerging contrasts and binaries in the poem. Creative writers use adjectives skilfully and any use of comparatives and superlatives should be considered vital in working out the meaning of a given text.

The following activities, after Tomlinson 1998, could fit in well with the RTIA and make it possible to easily integrate the English language and literature at the classroom level, even for those teachers who may not have trained to teach both components:

a. A group of learners who have read the same text sit in a circle and retell the story as a chain story.

b. Learners are asked to make visual representation of the story in the carried by the imaginative text.

c. Pair/group dramatisation of a text the learners have already read in class.

d. Debates on themes/issues highlighted by the selected texts

e. Balloon debates in which learners play characters from the text such as *A Man of the People* and try to justify being kept in the basket while someone else is thrown out to reduce the weight and stop the balloon form dropping to the ground.

f. In groups learners interview the 'author' (played one of them) about why he/she wrote the book, play or poem and what was he/she trying to say in it.

g. Characters/the persona from the texts (played by learners) are put on trial to defend their actions.

h. Students could be asked to design the front and back cover of the text they have/or would be reading and to justify any decisions made.

i. The class could be asked to re-write the imaginative text to include a change in the events – what if... or introduce an additional character in the text and show the impact this could have on the story development.

j. The learners could be asked to convert the text into a recital competition, dance or drama.

As a summary, a useful activity based on this poem would be to point out to the learners that at times the same word could be used as a noun and a verb in different contexts. The exercise appearing in Appendix 5 could help the learners in the process of word

formation as well as in understanding the concept of verbalisation of words. In doing this, the teacher should not lose sight of the fact that he is dealing with a poem and should constantly base his lesson on the poem at hand. The exercise; Appendix 5 is based on words the learners themselves came up with and is build around concept. The teacher could do the same with the words used in the original poem.

In Exercise 2, the learners were able to create literature from a set of sentences. To do this, they needed to understand the connectedness between the sentences and the ideas before putting them together in paragraphs. As found, not a single group managed to write out the sentences matching exactly the original text. This left many of them disappointed. Their disappointment with this task was not because it was uninteresting but because learners have their minds set on examinations and so they want to get everything right. They were saddened that they never wrote exactly as the author unlike in the poem where some words pretty similar to as those in the original poem. At the end they were happy with this task because of its capacity to pay attention to what they read.

In handling prose texts such as Achebe's *A Man of the People*, it is advisably, as the findings have revealed that teachers do not assume that the learners' minds are *tabula rasa* waiting to be filled with 'tested' facts about the text. The focus should not just be on what happens as it were. As one student put it, often they never look at what they are reading. Learners hardly pay attention to the diction, the cohesion markers, and the descriptors under the TA. Part of the value of reading literary works from an interactive point of view is the ability for the teacher to facilitate the learners' engagement with not just the content of what they are reading but with the language of the text, how the author creates meaning in his or her work. This means paying attention to detail which is

certainly beneficial to the development of the language skills such as intensive reading and comprehension.

The texts used in this research required that the learners follow the action, how the events are interconnected. Given that in all the schools the students had already read the actual text, it was telling that the learners were surprised at their inability to relate the events as they occurred in the original version of the text. But as pointed out in this chapter the focus of the task was not more on the correctness of the ordering of the action as in the original text but the aim was to generate a discussion as to why one sentence had to necessarily follow another and not the other. The fact that no two groups came up with similar write-ups helped to balance out the fear most of them had that of not getting the answer right! Indeed, the researcher used the opportunity to show that in a short while, they had come up with novel texts although they had borrowed the idea from Achebe! This is important in demystifying literature and making it accessible to learners across the board, regardless of their abilities.

The second exercise instinctively drew the learners' desire into knowing what happens in the text why it happens, and with what consequences unlike when they read the text from page to page with a view to simply "finishing" it. Indeed as earlier deserved, one teacher's advice to the Form 4 Examination Class was that the students should read the text at least five times so that they can 'internalise' it. (cf. video clip 1, Appendix 12). There is need for teachers to know that reading a text page by page does not necessarily result in learning. There is more to a text than the mere act of reading. It is not enough to know the story. The Integrated course requires that learners know how the story is being told and with what effect.

According to the IEC syllabus for Kenya secondary schools, the key aim of the language course is one of facilitating the learners' acquisition of communicative competence in the language use, that is, an ability to interpret discourse (Widdowson, 1978:144). Conventional pedagogic practice has tended to move in the opposite direction. As shown in this study, there seems to be persistent adherence to the segregative instead of the integrative way of handling both the English language and literature components despite the MoE's policy that the two be integrated. It is the case in majority of the schools visited that the two components are not only separated on the timetable but are actually handled by different teachers in the same class, especially at Forms 3 and 4. On this basis, the Ministry needs to look into the issue of timetabling with a view to ensuring that schools do not separate the two components and make them appear like two separate subjects.

Given the emphasis on examinations by the education system on the timetable and the limited time available, as observed by the teachers, the TA has in place strict limits imposed on the learners' language input and output. When teaching is centred on examinations, it hardly focuses on what learners can do with the text but what they can remember from what they have learned in the classroom from their teachers and guidebooks about the prescribed texts. But what happens after the examinations? It is no wonder that once at the university, the same students are said to be incapable of actively using English for academic purposes.

Language data is gradually filtered through to the learner strictly based on the English language course book with little coming from the literary materials at the teacher's

disposal. According to Widdowson (Ibid: p.161), this filtering process makes it extremely difficult for the learner to respond to language in an authentic way. This kind of control and separation between the language component and the literature component has the disadvantage of denying the learners the benefits enjoyed through the task-based interactive activities as those envisaged under the RTIA.

6.3 The case for the proposed RTIA basing on the findings of the study

The ultimate goal of the proposed RTIA is to engage the students interactively with the text, with fellow students, and with the teacher in the performance of tasks involving literary texts. In so doing, students are obliged, as put by Duff and Maley (1990:5), to "pay careful attention to the text itself and to generate language in the process of completing the task." This is the missing element in the current approach being used by teachers in schools when literature texts are taught. Learners are not given sufficient opportunities, if any, to pay attention to the next and generate language in the learning process under the TA.

Secondly, the RTIA, unlike the TA, puts in place a methodology approach that turns the learner from being a passive recipient into an active agent through textual intervention in a manner similar to the description offered by Pope (1995). Of central importance under this approach is the text itself, not the teachers' notes, not the guidebooks or the background information about the text but the text and the reader (in this context, the learner). It is my view that the MoE should take charge of providing secondary schools with key curriculum texts, for example the literature set books, to help ensure that every leaner has access to basic course work texts.

The classroom conditions (cf. the video clips in Appendix 12) would hamper the quality of the classroom interaction were the RTIA to be adopted. While most of the classes had a traditional seating arrangement with all the desks facing the chalkboard (apart from the lesson where the teacher sat under a tree with over 50 pupils!), many of the schools were overenrolled leading to overcrowding in the classrooms. Similar findings were made by Ackers and Hardman (2001:257). There is thus need for a clear policy on school enrolment. The government needs to think about putting up more secondary schools to meet the growing demand for secondary education, especially now given the Free Primary Education policy. In the short run however, it may be useful for more trained teachers to be employed by the government to feel the gap. This should lessen the pressure on teachers and allow them the opportunity to consider every learner's contribution and individual needs in the learning process.

The proposed RTIA has shown that it has the capacity to enhance learners' creativity. As defined by Maley (2003), creativity entails newness, novelty, originality, and immediacy (characterized by a sense of 'Eureka'!). A truly creative act gives rise to feelings of pleasurable recognition on the part of others. A typical reaction during a RTIA lesson would be "aaah!" or "why didn't we think of that". Creativity calls for experimentation, exploration, curiosity, taking risks, and simply being able to accept an alternative view from another person. These are issues that should be at the heart of the English curriculum, particularly when the teachers are handling poetry, novels, short stories and other literary genres in the classroom.

Indeed, most kinds of creativity advocated by RTIA seem to involve some kind of 'playing around' with things, to ask the question, 'what if...?' requires the ability to think the unthinkable. The RTIA does not call for the abandoning of all rules related to classical literary criticism, but aims at enhancing the existing rules to create a new conceptual space. Exercises and classroom tasks based on this approach call for seeing relationships and connections in texts, bringing out associations and combinations, and establishing how metaphors, images, and symbols used come to acquire their meaning, and not just knowing what they mean. It encourages seeing things in a new way and paying attention to peripheral issues too, and whenever possible reconfiguring of ideas. The present TA has inevitably killed creativity, has killed imaginative thinking in learners, by encouraging rote learning with a focus on examinations. It is this fact that further justifies the proposed new approach.

One major advantage witnessed when using RTIA is its inherent ability to stimulate and motivate learners. Teachers who actively explore creative solutions tend to be more active and vibrant than those who content to follow a routine. In the same way, students who are given the opportunity to exercise their own creativity will most likely respond positively to learning. Language use and language learning are inherently interactive processes and would considerably benefit from a RTIA to the teaching and learning of imaginative texts.

The case for RTIA is also embedded in the way we learn our L1. Children learning their first language play around with it a great deal, constantly testing its limits creatively. Adults often indulge in vast amounts of creative language play too, through punning, riddles, jokes, unusual collocations, deliberate ambiguity. In this respect I do concur with

Maley (2003) when he argues that these features should be given space in the classroom. He says, "Literature, as the supreme example of linguistic playfulness, clearly has a key revitalizing role to play in enhancing creativity in the classroom," (P. 37).

Such RTIA exercises reduce monotony and reliance on pre-determined approaches with greater teacher and learner freedom, increased creativity and choice hence contributing to the overall national goals of education: to cultivate independence, autonomy and linguistically articulate school leavers.

Carter and Nash (1990) believe that texts can not be analyzed in isolation from a 'seeing through' to social and cultural practices. That the writer and the reader bring their own worlds and fuse them into the text. Seen from this standpoint, we can not divorce written texts from their social, political, cultural and economic contexts. These contextual elements go a long way in influencing the dynamic process of both writing literary works and reading what has been written. Hence it is important the MoE sets out a clear guideline governing the selection of literature set books and measures put in to involve teachers before such books and prescribed for schools.

The interaction between the reader and the writer (represented by the text) in most cases becomes meaningful when the reader transcends the text and brings in his own knowledge of the world and experiences to bear upon the meaning that he ascribes to the words in the text. Indeed often words carry more than one meaning. Carter and Nash (1990: 29) refer to a situation where individual lexical items carry more than one meaning as 'Polysemy'. The proposed RTIA, because of its multidimensional approach would hopefully help learners visualise such multiplicity of meaning with less

difficulties. It has to be noted that lexical items in plurisignifying texts do not stop automatically at their first interpretation. Denotations are always potentially available for transformations into connotations and classroom interaction would make this possible.

It cannot be overemphasized to that in interactive reading contexts, the focus is not just on the text, but on the role played by the reader reading the text. No reading is complete unless we are able to interpret what we are reading. As we read, we make sense of the text. We piece it together to "understand it" (Thomas 1998:9). It has an effect on us. Learners should be guided to make sense of what they are reading .Teachers should be encouraged to facilitate meaningful reading rather that to enforce reading. The latter practice only ends up making students to dislike literary works.

From the research findings, it has been established that the RTIA could be a viable methodology in the effective implementation on the IEC curriculum in Kenya. One which could facilitate a clear focus on language without compromising the closer scrutiny and understanding of literary texts by learners. The research has demonstrated the need for the text to be at the centre of learning imaginative texts rather having the teacher tell learners what they need to know about the text for the short term purpose of passing the KCSE examination. The interactive approach as shown has the capacity to equip learners with the five skills English: listening, speaking, reading, writing and thinking. Handled from a more imaginative and process approach, these skills are likely to remain long with learners after school.

However, if the proposed RTIA has to be effectively adopted in Kenyan secondary schools, there are salient implications for the teacher-training programmes currently

being administered by our universities. As found out from the survey, the majority of the teachers who took part in this study are clearly a long way away from internalising the essence and spirit of the IEC. Indeed, as with their Malaysian counterparts (cf. McRae, 1992), many of the teachers confessed being inadequately equipped to cope with the difficulties of having to teach both the English language and literature when they have not been trained to teach one of the components.

The situation is further compounded by their personal tendencies, preferences, and the Ministry's failure to provide measurable guidelines on the teaching of IEC at school level to ensure there is integration between the two components. It is telling that only 5% of the respondents felt that given choice, they would teach both components at the classroom level. If Universities were to adopt an integrated approach while training teachers only can they expect their trainees to effectively facilitate the implementation of the integrated curriculum. Hence it is my recommendation that Kenyan Universities offering the B.Ed degree for teachers of English re-evaluate their courses in order to take into account the teachers have to play in integrating the English language and literature at the classroom level.

6.4 Future Prospects

While it is evident that the RTIA worked well with the learners, by offering them an opportunity to view literary texts from a different perspective, it emerged that the approach would require more time than is currently available if the teachers are to cover the prescribed syllabus. The overwhelming concern by teachers to complete the syllabus before the national examinations came out clearly from the teachers' responses to the

questionnaire. It is therefore important that if the RTIA is to be adopted in the wider curriculum context, more time should be provided for in the school timetable and KNEC examinations re-oriented to take into account this new approach to teaching imaginative texts in our schools.

In a unique way, the findings of this study are timely because KNEC has just announced in the recent past a major change in the way English is to be tested in the KCSE (Aduda, 2006). According to the writer, English examinations will henceforth adopt an integrated approach. In the new format, English Paper One will examine functional skills — application of language in daily life; while paper two will contain comprehension, literary appreciation and grammar. Paper three tackles creative composition and composition based on set literature text books. Hence, it is imperative that the teaching of the two subjects are equally integrated at the classroom level so that students can be able meet the demands of the revised examination requirements. Also such an approach will meet the syllabus requirement that language work should be contextualised so that vocabulary and grammar as far as possible arises from the text (MoE, 1992).

It is equally vital to bear in mind while using this approach that no matter how vague or inept a learners' response may be, as occasionally happened during this research, each learner should be encouraged to build on it. All responses have to be regarded as a basis for discussion and interpretation, and a means to enhance criticality and language awareness of every individual learner. While examinations are important for learners, the teaching of literary texts and KNEC seems to be in the direction of entrenching the integrated concept, teaching should go beyond examinations and pay more attention in essential language and literary skills.

Within the time and other resource constraints, it was not possible for this research to establish the impact RTIA would have on performance in the KCSE English examination. Doing this would have gone a step further to indicate whether the KCSE English results would improve under RTIA or not. In this study testing was avoided because over and above examinations, the skills expected to obtain through the use of this approach are needed by the learner not just for the good grade but long after finishing school. It would however be significant if further research was done to determine the impact of RTIA on learners' performance, building on the present study.

When all is said and done, it has been proved that RTIA is workable and that it is an appropriate pedagogical approach implementing the IEC. The approach also has the capacity to help learners in ESL contexts to improve their mastery of the English language. It can lead to an all-round mental, social and moral person given the opportunity learners have to interact with each other. By enhancing and making use of learners' social awareness, the approach has the capacity to indirectly prepare them for positive contribution to the society's development as set out in the national goals of education in Kenya.

On the basis of its ability to develop critical thinking and language awareness, the approach being recommended has the potential to build a firm foundation for further education in literary scholarship unlike the present TA which only encourages rote learning and the passing of the KCSE English examinations. This is because, through the RTIA, the learners' cognitive as well affective skills are addressed. Indeed, if a teacher

can expand his interactive activities to include drama, then this approach can lead to the development of psychomotor skills too.

Language teaching is a theoretical as well as a practical occupation. Teaching techniques and materials must ultimately be related to the underlying principles. If the findings of this research provokes the Ministry of Education, the Integrated English Curriculum developers at the Kenya Institute of Education and the teachers in the field into a systematic adoption of the RTIA in informing the materials used in the classroom, and if the results stimulates material writers to enquire into the pedagogic possibilities of the approach, then the research would have achieved its object.

It is hoped that this work has in a way made a case for the Integrated English Course and demonstrated how the teaching and learning of imaginative texts could be explored to enhance the learners' acquisition and mastery of speaking, listening, reading, writing and creative thinking skills. By studying English interactively, students learn to engage and enjoy the English language for different purpose and in a variety of text forms. This study aimed to show that the teaching of literature from an interactive approach could not only fit in with the secondary school English syllabus in Kenya today but that this approach could enhance creativity among Kenyan learners and bring to the classroom the element of enjoyment and criticality to the reader, this being an indispensable part and parcel of literature the world over. Understanding and creating oral, written and visual texts of increasing complexity should be at the heart of English teaching and learning. By engaging in text-based interactive activities, students become increasingly skilled and sophisticated speakers and listeners, writers and readers, and presenters and viewers.

Lastly, it has to be remembered that success in English is fundamental to success across the secondary school curriculum. Indeed, success in the Integrated English course should be able to give the Kenyan learners access to the knowledge and skills they need in order to participate fully in the social, cultural, political and economic life of Kenya and the wider world.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Teachers Questionnaire

Questionnaire for Teachers of English in Selected Secondary Schools in Kenya.

The Reader-Text Interactive Approach to Teaching Imaginative Texts: The Case for the Integrated English Curriculum in Kenya Secondary Schools.

Dear Sir / Madam,

You are one of the teachers of English whose school has been selected to take part in a research focusing on the above topic. I wish to kindly request you to complete this questionnaire to the best of your ability to enable me come up with informed findings on how best to improve the teaching and learning of English and Literature in our secondary schools.

By responding to the questions, you will be giving your views, feelings and ideas about the Integrated Approach to teaching the English language and literature from your perspective as a practising teacher. This research seeks to establish the workability of the language-literature integration through the Reader-Text Interactive Approach. Your personal opinion on how best the literary texts could be handled to foster the goals of integration between the two components, as set out in the secondary school curriculum, will be most welcome. Your personal views too on policy matters regarding the selection of texts and guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education will be significantly important.

I wish to assure you that the information you provide here will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of my studies and within the bounds of the Ministry of Education as set out in the research permit. No personal information will be disclosed under any circumstances.

I very sincerely appreciate your assistance and co-operation in taking your time to respond to this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lumala P.F. Masibo

PhD Student, University of Nottingham, UK.

This questionnaire is divided up into sections. Section I deals with information and Section II comprises both closed- and open-ended questions. I kindly invite to respond to all items in each section by filling in the blank spaces provided or by placing a tick [√] in the brackets given or by ranking the items listed accordingly.

SECTION I: Background Information

1. Name of School: _____

2. Your gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

3. Your age bracket:
   21-25 [ ]
   26-30 [ ]
   31-35 [ ]
   36-40 [ ]
   41+ [ ]

4.

Qualification		Year of qualification
Trained Graduate Teacher	[ ]	[ ]
Trained Diploma Teacher	[ ]	[ ]
Trained Approved Teacher	[ ]	[ ]
Other (specify)_____	[ ]	[ ]

5. What are the major teaching subjects you majored in?
   i) _____
   ii) _____
   iii) _____
   iv) _____

6. For how long have you been teaching?
   1-4 years [ ]
   5-9 years [ ]
   10-14 years [ ]
   15+ years [ ]

7. Indicate the Forms you teach and the number of streams you teach in each case:

Form:		No. of streams handled
1	[ ]	[ ]
2	[ ]	[ ]
3	[ ]	[ ]
4	[ ]	[ ]

8. What is the average number of students per stream in your school? [ ]

9. Given the number of lessons you have in relation to the number of students per class in your school, would you say your workload is
a) Heavy [ ] b) Moderate [ ] or c) Light [ ]?

10. If you teach Forms 1 and 2,
i) do you teach:

A. Both language and literature in each Form / Stream; [ ]

B. English language and another teacher handles literature
in the same Form / Stream; [ ]

C. Literature and another teacher handles language in the same class? [ ]

ii) What reason(s) account for the teaching arrangement in i) above? _____
_____
_____

iii) How many of the six weekly lessons allocated for English on the timetable do you spend on:
a) English Language [ ]
b) Literature in English [ ]

11. If you teach Forms 3 and 4,

i. Do you teach:
A. Both language and literature in each Form / Stream; [ ]

B. English language and another teacher handles literature
in the same Form / Stream; [ ]

C. Literature and another teacher handles language in the same class? [ ]

ii. Justify the teaching arrangement in i) above:
_____
_____
_____

iii. How many of the 8 weekly lessons allocated for English at this level do you spend on:

a) English Language [ ]
b) Literature [ ]

iv. Do you think the time allocated for both English language and Literature on the timetable is enough?

Yes [ ]
No [ ]

Briefly give two reasons to account for your choice above

_____

_____

_____

12. Given a choice, which would be your preferred teaching subject?

English language [ ]

Literature in English [ ]

Other (Specify please)_____ [ ]

SECTION II: An Appraisal of Issues surrounding the Integrated Approach to Teaching English language and Literature

1. Basing on your experience in the classroom, would you say that the decision by the Ministry of Education to integrate the English language and Literature into one examinable subject was appropriate?

Yes [ ]
No [ ]

Give a brief explanation as to why you think the decision was or was not appropriate: _____

_____

_____

_____

2. Given the integrated approach, state whether learner interaction when handling imaginative texts would help them improve in the following language aspects:

Language Area	Yes	No	Not sure
Vocabulary			
Speaking			
Listening			
Grammar			
Comprehension			
Writing			

3. Would your students' knowledge and proficiency in the following language skills better their learning of literature?

Language Area	Yes	No	Not sure
Vocabulary			
Speaking			
Listening			

Grammar			
Comprehension			
Writing			

4. Basing your response on actual classroom encounter, indicate how easy or difficult it is for your students to learn the following genres of literature as spelt out in the integrated English syllabus:

Genre	Very easy	Easy	Uncertain	Difficult	Very difficult
Oral Literature					
Poetry					
Short Stories					
Drama/Plays					
The Novel					

What are some of the reasons why your learners find some of the areas difficulty, as indicated in above?

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. It has been the practice of the Ministry of Education in Kenya to prescribe the literature set books to be examined at the KCSE level without involving teachers. Do you think this practice is appropriate?

Yes [ ]
No [ ]

6. If you had the chance, would you have picked the following texts as KCSE literature set books?

Text	**Yes**	**No**	**Not sure**
Things Fall Apart			
Mine Boy			
The Concubine			
A Man of the People			
Coming to Birth			
The River and the Source			
Romeo and Juliet			
The Government Inspector			
The Burdens			
Aminata			
The Merchant of Venice			
Betrayal in the City			

Why would you not select any of the above, if so?

_____

7. Would you say that the current texts prescribed by the Ministry of Education for the KCSE Literature examinations are suitable for your learners?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Briefly justify your position:_____

8. While handling the recommended literature texts, do you face any difficulties in getting your students do the following:

	Yes	No
Respond to oral questions in class	[ ]	[ ]
Raise a problem / ask questions	[ ]	[ ]
Participate in whole class discussion	[ ]	[ ]
Work in groups on a given text	[ ]	[ ]
Read the required texts on their own	[ ]	[ ]

9. The following are some of the factors that influence the reader's perception and understanding of a literary text. Rank these factors on a scale of 1-4 as to what you consider to be the most important to the least, bearing in mind your own students and the current KCSE literature texts:

A. The reader's fluency in the target language [ ]
B. The reader's personal experience [ ]
C. The reader's cultural background [ ]
D. The reader's level of interest in the content [ ]

10. Rank the following from 1-5 starting from the most important to the least of the approaches used by your learners to prepare for the KCSE Literature examination:

A. Reading through the texts several times [ ]
B. Reading carefully through teachers' notes [ ]
C. Reading commentaries / guidebooks on the texts [ ]
D. Participating in small group discussions [ ]
E. Taking part in Question and Answer sessions in class [ ]

11. Active learner participation in the teaching and learning of imaginative texts would enable learners to enjoy and master literature. Do you agree?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

12. What suggestions would you make to improve the teaching and learning of the Integrated English course at the secondary school level?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End.

Thank you very much for your contribution and taking part in this research. God bless you abundantly.

Appendix 2: Classroom Exercise 1

Exercise 1: Filling in gaps using suitable words

In the following exercise, you are required to complete the poem by filling in the blank space in each with the most appropriate word. After reading through the poem, you are asked to give it a suitable title. You will then compare your title and choice of words with those of others in the class. You have 20 minutes on this task. Discuss and agree as a group before inserting in the word you think best fits in.

So what is the _____ deal
about the minister's _____ son
that he makes _____news?

How come it was not _____
when _____'s hospital bed crawled with maggots
and her eyes_____ pus
because the doctors lacked _____?

What about Kasajja's _____ child
who _____ because the man with the key
to the _____ room was on leave?

___ have seen queues
of _____ mothers clinging to
babies with translucent skins
faint in _____
and the lioness _____ a nurse
commanding _____
'Get up or _____ the line'.

Didn't ____ hear it rumoured that
the _____ with the white mane
and black robes
whose _____ stores the justice of the land
ushered a rape _____ out of court
because the seven-year-old
failed to testify?

_____, I only remember these things
when I drink
they are indeed _____ explosions.

[Poem by Susan Naligwa Kiguli in *Echoes Across the Valley*: Ed. Arthur I. Luvai and Kwamchetsi Makokha]

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Appendix 4: Learners' Responses to Exercise 1

Blank 1: So what is the _____ deal

- Great Mountain
- Real
- Complete
- Good
- Key
- **Big**
- Main
- Famous
- Huge

Blank 2: about the minister's _____ son

- Sick
- Famous
- Eldest
- Wicked
- corrupt
- First
- **Only**
- Beloved
- Dear
- Real

Blank 3: that he makes _____news?

- **hot**
- public
- breaking
- such
- great
- alarming
- sad
- the
- headline
- big

Blank 4: How come it was not _____

- mentioned
- **announced**
- noticed
- published
- broadcast
- publicised

- discovered
- rumoured
- realized
- known

Blank 5: when _____'s hospital bed crawled with maggots

- Susan
- Joy
- Patience
- Jane
- **Mary**
- Ndosh
- Linda
- Patient
- Jean
- Julie

Note that all these are proper nouns as conditioned by the presence of the apostrophe in the line.

Blank 6: and her eyes _____pus

- **Oozed**
- Clogged
- Produced
- Had

Here only four words with "oozed" being the most obvious choice for majority of the students.

Blank 7: because the doctors lacked _____?

- expertise
- facilities
- equipment
- **experience**
- medicine
- skills
- concern
- time
- care
- knowledge

- mercy
- sympathy
- attention
- compassion
- apparatus
- cotton
- keys
- competency

Although experience was the most recurrent word, I have included the other words in the box because they could equally be used to fill the gap.

Blank 8: What about Kasajja's _____ child

- **only**
- sick
- youngest
- eldest
- unborn
- young
- unlucky
- poor
- dying
- handsome

Blank 9: who _____ because the man with the key

- **died**
- suffered
- cried

Again here, the students could not go beyond three words in all the schools I visited. They all sensed that Kassaja's son "died" due to the man's inefficiency.

Blank 10: to the _____ room was on leave?

- operating
- operation
- theatre
- medicine
- maternity
- living
- pharmacy
- x-ray
- **emergency**
- patients'

Blank 11: ___ have seen queues

- I
- We
- People
- They
- Doctors
- Many
- You

Blank 12: of _____ mothers clinging to babies with translucent skins

- expectant
- poor
- lactating
- emaciated
- desperate
- miserable
- gracious
- anxious
- pregnant
- **helpless**
- dehydrated

- hopeless
- restless
- weak
- many
- patient
- young
- crying
- breastfeeding
- prayerful

N.B.: Emaciated was often misspelled as "emerciated" and "ematiated"

Blank 13: faint in _____

- colour
- complexion
- despair
- discomfort
- shock
- the sun
- their hands
- line
- turns
- **agony**

Blank 14: and the lioness _____ a nurse

- **of**
- called
- like

Blank 15: commanding _____

- them
- the patients
- harshly
- arrogantly
- loudly
- tersely
- hoarsely
- women
- mothers

Blank 16: 'Get up or _____ the line'.

- get off
- off
- move from
- **leave**
- quit
- get out of
- follow

Blank 17: Didn't _____ hear it rumoured that

- **you**
- I
- he
- we
- they

Blank 18: the _____ with the white mane

- person
- judge
- **man**
- lawyer

Blank 19: whose _____ stores the justice of the land

- hands
- office
- occupation
- **chamber**
- heart
- head
- file
- mind

Blank 20: ushered a rape _____ out of court

- case
- victim
- convict
- **criminal**

Blank 21: _____, I only remember these things

- **unfortunately**
- But
- Anyway
- Fortunately
- Well
- But
- Okay
- Listen
- Usually
- Mostly

Some of the connectors have a clear sense of resignation or even satirical in the tone.

Blank 22: they are indeed _____ explosions.

- **dormant**
- queer
- vivid
- painful
- terrible
- mere
- severe
- cruel
- drunken
- great

Appendix 5: Sample Worksheet for Exercise 1

Task: Look at the words on the left and put a tick in the column(s) you think the word can fit in. The word "poor" has been done for you as an example. It can be a common noun, abstract, and can also function as an adjective.

	Proper Noun	Common Noun	Abstract Noun	Adjective	Comparative	Superlative	Verb
Poor		√	√	√			
Big							
Mountain							
Elder							
Young							
break							
Experience							
Broadcast							
Patience							
Joy							
Ooze							
Explode							
Compassion							
Die							
Certain							
Unfortunate							
Pity							
Terror							
Grace							

PAGE/PAGES
EXCLUDED
UNDER
INSTRUCTION
FROM
UNIVERSITY

Appendix 7: Exercise 2

Exercise 2: Arranging jumbled sentences to make a complete story.

In the following exercise, you have an opportunity to arrange the given sentences to make a complete story. The sentences can be divided into two paragraphs. Discuss in groups of two or three the possibilities of ordering the sentences as you work on the story. Agree at what point you should start a new paragraph. Once you have agreed on the order of your sentences, write out the two paragraphs.

1. The rampaging bands of election thugs had caused so much unrest and dislocation that our young Army officers seized the opportunity to take over.

2. The first few visits we made no headway at all.

3. Was that all? I thought.

4. Thereafter we made rapid progress with Edna's father who, no doubt, saw me then as a bird in hand.

5. We were told Nanga was arrested trying to escape by canoe dressed like a fisherman.

6. After my illness my father, some of his close relatives and I went with a big pot of palm-wine to Edna's father to strata a 'conversation'.

7. But the Army obliged us by staging a coup at that point and locking up every member of the Government.

8. Our host simply refused to believe that he had lost a Chief and a Minister as son-in-law and must now settle for this crazy boy who had bought a tortoise and called it a car.

9. He told us that Chief Nanga had paid a bride-price of one hundred and fifty pounds for his daughter and another one hundred pounds on her education and incidentals.

Appendix 8: The original text of exercise 2 and the order of sentences

ORIGINAL TEXT FOR ACTIVITY 2 AND THE

EXPECTED ORDER OF SENTENCES: 6, 2, 8, 7, 1, 5; 4, 9, 3.

After my illness my father, some of his close relatives and I went with a big pot of palm-wine to Edna's father to start a 'conversation'. The first few visits we made no headway at all. Our host simply refused to believe that he had lost a Chief and Minister as son-in-law and must now settle for this crazy boy who bought a tortoise and called it a car. But the Army obliged us by staging a coup at that point and locking up every member of the Government. The rampaging bands of election thugs had caused so much unrest and dislocation that our young Army officers seized the opportunity to take over. We were told Nanga was arrested trying to escape by canoe dressed like a fisherman.

Thereafter we made rapid progress with Edna's father who, no doubt, saw me then as a bird in hand. He told us that Chief Nanga had paid a bride-price of one hundred and fifty pounds for his daughter and another one hundred pounds on her education and other incidentals. Was that all? I thought.

From Chinua Achebe's, (1966) *A Man of the People*.

Appendix 9: Classroom Observation Sheet

OBSERVATION SHEET: Overall Class Motivation and Involvement

(Adapted from Nunan; 1989 and Peacock; 1997)

Date of observation: Activity:

Observation Focus: Levels of student motivation generated by the Interactive Approach and the materials in use. 3 is an average mark for any one item.

Instructions

a. This sheet is for observing the class as whole, not individual students.
b. Researcher to complete this sheet when the activity is drawing to a close.
c. Circle ONE number for each statement below.
d. Add final comments at the bottom of the sheet if you wish.

1. How involved in the learning process the students are?

least involved 1 2 3 4 5 very involved

2. What is the level of student concentration on the learning task?

low 1 2 3 4 5 high

3.Did the students enjoy taking part in the activity?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

4. Did the students pay persistent (extended) attention to the learning task?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

5. Overall what was the students' activity level (effort/intensity of application)?

very low 1 2 3 4 5 very high

6. Were the selected texts suitable to the students' level?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

7. Did the tasks result in the integration between language and literature?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

8. Was the approach used appropriate for learner-centred classroom interaction?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

9. Did the students complete the set tasks as reflected by the written work?

not really 1 2 3 4 5 very much so

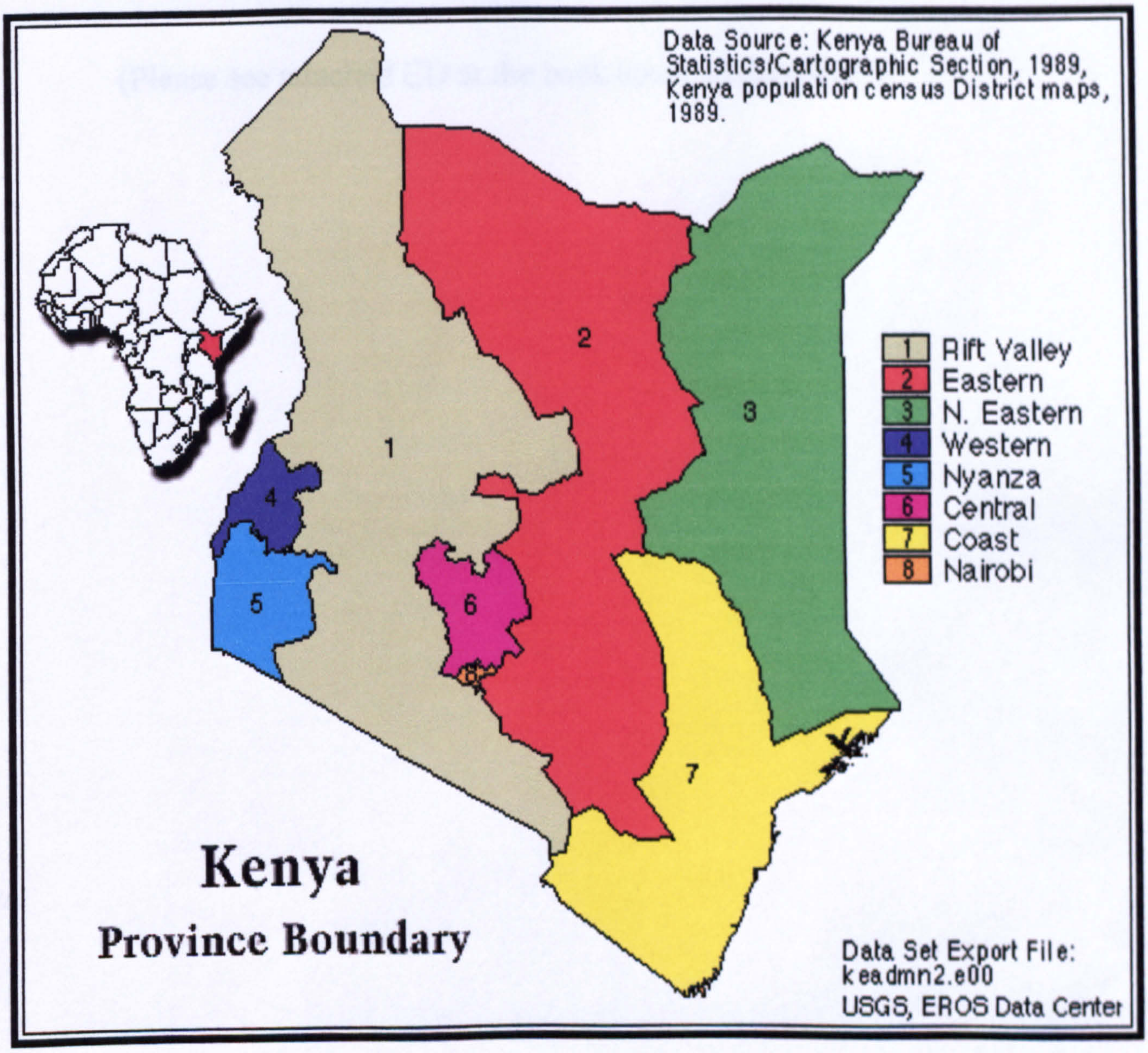
10. How successful was the interactive activity?

least successful1 2 3 4 5 most successful

Comments:

PAGE/PAGES
EXCLUDED
UNDER
INSTRUCTION
FROM
UNIVERSITY

Appendix 11: Administrative Map of Kenya by Province



Appendix 12: DVD showing video clips of both the TA and the RTIA

(Please see attached CD at the back cover of this thesis)