

## **Communicative Language Teaching Revisited: Exploring The Teacher's Role Towards Developing Writing Skills With A Special Focus on Marakwet District, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** The rapid growth of the world into a global village has necessitated the need to acquire communicative skills that are commensurate with the dynamic language needs. English is one of the languages of international communication and whose proficiency avails a whole world of opportunities to an individual. Over the past years, the performance of English language at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examinations in Marakwet District, Kenya, has been on a steady decline. This is of great concern since without the proper writing skills, these students are likely to miss out on the benefits that accrue with proper communication in the said lingua franca. In a bid to develop writing skills in the area, the author of this paper carried out a study aimed at investigating the use of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in the development of writing skills in secondary schools in the larger Marakwet District. Specifically, the research sought to expore the teacher's roles in the use of CLT to help learners acquire writing skills. Anchoring the discussions on selected tenets of Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model of Second Language Acquisition: The Input Hypothesis, this paper argues that teachers should consider students to be at the centre of teaching writing skill, should be the ones designing writing activities for students and should strongly encourage the students to learn by themselves through their own efforts to communicate in writing. This is because from the CLT perspective, the teacher is no longer the dominant figure but a facilitator and guide. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study population constituted 33 secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 11 schools based on divisions in the district which formed 33% of the study population. Purposive sampling was also used to select 11 teachers of English from the selected schools out of the 41 teachers of English in the whole district. Simple random sampling was also used to select 121 form three students from the 11 schools selected out of the total population of 404 form three students in the selected schools. The questionnaire, interview and observation schedules were used to collect data. Data collected was analysed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This paper recommends a shift in focus from teacher-centred to student-centred. The stakeholders should also endeavour to allocate more time to writing skills and introduce regular easy writing competitions. The discussions in this paper are of great benefit not only to English as Second Language (ESL) teachers and learners but also teacher trainers and curriculum developers improving writing skills in English language.

**Keywords:** *Communicative Language Teaching, English, Writing Skills, Marakwet District, Teaching, English Language Class, Pedagogy*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

Communication is the basic attribute of human life [1] and language is the main tool of human communication [2]. With the world already a global village, there has been an increase in the need for communication among the people of the world in various spheres of international contact like politics, academics, economics, technology and culture. This has resulted to the need and pressure of adopting a lingua franca for this global village to facilitate communication and make it more practical for various linguistic backgrounds [3]. Consequently, this calls for an international language and English is one of the languages of international communication. Proficiency in English can guarantee the availability of opportunities to employment, travelling, higher education, and even a better life. The knowledge of English is also essential to access printed and electronic information and higher education is dependent on English in many countries. Mackay [4] goes further to affirm "knowledge of English is necessary for accessing many discourses at a global level from international relations to popular culture and academia."

In Kenya, English is the official language. Besides this, it is the medium of instruction in primary schools from standard four onwards, secondary schools, colleges through universities in all the subjects and / or

courses except in other languages. English is also a subject of study in primary schools up to the tertiary institutions. This has given English unequalled privilege in the country and specifically in education. Moreover, it has various implications on one's life as Barasa [5] observes "... the government has to pay attention to the importance of English language for literate Kenyans.... This is about the value of English to the system of education and its relevance to all learners irrespective of their socio-economic status. Without competence in this language, many learners are disadvantaged during the process." Good performance in English is therefore paramount for its far-reaching ramifications.

Further, the ever-growing need for good communication skills in English language both written and spoken has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world and Kenya in particular. Millions of Kenyans today want to improve their command of English or to ensure that their children achieve a good command of this language. This has resulted into an enormous demand for quality language teaching, language teaching materials and resources [6]. Learners set themselves demanding goals with a view to mastering English to a higher level of accuracy and fluency. Wade [7] further argues that people do not learn a language just because of interest in the language itself but the learners are more concerned with what language can help them to achieve. Basically, language "fulfils their social and cognitive development" (p. 65). Employers too, insist that their employees have good command of English language writing skills and competency in English. It is a prerequisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in the contemporary world. Therefore, the demand for an appropriate teaching methodology that guarantees good performance in writing skills is inevitable.

The performance of English language at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) is really unsatisfactory. This is clearly evidenced by various annual Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) reports. For instance, KNEC Report of 2007 [8] observes about English paper one which test functional skills thus: "This is the paper that displayed the greatest drop in performance as attested by the drop of 7.67 percentage point." The KNEC report of 2010 [9] observes yet another drop thus: "Overall performance was impacted by the double decline in papers 1 and 3. It dropped by 1.06 from 78.42 in 2009 to 77.36 in 2010" (2010: 1). It should be noted that English papers 1 and 3 mainly test writing skills through functional skills and creative composition.

The revised secondary school syllabus [10] which replaces the original 8-4-4 education system syllabus that was first introduced in 1986 and revised in 1992, states that "the reorganization of the syllabus has been done in such a way that better mastery of the knowledge skills and attitudes required at the end of the secondary cycle is ensured.... The teaching of English and Kiswahili will remain integrated. The revised syllabus has clearly defined the integrated approach to make the teaching of the language more effective" (p. v). English language is both a compulsory and examinable subject in secondary schools. It is also a second language to most Kenyans, thus majority of the learners are likely to have problems in listening, speaking, reading and thus writing skills. Although the learners will have been taught English up to standard eight, there is quite a lot that they need to learn to enhance their mastery of English language. Consequently, a greater number of students miss out the benefits and privileges attached to English.

The KCSE performance in Marakwet District has not been good. Firstly, this is reflected in the number of students who achieved an overall mean grade of B+ and above at KCSE which has been dwindling over the years as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Marakwet District KCSE Overall Mean Grade Performance from 2004-2011

<b>Year</b>	<b>B+ and above</b>	<b>Candidature</b>	<b>% of the Total Candidature</b>
2004	043	1169	3.7
2005	039	1344	4.4
2006	042	1303	3.2
2007	044	1403	3.1
2008	041	1385	3.0
2009	031	1728	1.9
2010	70	1555	4.5
2011	86	1714	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>11,601</b>	<b>3.4</b>

It is these results that prompted this research into the teachers' role within CLT approach in the teaching and development of writing skills among students in secondary schools in the district. The continuous poor performance in English language could be an indication that the use of CLT in developing writing skills is not optimally used. Second, poor performance in the district is also revealed by the provincial panel survey carried out in Marakwet District from 27<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2010 which noted that in most schools visited, learners had

not acquired requisite competencies such as numerical, linguistic, manipulative and practical skills. From this survey, English language, captured under linguistic skills, is poorly taught.

Bishop [11] observes that among the barriers to efficient teaching and learning, perhaps, those caused by language are most formidable. This is especially so when teaching is done in a foreign language. It is worth noting that English is a foreign language to learners in the district and the appropriate methodology of teaching should be put into focus since the use of inappropriate teaching methods among other factors could affect language learning [12]. Even though English is learnt as a third language by most learners, it is the chief medium of instruction. Moreover, national examinations are set in English language as observed by KNEC report [13] which states that answers of examination questions must be written in English except language subjects other than English or otherwise specified in the rubric of the questions paper. This therefore underscores the value of writing skills to learners.

## **1.2 Understanding Communicative Language Teaching – An Overview**

At the end of the 1960s, Audio-lingual method (ALM) met a drastic attack from both American Sociolinguistics and British functional linguistics based on the study of language from a wider perspective. Hymes [14] put forward the term “communicative competence” to refer to appropriate language performance in contrast to “Linguistic competence”. At the same time, Haliday [15], Wilkins [16] and Brumfit and Johnson [17] emphasized “the functional and communicative potential of language” [18]. They saw the need to focus on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. Influenced by this view of language learning and teaching, CLT came into existence with explicit attention on language use, which expanded the dimension of language from the previous linguistic forms to communicative function. CLT is based on the idea that learning a foreign language is not to master its structures and forms, but develop students’ communicative competence.

CLT has various pedagogical principles to language teaching. Finocchiaro and Brumfit [19] gave detailed discussion. That teaching is learner-centred and responsive to learners’ needs and interests, the target language is acquired through interactive communicative use that encourages the negotiation of meaning, and genuinely meaningful language use is emphasized along with unpredictability, risk-taking and choice-making. Furthermore, there is not only exposure to examples of authentic language from the target language community but also the formal properties of language are never treated in isolation from use; language forms are always addressed within a communicative context, learners are encouraged to discover the forms and structures of language for themselves and lastly there is a whole-language approach in which the four traditional language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) are integrated.

The call for the adoption of CLT came as a response to discontent with the traditional grammar-translation method. In the traditional teaching method, classroom teachers focus on grammar and structure; this produced unsatisfactory results. Students had little ability to speak and understand English [20]. CLT theory holds that the acquisition and development of communicative competence mainly depend on students’ internal factors. The teacher therefore has to shift his or her role as a dominant teacher. In CLT classroom, teachers are no longer traditionally knowledge-transmitter. They play multiple roles in communicative activities as an assessor. Besides this, students become the centre of the class in CLT. All of them take part in activities. The effective way to make students active participants is by designing and organizing a rich variety of students-centred activities such as pair works, group works, role plays, story-telling, cross-words, information-gap activities and even games. Content being the soul of language, the classroom activities alone cannot produce satisfactory results in English language teaching and learning. It is suggested that teaching materials conveying more knowledge be introduced. In this regard, teaching materials should not be only textbook-based. It should be more flexible. Richards has suggested that over-reliance on a single textbook may militate against independence by both learner and teacher.

CLT advocates the use of language to communicate and it will undoubtedly be more effective than just teaching grammar to the students when they do not know the language. It is a fact that communication is not limited to verbal communication. Communication is through written and verbal media. Language learners should fully grasp the four language skills. CLT approach encourages students to participate in various types of language activities. It is not the business of CLT to correct students’ errors but it is on the basis of this that teachers need to help students to practice their dialogues, organize the group discussion and all other forms of exercises. Canale and Swain [21] extend the “communicative competence” into four dimensions. To them “communicative competence” is the underlying systems of knowledge and skill required for communication. Knowledge here refers to what one knows (consciously or unconsciously) about the language and about other aspects of communicative language use. Skills refer to how well one can perform this knowledge in actual communication [22]. From this perspective, it is advanced that what language teachers need to teach is no longer just linguistic competence but also sociolinguistic competence in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately in different socio-linguistic contexts. Also necessary is the discourse competence

which is the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres of importance is also the strategic competence which is the mastery of verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies that may be called into action for compensating or enhancing communication (ibid).

CLT has expanded over time to the level of it being an approach rather than a method which aims to: (i) Make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and (ii) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication [18]. Nunan, further offers five features that characterize CLT thus; an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language, the introduction of authentic texts into learning situation, the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself, an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contribution elements to classroom learning and an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom [23].

CLT is therefore a unified but broadly-based theoretical position about the nature of language learning and teaching [23]. It is on the same topic that Richards and Rodgers [18] argue that "at the level of language theory, CLT has a rich, if somewhat eclectic, theoretical base." Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language include the fact that language is a system of the expression of meaning, the primary function of language is for interaction and communication; the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative use and the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories or functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

### **1.3 Teacher Roles in a CLT Classroom**

According to Breen and Candlin, in Richards and Rodgers [18], the teacher has two main roles in CLT: "First, to facilitate the communication process between all participants in the classroom, and between these participants and the various activities and text. Second, to act as an independent participant within the learning-teaching group. Other roles assumed for teachers are need analyst, counsellor, and group process manager." A process approach to writing redefines the teacher's role from a giver of information and hunter of errors to the teacher as facilitator. If a teacher is a facilitator rather than an error-hunter, students are given what they need most - the chance to internalise skills through guided experience. Too often, we have been neurotic about errors focussing on them to the exclusion of everything else. To develop self-reliant students, establish a classroom model that provides students with time, strategies and experience. Ensuring that students write notes is first step in mastering writing skills; allowing time for writing process is the second. Teachers need to validate the importance of revising and editing by allowing in class time for these processes. Another aspect of teacher as facilitator involves modelling, revising and editing. Modelling is best accomplished through students' drafts on overhead transparencies or duplicated copies for use with an entire class.

Teachers are part of the entire writing process providing suggestions, helping and listening to writers read their papers to them. The teachers should know when to stay out of the student's way. The writing belongs to the writer, and when teachers suggest a specific way to change the piece, they take away some of that ownership. When teachers mark rough drafts with specific suggestions and correct the punctuation, they are doing all the work for the writer. The ones who are getting practice in editing are the teachers when it is the students who should be practising. Teachers should guide and suggest but not mark papers with specific changes that need to be made because then the students have only to make the corrections and not think about why they are making them. Teachers may help by asking questions and making general suggestions on rough drafts, particularly for students who ask for help or those who have trouble writing. The more a teacher takes over, the more students write to please the teacher rather than them and that writing loses vitality and originality. Along with the process of writing, there is need to both directly teach writing skills and provide practice time for improving them. The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of lasting value. Encouraging student participation in the exercise, while at the same time refining and expanding writing skills, requires a certain practical approach. The teacher should be clear on what skills they are trying to develop.

Next, the teacher needs to decide on which type of exercise can facilitate learning of the target area. Once the target skill areas and means of implementation are defined, the teacher can then proceed to focus on what topic can be provided to ensure student participation. By doing this, the teacher can expect both enthusiasm and effective learning. Choosing the target area depends on many factors such as: a) what level are the students? b) What is the average age of the students? c) Why are the students learning English? d) Are there any specific future intentions for the writing? e) What should the students be able to produce at the end of this exercise? f) What is the focus of the exercise? Once these factors are clear in the mind of the teacher, the teacher can begin to focus on how to involve the students in the activity thus promoting a positive and thus long-term learning experience. Having decided on the target area, the teacher can focus on the means to achieve this type of learning. As in correction, the teacher must choose the most appropriate manner for the specified

writing area. If formal business letter English is required, it is of little use to employ a free expression type of exercise. Likewise, when working on descriptive language writing skills, a formal letter is equally out of place. With both the target area and means of production clear in the teacher's mind, the teacher can begin to consider how to involve the students by considering what type of activities are interesting to the students; are they preparing for something specific such as a holiday or test?, Will they need any of the skills pragmatically? What has been effective in the past? A good way to approach this is by class feedback or brainstorming sessions. By choosing a topic that involves the students the teacher is providing a context within which effective learning on the target area can be undertaken.

Finally, the question of which type of correction will facilitate a useful writing exercise is of utmost importance. Here the teacher needs to once again think about the overall target area of the exercise. If there is an immediate task at hand, such as taking a test, perhaps teacher guided correction is the most effective solution. However, if the task is more general; for example, developing informal letter writing skills, maybe the best approach would be to have the students work in groups thereby learning from each other. Most importantly, by choosing the correct means of correction the teacher can encourage rather discourage students. The teacher's role is therefore of great significance in the development of writing skills through CLT.

#### **1.4 The Debate**

Berns [24] explains that in CLT "language teaching is based on a view of language as a communication, that is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers and writers use to make meaning; speakers communicate about something to someone for some purposes either orally or in wording" (p. 104). From these assertions, CLT is an approach to the teaching of second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) that emphasizes interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. It is also referred to as communicative approach to teaching of foreign languages or simply the communicative approach. This approach is seen as a response to the traditional and teacher-centred methods such as audio-lingual method, direct method and grammar translation among others.

The poor performance in English in the country particularly in the written expression and in particular Marakwet District could be attributed to the nature of pedagogical activities going on in the classroom. Performance in the greater Marakwet District is very dismal since a mere 1% of the candidature from the year 2005-2011 scored a mean grade of B+ and above in English. This is an indication that there are certain factors which affect language teaching. This is why the study sought to establish the use of CLT methodology to develop the much needed writing skills. Many books, the syllabus and teacher's handbooks, have all based their work on the CLT approach. There is a probability that teachers do not use this approach to develop writing skills and if they do, then they do not use it appropriately. Thus, the need for this study on the teacher's role within CLT approach to develop writing skills.

#### **1.5 Theoretical Framework**

The discussions in this paper are underpinned by the Stephen Krashen's Monitor Model of second Language Acquisition which has five hypotheses namely: The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, The Monitor Hypothesis, The Natural Order Hypothesis, The Input Hypothesis and The Affective Filter Hypothesis. Closely related to the discussion of this work is The Acquisition- Learning Hypothesis in which Krashen maintains that adult L2 learners have at their disposal two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in an L2: *acquisition* which is 'a subconscious process identical in all important ways to the process children utilize in acquiring LI and *learning* which is a conscious process that results in "knowing about" language [25]. Acquisition is realised through meaningful interaction in a natural communication setting contrary to language learning situation in which error detection and correction are central, as is the case in classroom settings, where formal rules and feedback provide the basis for language instruction. Language can also be acquired in the classroom when the focus is on communication for instance through dialogues, role playing and other forms of meaningful interaction [26]. However, this research utilized The Input Hypothesis.

The explanation of the Input Theory which Krashen emphasizes refers to using language to learn and then learning to use language. Krashen's Input Hypothesis and other second language (L2) acquisition theories typically stress that language learning comes about through using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills. That is to say, we acquire a language mostly as the result of using language in the process of communicative activities, not the result of conscious language drilling. According to Krashen, we acquire a language through our subconscious acquisition process not our conscious learning process; the way a child learns a language. Language acquirers are not consciously aware of the grammatical rule for correctness. This can be equated to 'picking-up' a language. Language learning on the other hand, refers to the conscious knowledge of a foreign language, knowing the rules, being aware of them and being able to talk about them. This is to say that language learning can be compared to learning about a language. Krashen also points out that for students to acquire a language, they must receive comprehensible input. The input hypothesis

states that a language acquirer who is at level 'i' must receive 'comprehensible input' that is at level 'i+1'. Comprehensible input means that students should be able to understand the essence of what is being said or presented to them. Students learn a new language when they receive input that is just a little bit more difficult than they can easily understand. That is to say that the students may understand most but not all words the teacher is using.

For comprehensible input to be realised, teachers should constantly involve students, ask many questions, and encourage students to express their ideas and thoughts in a new language when enough input is provided, i+1 is present. As for the application of the Input Hypothesis, the instructor should provide input that is roughly-tuned. The teacher should always send meaningful messages and 'must' create opportunities for students to access i+1 structures to understand and express meaning. For instance, the teacher can lay more emphasis on listening and reading comprehension activities. Extensive reading is often preferred because of ample amount of input provided. Outside reading is also helpful (for instance, graded readers, magazines and the like). Thus, this will form the basis for writing skills. That is, if language models and teachers provide adequate comprehensible input, the structures that acquirers are ready to learn will be present in that input. The techniques that make learning comprehensible for language learners include previewing materials, providing opportunities for students to express themselves in English and providing time for hands-on activities. Having students work in co-operative learning groups provides them with additional peer support. This Hypothesis is appropriate for this study since the tenets of CLT are student-centred where the learners are encouraged to experience language in its natural and contextual setting and in group work. Above all, the teacher is a facilitator who can provide the 'comprehensible input'.

## **II. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Approach**

This study adopted a mixed method approach - combined two approaches to data collection and analysis. Qualitative method was adopted through teacher interview and classroom observation schedules and quantitative method through student questionnaire for better analysis and thus interpretation of results. This study adopted descriptive survey design because the study was concerned with investigating the use of CLT approach in the development of writing skills in secondary schools in Marakwet District. This study sought to collect data from form three teachers of English through teacher interview schedule and form three students through student questionnaire and also through lesson observation schedule.

### **2.2 Study Site**

The study, whose findings form the basis of the discussions in this paper, was conducted in the larger Marakwet district, Elgeyo-Marakwet County, Kenya. It is bordered by the following districts: Keiyo North to the south, West Pokot to the north, Baringo to the East and Trans-Nzoia and Uasin-Gishu to the West. It covers an area of 1709km<sup>2</sup> with a population of 157,503. It is divided into nine divisions namely: Kapcherop, Kapyego, Chebororwa, Chesongoch, Chebiemit, Kapsowar, Tirap, Tunyo and Tot with 29 locations and 89 sub-locations. The people in the district mainly grow cereals such as maize, beans, green grams, peas, horticulture and livestock keeping for their economic upkeep. In spite of the poor infrastructure in the district, it is productive, save for the Kerio Valley region which is semi-arid. There are 33 registered secondary schools with a student population of 8075. Out of this, 15 are boys' schools, 13 are girls' schools and the rest 5 are co-educational. There is a total of 268 teachers and out of this 41 are teachers of English. The choice of the study area was based on the following reasons: first, is the fact that English language performance at KCSE has been very dismal. In fact, a mere 1% of the candidature each year since 2005 has been able to score a mean grade B+ and above in English language at KCSE in the district. Second, is the lack of comparable studies and almost no concrete information on the approaches to teaching English language in the study location. Third, is the logistical considerations which include convenience, time and financial resources available to the researcher. Lastly, is the curiosity about English language teaching raised in the researcher during the fifteen-year teaching experience in three of the secondary schools in the district as at the time of doing this study.

### **2.3 Study Population**

The sample population was drawn from 33 public secondary schools in the greater Marakwet district. The study targeted 41 secondary school teachers of English and 404 form three learners. Form three learners were presumed to have acquired sufficient levels of knowledge in English language. It is also at this level that the learners can take risks and participate more actively in tasks with less anxiety. Obanya [27] observes that it is in form three that teachers of English consolidate the language taught in preparation for the terminal examinations to come in form four and the selection of the teachers of English language is because they are the main participants in the teaching of English language and could accurately give their views regarding the use of CLT approach in developing writing skills.

## **2.4 Sampling Procedures**

Stratified sampling was adopted to select schools based on the nine divisions in the district. The district has a total of 33 public secondary schools with no private secondary school. Simple random sampling was used to select two schools from the division that had more than five schools and one school in divisions that had less than five schools. The 11 secondary schools selected represented 33% of the number of secondary schools in the entire district. Purposive sampling was also used to get 11 teachers of English teaching form three class in the 11 selected schools out of the 41 teachers of English in the whole district. This was so because they were the ones teaching the target class. Purposive sampling was also used to select the form three students in the 11 selected schools. This is because they have been in school long enough to recognise methodology of teaching writing skills in English and the challenges associated with writing skills. Furthermore, simple random sampling was used to select a total of 121 students for the study from the 11 selected schools. While in each school, the researcher sampled 30% of the total population of the form 3 students. The selection of the students to participate was done through simple random sampling. This was by way of writing 'to participate' on pieces of papers that were equivalent to 30% of the total number of the form three students from each of the selected schools. The remaining 70% of the papers were written 'not to participate'. The pieces of papers were mixed thoroughly and then given to the students to pick at random. This meant that 30% of form three students per school were randomly selected through this process.

## **2.5 Instruments of Data Collection**

This study adopted a survey design and therefore data was collected through interview schedule, observation schedule and questionnaire. The reason for using triangulation is to decrease, negate and counterbalance the deficiency of a single data collection instrument, thereby increasing the ability to interpret the findings so as to ensure reliable and valid study [28]. Besides this, triangulation is one way to increase the validity, strengths and interpretive potential of a study, decrease investigator biases and provide multiple perspectives (Densin, in *ibid*). This will eventually ensure balanced and enriched information. In this study, triangulation was important because of its complementary role. It was found that the data collected through student questionnaire was not observed in class through observation schedule. A case in point is the use of puzzle/cross-word, telephone conversation, hot-seating, picture stories and jig-saw which were not observed but some of the respondents indicated that their teachers use. It was also interesting to note that the same scenario was established through the teacher's interview schedule in which what was collected was not was not observed in class. Triangulation curbed against falsehood and made confirmation of the data through corroboration.

## **2.6 Validity and Reliability**

To ascertain the validity of the research instruments, the researcher discussed with the research supervisors and other colleagues from School of Education, Moi University department of curriculum Instruction and Educational media, suggestions and clarifications given were used to improve the instruments. A pilot study was done to help the researcher familiarise himself with the data collection instruments, locate elements of the study population and the study units during the research period. Pre-test of student questionnaires, teacher interview schedules and observation schedules was done to make necessary modifications before actual collection.

To test reliability, a pilot study was carried out in two schools in Keiyo North district which was randomly selected. Two form three teachers of English were interviewed from the selected schools. Two interview and observation schedules, learners and teachers questionnaires were piloted. To determine reliability, the researcher administered the same test two weeks after the first administration. The re-administration was done in the same two schools in Keiyo North district. The results obtained was analysed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation ( $r$ ). A coefficient correlation ( $r$ ) between the first and the second scores was obtained which was 0.72, 0.80 and 0.71 for questionnaires, observation and interview respectively. This gave an average correlation coefficient of 0.74 between the two tests implying that the research instruments were reliable. Cohen and Marion assert that correlations ranging from 0.65-0.85 are accurate enough for most purposes. The results obtained was also analyzed and checked by colleagues in the department of Curriculum Instruction and Educational Media to limit the distorting effects of random errors in the findings.

## **2.7 Data Collection and Analysis**

The data was collected by use of interview schedule, observation schedule and the questionnaire. The researcher observed the actual teaching after which the teacher interview was conducted while the student respondent filled the questionnaire. The respondents were assured that the information was used in strict confidence only for the purpose of the study. Teachers of English were interviewed and their responses audio-taped and recorded. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistical techniques which include: percentages

and frequency means and presented in tables. Data from interview and observation schedules were coded and analysed descriptively in identified themes based on study objectives.

### III. RESULTS

#### 3.1 Teacher's Role during English Language Lessons

The student respondents were asked to state the kind of role they prefer during English language lessons. The findings revealed that 47.8% (55) of the respondents reported that the teacher helps in learning while 45.2% (52) stated that the teacher facilitates learning. Furthermore, 6.9% (6) of the respondents reported that the teachers are controllers of everything in the class. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2. Role of Teacher during English Language Lessons

Role	Frequency	Percent
As a person in control of everything in the class	8	6.9
As someone who does not control everything but helps and guides you in learning	55	47.8
As a person who facilitates or helps you learn	52	45.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### 3.2 Student-Centered Approach and Teacher Role

The researcher sought the teachers' opinion on whether the students should be at the centre of teaching writing skills and the teacher role in general. All the teachers reported that students should be at the centre of teaching writing skills. Majority of the teachers felt that the teacher should be the one designing writing activities for students in English language classroom. It was further stated by all the teachers that they play important role by being facilitators in the teaching of writing skills. One of the respondent coded 03 said: *"...yes most of the writing skills are applicable in future; therefore, it is good to be student-centered."* The interview conducted also disclosed that majority of the teachers strongly encourage the students to learn by themselves through their own efforts to communicate in writing. Except two cases, majority of the teachers do allow their students to write down all that comes to their minds free from any interruptions arising from grammatical mistakes. The main reason for doing this is to encourage learners engage in free expression.

#### 3.3 The Teacher as an Organizer

From the observation, it was observed that most of the teachers were shown as the chief organizer in the classroom by way of giving the format of an activity to be presented; for instance, in minute-writing the teacher gave an introduction, body and review of the functional skill.

It was also observed that the teacher is a helper to students in the class because they gave clarifications, directions and they also checked the notes in the course of the lesson. The teacher would also get the students' attention by moving about the class in the course of the lesson. Group work and questions were given to students as assignment to help them understand concepts clearly. In lessons two, five and nine, teachers did not move about the class to check if the formats administered to them were put into use neither did they explain the meaning of some new terms in the students' reference books.

Most of the teachers were observed as enlighteners in the classroom because they shed light on the definition and uses of items for instance curriculum vitae (CV), official letter, minute-writing and also by defining the terminologies which may be difficult to the students. In writing an official letter, the teachers showed the students where to place sender's address and gave them the most current of the formats of writing official letters, minutes, reports and diaries.

The researcher observed that teachers were the main speakers; controller of the class because they introduced the lesson activities and gave a summary at the end of the lesson. In the course of the lesson, most teachers involved the students in answering questions and also in the group work.

### IV. DISCUSSION

From the findings, majority of the learners (93.0%) reported that they prefer teachers to guide them on writing skills during English language lessons. The teacher should not control everything during the learning process but should help guide and facilitate learners to develop writing skills. This is in line with the CLT approach which advocates for the fact that the teacher's role should be that of being a facilitator and a guide. Teachers reported that students should be at the centre of learning writing skills. It was further established that the teacher should be the one designing writing activities for students in English language classroom. It was also found that teachers should strongly encourage students to learn by themselves through their own efforts to communicate. From the interview conducted, it was disclosed that activities such as group discussion, question-

answer, daily assignments and use of samples are commonly used by teachers of English. It is also revealed that teachers should not correct students' mistakes during presentation. This can be done after a discussion.

It is the role of the teacher to take into consideration the needs of different learners especially for the slow and faster learners. This can be done through remedial teaching, and giving extra work for fast learners on writing skills. It was revealed that it is the teacher's role to design activities which enhance students' creativity and that they should be related to what happens in the real world. This is in support of Richards and Rodgers [18] assertion.

It was also established that teachers took the centre-stage in controlling learning activities in class. This is a role that featured prominently. This does not go as per the principles of CLT approach in which the teacher's role should just be that of a facilitator and a guide.

It was explored from the study that the teachers not only help but also facilitate writing skills in learners. The results also reveal that teachers engage learners in role play, learning games and pair work which are useful for enhancing writing skills. These findings are in consonant with those of Breen and Candlin, cited in Richards and Rodgers [18]. They mention that a teacher plays the role of being a facilitator in CLT classroom between the participants and the various activities and the text. Teachers are part of the entire writing process providing suggestions, helping and listening to writers read their papers to them (ibid). The more a teacher takes over, the more students write to please the teacher rather than themselves and that writing loses vitality and originality. This is what is also recommended by Magut [29]. Besides this, Ng and Tang [20] support the fact that in CLT classroom, the teacher should shift his/her role as a dormant teacher and knowledge transmitter.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing discussion, it suffices to conclude that teachers should consider students to be at the centre of teaching writing skills. As such, the teacher should be the one designing writing activities for students in English language classroom. Teachers should strongly encourage students to learn by themselves through their own efforts to communicate in writing. Teachers should also use questions and listen to answers of slow learners while fast learners are given extra questions to handle or given opportunities to do peer teaching in class. Teachers are also advised to go round class to observe students' work and use a variety of activities to ensure students are active in class. These activities include giving them quick exercise, oral questions, class presentations, group work, pair work and asking learners to write on the chalk board. These activities support the learning of writing skills using CLT.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this paper, the following recommendations are drawn:

- a) Teachers should actively engage students in activities that enhance writing skills such as role-play, learning games, pair and group work and other forms of co-operative learning;
- b) Teachers should allocate more time to writing skills and also introduce weekly or fortnightly essay writing competition and
- c) Teachers to encourage free writing and exchange of written work in English language classroom.

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