THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Assessment of the Quality of Creative Writing Activities in Upper Primary Textbooks and Teachers' Guides in Kenya

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Abstract:
The effectiveness of teaching and learning of English writing skills largely depends on the quality of learning materials, key among them being textbooks. Textbooks make learning more enjoyable and interesting to learners as they provide practical experience which goes a long way in stimulating self-activity and creativity among learners. They provide critical inputs for classroom lessons through various activities, readings and explanations which are used to develop competence in Creative Writing (CW). In Kenyan primary schools, the government has endeavored to achieve a 1:1 learner-textbook ratio to enhance learning and improve academic performance. However, the performance of CW skills is still unsatisfactory. Furthermore, many studies conducted in Kenya with regard to teaching and learning materials have focused on the importance and availability of textbooks; but the quality of CW activities in these textbooks, which facilitate the learning and acquisition of CW skills, has not been looked into. Moreover, the originality, fluency and creative demands of CW are problematic to upper primary learners in Vihiga County as reflected in the persistent underperformance in CW in the English subject with more than 60% of the learners scoring below the pass mark pegged at 20 marks out of the total 40 marks. Therefore, the quality of the CW writing activities has to nurture creativity and be graduated in complexity to develop higher order skills like CW. The foregoing assertions prompted the researcher to assess the quality of CW activities in the textbooks and teachers' guides used in CW pedagogy in Vihiga County, Kenya. The study employed a qualitative exploratory research design and was guided by Archer's theory of reflexivity which views writing as internal and external conversations and addresses the concerns of the individual and the social structures or 'expected' ways of acting in a particular context. Data collection tools were Document Analysis Guide (DAG)and Interview Schedule whose validity and reliability were tested through triangulation and thick description. Class 6, 7 and 8 New Primary English Textbooks and Teachers Guides were assessed to establish the quality of CW activities therein and 30 Class 6, 7 and 8 teachers of English interviewed. Data from DAG was analyzed using content analysis while data from Interview was analyzed thematically through transcription, coding and identification of themes. The study revealed low quality and inadequate CW activities in textbooks and Teachers' Guides that can develop CW effectively. The study recommended reviewing CW activities in pupils' and teachers' books, in-servicing of teachers on CW instruction and developing CW reference materials besides the textbooks and Teachers Guides.

Keywords: Quality, text book, creative writing activities, upper primary learners

1. Introduction

For any meaningful learning to take place, relevant and appropriate teaching and learning materials must be availed. The teaching and learning of English writing skills largely depends on the availability of materials (Grossman and Thompson, 2008). The content of English language textbooks influences what teachers teach and what learners learn (Richards, 2009). Richard's views are substantiated by Celce-Murcia (2001) and Wright (cited in Lee, 2003) who argue that any textbook has a very important and positive part to play in teaching and learning of English. Thus, textbooks will always survive on the grounds that they meet certain needs. (UNESCO, 2000; Minae, 2004; Ouma, 2005; Omulando, 2009 & Francisca, 2012) noted that availing the teaching and learning resources particularly textbooks is a valuable way of improving results. This improvement in result could be realized because, according to Uboga, (2004), textbooks facilitate the pupils to trail the teacher's order of presentation and assists in understanding of the lessons. They make learning more enjoyable and interesting to the students since they provide practical experience which goes a long way in stimulating self-activity and creativity among the students. In addition, they provide tangible foundation for abstract thoughts thus reducing pointless word responses from learners (Nyamubi, 2003). Most importantly, textbooks provide the necessary input for classroom lessons through different activities, readings and explanations which provide tasks for developing competence in CW. Quality and adequate CW activities in textbooks help learners develop and express their feelings and thoughts in an original, fluent and interesting way. In Kenya, originality, fluency and creativity are the three broad scoring

areas in CW in English in upper primary (Kenya National Examination Council {KNEC}, 2015).The activities in the textbook and Teachers guide should therefore enhance the achievement of originality, fluency and creativity in CW skills because, CW is critical to the learners' overall performance in the English subject as it accounts for 40% of the total score. Therefore, the quality and adequacy of CW activities in enhancing development of CW skills supersedes the availability of the textbooks and teachers' guides and cannot be underestimated.

Despite the importance of the quality of CW activities in these textbooks, this area has not been explored in terms of research. CW has therefore remained a problematic area to upper primary learners in Kenya. Of interest in the present study is the quality of CW activities in textbooks and Teachers' Guides in meeting the needs of CW pedagogy. For teachers, textbooks or course books, either required or supplementary, provide content and teaching-learning activities, which shape much of what happens in the classroom (Richard 2009). Two important aspects from Richard (2009) assertions related to this study are the content of English language textbooks and how they influence what teachers teach. CW activities are embedded in the content and an assessment of these activities informs the stakeholders of their quality in the development of CW skills. Regardless of these insights, teachers of English in upper primary classes in Kenya continue to grapple with the inadequacy CW activities in textbooks and teachers' guides hence the need for the present study.

2. Creative Writing Activities in the Text books and Teachers' Guides

Byrd (2001) reports that most teachers depend on textbooks often as a required tool because they provide content and activities of what happens in the classroom. Despite this pivotal role textbooks play in language pedagogy, little importance is being given to the examination of English composition (CW) text books and writing activities (Yu & Reynolds, 2018). They further argue that the severely limited number of empirical studies that have been conducted have only focused on L2 writing activities at undergraduate and post graduate writers; the type of tasks being given to high school L2 writers has not been considered (Cho, 2014; Jackson, *et.al* 2006; Maher *et. al.*, 2013; Mateos *et.al*; 2007). This informs the premise of the present study since the primary school level has not been included too. More so, these limited studies were conducted in the Western countries with different pedagogical contexts hence the need for a similar study in the Kenyan context to exemplify classroom practice.

In pedagogy, the textbook is used as a standard source of information for formal study of a subject and an instrument for teaching and learning (Graves; 2000). According to Reem, Wafa'a Danyah and Nadia (2018), writing materials and tasks should be best designed and delivered to improve students' English proficiency and their writing skills. This assertion demands for quality and adequate activities in these materials to equip the learner in CW. However, several research studies conducted only investigate the teachers and learners' views on some aspects and issues related to English writing activities and not their quality. Students' interactions and teacher's feedback during writing lessons are prominent factors in developing students' writing skills. (Storch, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Shehadeh, 2011; Cummins, Gass, Hudelson, Hudson, & Master, 2013; Veiga *et al.*, 2016). The bridge between learners' interaction and the teachers' feedback in CW are the activities in the teaching and learning material they are using. Therefore, the study sought to establish the quality of the activities in the textbooks and teachers' guides being utilized in CW pedagogy and whether these activities are customized to enhance the learner's CW competence.

CW demands expression of thoughts in an original, fluent, interesting way instead of writing boring, repeated and monotonous writings (Temizkan, 2010). Writers are engaged in their imaginative world having a dialogue with their writer self (O'Rourke, 2005). This unique symbolization of experience gives CW evidence of originality. Textbooks are considered as central to teaching and learning, as their quality is a determining factor in enhancing or diminishing the quality of a language program. Ochako. *et. al*; (2019); in their study on 'Approaches Teachers use in Teaching Imaginative Writing' reveal teachers' reliance on textbooks for instruction and evaluation. The interview findings showed that 50% of the teachers gave imaginative assignments from text books while during lesson observation, results revealed that five (5) out of seven (7) students' imaginative writing notes were read from textbooks. In addition, six (6) out of seven (7) imaginative writing assignments were taken from text books and written on the chalk board. The aforementioned figures point to the need of having quality activities in the textbooks due to teachers' reliance on them. The importance of quality CW activities in textbooks is well captured by Uboga (2004) who postulate that text books facilitate the pupils to trail the teacher's order of presentation and assists in understanding of the lessons. Therefore, in preparation to teach CW, teachers should assess the quality of CW activities in the textbooks they use by asking themselves if the CW activity is appropriate to the needs of the learners, whether it is within the reach of the learners and whether the learners find the activity enjoyable. If these needs are met, the CW activities engage the learner fully and make him/her less apprehensive during the CW exercise. Therefore, the Kenyan learners stand to gain if meaningful CW activities are embraced in the textbooks and Teacher's Guides because the complexity of the CW to learners writing in second language will be limited.

3. Research Methodology

The objectives of this study were fulfilled through a qualitative exploratory research design which according to Burns and Creswell (2013), is conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas, and to increase knowledge of the phenomenon. The study assessed CW activities in textbooks and Teachers Guides in order to gain insights into the quality of CW activities employed in developing CW skills in Vihiga County which is located in the Western Region of Kenya. The choice of Vihiga County was influenced by persistent underperformance in English composition despite the government efforts of availing textbooks in public primary schools. Besides, Vihiga's rural setup exemplifies practice as opposed to the urban setups which are well resourced and are deemed to have L2 competent learners. The documents used in this study were the KICD approved textbooks used in the classrooms which were analyzed through content analysis. Documents are

preferred because they are reasonably direct and accurate sources of information Mutai (2000; 144). A sample of 30 teachers of English from the 10 purposively selected schools from class 6, 7 and 8 were interviewed about the quality of CW activities in the New Primary English textbooks and the teachers' guides. The sample was informed by Nastasi (2005) who recommends a sample size of 30 for in-depth interview. Interviews are one of the most important sources of data because they allow participants to report their thoughts and experiences thereby providing rich data that is necessary to understand the cases in depth (Gillham, 2005; Rubin and Rubin, 2005). Interview schedules are therefore a feasible and adaptable way of finding out information.

Stake (2005) explains that to give quality, credibility, and trustworthiness to a qualitative research, certain methods are used which include: triangulation, saturation, member checking and self-disclosure (Reflexivity). In qualitative research, validity entails the researcher checking for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent (Creswell, 2009). To ensure that the findings in this research are accurate and credible, a number of measures were taken. Validity strategies such as data triangulation and the use of thick and rich descriptions of the procedures and findings were used. By converging data from the two sources, conclusions were drawn from various angles making the research findings trustworthy. Secondly, the researcher involved peers and experienced researchers in reviewing key concepts, methodology and analysis and to help check the credibility of the research rationale, research process and report as suggested in research literature (Stake, 2006; Mason, 2002).

Regarding reliability, Richards (2009) explains that 'dependability in qualitative research involves an interrogation of the context and the methods used to derive the data' (p159). Yin (2003) suggests that one way of enhancing dependability is to make clear and detailed descriptions of the steps followed in the study. To ensure dependability in this study, care was taken to make a thick description of the entire research process in a manner that makes it possible to carry out a similar study in another context, if necessary (Ponterotto, 2006). In the process of data generation, the researcher accumulated a data set consisting of interview and document notes. The researcher utilized content analysis. To ensure consistency in approach during the study, the exploratory study procedures were documented and applied consistently in the data collection phase by immediately describing in detail the opinions and feelings and the behavior captured during inter views.For the textbooks and teachers guides, the CW activities were assessed in relation to the approach the texts leaned towards. Data analysis was achieved using content and thematic analysis and discourse analysis. Interview data was subjected to narrative while classroom observation data was analysed using discourse analysis. In terms of ethics, according to Mason (2002), the researcher observed truthfulness and all participants were given accurate and detailed information about the research, their express consent, confidentiality and anonymity were assured, any sort of harm was avoided and the researcher show appreciation of the participants' support in any appropriate manner (Cohen et al., 2007).

4. Results, Analysis and Discussions

Class 6, 7 and 8 KICD approved textbooks and Teacher's Guides were analyzed to establish the quality of CW activities in these textbooks. Composition writing is vital in the teaching of English as a subject and therefore the researcher set out to establish how the activities textbooks are appropriate in the teaching of CW. From the exploration done, 100% of the teachers teaching Class 6, 7 and 8 argued that the textbooks were inadequate in guiding both the learner and the teacher in CW. They posited that CW activities need enrichment in order to guide the teacher especially the new and inexperienced teachers in the profession. These were there sentiments, *'We have very little to gain from the textbooks. After reading a comprehension passage, one is asked to help learners write a story. In all the CW activities, you are always asked to use the 4W and the H question. There is nothing new in every writing exercise. The teachers' guides are presented just like the textbook. No model composition is given. If you have no idea and lack creativity, you get stuck. There is little you can do to help the learner. Strange enough, there are no approved KICD CW reference materials like in reading.'*
The need for enrichment of the textbooks was witnessed in the CW activities that came at the end of every unit. Two examples of CW activities were picked at each level because of the similarity in approach and presentation. Samples of composition writing activities were as follows.

4.1. Class 6 Creative Writing Activities

4.1.1. Course Book: Unit 6: Wedding Ceremony

Imagine you attended the wedding ceremony of your aunt and that you performed the duty of a server. Write three paragraphs about your duty and the wedding. The following points will help you.
- Who the invited guests were.
- How you prepared for your duty.
- How you performed your duty.
- How you enjoyed at the wedding ceremony.

4.2. Teachers Guide: Unit 6

4.2.1. F: Write Better

4.2.1.1. Continuous Writing: A Wedding Ceremony
      Guide pupils to discuss various wedding ceremonies they have attended. Guide them to read the instructions in their books. Remind them they need not to stick to answers to the questions only.

4.3. Unit 12: F, Write Better from the Textbook

4.3.1. An Animal Story
    We are going to write an animal story in groups. Each member of the group is going to tell a story. Do the following.
- Choose the best story.
- Write down the main ideas of the story.
- Decide the number and order of paragraphs. Write the story as a group. Get one member to write down the points as you get them.
- Then copy the same story in your exercise books.

4.3.2. Teachers Guide
      Let the learners tell an animal story. Which animal do they like and why? Where does the animal live and what is its importance? Every idea is to be developed in a paragraph.
      The 2 extracts of CW activities from class 6 English textbook and the Teachers Guide reveal the need for enriching these activities. The first activity is about a wedding ceremony in which learners are to generate a story using the 4W and an H question. The second activity is an animal story and the teacher are to help the learners in groups to choose the best story, write down the main ideas and decide on the number and order of paragraphs. It is an improvement from the first activity because it incorporates brainstorming and collaboration through groups. Both activities are process oriented in their approach. The instructions about each member telling a story in activity 2 are not focused; whether it is a story about an animal or on any other topic. The learners are then to choose the best story, write down the main ideas then copy down the story in their books. Key steps of process approach such as revising and editing are missing both in the textbook and the teacher's guide. With process approach, the learner writes a first draft, shows it to the teacher or to another student, reads it again, enriches it, and revises it before writing the final draft. So, when adopting this approach, the teacher gives the learners enough time to not only get more ideas but to express them in new language forms as well(Hassan and Akhand, 2010).This approach places the tasks of revision on the students through making them read and rewrite. Moreover, it gives them opportunities to review, clarify and reorganize what they have written on their own. The process-based approach encourages learners to write as much as possible without worrying about mistakes (Kroll, 2003). Thus, the focus is on fluency rather than accuracy. After the learners have generated a story, they can improve on its accuracy at the editing process. This makes the process writing approach the best alternative for primary school learners as they are yet to develop their writing competence. However, all the steps were not adhered to and time was restrictive. The approach presented in the textbook is a segment of the process writing approach. Other than planning and brainstorming, other steps like drafting which may take several drafts, revising and finally publishing are not captured in the textbook. According to Durga & Rao (2018),the steps involved in process approach are setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, revising, writing, editing and publishing.

4.4. Class 7 Course Book Creative Writing Activities

4.4.1. Unit 1: F: Write Better

4.4.1.1. A Description of People
    In this unit you read about pastoralists and nomads and how they move from place to place in search of food and water. Think of another group of a people and write about them. Use the following as well as any other ideas you may have.
- Where they usually live.
- Their main food and how it is prepared.
- Their activities e.g. farming, fishing etc.
- Their special ceremonies.

4.5. Teachers Guide

4.5.1. Unit1: F; Write Better
      Make sure the students understand the term pastoralists/nomads and ask them to suggest examples of such people. Guide the pupils to give examples of other groups of people, for example; farmers, fishermen, etc.
Let them read the instructions for the exercise.
Help them to organize their compositions.

<u>4.5.2. Unit 23: F: Write Better</u>

4.5.2.1. Writing a Narrative in the Past Tense
       Imagine you are one of the islanders who found Daedalus burning his wings and who later helped him to search for Icarus. Write the story as it happened to you, beginning like this: One morning, as I was walking to my farm with some of my friends, we suddenly noticed a cloud of smoke……………………………………
       You should include these points in your story:
- What Daedalus told you.
- The search for Icarus.
- How Icarus was buried.
- The departure of Daedalus.
- The naming of the island.

4.6. Teachers Guide

<u>4.6.1. F: Write Better</u>
       Write a narrative in the past tense.
- The pupils can use information from the story as the starting point. However, they will have to add details from their own imagination. They should also be encouraged to use some direct speech. You can assist them by discussing a sequence of events, and putting some of the ideas on the chalkboard.
- It will be advisable to get pupils contribute a suitable story orally before they write individually. This should be done as a class oral composition, with as many pupils as possible taking part. They can be encouraged to illustrate their own stories.

       From the class 7 CW activities, the textbook adopts a process approach to writing in which the learner is guided to generate a story using the 4H and W questions. With CW, it goes beyond having a story. Aspects of creativity and style have been alluded to where learners are to generate ideas from their own imagination and use direct speech without any illustration. CW entails presentation of ideas and thoughts in a unique and symbolic manner with incidences of creativity and originality (Mwangi, 2016); aspects which the 4W and H questions fail to capture. In the textbook activities, much guidance has to be done by the teacher whose guide book is equally shallow. In the first activity, it's about the description of people and the learner has to generate a story through the 4W and the H question; an aspect of process approach to writing; which according to Johnson (2008), it is prewriting which entails finding the ideas, collecting information, and organizing the thoughts. Prewriting strategies include brainstorming, free-writing and journal writing. The teacher is to ensure the students understand the term pastoralists/nomads and ask them to suggest examples of such people, guide the pupils to give examples of other groups of people, for example, farmers, to let them read the instructions for the exercise and help them to organize their compositions. Organization of composition is not clear whether it is in terms of paragraphing or the development of the episodes in the story. It would be clearer if a sample had been given. According to Adeyemi (2012), generally, writing is seen as a process in which students are given time to think about and discuss their ideas on a specific topic, to write a draft or framework of what they want to say, to discuss this again and then to write a more detailed account. However, from the textbook and teachers' guides' presentation, this process is not achieved. When teachers were asked why they don't follow the process fully, they said,

       'A lesson lasts for 35 minutes only. This time is not enough to allow students think and discuss a topic write a draft, then a more detailed account. In addition, the heavy workload weighs us down because we keep on moving from one class to the next.'

       This results are in line with A deyemi (2012) findings who established thatteachers handled the teaching of composition writing in their classrooms casually as well as their penchant to teach composition writing as homework to their struggling students citing time limitations as well as large class size (about forty students in a class).
In the second activity in class 7, learners were expected to write a narrative in the past tense; an aspect of grammar considered under accuracy and the teacher is to help them to add details from their own imagination and also encourage them to use some direct speech. The teacher too could assist them by discussing a sequence of events, and putting some of the ideas on the chalkboard. It was advisable to get pupils contribute a suitable story orally before they write individually. This should be done as a class oral composition, with as many pupils as possible taking part. They can be encouraged to illustrate their own stories. This second activity is an improvement of the previous activity as it is learner centered, the teacher is to guide learners infuse direct speech in their compositions which is an aspect of style. The aspect of fluency was to be tackled by allowing the teacher to discuss the sequence of events with the learners. Allowing learners to brain storm is an aspect of process approach to writing. However, there is neither further direction nor models to guide especially the inexperienced teachers. Terms like brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing are useful for talking about the parts of the writing process, which do not necessarily occur in a fixed order for individual writers in specific situations (Johnson, 2008). In addition, in the process approach, the students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand in the composition for the teacher to correct – which usually means to find errors. A student should be given the time for the process to work, along with the appropriate feedback from readers such as the teacher or other students. This would enable the student to discover new ideas, new sentences, and new words as they plan, write a first draft and revise what they have written for a second or subsequent drafts depending on their level of competence (Coffin, et al, 2003).

4.7. Class Eight Course Books Creative Writing Activities

4.7.1. Unit 1: F; Write Better Page 9

When the people of Cherongo realized that Barmuriat had been dishonest, they sent him away for five years. During that time, he had many adventures. He also learnt how to be honest and to work for himself. By the time he returned to Cherongo at the end of the five years, he was a changed man.

Now imagine you are Barmuriat telling the people of Cherongo what happened to you, and how you have changed. Write down what you said to them.

Think of a good title for your story. The following questions will help you imagine what happened to Barmuriat.

- Where did you go after leaving Cherongo?
- Did you find anywhere to live?
- How did you get food?
- How did you feel when you were returning?

4.8. Teachers Guide: Unit 1

4.8.1. F: Write Better

The return of Barmuriat.

- Let the pupils read the introduction to the exercise in their books and make sure they understand the instructions.
- Using guiding questions in the pupil's book, help the pupils imagine what happened to Barmuriat. Put some alternative suggestions on the chalk board in note form.
- Ask the pupils to write the story individually. They can use some of the chalk board notes if they like, but they should also add ideas of their own. Give additional help to the weaker learners.
  Note: allow enough time for the challenged learners to complete part F.

4.9. Unit 25

4.9.1. F: Write Better

4.9.1.1. Continuing a Story
Here is the beginning of a story about space adventure

Our journey was ending. After travelling for over six months in our rocket, Red Hawk, we landed gently on the surface of mars. We knew that it was very cold and that there was very little air, so we put on our space suits before setting out to explore the area where we had landed. Suddenly our leader cried out, 'Look! Foot prints!' He was right. In the dusty soil, we could see footprints of some huge, strange creature…

4.10. Now Continue the Story

- What did the surface of Mars look like? (Flat, mountainous, rocky, sand?)
- Was there any vegetation? Any water?
- Did you see the creatures that had made the footprints?
- If so, what did they look like?
- How did they behave?
- Were you able to communicate with them?
- How did it all end?

4.10.1. Teachers Guide: Unit 25

4.10.1.1. F: Write Better

Continuing a story: A Journey to planet Mars
Before the pupils write the story individually ask them to discuss in pairs, considering the questions provided and suggesting any other relevant points.
Note: Give more practice for use of tenses to the challenged learners.

In the first activity, the Class 8 Textbook CW activity asks the learner to imagine that's/he is Barmuriat telling the people of Cherongo what happened to you, and how s/he has changed and to write down what s/he said to them. The learner is further instructed to think of a good title for his/her story. They are then given the 4W and an H questions to help them imagine what happened to Barmuriat. In the Teachers' guide book, the teacher is instructed to let the pupils read the introduction to the exercise in their books and make sure they understand the instructions, using guiding questions in the pupil's book, help the pupils imagine what happened to Barmuriat, put some alternative suggestions on the chalk board in note form and ask the pupils to write the story individually. They can use some of the chalk board notes if they like, but they should also add ideas of their own. The teacher is also to give additional help to the weaker learners and allow enough time for the challenged learners to complete part F.
In the writing activity above, the learner is to think of a good title and to imagine a story through the five questions. This approach is limited to only one aspect of the process writing; prewriting. All the other stages in the process writing

approach have been left out and the resultant compositions are strained in communication, devoid of accuracy and creativity especially for teachers who heavily rely on the textbook during instruction. The results from such pedagogical interactions would be a replica of Adeyemi (2012) findings that the teachers' approach to teaching writing showed lack of value/importance placed on writing and creativity as a skill… The teachers' lessons were uninspired, as they showed no passion for the activity.

This brainstorming and generation of ideas help learners to generate a story. The teacher's duty is to help the learner to read the introduction to the exercise in their books and make sure they understand the instructions, help the pupils imagine what happened to Barmuriat, put some alternative suggestions on the chalk board in note form and ask the pupils to write the story individually. This kind of presentation lacks the essential approach in which the teacher is guided on how to develop creativity and accuracy in writing. Even editing, in which many teachers use to correct grammar has been omitted. From the Textbook samples; it is evident that both teachers and learners have little to gain from these materials in terms of approaches employed. The only recurring way of approaching writing in upper primary classrooms in these materials is through the 4W and H question which is a process approach to writing item. However, it is limiting as it only helps the learner to generate the story at the expense of creativity and accuracy. This therefore calls for the teacher to adopt the textbook to CW teaching but many teachers reject the textbooks due to their superficial nature and look for alternative materials which are not approved by KICD. This points to Yu and Reynolds (2018) argument that little importance is being given to the examination of English composition textbooks and writing tasks (activities). The situation is further heightened by the fact that even the KICD Approved booklist; which guides the teacher on the KICD approved course books and supplementary materials has no provision for CW supplementary materials. This makes many primary school teachers in Vihiga County to shy off from teaching CW.

The second activity is about 'A Journey to planet Mars.' The topic looks so abstract to learners at this level especially those ones from a rural set up like Vihiga County. Such abstract concepts can cause the teacher either adapt the text or reject it. Graves (2000) argue that some teachers reject the textbook approach to learning and wish to make substantial changes to the textbook they need to use. Adapting a textbook to fit actual needs of a group of learners is a demanding and time-consuming process. Apart from lack of time and resources that majority of teacher's state to be the main obstacles in adapting textbooks, teachers also need training and experience in modifying textbooks. The researcher further established that out of the total number of units in a textbook, only a quarter (7 out of 28 writing activities) was for imaginative composition writing. Out of this allocation to CW, no detailed direction is given to the teacher on how to teach composition writing in upper primary. An analysis of the KICD Booklist showed that no single textual material or supplementary resources were recommended for writing regardless of how CW was of great importance in the overall score of the English subject in primary schools. While from page 36 to 59 of the KICD approved booklist listed supplementary reading materials, none was allocated for writing yet in terms of language skills development, writing is more complex than reading.

The teaching and learning of English writing skills largely depends on the availability of materials (Grossman & Thompson, 2008). In Kenya, these materials are available but inadequate in terms of CW activities which signify the little attention directed to CW skills. This Kenyan situation is similar to Saudi's as indicated by Al Bashir (2016) that, it is important to indicate that the teaching of writing is not paid much attention in the Saudi context compared to the teaching of other skills such as vocabulary and grammar (Aljamhoor, 1996; Alnofal, 2003; Al Haysony, 2008). A similar scenario is presented in Chinese classes where according to Yu and Reynolds (2018), Chinese senior secondary students, among their integrated textbooks, only a few writing activities are included…and the empirical investigations relating to English writing taking place in the Chinese context indicate a disinclination to evaluate writing activity types.

5. Conclusions

Textbooks provide the necessary input for classroom lessons through various activities thus; textbooks will always survive on the grounds that they meet certain needs. In Kenya, CW activities in English textbooks and teachers' guides are inadequate in developing CW skills. Therefore, textbooks should have provision for sufficient and appropriate CW activities that would enhance the teaching and learning competence in CW.

6. Recommendations

- The teachers of English should creatively and innovatively select and use CW activities from a variety of available resources rather than sticking to the textbook they view as sketchy and shallow. Efforts should be made to prepare resources that can be used over a period of time.
- Preparation and use of instructional materials by English composition teachers need to be encouraged through the syllabus, textbooks and teachers' guides. Suggestions on appropriate instructional materials are missing in the current syllabus and KICD approved class texts.

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