Language Registers and their Influence in the Instruction of English Language in Secondary School in Kenya

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ABSTRACT
This paper examined how language registers influence the instruction of English language in secondary schools in Kenya. It specifically looks at how the various language registers used by both the teachers and learners in English second language (ESL) classes influence the manner in which classroom instruction and language learning take place. Thirteen form three classes randomly selected were observed, thirteen teachers of English language purposefully selected were interviewed and finally 195 students randomly selected from the observed classes filled the student questionnaire. Data obtained were both qualitative and quantitative. It was established that the teachers and learners of English language in secondary schools in Kenya use official and non- official forms of English during classroom interaction. The use of these non-official forms of English facilitates language learning and acquisition among the learners. It also minimizes communication breakdowns during oral communication.

Key words: *language registers, language use contexts, authentic communicative contexts, instruction of English, native speaker, non-native speaker, native speaker competence*

I.0 Introduction

Educational settings in Kenya and many parts of Africa are characterist by multulingualism. Students come to school with varied language resources and this multilingual environment influence the classroom contexts in which they further develop these resources and develop new ways of using language. In addition to multilingualism the media, social context, group identity and culture play a significant role in shaping language use among learners in secondary schools in Kenya. In addition to these factors the learning of English in Kenya has faced competition from Kiswahili language. After independence in 1963, the Ominde commission of 1964 advocated for the learning of Kiswahili as a compulsory subject in primary schools however, it was not examinable.

In 1974 Kiswahili was made a national language Crystal (2006). This was on the premise that the language could be used as a lingua franca by the various communities.

 In 1984 the Mackay commission which recommended the introduction of 8-4-4 system of education reinforced the status of Kiswahili as a compulsory and examinable subject in primary and secondary schools in Kenya. the competition between the two languages; English and Kiswahili has risen even higher since the latter was given a new impetus as it was reaffirmed as the national language of the Republic of Kenya, apart from the being declared the official language of the republic alongside English GOK, (2010).

The above factors combined have given rise to two forms of English language in Kenya; formal and informal English. These forms of English are spoken in Kenya and the same forms of English have found their way into the English language classrooms, hence both the teachers and the learners in secondary schools in Kenya use these forms of English interchangeably. Apart from these forms of English the teachers as well as the learners may employ the use of either mother tongue or Kiswahili during classroom interaction. The use of these forms of English together with mother tongues and Kiswahili has given rise to nativized form of Kenyan English. Molina (2015) observes, this nativized English spoken in Kenya may include some language mixing, code switching, and use of emerging vernaculars, which adds to the diversity of Kenyan English.

1.1 Study Objective
The study objective was to investigate the language registers and their influence in the instruction of English language in secondary school in Kenya.

1.2 Theoretical Framework
The study was based on the interaction hypothesis by Michael Long (1983) which offers an explanation how ESL learners can best succeed at learning a target language. SL development can be facilitated through interaction between non-native speakers and native speakers or non-native speakers of a higher level by creating a naturalistic SL acquisition environment, therefore providing awareness of L2 gaps through negotiation of meaning. He argues that conversation interaction is essential if not sufficient condition for second language acquisition. He studied the ways in which speakers modify their speech and their interaction patterns in order to help learners participate in a conversation or understand meaning in a new language.

This hypothesis is ideal for this study because oral communication in English language classes promotes the acquisition of the target language; English. This takes place in interactive classrooms. The hypothesis also places a lot of premium in conversational interactions as an essential and sufficient condition for second language acquisition in English language classes. Further, this hypothesis stresses the need for speakers (teachers) to modify their speech and interaction patterns in order to help learners participate in classroom interaction. During this interaction both the teachers and learners use various registers during their interaction in order negotiate meaning in class.

2.0 Literature Review
In this section literature related to language registers used in the English language classrooms and how they influence the teaching and learning of English language has been presented.

2.1 The Meaning of Registers
According to Yule (2010) a register is a conventional way of using language that is appropriate in a specific context, which may be identified as situational (e.g. in church), occupational (e.g. among

lawyers) or topical (e.g. talking about language). We can recognize specific features that occur in the religious register (Ye shall be blessed by Him in times of tribulation), the legal register (The plaintiff is ready to take the witness stand) and even the linguistics register (In the morphology of this dialect there are fewer inflectional suffixes).

Registers are synonymous with styles as Brown (2000) observes that a style is a social or regional dialect, but a variety of language used for a specific purpose. Styles vary considerably within a single language user's idiolect. It can thus be argued that registers are sometimes incorrectly used as a synonym for style. He further observes that registers are commonly identified by phonological variants, vocabulary, idioms and other expressions that are associated with different occupational groups. Registers sometimes enable people to identify with a particular group and to maintain group solidarity. Colleagues in the same occupation or profession will use certain jargon to communicate with each other, to the exclusion of eavesdropper. Truckers, airline pilots, salespersons, and farmers, for example use words and phrases, unique to their own group. In the classroom context the learners may use certain registers which are unique to them in order to exclude their teachers from hearing and understanding what they are saying. On the other hand teachers mostly use formal English that can be understood by all the learners in the class; however teachers at times may use informal English when explaining certain concepts to the learners.in the English language classroom the use of formal and informal English therefore comes into play.

2.2 The Use of Language Registers in the Society

Jagero and Odongo (2012) in their study manifestation of formal and informal code- switching in Nairobi established that whenever people interact they judge consciously what mode of behavior best suits the interaction. For example, conversations concerning ethnic status relationships are frequently jocular. They observed that those who choose English tend to have high status connotation while Kiswahili is used by all groups to connotate "brotherhood'' or neutrality because it helps to bridge between the English and ethnic language differences. In their study they reported that the languages used were perceived as having different levels of formality; English as the most formal followed by Kiswahili while ''sheng'' which is a fusion of Kiswahili and mother tongue is less found. Mother tongue is perceived in as least formal. The use of language in this manner has found its way into the Kenyan classrooms.

Momanyi (2009) observes that Kiswahili as well as English have been hit by a wave of ''Sheng'' speakers who are mostly pre-adolescents and young adults. She says that the youths developed this kind of secret code which they wanted to identify themselves with, and a variety of the subculture. She further observes that the term "sheng" was originally coined as a result of emerging mixture of Swahili and English words but as time went by the code no longer was situated in these two languages. It is now a blend of these two languages and other ethnic Kenyan languages.

Several scholars have advanced the origin of the code (Ogechi 2005; Githiora 2002; Abdulaziz & Osinde (1997). However, they all agree that the code started in the less affluent and slum areas of East lands of Nairobi. Githiora (2002) cited in Momanyi (2009) observes that most urban families are bilingual where Kiswahili is one of the languages spoken. 'Sheng' has moved far beyond the urban centres and is spoken by youths in the rural areas of Kenya. In Nairobi alone, increasing number of city residents are speaking 'sheng' and this includes some parents in the home environment, even politicians addressing people in public gatherings.

2.3 The Use of Registers in the English Language Classrooms

 Momanyi (2009) observes that local TV and Radio stations have also given space to 'Sheng' where specific programmes use this code (Vioja Mahakamani, Vitimbi etc). These broadcasts have a

lasting linguistic effect on school children and the youth since some of them tend to identify with certain characters in these programmes through the use of this code. Similarly, Gathumbi, Bwire & Roy-Campell (2014) in their study, instructional practices and challenges in secondary English language teaching implication for development of benchmarks in Kenya reported that the introduction of vernacular radio stations in various local languages have reduced, learners' exposure to English. They reported that learners seemed to prefer listening to such radio stations and not to those that broadcast in English. They said that when the learners were asked why they prefer these stations, they said they understood better and enjoyed listening to the local programmes than when they listen to broadcast in English. They said that the learners could also associate with what they discussed. This culture has found its way into schools in Kenya thus affecting English language as Barasa (2005) points out:

> What vernacular does to English in the rural schools, sheng does to urban schools. It is significant because it reflects changing values in society. Furthermore, it does not just seem to affect English alone; it has affected Kiswahili too. Whereas in the past school effectively denoted disassociation from street culture, sheng has brought the culture right into the classroom. The fact that teachers too are affected by it shows the level of acceptance it has gained in urban areas. It has subsequently affected the learning environment. This language has to be resisted through an approach that will insist that within school sheng just like vernacular should not be used, (pp. 57-58).

In the English language classrooms both the teachers and learners are involved in the construction of knowledge. In doing this, they both use formal and informal registers in classroom discourse. According to Ouma (2014) learners in primary school code- mixed English and mother tongue words. She observed that the learners did this because of various reasons that include the need to fill a lexical gap; she found out that whenever the learners were involved in an informal engagement whereby the teachers were not with them to instill the use of the target language (TL) almost every learner inserted a Dholuo word whenever they missed an English equivalent. This she reports was seen as a way of keeping expression flowing and making communication easy to avoid breakdown due to lack of a word that they are not able to comprehend quickly.

Second, excluding or including a participant from a conversation; learners were found to code mix in order to exclude their teachers from a conversation. However, the pupils inserted mother tongue especially when they wanted the whole group to understand the message hence including all participants in the conversation. Third, to break monotony of using one language in speech, she reported that pupils alleged that speaking in one language for a while day and especially a language they are not familiar with is impossible and also boring. They also reported that it is not easy to joke, say proverbs and riddles in English as it is boring to the learners. Fourth, code –mixing occurs when pupils are quoting fellow pupils, teachers and previous speakers. She also reported that unavoided code-mixing was experienced among pupils when dealing with reported speech. Fifth, code- mixing was motivated by the need to capture attention of listeners. This is done when a speaker realizes that the listeners are not following what he/she is saying they could code mix to capture their attention.

3. 0 Methodology

This study adopted mixed methods approach, thus utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods in the collection of data. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) point out that mixed research approach can help clarify and explain relationships found to exist between variables. It also allows researchers to explore relationships between variables in depth and help to cross validate relationships discovered between variables. According to Creswell and Clark (2011, 2018) mixed methods research approach provides trends that offset the weakness of both qualitative and quantitative research. They also point out that mixed methods research gives more evidence for studying a research

problem than either qualitative or quantitative research alone and finally, it helps to answer questions that cannot be answered by quantitative and qualitative approaches alone. The study adopted descriptive research design. Bhattarjee (2012) defines survey research as a method involving the use of standardized questionnaires or interviews to collect data about people and their preferences, thoughts and behaviours in systematic manner. The study was carried out in secondary schools in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya.

Stratified sampling was employed to stratify the schools into national, county, extra-county and sub county schools. While a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select a total of 13 out of 112 schools that engaged in the study. Fifteen form three students from each of the selected classes were randomly selected to fill in the students' questionnaire giving a total of 195 students. The form three students were chosen on the premise that their language ability is sufficiently developed and they can interact well using English language in class. The teacher of English from the selected class in each school automatically participated in the study in total 13 teachers of English participated in the study

3.1 Research Instruments

In the study a combination of a combination of three instruments was adopted to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. These are interview guide for teachers of English, classroom observation schedule and student questionnaire. The main purpose for using the three instruments was to triangulate the findings of the study.

3.2 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative data drawn from closed ended items in the student questionnaire was analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Creswell and Clark (2018) observe that quantitative data analysis proceeds from descriptive analysis to inferential analysis and multiple steps in the inferential analysis build a greater refined analysis. The data was compiled in frequencies and then converted into percentages. For easy interpretation, the information was tabulated. Information from open ended items was analyzed qualitatively into themes guided by the study objectives.

Qualitative data obtained from open ended items in the student questionnaire, teacher interview guide, classroom observation schedule were coded and analyzed descriptively in identified themes based on study objectives as (Kumar 2011; Creswell and Clark 2018) point out qualitative data analysis involves coding the data, dividing the text into small units that is phrases, sentences or paragraphs, assigning a label to each unit and then grouping the codes into themes and finally a discussion of evidence for the themes or categories; or diagrams presenting frameworks, models or theories.

4.0 Findings of the Study

The objective of the study was to investigate the language registers and their influence in the instruction of English language in   secondary school in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. Qualitative data obtained from the student questionnaire open ended items, teacher interview guide and classroom observation schedule were presented thematically in narration form while quantitative data obtained from student questionnaire closed ended items were analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented using percentages and frequencies which were summarized in form of brief descriptions and frequency tables.

4.1 Language Registers used by teachers in the English Language Classes

In the study all the teachers interviewed agreed that they sometimes use non-official forms of English language during classroom instruction. The teachers reported that they use these non-

official forms of English when they find out their students have not understood what they are teaching them in class, when explaining concepts in which the learners are not familiar with especially when teaching poetry and drama, other reasons cited by the teachers are: in order to break monotony in class, to draw the learners attention; this is because if you deviate from official English the learners will pay much attention because they are attracted by the speaker's way of communication.

Other teachers said they use non-official English to crack jokes in class with their learners hence making their lessons lively and enjoyable to the learners, others said they do this in order to bring themselves to the level of learners and this situation motivates the learners. Other teachers also reported that they use non-official forms of English because some of the literary texts they teach in class use some of these forms of English; this they need to explain to the learners as style that writers adopt in their work; examples of such texts include Betrayal in the City by Imbuga (2013) and The River and the Source by Ogola (2002). One teacher quoted an instance where the writer uses non official form of English in The River and the Source:

> ''*Sometimes she remembered how it had been and this was painful for now she, a migogo, was reduced to living with her brother''* (p.94).
>
> Another teacher also quoted *"father, even if I go away, you can trust me to come back. I would like to see the jorochene, the white people and their magic." (p. 51).*

Similarly, during the classroom observation it was observed that the language registers used by both the teachers and learners were varied. It ranged from the use of informal English, the use of formal English, use of basic (simple) English, the use of other languages and finally code-switching and code mixing. Most of the teachers were observed to use formal English most of the time followed by the use of basic English. The teachers were seen to use formal English as the language policy demands; however, they simplified the language in order to facilitate learning among the learners. Apart from the teachers using formal English they sometimes use informal English when explaining difficult concepts or when making references.

4.2 The Language Registers used by Learners during English Language Classes

On the item 'do your students sometimes use non-official forms of English language?' In the study all the teachers interviewed reported that their learners sometimes use non-official forms of English language during English lessons. When the teachers were asked why they thought their learners use these non-official forms of English language in class, the answers they gave were varied, however most mentioned that their students use these non-official forms of English in order to facilitate or ease communication in class; this is because most of the time some of the learners cannot express themselves well in official English as such they prefer 'Sheng'.

 Others teachers reported that their learners use these forms of English because these forms of language are widely used in the environment, others said the learners do this in order to create humor in class, others said the learners pick these forms of English from the literary books they use in class where writers use non-official forms of English to pass across their themes, others reported that their learners do this because they carry out direct translation from Swahili to English for example in an expression like '*me I want to tell you …*' this occurs because of direct translation from Swahili to English.

In addition, other teachers reported that their learners do this because it helps them to understand/ appreciate the culture of the people used in texts for example in oral literature that is oral narratives, riddles, proverbs, tongue twisters and many others. They say this places what the learners are learning in historical and linguistic contexts and hence helps the students understand the texts better. Some of the teachers reported that some of the learners find the official English a bit difficult to speak; this is because of the fact that the learners lack exposure English language because is not

spoken outside class and also due to poor reading culture among the students. Other teachers cited the school language policy which states the use official English in school has not been fully entrenched as a tradition in most schools. Other teachers reported that their learners use non official English because they want to be understood by their peers, others derive pleasure by using such forms of English as they see it as fashionable.

Finally, a few of the teachers reported that their learners are influenced by social media for example Facebook, WhatsApp, short text messages as well as the main stream media for example television and radio whereby most of the plays, talk shows and comedies are performed using non official English; these they say definitely has some influence on the type of English spoken by students in secondary schools.

During the classroom observation the learners were observed to use formal English when communicating with the teachers; that is when responding to oral questions asked by the teachers and also when they are asking questions in class. They use informal English during group discussions, during dramatization and during literature lessons especially during the study of those texts where the writers have used informal English as a style. This was seen during the discussion of themes in texts such as the river and the source and betrayal in the city where the writers have infused informal English in their works. The learners were also observed to code switch and code mix English and Kiswahili words during their oral interaction.

 In the student questionnaire when the learners were asked 'in your English language classes do you sometimes use informal language?' more than half of the learners 117 (60.0%) answered to the affirmative that in their English language classes they sometimes use informal, while 78 (40.0%) were of the contrary opinion. It can therefore be observed that most of the learners in secondary school sometimes use informal language in their English language classes. Table 4.1 illustrates this.

Table 4.1: Students Use of Informal Language during English Language Classes

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	117	60.0
No	78	40.0
Total	**195**	**100**

Those learners who said that they sometimes use informal language during classroom interaction reported that they use these forms of language during debates when they cannot retrieve the correct forms of formal English words to use as such they resort to colloquial language that is 'Sheng'. Others reported that when they do not get or understand a point a colleague is making they ask in colloquial language for example *'and kama what?'* They also reported that they use informal language when they are discussing among themselves. Other situations that they use informal language are when they are told to give a narrative they sometimes infuse informal language in their narrations when explaining so that other students can pay attention and comprehend. Finally they reported that they use these informal languages to arouse the attention of their colleagues.

When the learners were asked why they use language in such a manner? They gave varied reasons: some said that they use language in such a manner because some words are hard to translate from mother tongue to English as such they prefer using slang. Others said that their use of informal English fosters understanding among them as that is the kind of English they often use in and outside class when they are communicating among themselves. Others reported that using language in such a manner makes learning fun and interesting. Others reported that some words in English are hard to pronounce and hence they resort to the use of slang instead of using words that are rather difficult and awkward to pronounce in formal English. Similarly, others said that they use English

in this manner because in order to emphasize certain points; others said they do this in order to avoid the use of complicated English words. Others said that they use English in this manner because of their limited vocabulary of the target language English because they do not read widely in order to increase their repertoire of the English vocabulary; others also reported that they do this because of direct translation of words from their first language to English. This situation gives rise to the use of informal languages in English language classes.

On the item 'what are some of the classroom activities that learners use the various forms of the English language during classroom interaction?' The teachers interviewed reported that the learners use formal English when they are constructing oral sentences instructed by the teacher, when asking and answering oral questions in class. On the other hand most of the teachers reported that the learners use non-official forms of English during class discussion, debates, class presentations, during dramatization. Other teachers reported that their learners reported that their learners use non-official English when responding to specific literary texts; this happens especially in situations where the writer of a certain text has used non-official English in this case the learners tend to emulate these forms of languages as they give them the license to use the non-official forms of English during classroom interaction.

4.3 The use of other languages in English language classes
When the learners were asked 'do you sometimes use other languages during English lessons?' from the study it was established that majority of the learners 135 (69.2%) reported that they sometimes use other languages during English lessons, while 60 (30.8%) said that they do not use other languages during English lessons. This is summarized in Table 4.2. It can thus be concluded that in secondary school learners use other languages during English lessons.

Table 4.2: *Students' Use of Other Languages during English Lessons*

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	135	69.2
No	60	30.8
Total	**195**	**100**

On the other languages that the learners use in English language classes the learners reported that they use Kiswahili and Sheng mostly and in some rare occasions they use mother tongue. The learners reported that they use these other languages during debates class/group discussions, during oral literature lessons, during class presentations, asking and answering questions, dramatization and when and finally when explaining difficult concepts to their colleagues in class.

When the learners were asked 'what makes you use these languages in class?' The learners gave varied reasons as to why they use these other languages in class. Most of them reported that they use these other languages in order to make their colleagues understand what they are explaining or discussing with much ease, others reported that it is fun to use these languages, others reported that they use these languages for emphasize and to make clarification of certain points in class. Similarly other learners reported that they use these languages to make learning lively, others said they use these languages when they encounter difficulties while speaking English; thus they use other languages in order to continue communicating what they are saying, others also said that they use these languages to facilitate understanding among all the learners in class.

4.4 The Teachers' use of Vocabulary in English Language Classes that is beyond the Learners' Linguistic Level

On the item, 'during classroom instruction do you sometimes find yourself using vocabulary which your students do not understand?' All the teachers interviewed agreed that during classroom instructions they sometimes find themselves using vocabulary which their students do not understand. They reported that this form of vocabulary may be the kind of vocabulary that is used in the learners' text books; the teachers use these forms of vocabulary on the assumption that the learners understand them. Other teachers reported that they use specific vocabulary that is tested during national examinations; others reported that their students find out that the language they use as teachers may be difficult for the learners to understand because the linguistic proficiency of some of the learners may be low.

In those situations where the students may not understand the vocabulary used by their teachers, most of the students try to seek for clarification from their teachers. For example, one teacher reported that a leaner might ask a question like *'What is the meaning of the term you have just mentioned?'* Other teachers reported that some of their students might just murmur among themselves in order to express their discontent or lack of understanding of the meanings of certain words, statements or concepts that they teach. Other teachers reported that other learners may just stare at them blankly and they therefore need to deduce that something is not well.

On the item 'during classroom instruction do some of your students use vocabulary that other students do not understand?' Most of the students agreed that during classroom instruction some of their student use vocabulary which most of the other students do not understand while a few said that their student do not use vocabulary which most of the other student do not understand. Those teachers who reported that some of their student use vocabulary which most of the other student do not understand said that such students might have researched or widely read hence their level of language is higher than that of their peers, other reported students might copy the kind of vocabulary used by their teachers, other may be because of their background; some students come from homes or regions where English is the language of daily communication and as such their linguistic competence is very high and finally a few of them may use vocabulary that others may not understand just to show off that they have mastered a lot of vocabulary than their peers.

4.5 Teachers' Opinions on the Use of the Various Language Registers in English Language Classes

On the item, 'in order to make the teaching of English meaningful and rewarding to the learners, how should the teachers of English language use the various registers of the English language?' Most of the teachers interviewed reported that teachers of English should use the various registers of the English language in class. This they said when the various varieties of English are used it will make learners understanding of concepts easy, other teachers reported   that teachers should use both official and non-official forms of English, one teacher reported:

> *We as teachers we should use both the official and non-official forms; however we should inform the students that the non-official English is not acceptable especially when writing. Non-official forms of English should only be used during oral interaction; teachers should only use these forms of English only during explanation.*

Those teachers who reported that teachers should stick to formal English during classroom interaction said teachers should do so because learners tend to copy a lot from their teachers, that is, if informal language is used by the teachers the learners will take it as a norm which in turn will compromise language learning and hence communicative competence among the learners. For example, one teacher said:

> *We should use the non-official English in context; we should use the Standard English most of the time; if we use the non-official English it will confuse the learners in terms of structure and as such we might not achieve much in our teaching of English language.*

Other teachers echoing the same said that teachers should use formal English as prescribed by the KIE (2006) English language syllabus, however, if we use non-official English we should explain to the students whenever we use these forms of English language.

On the item, 'do you think the use of non-official language in English language classes aid the learners in learning English?' most of the teacher interviewed reported that the use of non-official forms of English classes aid the learners in learning English while very few of the teachers disagreed. Those teachers who agreed said that when teachers use non-official English teachers will be at the same level with the learners and this will facilitate language learning as one teacher reported.

> *When you use non-official English you bring yourself to the level of the learners, hence you can easily interact with them and they can open up and state their learning difficulties.*

Other teachers reported that the use of non-official languages in English language classes aid the learners in learning English as it facilitate understanding, it also make learning fun for the learners and it also arouses the learners curiosity during learning. Other teachers interviewed said the use of these forms of English breaks classroom monotony, other said it makes the English language familiar, others said it encourage the learners to participate in the lesson, it also makes complex concepts simple to learn.

Those teachers who disagreed said that the use of non-official forms of English will encourage the use of non-official forms of English among the learners. This may thus be transferred to written English leading to mistakes and incorrect usage of the English language and hence this will affect learners' communicative competence and performance in English language during examinations. In addition, these forms of English may also be used by the learners during examinations hence the need to discourage their use in English language classes.

4. 6 Discussion of the Findings

In the study the students' questionnaire established that more than half of the learners 117 (60.0%) reported that in their English language classes they sometimes use informal language. Similarly during the teachers' interview the teachers reported that their learners sometimes use non- official forms of English during English language lessons. Conversely this was also noted during the classroom observation. It was observed that students used informal English during group discussion, dramatization, during literature lessons and especially during the discussion of text books where the writers have used informal English as a style. These findings add to those of Ouma (2014) who points out learners in primary school code- mixed English and mother tongue words. She observed that the learners did this because of various reasons that include the need to fill a lexical gap; she found out that whenever the learners were involved in an informal engagement whereby the teachers were not with them to instill the use of the target language (TL) almost every learner inserted a Dholuo word whenever they missed an English equivalent. This she reports was seen as a way of keeping expression flowing and making communication easy to avoid breakdown due to lack of a word that they are not able to comprehend quickly.

The students' questionnaire further revealed that students sometimes use informal English during classroom interaction during debates especially when they cannot retrieve the correct form of the formal English words they resort to ''Sheng''. Other students reported that when they do not understand a point their colleague is making they tend to ask in colloquial English. They also reported that they use informal English during class discussions, when presenting a narrative in class and finally when they want to arouse the attention of their colleagues.

In relation to the use of non-official English all the teachers' interviewed revealed that that they sometimes use non official forms of English language during classroom interaction. They explained that they use these non- official forms of English when they find out that their students have not understood what they are teaching them especially during poetry and drama lessons. Other reasons cited by the teachers as to why they use these forms of english include is to break monotony in class, to draw the learners attention; this is because if you deviate from official English the learners will pay much attention because they are attracted by the speaker's way of communication.

Other teachers reported that they uses non-official English to crack jokes with their learners hence make their lessons lively and enjoyable. Others said they do this in order to bring themselves to the level of learners and this situation motivates the learners to non-official forms of English because some of the literary texts they teach in class uses some of these forms of English; this they need to explain to the learners as style that writers adopt in their work examples of such texts include Betrayal in the City by Imbuga and The River and the Source by Ogola. One teacher quoted an instance where the writer Ogola uses non official form of English in The River and the Source; *"Sometimes she remembered how it had been and this was painful for now she, a migogo, was reduced to living with her brother* p.94."* Another teacher also quoted *"father, even if I go away, you can trust me to come back. I would like to see the jorochene, the white people and their magic."* (p. 51). These findings support those of Momanyi (2009) who observes that Kiswahili as well as English has been hit by a wave of 'Sheng' speakers who are mostly pre-adolescents and young adults. She says that the youths developed this kind of secret code which they wanted to identify themselves with and a variety of the subculture She further observes that the term ''Sheng' 'was originally coined as a result of emerging mixture of Swahili and English words but as time went by the code no longer was situated in these two languages. It is now a blend of these two languages and other ethnic Kenyan languages.

On the reasons why the learners use informal forms of English the students' questionnaire revealed that most of the learners most use language in such a manner because some words are hard to translate from mother tongue to Kiswahili as such they prefer using slang others reported that their use of informal English fosters understanding as that is the kind of English they often use in and outside class when they are communicating among themselves. These findings add to those of Barasa (2005) who observes that what vernacular does to English in rural schools, Sheng does to urban schools. He further asserts that this is significant because it reflects changing values in society. Others said that using language in such a manner makes learning fun and interesting.

Other learners reported that some words in English are cumbersome to pronounce and hence they resort to the use of slang instead of using words that are rather difficult and awkward to pronounce in formal English. Others reported that they use English in this manner because of their limited vocabulary of the target language (English). These findings mirror those of Muriungi and Kibui (2015) who studied the influence of motivation on acquisition of English language skills among day secondary school students in Kenya observes that teachers reported that majority of their students make pronunciation errors while reading aloud or when participating in class discussions. It is only a minority of the learners about (12.5 %) who do not often make these errors. They also established that while the teachers endeavored to correct the mistakes instantly and use them as an opportunity to teach oral skills most of the students (75%) treat it as indifference as well as making fun of it. This can result in serious setbacks like anxiety to the affected learner.

The above results is also reflected by the findings from the teachers' interview which revealed that most of the teachers reported that their students use non-official forms of English in order to facilitate or ease communication in class, this they reported is because most of the time some of the learners cannot express themselves well in official English as such they prefer slang (Sheng). These

findings are consistent with those of Shteini and Hamuda (2016) who found out that most students lack essential vocabulary and this situation leads to their inability to express themselves in English language. They also noted that most students cannot retrieve suitable vocabulary rapidly. When they speak they cannot use some grammatical categories such as complex sentences.

Other teachers reported that their learners use these forms of English because these forms of language are widely used in their environment, other teachers reported that learners use these forms of English in order to create humour in class, others said that some students pick these forms of English from literary books they read in class where writers have used non-official forms of English to pass across their themes. Other teachers reported that their learners do this because they carry out direct translation from Swahili to English for example, expressions like *'me I want to tell you...'* this occurs because of direct translation from English to Kiswahili.

Finally some of the teachers reported that their learners are influenced by social media for example Facebook, WhatsApp, short text messaging as well as the main stream media for example television and radio whereby most of the plays, talk shows and comedies are performed using non- official English, these they say definitely has some influence on the type of spoken by students in secondary schools in Kenya. This study therefore adds to the findings of Momanyi (2009) who established that local TV and radio stations have also given space to 'Sheng' where specific programmes use this code (Vioja Mahakamani, Vitimbi etc). These broadcasts have a lasting linguistic effect on school children and the youth since some of them tend to identify with certain characters through the use of this code.

In the study the students' questionnaire revealed that majority of the learners 135 (69.2%) reported that they sometimes use other languages during English language lessons. They reported that they use mostly Kiswahili and 'Sheng' and in rare occasions they use mother tongue. The learners reported that they use these other languages during debates, class and group discussions, oral literature lessons, class presentations, asking and answering questions, dramatization and when explaining difficult concepts to their colleagues in class. These findings are in line with those of Cervantes and Rodrigues (2012) who established that in Mexico learners in the English language classes mostly employed language switch from English to Spanish, followed by confirmation request, comprehension check, asking for confirmation, translation, repetition, paraphrase at, code-based confirmation check, other reformation, meaning replacement, and finally mime.

In the study most of the learners reported that they use these other languages in order to make their colleagues understand what they are explaining or discussing with much ease, others reported that it is fun to use those languages. Others reported that they use these languages for emphasize and clarification of certain points in class. Similarly, others reported that that they use these languages to make learning lively. Others said that they use these languages when they encounter difficulties while speaking English; thus they use other languages in order to continue communicating in class.

During the classroom observation it was also noted that most learners code switched and code mixed English and Kiswahili words during their oral interaction. These findings support those of Onchera (2013) who observed that mother tongue interference was a crucial factor hindering the teaching of oral skills alongside learner's shyness. Most of the learners in secondary school in Kenya spoke mother tongue and this highly impacted on their performance in spoken English. Similarly, these findings support those of Gathumbi et al., (2014) who reported that among the reasons for the learner's inability to learn English is the introduction of vernacular radio stations in various local languages reduced the learners' exposure to English language. They reported that learners preferred listening to such radio stations and not those which broadcast in English as they understand and enjoy listening to local programmes than when they listen to broadcasts in English language.

5. Conclusion

From the study, it was established that the teachers as well as the learners use non official forms of English during classroom interaction. It was established that the use of these non- official forms of English in English language classes facilitates language learning and acquisition among the learners. It also minimizes communication breakdowns among the learners and between the learners and the teachers during oral communication. It was also established that the learners in English language classes sometimes use other languages during English language classes. They were found to use mostly Kiswahili, 'Sheng' and in some occasions mother tongue.

5.1 Recommendations

From the study the following recommendations have been made: Teachers should expose learners to a lot of authentic reading materials. This will expose them to the use of the English language in different contexts and also aid in increasing their repertoire of English vocabulary and sentence structures. Finally Teachers should use varied authentic communicative contexts during classroom instruction to provide near native speaker competence.

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