THE USE OF GROUP WORK IN TEACHING LEARNERS WRITING SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KEIYO NORTH SUB COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

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ABSTRACT

Writing plays a significant role in the school curriculum. However, studies have pointed out that secondary school have not appreciated the use of group work in teaching learners writing skills thus the students lack of basic skills of writing. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to assess the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills among learners in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub county, Kenya. The objectives were to: examine how teachers plan group work in teaching writing skills; determine the learning activities teachers in Keiyo North use when using group work to teach writing skills; observe teachers' use of group work as a teaching strategy; establish the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills. The study was guided by the constructivist theory by Jerome Bruner which posits mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by learners. The study utilized descriptive survey research design and it targeted 43 teachers of English and 3,574 Form 4 students drawn from 19 secondary schools in Keiyo north Sub County. Purposive sampling was used to select 13 teachers of English while stratified, proportionate and simple random sampling procedures using the lottery technique were used to select a sample size of 364 Form 4 students. This study used the questionnaire, interview and observation schedules to collect data. Quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics including: frequencies and percentage and was presented in tables, figures and descriptions. Qualitative data were categorized and analyzed using content analysis procedures and reported in emergent themes based on study objectives and variables. The study found out that 46.2% utilized group work in teaching of writing skills. The majority of the learners were encouraged to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means in sentences. Teachers involved punctuation marks, handwriting, spelling, paragraphing and adherence to coherency. The study cited challenges such as inadequate time, inability of students to complete their assignments on time and there was conflict between team members during discussion groups. The study concluded that teachers have knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy though they have not fully utilized group work in teaching writing skills. Group work enhanced students' writing skills. Finally, the study concluded that teachers were faced with a number of challenges in the use of group work for teaching writing skills. The study recommends that teachers need to group students in smaller groups in order to cater for the needs of each and every member of the group. Teachers of English need to ensure that, there is compatibility among the group members in order to avoid misunderstanding. The findings from this study will be useful to teachers of English in secondary schools and their efforts towards improving writing skills so as to meet the needs and expectations of the learners. The findings may be useful to the Ministry of education through KICD in its efforts towards retooling and repositioning its efforts in boosting the development of writing. The successful implementation, completion and approval of this study will help students develop positive attitude towards use of group work in writing skills thereby leading to improved performance.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband Keittany and children Caro, Ron, Emma, Abelo and Boby for their patience during my studies.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ii

ABSTRACT iii

DEDICATION iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT v

TABLE OF CONTENTS vi

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF FIGURES xii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xiii

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Background to the Study 1

1.3 Statement of the Problem 3

1.4 Purpose of the Study 4

1.5 Objectives of the Study 5

1.6 Research Questions 5

1.7 Scope of the Study 5

1.8 Limitations of the Study 6

1.9 Justification of the Study 6

1.10 Significance of the Study 8

1.11 Assumptions of the Study 8

1.12 Theoretical Framework 9

1.13 Conceptual Framework 10

CHAPTER TWO 13

LITERATURE REVIEW 13

2.1 Introduction 13

2.2. Concept of Teaching Students in a Group 13

2.2.1 Types of Group Work 17

2.2.2 The Purpose of Using Group Work in the Classroom 18

2.2.3 Advantages of Group Work 19

2.2.4 Disadvantages of Group Work 20

2.3 The Role of the Teacher and Students in Group Work 22

2.4 The Process of Forming Groups 24

2.4.1 Group Size 24

2.4.2 Selection of Group Members 26

2.5 Concept of Writing Skills 27

2.6 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy 29

2.7 The Nature of Learning Activities that Teachers Engage Learners in when using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills 31

2.8 Influence of Group Arrangement on Writing Skills 32

2.9 Influences of Use of Group Work on Students Writing Skills 32

2.10 Challenges Teachers of English face in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills 33

2.11 Related Studies 35

2.12 Chapter Summary 37

CHAPTER THREE 38

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY 38

3.1 Introduction 38

3.2 Research Design 38

3.3 Research Methodology 39

3.4 Study Area 40

3.5 Target Population 40

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures 41

3.6.1 Sample Size 41

3.6.2 Sampling Techniques 42

3.7 Data Collection Instruments 43

3.7.1 Questionnaire for Students 44

3.7.2 Interview Schedule for Teachers 45

3.7.3 Observation Schedule 46

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments 47

3.8.1 Validity of the Research Instrument 47

3.8.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments 48

3.8.3 Piloting of Research Instrument 49

3.9 Data Collection Procedures 50

3.10 Data Analysis Procedure 51

3.11 Ethical Considerations 51

3.12 Chapter Summary 52

CHAPTER FOUR 53

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION 53

4.1 Introduction 53

4.2 Response Rate 53

4.3 Background Information 53

4.4 How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills 54

4.5 Learning Activities Teachers in Keiyo North Use when Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills 61

4.6 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy 66

4.7 Challenges Faced by Teachers of English in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills 70

4.8 Students Performance in Writing 72

4.9 Discussion of Findings 72

4.10 Chapter Summary 77

CHAPTER FIVE 78

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ... 78

5.1 Introduction 78

5.2 Summary of the Findings 78

5.2.1 How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills 78

5.2.2 Learning Activities Teachers in Keiyo North Use When Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills 79

5.2.3 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy 81

5.2.4 Challenges Faced by Teachers of English in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills 82

5.3 Conclusion of the study..... 83

5.4 Recommendations of the Study..... 84

5.5 Areas for Further Research 86

REFERENCES 87

APPENDICES 94

APPENDIX I: Questionnaire for Students 94

APPENDIX II: Interview Schedule for Teachers' of English..... 98

APPENDIX III: Observation Schedule.....100

APPENDIX IV: Research Permit 102

APPENDIX V: Research Authorization (NACOSTI) 103

APPENDIX VI: Research Authorization (County Commission).....104

APPENDIX VII: Formal Research Authorization.....105

APPENDIX VIII: Map of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Keiyo North 106

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sample Size of the Study 42

Table 4.1: Students' Responses on Various Ways and Activities Teachers involve them when engaged in Group Work..... 54

Table 4.2: Student Responses on activities used by Teachers of English During Group work 56

Table 4.3: Student Responses on Activities undertaken During Group Work 57

Table 4.4: Students' Responses on Learning Activities Involved When Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills 62

Table 4.5 presents the findings on how the individual schools scored in terms of writing. 72

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework 10

Figure 4.1: Teachers' Responses on Use of Group work……...66

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSHE	Centre for the Study for Higher Education
DEO	DEO
DfES	DfES
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
ESC	English Speaking Country
ESL	English as a Second Language
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
L1	Speaker of first language
L2	Speaker of Second language
NCST	National Council for Science and Technology
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UK	United Kingdom

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation of the introduction to the study background and it covers the statement of the problem, research questions of the study, an overview of scope, limitation, justification, significance, assumption, theoretical framework, operational definition of terms and chapter summary.

1.2 Background to the Study

Group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. But without careful planning and facilitation, group work can frustrate students and instructors and feel like a waste of time (Race, 2000). Group work is one of the teaching strategies available to teachers attempting to make their teaching more effective **(**Geliş, 2003). Group work is also essential for learning since it helps the students involved to effectively learn from each other (McGourty & DeMeuse, 2001).

In all British classrooms, students are grouped in some form. The benefits or disadvantages of these various grouping practices have aroused much comment by the UK government (DfES, 2004) and among researchers (Blatchford et al., 2003). These groups help students to interact with each other as they build on their understanding, learn new ideas and concepts, and develop their cognitive skills (Vygotsky, cited in Arends, 2000). Thus, pair and group activities are essential in the classroom as they provide students with an opportunity to work collaboratively and when working on pair and group activities, more capable students can work with those who find it difficult to complete the tasks on their own.

Group learning has become a common practice in schools and tertiary institutions in New Zealand (Ward & Masgoret, 2004). Students are divided into small groups to learn content knowledge, to explore or discuss an assigned topic, or to complete cases, projects and group assignments, to answer a few challenging questions, or to engage in an exchange of ideas, and share some insights with group members. The frequently used techniques include Socratic questioning, problem-based learning, case studies, role playing, critical thinking, and behavioral analysis (Porter, 2006).

In Asian countries, group learning is believed to provide a more comfortable and supportive learning environment than solitary work and helps to develop individual writing skills (CSHE, 2002; Gupta, 2004; Schofield, 2006). Research on students' participation in cooperative learning concepts in the form of group work and group assignments, indicates that, regardless of subjects, students who work in groups achieve better results and are more satisfied with their learning experiences than those who do not work in collaborative groups (Gross, 1993; Springer, Stanne & Donovan, 1999).

Other benefits of this group learning include promoting retention rates, transferring knowledge, providing counseling to students with cognitive, physical, social, and emotional problems, and enhancing their intercommunication skills (Porter, 2006). Therefore, the group learning approach prepares students in problem-solving in a collaborative way and provides them with experiences which could be utilized in their future careers (Gupta, 2004).

In Kenya, Magut (2000) investigated the use of process approach in teaching writing skills and observed that most teachers find it difficult to teach writing. They used poor approaches and majority lectured students on how to write. Andiema and M'mbone

(2014) study on Challenges in teaching composition writing in secondary schools in Pokot County indicated that there was lack of proficiency in English both written and spoken include. This is evidenced in Keiyo North performances in English as shown in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Keiyo North KCSE Performance

	2010	**2011**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**	**2017**
	No of students						
A	26	3	1	2	0	4	2
A-	62	39	12	28	10	43	25
B+	103	134	66	123	105	196	135
B	131	213	130	212	124	259	154
B-	160	227	166	258	363	305	324
C+	160	153	145	259	134	195	425
C	105	98	115	174	198	153	225
C-	132	137	191	181	308	295	266
D+	96	82	134	136	235	367	381
D	176	152	408	210	261	357	389
D-	36	39	50	38	164	68	82
E	2	3	0	1	3	0	3
Total	1189	1280	1418	1622	1905	2242	2411

Source: Ministry of Education

It is against this backdrop that the current study set out to determine influence of group work on writing skills in secondary schools in order to provide way forward in improving learning of writing skills among learners.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Despite the significant role played by writing in the school curriculum, studies point out that secondary school students lack basic skills of writing. Their performance in writing continues to be unsatisfactory as evidenced by school leavers' lack of communicative competence. KNEC Report (2019) shows that students are weak in both mechanical and stylistic skills of writing that entails punctuation and word choice. Use of group work has been accredited to help students communicate clearly in writing on the intellectual, self-reflection and emotional levels (Levin & Kent,

2001). Through group work students will initiate conversations that will end up in aiding them to develop their writing competency.

The performance of English language in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) over the years has not been good enough with 2016 recording one of the lowest performances in which no A grade was recorded (KNEC, 2016). The annual Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) reports observation of English paper one, two and three thus: "performances over the years have been low. A glance at the means (2011 – 36.42%, 2012 – 37.88%, 2013 – 27.42 %, 2014 - 38.84%, 2015 – 40.29. 2016 – 40.11, 2017 – 39.99%) indicates that performance fell short of the ideal mean of 50% (KNEC, 2012, KNEC, 2013, KNEC, 2014, 2015, KNEC, 2016 & KNEC, 2017). Given that writing is key in the performance of these papers it becomes imperative for more research on how best to improve writing.

Though research has been conducted on group work and its impact on performance (Chebii, 2014; Kotut, 2016) poor performance in KCSE is still evident with most schools scoring a mean of C- in the past examinations (Keiyo North Sub County Office, 2016: 2019). This therefore made necessary to probe the use of group work on writing skills in secondary schools in Elgeyo Marakwet County, in which the performance of English language in most of the schools was a mean of C- and below this was related to poor writing skills (Keiyo North Sub County Office, 2016). Therefore this study sought to determine the use of group work in teaching learners writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub County, Kena.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the use of group work in teaching learners writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub county, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following were the specific objectives of this study:

i. To examine how teachers plan group work in teaching writing skills.
ii. To determine the learning activities teachers in Keiyo North use when using group work to teach writing skills.
iii. To observe teachers' use of group work as a teaching strategy.
iv. To establish the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

i. How do teachers plan group work in teaching writing skills?
ii. What is the nature of learning activities teachers in Keiyo North use when using group work to teach writing skills?
iii. How do teachers' uses of group work as a teaching strategy?
iv. What are the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills?

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study was interested in finding out the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub County. The study was limited to teacher's knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy, learning activities involved when using group work to teach writing skills, how teachers utilize group work in teaching writing skills and establishing the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills.

The study targeted 43 teachers of English and 3574 students drawn from 19 public secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub County, Elgeyo Marakwet County. Stratified, purposive and random sampling technique was applied in order to select the respondents. The study was limited to the teaching staff since they are more conversant with the use of group work in teaching writing skills. Data was collected from teachers of English and students, coded, analysed and recorded. The study was conducted between December 2014 and February, 2015.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The reliability of the information obtained largely depended on the attitudes of the respondents. Some may have given wrong information which could have limited the accuracy of the findings. Triangulation of the research instruments helped in overcoming this limitation. Owing to the same constraint, the study used the questionnaire, interview schedule and observation schedule to collect data. The researcher sought permission to conduct the study from relevant authorities' before meeting the teachers and students of the selected schools.

In some schools the teachers were not open enough to respond to the interview. The researcher took time to persuade them and clarified that the exercise was mainly for academic purposes. During the interview, some of the teachers were not at ease while giving out the information about their respective schools, until they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The researcher used triangulation of instruments so as to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

1.9 Justification of the Study

Effective writing is a vital life -skill that is important in almost every subject in school as well as in the work world (Koross, Indoshi & Okwach, 2015). While grammar is an

important part of writing, effecting writing requires much more. Mureithi (2015) argues that when a writing process is used to teach writing, students begin to understand writing as a form of communication. Furthermore, writing helps students recognize that they have opinions, ideas, and thoughts that are worth sharing with the world, and writing is an effective way of getting them out there. Young students sometimes find it difficult to make the transition from speaking to writing. Speaking is so immediate and so detailed. Graham and MacArthur (2013) observe that when writing becomes a part of a learner's world, there are conventions that suddenly come into play; proper way of holding a pencil, punctuation, spelling and grammar. The easiest part of teaching writing to learners is by continually having discussions about what you are reading together in groups (Cannella-Malone et al., 2015).

The annual Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) reports observe about English paper one, two and three thus: “performances over the years have been on low. A glance at the means (2011 – 36.42%, 2012 – 37.88%, 2013 – 27.42 % and 2014 - 38.84%) indicates that performance fell short of the ideal mean of 50% (KNEC, 2012, KNEC, 2013, KNEC, 2014, 2015 & KNEC, 2016). These papers require students to have strong mechanical and stylistic skills of writing. The reports indicate that students are weak at punctuation, word choice and make frequent construction errors. This therefore made necessary to probe the use of group work on writing skills in secondary schools in Elgeyo Marakwet County, in which the performance of English language in most of the schools was mean of C- and below this was related to poor writing skills (Keiyo North Sub County Office, 2016).

1.10 Significance of the Study

The findings from this study will be useful to teachers of English in secondary schools and their efforts towards improving writing skills so as to meet the needs and expectations of the learners. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) is the one that sets the standards required in use of various teaching and learning activities including group work in education sector through syllabus formulation and implementation. Therefore, the findings may be useful to the Ministry of education through KICD in its efforts towards retooling and repositioning its efforts in boosting the development of writing. The study also will benefit curriculum developers in identifying relevant work group to be used in teaching and learning in secondary School, for the realization of Vision 2030.

The successful implementation, completion and approval of this study will help students develop positive attitude towards use of group work in writing skills in among students in secondary school and improve their performance for future career dreams. It is expected that the study will provide an all-round development of the learner necessary to improve their writing skills. The study will provide solutions to the group work effectiveness to enhance students writing skills and encourage teachers to make use of more group work activities. The study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on use of group work and writing skills in secondary schools and can be used as a basis for subsequent researches in similar settings.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the assumptions that teachers and students from the various secondary schools would co-operate in filling questionnaires and answering oral interview questions and that teachers would provide reliable information to enhance

the study, the portion of the population in which the research was carried out was representative of the target population and the research instruments would yield reliable and valid information. The study further assumed that learners were engaged in group work during the teaching and learning process.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by constructivist theory by Bruner (1960); formalization of the theory of constructivism is generally attributed to Piaget (1900), who articulated mechanisms by which knowledge is internalized by learners. He suggested that through processes of accommodation and assimilation, individuals construct new knowledge from their experiences. Bruner's constructivist theory is a general framework for instruction based upon the study of cognition. Much of the theory is linked to child development research by (Piaget, 1900). The ideas outlined in Bruner (1960) originated from a conference focused on science and math learning. Bruner illustrated his theory in the context of mathematics and social science programs for young children. Riaza & Halimah (2011) assert constructivist theory is where each individual learner combines new information with existing knowledge and experiences. This can be applicable where students meet to share knowledge with their colleagues. Dick and Carey (2005) further elaborate that an individual has learned when they have constructed new interpretations (Dick & Carey, 2005). The students taught by the collaborative teachers to acquire knowledge will learn to work as a team they obtain knowledge as expected as Hartley and Davies (1978) expound. The constructivist view, based on the theories of Piaget, explains that learners construct their cognitive abilities through self-motivated action in the world. In this theory, the emphasis is placed on the student rather than the teacher. Teachers are seen as facilitators or coaches who assist students to construct their own

conceptualizations and solutions to problems. The developments of Vygotsky's ideas suggest that we learn from others, not necessarily because they are more competent, but because they think differently.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 presents the conceptual framework for the study

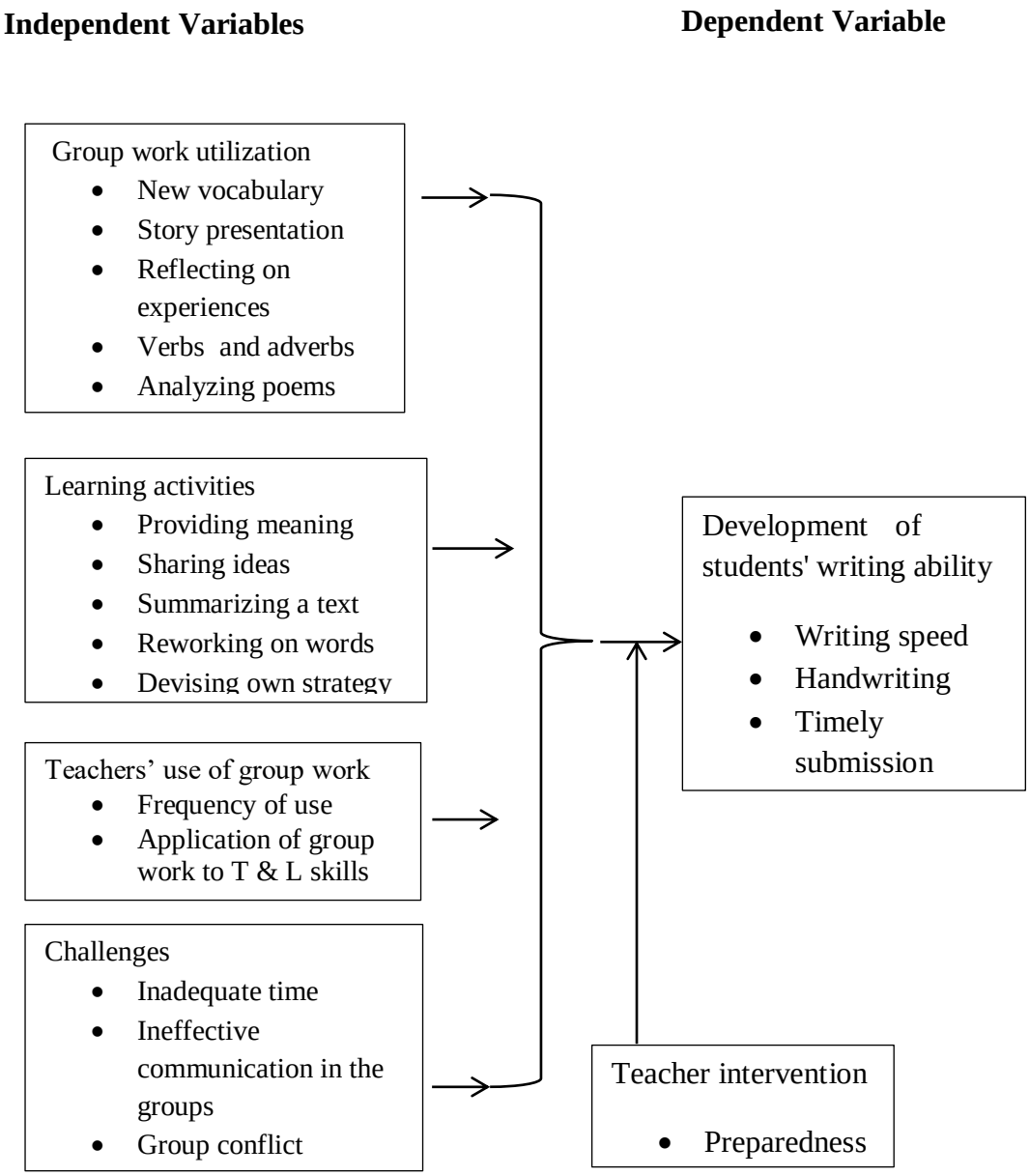

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework indicates that the independent variables which are teachers' use of group work, learning activities, group work utilization and challenges influences learners' development in writing abilities. The dimensions in the teachers' use of group work include frequency of group work usage and application of group work to the various skills of learning that includes reading, writing, listening and speaking. Learning activities dimension includes providing meaning, sharing ideas, summarizing a text, reworking on words and devising own strategy. Group utilization includes dimensions such as provision of new vocabulary, story presentation, reflecting on experiences, verbs and adverbs and analyzing poems. Lastly the dimensions in the challenges facing group work includes the rate at which students complete assignment owing to the fact that group work takes time, ineffective communication and group conflict. This relationship is likely to be affected by intervening variable which is how a teacher prepares herself. The dependent variable which was development of students' writing ability was measured using the writing speed, handwriting and timely submission of writing exercise. The development of students writing ability as illustrated was being compounded by teacher interventions such as preparedness.

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms Used in the Study

Attitude : A psychological predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavors.

Formal learning : Are established to complete a specific task such as writing a report, carrying out a project, or preparing a position paper which can be

groups		completed in a single class session, or in days and weeks.
Group	:	Is defined as two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships, and group work is a way to serving individual within and through small face to face group in order to bring about the desired change among the client participants
Informal learning groups	:	Clustering of students within a single class session which can be formed by asking students to turn back to a neighbour and spend some two or three minutes discussing on a question the teacher has raised.
Study teams	:	Are long-term groups that need a semester and more time to complete the requirements and with equitable members who have the responsibility of providing members with support, encouragement and assistance throughout the
Writing skills	:	Basic to skills such as the fundamentals of letters (what a letter is, what each letter is called, and how it sounds) is where you should begin if you want to teach literacy effectively

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section of the research thesis elaborates on what other authors have said about group work and how it influences writing skills among students. It enhances a better understanding on teaching students in a group and teaching of writing skills. The chapter present literature related to: Concept of Teaching students in a group and types of group work. The purpose of using group work in the classroom, the role of the teacher and students in group work, the process of forming groups, concept of writing skills, challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work in teaching writing skills, teachers' perception on the challenges, the nature of learning activities teachers engage learners in when using group work to teach writing skills, influence of group arrangement on writing skills, influences of frequency use of group work on students writing skills and teachers' knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy. The chapter also contains related studies and chapter summary.

2.2. Concept of Teaching Students in a Group

Different authors in different disciplines and fields of study have forwarded their definitions of group as well as group work. In part differences in definition occur because writers often select those things that are of special importance in their work and then speculate these as the criteria for group existence.

Groups are a fundamental part of social life. They can be very small - just two people - or very large. They can be highly rewarding to their members and to society as a whole, but there are also significant problems and dangers with them. A group exists when two or more people define themselves as members of it and when its existence

is recognized by at least one other, and group work which is a form of cooperative learning, aims to cater for individual differences, develop students' knowledge, generic skills for example communication skills, collaborative skills, critical thinking skills and attitudes (Brown 1988).

In addition, according to Forsyth (2006), a group is defined as two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships, and group work is a way to serving individual within and through small face to face group in order to bring about the desired change among the client participants. Group work which involves students working collaboratively on set tasks, in or out of the classroom, includes any learning and teaching tasks or activities that require students to work in groups and any formal assessment tasks that require students to work in groups.

Basically, group work is based on the concept that shows the physical, mental and social developments of students through necessary and significant interaction with one another that is a person is shaped by others and is shaping others. Group work is defined as a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves a cooperative work (Brown, 1991). This author has also shown the importance of cooperation among members to deal with the given task. Simply a collection of individuals sitting together without any coordination and common objectives may not mean group work. In order to say that the collection of individuals in a group is learning, there must be a link among all group members that shows cooperation and collaboration to achieve a common goal of their learning.

In the definition of group work, Long and Porter (1985), Pica and Doughty (1985) and Foster (1998), cited in Byram (2000) highlighted the importance of making clear cut

distinctions between working in a group and working as a group. According to them, "working in a group is mainly a matter of location". In this case a certain number of students may sit together in a common area, but doing independent activities (simply a group of people without the same purpose), or they may sit together having and working on the same task but without any force for everyone to participate (a group of people having the same purpose but doing without any interaction and cooperation to achieve their common goal/s). On the other hand, "working as a group presupposes a task in common." It implies that a group of students sitting together, having the same purpose and show some sort of interaction and cooperation amongst group members to make the result of their work effective as possible. A task obliges each member to make a contribution.

Johnson and Johnson (1989) listed out the following five essential elements in order to have effective cooperative group work learning: individual accountability, positive interdependence, face-to-face interaction, group processing, and interpersonal and small group skills.

a. **Positive Interdependence:** This point of group work indicates that each group member depends on each other to accomplish a shared goal or task that is, students need each other to complete the group's task with the help of all members, and the group may not be able to reach the desired goal without the participation of all members. Therefore, in order to strengthen such kind of link among students, teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals, joint rewards, shared resources and assign roles.
b. **Face-to-face Interaction:** This has a decisive role in promoting success of group members by praising, encouraging, supporting, or assisting each other. This shows that in the context of group work, students promote each other's learning

by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn and discover new ideas and innovations within the group. Hence students explain, discuss and teach what they know to classmates with the help of their teacher. Teachers are also expected to structure the groups so that students sit together and discuss through each aspect of the task given.

c. **Individual Accountability:** Each group member is accountable and responsible for his/ her own learning. Members of a given group cannot rely on one or few students to do the total work of the task. The result of their effort should reflect a balance of contributions from all members of the group, and also each member's effort to the group could be assessed so that assessment needs to be shared to continue to support and encourage each member of the group. Therefore, this individual accountability helps to avoid members from merely relying on other group members' efforts.

d. **Social Skills:** Group work makes things smooth for students to learn and develop different interpersonal and social skills which will help them to build stronger cooperation among group members and beyond the group. These skills include leadership, decision making, trust building, communication, and conflict management skills.

e. **Group Processing:** This refers to the ongoing assessment of how groups are functioning to achieve their group goals or to complete the tasks. So groups need a specific time to discuss on how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members, to describe and decide on what behaviors are useful or not and what changes need to be made to move the group along and complete tasks.

In the system of group work learning and teaching, Brown (1991) states that students are expected to work together for the success of their goal and completion of the tasks given. And group work, which needs full cooperation and collaboration, occurs when all members of a group are aware of their responsibility and role, and when they commit themselves to accomplish the task in the best way possible.

2.2.1 Types of Group Work

Students learn best when they are actively involved in the process. Researchers report that regardless of the subject matter, students working in small groups tend to learn more of what is taught and retain it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional formats. Students who work in collaborative groups also appear more satisfied with their classes. There are three general types of group work: informal learning groups, formal learning groups, and study teams (Brumfit, 1984, and Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1991).

Informal learning groups are extemporized clustering of students within a single class session which can be formed by asking students to turn back to a neighbor and spend some two or three minutes discussing on a question the teacher has raised. The teacher can also form such kind of groups having three to five members to solve a problem or pose a question. In order to check the students' understanding of the material being learned, and to give students opportunities to apply the learned content into practice, the classroom teacher may form this kind of group at any time and without worrying much on the size of the group.

Formal learning groups are established to complete a specific task such as writing a report, carrying out a project, or preparing a position paper which can be completed in a single class session, or in days and weeks. Here students work together until the task

is finished. Groups typically meet regularly over an extended period of time. This allows for continuity of interaction among group members and creates the opportunity for social cohesion and bonding to develop among group members. Study teams are long-term groups that need a semester and more time to complete the requirements and with equitable members who have the responsibility of providing members with support, encouragement, and assistance throughout the time. These kinds of groups share some features with the formal groups.

2.2.2 The Purpose of Using Group Work in the Classroom

As can be understood from the above parts of this section, the main goal of group work can be achieved through the combined efforts, talents, ideas and knowledge of group members. Therefore, apart from the end product of students' work, the aim of engaging students in group work activities includes the following points as (Exley, & Dennick, 2004, p. 4 - 5) has listed out.

First, the development of intellectual understanding and of intellectual and professional abilities: by thinking and problem solving, that is analyzing, evaluating evidence, logical reasoning and synthesizing, by clarifying concepts and theories through discussing and accepting and seeing interrelationships and connections.

Second, the development of communication skills and of group work skills: working in a group gives an opportunity to practice a variety of group management skills and group roles including leadership, planning and organization, giving support and encouragement to others, setting tasks and monitoring progress. Through discussion practicing, giving explanations, listening, questioning, presenting and defending a position and giving constructive feed-back.

Third, personal growth and support for independence: by taking part in debate and discussion students can test their values and attitudes while developing self-esteem and confidence and by preparing for and taking part in small group teaching discussions and activities students accept their personal responsibility for the progress and direction of their own learning. Finally, by reviewing and reflecting on their actions, students can learn from their successes and failures and so develop their skills and understanding, and plan future learning.

2.2.3 Advantages of Group Work

Since the 1960's, there have been many discussions on the value of group work for language learning (Brumfit, 1984). Recent research and literature have confirmed the advantages of group work. Group work promotes a positive affective climate. According to Dunn and Dunn (1993), many exceptional students have difficulty in socializing with peers and they may feel intimidated when asked to participate in whole class activities. Structured group work techniques alleviate much of the anxiety of participation and also provide opportunities for exceptional students to practice social skills. They also said that when mutual goals are established, and ideas, material and information are shared, a collaborative partnership also develops in which students learn how to learn with one another. Students can develop social skills which were normally practiced only by the teacher such as changing topic, turn-taking, asking for clarification and so on. Given appropriate materials to work on and problems to solve, students can engage in genuine information exchange.

Group work increases language practice opportunities. Long and Porter (1985) explained that group work motivates learners and allows for a greater quantity and richer variety of language practice, and lack of clear and open opportunities to

practice the new language system may be associated with low achievement of students on the target language. Thus, in such narrow situations to practice the target language, group work is a key to engage learners in real life situations through the target language. Group work improves the quality of student talk and increases their talking time. Additionally**,** group work allows students a far greater degree of autonomy.

2.2.4 Disadvantages of Group Work

As discussed above, group work helps students to use the target language, and encourage their cooperation and joint learning. However, if it is not well managed and organized it may promote errors, noise, ill-discipline, frustration and anxiety (Atkins, Hailom & Nuru 1996). In addition, the intended objective of the lesson may not be achieved if the activity is not appropriate to the abilities and interests of the class and if it is not well managed timely. Whilst there is evidence in support of the benefits of group work for student learning there are several factors that may impinge negatively on group work.

Woodward (1995), cited in Atkins, Hailom, and Nuru (1996), stated many practical problems related to group work. He explained that students may not like to work with the partners they are assigned to work with and some groups may finish early while other groups are still working or some might not be clear with the task given; some of them may sit in the group but work as individuals. They may do the task without discussing and interacting; some groups may discuss their own things, which have nothing to do with the task; some groups may sit back and allow dominant members to do the task; group work may get over-competitive and cause arguments among

students not accustomed to cooperating, and may create undesirable noise, and leads to discipline problems.

Students may speak only in their L1. Second language use in the foreign language classroom needs to be maximized wherever possible, by encouraging its use. In classes where all learners share the same first language or national language, teachers need to use a range of options to encourage learners to use the L2 as much as possible (Afzal, 2013). There are several reasons why learners use the L1 when they should be using the L2 like low proficiency in the L2, the nature of using the L2 to do certain jobs, shyness in using the L2, or simply a lack of interest in learning the L2, or the activity may be too difficult, too easy or it may be just plain boring for the students. Therefore, this can be reduced by choosing activities that are relevant, interesting and fun for the students has a great result. Another occasion when students may use too much L1 is when they do not understand the instructions.

Students may pick up incorrect English from other students. As the teacher is not always on hand to correct errors and mistakes, students may use incorrect or pick up unusual English from other students. However, research done by Long and Porter (1985) revealed that the amount of mistakes students make does not increase in group work. The teacher may feel like they are losing control of the class. Brown (1994) reported that for students and teachers who have not had a lot of experience with group work may elicit frightening moments at first. However, by introducing group work in small doses both teachers and students will soon see the benefits of these activities. The most important aspect to remember is that, the activities must be set up carefully and the learners must have very clear instructions on how to accomplish the activity. After the activity starts, the teacher's role is to monitor the students and offer

assistance when necessary. However, it can be a bit daunting at first to try and keep an eye on several groups at once.

2.3 The Role of the Teacher and Students in Group Work

According to Atkins, Hailom and Nuru (1996) students come to the classes with their own backgrounds, personal relationships, and personality, all of which affect the way learners interact. Since individual achievement is the top priority in many educational settings, collaboration is often something that students may not be used to making the students to use more time accept collaborative tasks and learn how to perform them successfully. Since the students do most of the activities in pairs and group work systems, teachers are expected to plan and organize group work activities properly to be effective and productive.

Long and porter (1985) stated that socialization in the classroom will be increased as group work increases opportunities to practice in the target language. But this effective output of group work can be determined by the proper management and organization skill of the teacher, and the students' willingness and interest to work in groups. Therefore, teachers do play an important role in shaping these students' experiences and persuading them to see the importance of working in a group for the development of their interpersonal, academic and social skills.

According to Harmer (1991), language teachers have different roles in whole class (lockstep) and in small group teaching. Long (1987) has also listed out different points that a teacher might ask before embarking on what could otherwise be a wasteful expenditure of time and energy. He/ she has to think of the number of students that he/she wants to work in each group, the number of groups that he/she wants in each class of students, the formation and composition of groups, the

advantage of imposing a particular structure on the groups, the kind of work that the students do in groups, the relationship between the result of group work and the rest of the teaching and learning in the class, and finally the roles of the teacher and that of the students.

Mulat (2007) has also explained different roles of a class room teacher when using group work. Those roles can be recognized before the group work is put in to practice, during the group work and after the group work is finished. Before the group work is practiced, teachers have very crucial roles like deciding on the content and the task, the size of each group, the way of assigning/ grouping students, and other necessary things. While students are already doing the given activity or task, the teacher is expected to give guidance and support to groups or members of a group, to move around and appreciate each student's participation in the discussion. Finally, after groups have finished their work, the teacher may get them report what they have done, encourage them to ask questions and give comments on the work of others, and give specific and general feedbacks which are very important in the teaching learning process and the content of the lesson

On the other hand, students in a classroom and particularly in a given group may show different behavior which Charness, Kipperman, Rabow and Radcliffe (1994) classified as productive and non-productive. According to these authors, "productive behaviors" of students are important roles and skills which would be encouraged and appreciated as they are the means to maximize the learning potential of both the group and the individual. These types of behavior or roles of students required while working in groups include: initiating, giving and asking for information and for reactions, restating and giving examples, contrasting and reality testing,

clarifying, synthesizing, summarizing, gate keeping and expediting, timekeeping, evaluating and diagnosing activities within the group.

In contrast, Charness, et al. (1994) reported that “nonproductive behavior” which are also common in a given classroom can hinder the dynamics of group discussion. Such behavior include being silent which can be caused by lack of knowledge of the subject, by confusing the group process, by not understanding the discussion, by members' slowness in phrasing his or her thoughts in fast talking group, or by shyness; over participants, the repeater, the wanderer, the story teller, or other non-significant behavior of students. According to them, a good group handles the problems that arises and realizes the potential of the members in order to enhance learning. Each group involves properties and strengths of its own that encourage learning. It should also promote a warm, friendly atmosphere that encourages all members to participate.

2.4 The Process of Forming Groups

The size of each group and the selection of members for each group are some of the most important aspects that an ESL (English Speaking Language) or EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom teacher needs to consider when forming groups.

2.4.1 Group Size

Most researchers define a small group as having at least three and no more than twelve or fifteen members. A group needs to have at least three members otherwise it would simply be a dyad. With three members, coalitions can be formed and some kind of organization is present. A large group (more than twelve or fifteen members) inhibits the group members' ability to communicate with everyone else in the group. According to Welton and Mallan (1992) the purpose of the teaching and learning

process has a decisive role in determining how a group should be and for most purposes, three to eight students per group is acceptable. Parker and Jarolimek (1997), on the other hand, stated that the number of students in a certain group can influence the goal of the teaching learning process that can be accomplished. They clarify this as follows: The size of a small group affects its achievement both of academic knowledge and cooperative skills. If groups are too large, there may be duplications of responsibilities, less opportunity for individuals to carry their share of the group effort, difficulty achieving face to face interaction, and a tendency for some members to fade out of the group activity. On the other hand, if groups are too small, there may be insufficient division of labor to warrant group work and very few opportunities to cooperate. In general groups should be kept small from two to five learners, with four to five as the optimal size (Parker & Jarolimek, 1997).

According to Byrne (1987), four to eight students in each group is an acceptable size although there is no clear group size. Groups with smaller number of students are better for some activities like games, but a larger number may be also better if the teacher needs students to share ideas and experiences with their group members. He finally, says that the size of each group can be decided based on the nature of the classroom furniture. Harmer (1991) also shows “Groups of more than seven students tend to be less than totally appropriate since the amount of student participation obviously falls and the organization of the group itself may start to disintegrate”. According to this author deciding the number of students in a certain group depends on the activity being performed. With respect to group size, the larger the group, the broader the range of experiences, expertise, skills and interests to contribute to the learning activity. However, larger groups have the potential for members to be uninvolved or to dominate others.

A number of studies argue that learning through group work works best when group size is smaller where students are grouped in clusters of three to five. In a research by Gellis and Yayina (2004) on group work and collaborative work for primary school teachers in Bangladesh, he mentions that, group work is one of the teaching strategies used by teachers who attempt to make their teaching more effective. The study affirms that, there is a considerable variation in the extent and nature of such work. Therefore, it is necessary to examine group and collaborative work, to indicate their importance and the variable use of these techniques. The variation between the teachers who are using group work, collaborative work, individual or whole class work have been explored and different kinds of group work have been described.

The larger the group size the more difficult to organize tasks, to manage different skills, and reach in a consensus though good to make diversity in the group. The amount of materials, classroom furniture, and the amount of time allocated for the learning activity, the type and the size of the task may determine the size of each group. Ahmed (2016) in a study on Student Experience of Group Work and Group Assessment in Higher Education asserts that group-based or cooperative learning requires a number of logistical issues to be put in mind such as class size, task and the amount of time.

2.4.2 Selection of Group Members

According to different experts in the field of language teaching, there is no one single way of allocating students into groups since there are a number of practices that the teacher can use depending on the task set for the group, the expertise of each student in the class and the learning objectives for the subject. With regard to the learners ability of language use and achievement, age level, gender, intimacy, sitting

arrangement are some of the important points that the teacher should take in to account while forming groups (Cohen, 1972; Byrne, 1987; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, considering the aforementioned and other important variables, the teacher may select students in a certain group through random appointment, self-selection, and selective appointment.

Random appointment methods are often employed as they are relatively easy to administer with little preparation, break up friendship groups and allow people to work with people they ordinarily wouldn't and are criticized as students have the chance to be assigned to a group with unsuited members and this can directly affect their interaction in the group discussion. In this method, Gower & Walters (1983) suggest several ways of assigning learners into groups. For example, the teacher can give each student a number and then ask all the same numbers to sit together, or by dividing the class on the basis of likes and dislikes, color of clothes, hobbies, gender, or the teacher can give out to each student at random a card with a word written on it.

2.5 Concept of Writing Skills

Writing skills are increasingly important, when writing is taught in schools, writing instruction often takes a backseat to phonics, handwriting skills, and reading comprehension (James, 2010). Effective writing is a vital life-skill that is important in almost every subject in school as well in the work world. Additionally, standardized tests increasingly contain a writing component; in some cases, this includes a requirement to write an essay on a timed test.

In order to develop writing skills Judith, (2014) states that one should write to learn, to understand, to construct new knowledge, to study, to communicate to prove a point. The writer should place intense focus on expository writing, implement proven

writing activities, teachers should engage students in deep writing instruction that requires them to think analytically and bridge the application of writing to support reading, speaking, listening, and content-area learning. Improving writing skills involves strong writing where thinking precedes writing. It requires excellent grammar by learning the major and minor points of grammar. The writer also should have a consistent stylistic *approach by* choosing one style and sticking to it.

Joshua and Andrada (2014) assert that when improving your writing, one should be keen with grammar, spelling and punctuation, it is important to remember your audience. A writer ought to keep their audience in mind, so as to bear in mind the medium in which they plan to publish. This knowledge enables them to decide whether to write in a formal style or a more informal one and the structure to use. Student's writing skills can be evaluated by testing their ability to express ideas effectively in standard written English, ability to recognize faults in usage and structure and their ability to use language with sensitivity to meaning.

Daslin (2014) explains that writing skills should involve basics such as the fundamentals of letters (what a letter is, what each letter is called, and how it sounds) is where you should begin if you want to teach literacy effectively. They should involve phonics, what sound letters make and how to identify them and form words with the letters. Understanding sentence structure with proper grammar and with the correct punctuation should also be considered. Types of writing, storytelling, writing five paragraph essays, use of voice (“speaking” in a text) are a key in writing skills. Teachers should make writing an enjoyable activity and not set limits for the students. They should teach pre- and post-writing process skills for students to learn that there is more to writing than just putting words on a page, skills taught should be built on

and maintained. These involve skills like grammar, spelling, parts of speech, and voice, tense and writing style. Students should be encouraged for creativity and critical thinking**.** The students can then prepare for real, academic writing with frequent reading. Choice of word, handwriting improvement, and self-confidence, building skills to correct levels and raising writing passion should be put into a consideration.

Muschla and Muschla (2010) explains that basic writing skills involve basic rules of spelling especially on the commonly miss pelt words, plural forms of names, compound words, prefix and suffix, homonyms (commonly used words that sound alike but have entire different meanings). Basic writing skills should also involve subject and predicate, verb tenses, nouns and pronouns, adjectives and adverbial phrases, clauses, periods and other end stops, commas, apostrophes, colons and semicolons, hyphens, quotation marks, refining your sentences, paragraph structure, types of paragraphs, writing dialogue, proof reading and revising your writing, additional grammar and writing resources. Writing should have a structure (the way the content is laid out) a style (the way it is written), and be of good content (what you are writing about) (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2013).

2.6 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy

Teachers are aware of group work and its dynamics which are solved by carefully designing the group activity (Maryellen, 2010). They have an understanding of the challenge in education today, which is effectively teaching students by teaming up a diverse ability and differing rates of teaching. With a multi-age, racially mixed, elementary team of teachers, this can be achieved through cooperative and cross-age

teaching. In cooperative teaching, all contribute to the group effort because all teachers have an educative partner whom they can rely on.

Although some teachers report that group work is the best for acquiring knowledge and understanding in higher institutions, other teachers find them to be worst, and feel reluctant to work in groups (Fink, 2004; Pieterse & Thompson 2010). Added to this tension is group work's appeal for teachers in the face of increasing class sizes and staff workloads (Burdett, 2003). Staff has commented that group work can be time consuming and difficult to implement hence teachers often underestimate the effort involved in organizing effective group work. Some teachers also consider group work as a potential waste of valuable time (Frykedal & Chiriac, 2010).

Judith (2014) gives a deeper clarity that teachers have knowledge of groups that they are not only business-oriented but also, they generally give personal benefits for staff as well. In a team environment, teachers acquire the ability to share ideas among the group. Perhaps there are several possible approaches to teaching, and as an individual, a teacher may be unsure of which to take. However, the members can each contribute pros and cons of approaches to tasks and methods to accomplish key goals. This kind of collaboration both benefits the students and gives an outlet to bounce around ideas. A group approach can lead to cost savings for the school, since groups accomplish more, as well as an ability to meet individual and group goals more quickly, since more people are attacking the task. Teachers are able to show their various strengths and also weaker areas are compensated as well since workload is distributed so that people play to their strengths with the work to tackle areas where they are weaker to allow for improvement. As a result, stronger and more skilled workforce comes up, as people use the teamwork opportunity to improve across the board.

2.7 The Nature of Learning Activities that Teachers Engage Learners in when using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills

Teachers can engage students in various activities during group work. This includes asking the students about their perception on a given topic. These perceptions can be utilized during class meeting in order to give chance to every student to participate (Exley & Dennick, 2004). Teachers encourage ideas from students, carefully listen to them and evaluate them. Teachers also randomly select students to answer questions or give an overview of a given topic. Brainstorming students also allows students to be keen in class and they generate many ideas without others' commenting, disagreeing or asking too many questions and they become more creative. The teacher encourages and maintains a positive atmosphere by observing the way students are participating as well as be aware of feelings communicated non-verbally. The teacher anticipates what information, materials or other resources the class needs as it works. The teacher should begin a class at a high note with a joke, an instance or with a short story

According to Fink (2004) the formative (ungraded) quizzes, which involves writing quiz questions on the board, an overhead projector, or a handout and giving students an appropriate time to respond is a learning activity. Think-pair-sharing is another form of learning where in its simplest form, teachers give students a particular question or a scenario to think about, then they pair up to discuss their ideas. Another learning activity is one-minute paper or short writes which should involve teachers punctuating their class with short writing assignments and dictation then the students can exchange books and mark for each other as the students discuss the answers as a class. Fink (2004) explains that use of ice breakers (low-stakes activities that get students to interact and talk to each other) at the beginning and at the end of the class

encourages participation of each student, the creation of a sense of community and focusing students' attention on material that will be covered during the class period. The use of Case studies scenarios that apply concepts learned in class to a "real-life" situation enables the students to remain alert to the teacher. Interactive demonstrations can be used during learning, where applicable to demonstrate the application of a concept, a skill, or to act out a process. The exercise should not be passive. Jigsaw is a cooperative active learning exercise where students are grouped into teams to solve a problem or analyze a reading and this also is beneficial as students improve their skills.

2.8 Influence of Group Arrangement on Writing Skills

Different abilities among teachers influence on their group arrangement. They may have different aptitudes and talents, so that other members of a group may assist the others with writing, pronouncing certain words, punctuating sentences and overcoming their mother tongue influence among others (Exley, et al., 2004). Group arrangement can also be determined by people's personalities some may be anxious, as they haven't fully understood what work the team will do, others are simply excited about the task ahead, other team members may be challenging their leaders or be jokers in the group. The individual's behavior is driven by a desire to be accepted by the others, and avoid controversy or conflict. Serious issues and feelings are avoided, and people focus on being busy with routines, such as team organization, which does what, when to meet each other among others (Tuckman, 2014).

2.9 Influences of Use of Group Work on Students Writing Skills

Influences such as need of convening the students over a given idea, suggesting procedures, to change direction, providing new energy and ideas causes teachers to

come together as one to teach. Other influences such as seeking information or opinions where students would like to request facts, preferences, suggestions and ideas from different teachers also ends up bringing teachers together to form a group. A given teacher also may want to give information or opinions to answer given questions, to give a clarity or to make a summary by providing facts, data, information from research or experience to both teachers and students and hence group teaching is applied for discussion purposes. Other factors that influence regular use of teaching learners in groups include; trying to improve teaching, to reinforce a common identity and give individuals a sense of belonging within a group, to facilitate contact between the students and teachers, to address educational needs of students.

2.10 Challenges Teachers of English face in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

Tuckman (2014) assert that teachers working in a cohesive team tend to be affected on their individual behavior. Some of them tend to like interacting with people with informal groups. Teachers tend to face internal conflicts when trying to decide which performance norms to accept. Some of the teachers especially the female teachers tend to keep grudge due to small mistakes made by their fellow colleagues (Rogers, 2015). Teachers perceive this as part of life teaching lessons where they have to learn to live with their members. This leads to them appearing irresponsible and burdensome and some of them loose motivation due to mistreatment by the older teachers for instance being assigned tasks that other teachers would not prefer to take due to them been burdensome.

Tuckman (2014) expound that dysfunctional consequences of groups where negative aspects of groups such as taking more time to accomplish tasks, loss of individual identity for members, free-rider effects, groupthink, and pressure for conformity to group norms becomes a challenge to the teacher. However, teachers have an understanding that keeping rules is a requirement for them during school hours and hence they tend to slowly conform to the group's norms. Physical layout of schools, teaching processes, institutional design and teaching design affect the formation of teaching groups. Power and influence patterns can lead to division where some members who may be acting as team leaders may tend to violate the group norms but take action when a member commits the same offence. Social loafing where some members ride on others leads to group misunderstanding. Social status of teachers in the group tends to affect others who feel intimidated or be of low self-esteem. Pressures toward uniformity among members a large number of members in a group and interdependence by the members brings about conflicts among the members. Poor communication network and incompatibility among the members and lack of adjustment to the group norms can bring about misunderstandings in the team (Wu, Liu, Zhao & Zuo, 2017). The teachers ought to share their experiences with their colleagues in order to overcome the difference.

Peterson and Miller (2004) assert that decisions often take more time in groups and teachers who rush in making decision may feel intimidated. Other individuals cannot simply go with their first instinct or idea, usually, they introduce ideas and work through group conflicts together to come to a consensus. This is problematic on projects with pending deadlines where urgent decisions are needed.

2.11 Related Studies

A study conducted by Long and Porter (1985) on the use of task-based learning and group work incorporating to develop English speaking ability, among high school students in Pretoria found that, group work and pair work substantially increases the opportunities which students get to speak English. Group work encourages students to become more engaged in material through discussion, debate, and the opportunity to articulate explanations to their peers. Such classroom practices allow students to check their understanding and construct new knowledge through interactions with each other and with course material which are the most important aspects for meaningful learning. He added that it may represent one of the most accessible methods for converting a classroom from a teacher-centered setting to an active, learner-centered environment.

Exsley and Dennick (2004) in their study on investigation into the use of group work in the teaching of religious studies. A case study of 'O' level classes at Christ Ministries High School and Warren Park High in America, found out that group work enhances students' decision-making power by involving them in the selection of the learning tasks from a variety of alternatives as well as in deciding who in the group will study which features of the group topic and how the groups' work will be reported to the class as a whole. Students can be more autonomous and self-reliant; they can take on roles and adopt positions which are usually the teacher's preserve. So that they can practice a range of language functions associated with those roles and positions; in problem solving exercises, they can learn to suggest, infer, qualify, hypothesize, generalize, or disagree. Generally, the use of group-work is potentially beneficial to many EFL teachers and learners. The teacher has the time to assess the

effectiveness of his/ her lesson as students work on language learning tasks and he/she can accommodate individual problems.

A study conducted by Leonard (1993) focused on assessing the effectiveness of cooperative learning on the academic achievement of high and low achievers at secondary level in mathematics in Pakistan. It also focused on the effect of cooperative learning on the retention level of high and low achievers in mathematics at secondary level. The study was experimental in nature and was carried out in district Rawalpindi in 2006. Results revealed that, although low achievers were active in the learning process, the small-group model did not reduce greatly the differential status effects between high and low achievers. High-achieving students assumed dominant roles in the undertaking of group tasks, in group decision making, and in the frequency and quality of contributions to group efforts. The findings suggest that low achievers are generally passive during small-group work. In addition, Peterson and Miller (2004) also reported that high achieving students experienced greater quality of experience particularly in the areas of engagement, perceived skills and self- esteem than low achieving students in group work learning situations. And some students may feel that it was unfair that they were in a group in which members did not have the interest.

On the other hand, a study by Gardner, Margoret, Tennat, and Mihic (2004) on students who had different grades showed the little possibility of achievement in differing students' attitude towards working in groups. The majority of high and low achiever students have showed a positive attitude towards group work, so in relation to their ability students have no attitudinal difference towards group work.

Onchera and Manyasi conducted a study in Kenya (2014) to investigate to what depth learners are exposed to appropriate functional text varieties among primary school learners in Nairobi. From the research, it was found that teachers have different understanding about the teaching of functional writing skills. The differences in the beliefs that teachers held about the issues in teaching functional writing, did reflect differences in their practices, approaches and the depth to which learners are exposed to appropriate functional writing text varieties, that students are not fully exposed to varieties of functional writing texts, that teachers give minimal support to learners.

2.12 Chapter Summary

The chapter has reviewed studies and literature on use of group work to develop students writing skills, however; from the above discussion, it is clear that few studies have revealed results on use of group work based on writing skills. Therefore, this study assessed the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County, Kenya. The next chapter discusses the research design and methodology that guided the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was adopted in the research to answer the research questions. The chapter describes the research approach, research design, study area, study population including the sample size determination and sampling procedures adopted, instruments used for data collection, validity and reliability of research instruments, data collection procedures, analysis of the data collected and ethical consideration issues.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a sketch and the procedures for research that cover the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2010). The study used descriptive survey research design. A descriptive research gives a thorough and accurate description survey by determining the "how" or "why" the phenomena came into being, and also what is involved in the situation. This is achieved by portraying an accurate profile of the events and situations considered as an extension of, or forerunner to an explanatory research (Robson, 2002). Therefore, a descriptive study would look at what is going on, (Sekaran, 2003). Descriptive survey research design was used to report the status of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary school. The descriptive survey design was the main method of data collection administering questionnaires, interviews and observation schedules.The population of interest was thoroughly investigated in their places of understanding the use of group work to improve writing skills. Descriptive survey research design is important especially when the researcher is using structured questionnaire and interview schedule to collect first hand data. The

design was opted for because of its strengths as it involves gathering information from the sampled schools, direct quotation from the respondents and other sources, and it allows for the use of multiple sources of data collection for purposes of triangulation. The multiple sources of data collection included the students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and lesson observation guide. The design was good in obtaining both qualitative and quantitative data with regard to the use of group work in teaching of writing skills in secondary schools. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) also point out that descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact-findings, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems. In supporting this view, the current research set out to formulate principles of knowledge and the solution to significant problems related to writing skills.

3.3 Research Methodology

This study adopted the use of mixed methodology. Mixed methodology is the blending of two approaches in a research study resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data (Coolican, 2013). The study used mixed methods in a single research which permits for pragmatism. The blending of qualitative and quantitative methods in this study neutralizes bias, seeks convergence of results and produces final products which highlight the significant contribution of both approaches. Further, the researcher used mixed methodology for it was considered appropriate in helping the research meet the principles for gauging the significance of the answers better than do the single methods designs. As pointed out by Creswell (2011) mixed methodology provides the chance for presenting a superior diversity of different opinions. In this study, questionnaires were used to collect quantitative information from students, lesson observation gathered information on nature of learning activities during group

work and challenges encountered while interviews were used to collect qualitative data from teachers making the study to be a mixed methodology.

3.4 Study Area

The study was conducted in secondary schools in Keiyo North, Elgeyo Marakwet, county. Elgeyo-Marakwet County is one of the 47 Counties of Kenya. Elgeyo Marakwet County is located in the former Rift Valley Province. Its capital and largest town is Iten. It borders the counties of West Pokot to the North, Baringo County to the East, Southeast and South, Uasin Gishu to the Southwest and West and Trans Nzoia to the Northwest. It covers an area (Km ^{2}) of 3,029.8 km squared with temperatures ranging from a minimum of 14 °C to a maximum of 24 °C. The rainfall ranges annually between 400mm and 1,400mm.

The study was carried among secondary school teachers of English and students in Keiyo North sub county. This was attributed to the fact that most of the students in the Sub-County have continued to perform poorly in English, a problem mostly associated with poor writing skills as noted by KNEC, (2010).

3.5 Target Population

A population is the whole group of individuals, events or objects having common evident features. A target population is that population to which a researcher wants to take a broad view of the results of a study (Coolican, 2013). Kasomo (2006) describes the target population as the aggregate of all cases that conform to designated sets of specifications to which the study will generalize the results. In this study, the target population comprised of 43 teachers of English and 3,574 form IV students drawn from 19 secondary school in the sub county (DEO office Keiyo Marakwet County,

2014). The research selection of form IV was based on students' experiences since form one regarding writing and involvement in the use of group work.

3.6 Sample Size and Sampling Procedures

3.6.1 Sample Size

A sample size is part of the target/accessible population that has been procedurally selected to represent it. Kothari (2008) defines a sample size as the number of items to be selected from the universe (population) to constitute a sample. The sample size formula for this study was given as:

$$\mathrm{n} = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1-P)}{\left(ME^2 * (N-1)\right) + (X^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where n=Sample size

X^2=Chi Square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom= (3.841) from tables

N=Population size

P=Population proportion (.50 in the table)

ME=Desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion=0.05)

Using this formula, a sample size of 364 students was arrived at. However, 30% of the schools (43) were selected for observation purposes giving a sample size of 13 schools. In each school one lesson was observed and one (1) teacher of English was interviewed. This therefore shows that a total of 13 lessons were observed in the study and a further 13 teachers of English were interviewed. The choice of 30% was based on the recommendations of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

3.6.2 Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the procedure adopted in the selection of a number of individuals as stated in the sample size in such a way that the individuals chosen for the study are considered to be a representative of the large collection where they were chosen. Selected entities from the sample and the large group from which they were selected from, is the population, (Kothari, 2008).

This study employed various sampling procedures which ensured a representative population that would allow for the generalization of the study findings to a larger population since it is not likely to seek the opinions and views of everyone in a population for generalization of the study findings. The sampling procedures which were used in this research included, stratified, simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. The Table 3.1 presents the sample size of the study.

Table 3.1: Sample Size of the Study

Types of school	School Sample	Respondents	Sample
Sub County	3	Teachers	3
		Learners	84
County	7	Teachers	7
		Learners	196
Extra County	2	Teachers	2
		Learners	56
National	1	Teachers	1
		Learners	28
	13		377

As shown in Table 3.1 Schools were grouped (stratified) either as National, Extra County, County or Sub County schools. Stratified sampling was opted for because it has an advantage of built in assurance that the sample will accurately reflect the

numerical composition of the various sub groups (Kothari, 2008). In this study sub groups included national, extra county, county school, and sub county school. Proportionate sampling was then used to select 3 Sub County Schools (11/43 x 13), 7 County Schools (23/43 x 13), 2 Extra County Schools (8/43 x 13) and 1 National school (1/43 x13). Individual schools were then arrived at using simple random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select 3 teachers of English from sub county schools, 7 teachers of English from County schools, 2 from Extra County and 1 from National school that had initially between stratified. Purposive sampling was opted for because teachers of English have critical information on matters related to grouping of students and writing skills among students. Ten percent (10.1% of 3574 = 364) of the students' population was used to get students. 28 students were then picked from each school (364/13=28 per school) using simple random selection. This lead to a selection of 84 students from sub country schools, 196 students from county schools, 56 students from extra county schools and 28 students from National school. Simple random sampling was opted for because of its ability to give equal chances to respondents. This gave rise to the selection of 364 students and 13 teachers of English in 13 schools leading to a sample size 377.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

Kombo and Tromp (2006) posit that in social science, interviews questionnaires, observation checklists and standardized evaluations are commonly used as research tools. This research adopted both quantitative and qualitative data collection procedures. The study found it necessary to use three instruments for purposes of triangulation in order to gather the most reliable data. Brewer and Hunter (2006, p. 4) state that "the multi-method approach allows investigators to tackle a research problem with an arsenal of methods that have no overlapping weaknesses in addition

to their complementary strengths". Triangulation is expected to enhance the researcher's ability and effort to assess the accuracy of the findings and thus assure the reader that they are reliable (Creswell, 2009). It adds quality when multiple sources of data are used to study a particular phenomenon (King & Horrocks, 2010). In this study, the questionnaires, interview and lesson observation added value to this research, because the researcher was able to observe activities such as preparation for group discussion, group writing teacher preparedness and challenges encountered.

3.7.1 Questionnaire for Students

A questionnaire refers to a collection of items to which a respondent is expected to react usually in written (Kothari, 2008). Sekaran (2013) suggests that questionnaires are resourceful data collection instrument which aids the researcher to know what will be required and how to measure the variables of concern. Questionnaires are easy to administer and analyze. The questionnaires are advantageous because they cover a large population within a short time and minimal cost on the part of the researcher and intensify independence and accuracy of responses from the respondents (Sekaran, 2013). In this study closed and open ended questions were administered to sampled secondary school students through the questionnaires. The questionnaire was preferred because they were considered convenient to be used when handling large group of data. According to Kothari, (2008), the questionnaire generates data that are quantitative in nature and hence this tool is deemed appropriate since it gathers such information in cognizance with the research design adopted.

The questionnaire in Appendix II contained five sections with section A dealing with the demographic description of the participants involved in the study. Section B had three questions that focused on how teachers used group work as a teaching strategy,

section C had questions on the learning activities involved when using group work to teach writing skills and section D had questions on teachers utilize group work in teaching writing skills while the last section covered the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills.

3.7.2 Interview Schedule for Teachers

This study made use of interview as a method of collecting qualitative data. An interview schedule is a set of questions that an interviewer asks while interviewing the respondent. Interview was used in collecting data from the teachers of English from the 13 secondary schools. Kothari (2008) observes that interview schedule is mainly appropriate for exhaustive investigation. Some of the advantages of using interviews are that the researcher may obtain more information about the respondents. Personal characteristics and the environment which is often of great value in interpreting results. Interviews enable the researcher to get in-depth information and required data through the use of probing questions. Interview eliminated many sources of bias common in other instruments.

The researcher endeavoured to build a rapport with the respondents; the interview was like a conversation and questions were asked when the interviewer feels it is appropriate to ask them. The researcher interviewed 13 teachers of English from the selected secondary schools. According to King and Horrocks (2010) qualitative information is usually gathered by researchers through the use of questionnaires and interviews. However, interviews are considered to be more authoritative in producing qualitative information that allows researchers and investigators to determine people's opinions in deeply. Cohen et al (2007) pointed out that interviewing is a significant approach for discovering the construction and compromise of meanings in a normal

setting. King & Horrocks, (2010) noted that the significance of interviewing does not result only to analyses words, a holistic snapshot, reporting of detailed views of informants but also, since it permits interviewees to express meanings in their own voices and give their own opinions and feelings. The tool comprised questions on how teachers prepared for group work, the learning activities that teachers engaged in during group work and the challenges they faced when utilizing group work.

3.7.3 Observation Schedule

Observation is viewed as an important strategy for obtaining comprehensive information in qualitative studies specifically where a composite of both oral and visual information become important to a study (King & Horrocks, 2010). An observation schedule was prepared by the researcher in order to establish the use of group work in teaching writing skills in secondary schools, since it is best to observe what is actually happening. A check list was constructed for this purpose, what was observed was noted down as useful data for analysis to support and confirm information from the other instruments of collecting data. In this study, direct observation and coding was employed while analysis done later. Direct observation is suitable for descriptive studies since it is objective based and facilitates the derivation of more real information (Kothari, 2008). Facts from observation such as introduction of lesson, group arrangement, lesson development, size of group, types of text books used in group discussions, gender diversity and number of time they used group work were observed so as to strengthen validity of teachers' interviews and educational officials' narratives. Student's activities that involved writing were also recorded as the lesson progressed using the performance check list.

The researcher used a performance checklist to measure teaching of writing skills amongst students. The checklist comprised of 7 aspects related to writing. These were writing speed, handwriting, grammar and syntax, word choice, spelling, adequate seat time, revision process and timely submission. The items were scored on 3 point rating scale that was poor, moderate and good. The performance check list was done for the 13 schools and an average score recorded.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

When formulating a detailed tool, reliability and validity are two of the most important characteristics to be considered (Kothari, 2008). This section provides the determination of both validity and the reliability of the research instruments used in the study.

3.8.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity refers to degree to which evidence supports any inferences a researcher makes based on the information collected using particular instrument (Kothari, 2008). In this study, two types of validity were used namely face validity and content validity. Face validity refers to the likelihood that questions in an instrument will be understood. To improve on the face validity, a pilot study was conducted after which responses to each item were scrutinized to identify any misunderstandings and ambiguity. Items found to be unclear or ambiguous were modified thereby improving face validity. The researcher made sure that multiple methods used for data collection triangulate each other (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Gibbs, 2007; Hatch, 2007). Triangulation ensured consistency and validity of the data. Content validity, refers to whether an instrument provides adequate coverage of the topic. Expert opinions literature searches and pre-testing of open-ended questions were used to improve the

content validity used. The questions in the questionnaire were brainstormed with colleagues and there after necessary corrections made.

To determine the content validity of interview schedule and questionnaire items, a team's judgmental panel from Moi University examined them. Suggestions and advice offered were used as a basis to modify the research items and make them more adaptable in the study. Their feedback was used to revise the instrument. In addition, the researcher conducted all the study in person in order to ensure systematic validity.

3.8.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

Reliability refers to the degree to which the instrument yields the same results on replicated trials (Orodho, 2009). It is therefore the degree of consistency or whether it can be relied upon to produce the same results when used in two or more attempts to measure theoretical concepts. Reliable measuring tool need not be applicable (Kothari, 2008). To ensure reliability of the questionnaires, a pilot study was carried out in neighbouring Uasin Gishu County. This area was used for piloting because the two counties share similar characteristics. Split half method was used to determine a reliability index through Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficients where the researcher piloted the instruments once in the field and the pilot questionnaires were randomly divided into two halves. The piloting of the questionnaire was used to identify faults hence improve its reliability. The SPSS computer software aided in working out this coefficient correlation achieved. Co-efficient alpha of 0.84 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for data collection. According to Oluwatayo (2012), a reliability index of over 0.80 is considered ideal for a study.

Credibility of the research instrument was ensured through triangulation of sources. This involved utilization of different data collection methods that included student's questionnaire, teacher's questionnaire and the observation guide. This led to generation of consistent findings.

3.8.3 Piloting of Research Instrument

Instrument piloting is a crucial element of a good study design. Conducting a pre-test study will not guarantee success in the main study but it does increase its chance (Madsen, 2012). The questionnaire, interview schedule and lessons observation used in this study were pre- tested through a pilot study before actual data collection. This enabled the revision of the research instruments before actual data collection in terms of their content.

To establish reliability of research instruments a pilot study was carried out in 3 secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County. These schools were selected purposively to ensure that they bear the same characteristics as the schools in the study area. The researcher selected schools in Uasin Gishu County to control the "halo effect" and to widen the applicability of the study. The feedback obtained from the piloted secondary school aided the researcher in revising the questionnaire, interview schedule and lesson observation to ensure that they covered the objectives of the study adequately.

Piloting ensures that the items elicit and give the kind of responses the researcher intends to get and that they are acceptable in terms of their content. The researcher also verified their content for accuracy consistency and ensured that unclear information was removed while deficiencies and weakness were noted and corrected

in the final instruments (Creswell, 2009). This ensured simplicity and suitability of the items in the questionnaires and interview schedule.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

In order to collect primary data, the questionnaire, interview schedule and observation schedule were used. Sekaran (2013) suggests that questionnaires are efficient data collection apparatus which provide the researcher to know exactly what is necessary and how to measure the variables of interest. Upon approval of the research proposal, an introductory letter from the school of education of Moi University was written. This letter was aimed at assisting the researcher in securing a permit from the National Council for Science, Technology and Innovations (NACOSTI) for the purpose of conducting research in the selected sampled secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County. Once the permit was granted, the researcher sought for appointment with Commissioners' office to approve research collection in the Sub-County.

The questionnaires were administered to 364 students when schools were on session. Before the administration of questionnaires, the researcher sought for permission to conduct the study from the school management. Thereafter, 28 Form four students in each of the sampled schools were identified through simple random selection and requested to participate in the study. They were issued with one questionnaire each and were requested not to write their names on the questionnaire. They were further instructed to answer all the questions by ticking only one choice in each question. Once the questionnaires were completed they were collected immediately for analysis. Thereafter, the researcher conducted a 30-minute interview schedule to teachers of the sampled schools. The researcher made notes on the themes that were

emerging from the interviews. In addition, the researcher observed one form four English lesson which was in progress during the time of visit in each selected school.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedure

This refers to the important assessment of the coded data and making inferences (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). Once the questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedules were collected by the researcher, they were coded and entered into the SPSS computer software and analysed. Data was based on the objectives and research questions of the study. Quantitative data collected was analysed using descriptive statistical techniques which included frequencies and percentages and presented in tables and figures. Qualitative data from the interviews were categorized and reported as per the emerging themes. Data from observation was reviewed, rrecorded, and synthesized as per the emerging themes. .

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Permission to carry out the study was sought from the relevant authorities and the respondents who participate in the study (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). The researcher took into account the effects of the research on teachers and students, and acted in a way that protects their decorum. Ethics are norms for conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. A number of ethical issues can arise during the academic research writing and publishing process. These include plagiarism, fabrication or falsification of data, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, treatment of human subjects and animals in research and authorship issues (Hammersley & Traianou, 2012).

In this study, the researcher assured all the teachers and students of the selected secondary schools that the information given was meant for academic purposes only.

This was done to ensure honest information was given and also to enhance the process of data collection. The researcher shared the research findings after completion of research to the relevant users that would be interested in the research findings.

3.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research design and methodology, study population along with the sample size and sampling procedures; instrumentation; a description of the type of tools used along with the requisite validity and reliability considerations; data collection procedures including setting the boundaries for the study; instruments used to collect data as well as the data analysis rationalization in view of the design of the study. Considering the sensitivity of the subject under study, due attention was paid to ethical issues and confidentiality aspects in relation to the respondents. The next chapter deals with the analysis of the collected data, interpretation and discussion of the findings in line with the literature reviewed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the study findings. The main purpose of the study was to assess the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub county, Elgeyo Marakwet County. This section is divided into five sections with section one covering the background information of the respondents involved in the study. Section two covers teachers' knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy, section three covers the learning activities involved when using group work to teach writing skills and section four covers the how teachers utilize group work in teaching writing skills while the last section covers the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills. The section begins with the demographic information of the respondents involved in the study.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 336 out of 364 students fully filled and returned the research questionnaires; in addition, 11 out of 13 teachers were interviewed.

4.3 Background Information

Before embarking on analysis, presentation and interpretation of the study objectives the researcher looked at the performances of previous English examination performances. This was important as it lays a basic foundation on which the study was based. Afterwards the study analyzed, presented, interpreted and discussed the study objectives.

4.4 How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

The first objective of this study was to examine how teachers plan group work in teaching writing skills. First, the researcher sought to understand from the students various ways and activities in which the teacher involved them while being engaged in group work. Students' Responses were Tabulated are the results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Students' Responses on Various Ways and Activities Teachers involve them when engaged in Group Work

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Comprehension Activities	11	3.5
Listening Skills	5	1.6
reading set books	55	17.3
Discussion	140	44
Vocabulary	89	28
Role Play	2	0.6
Communication Skills	4	1.3
Writing Skills	12	3.8
Picture Stories	18	5.7
Statement	10	3.1
Pictures	25	7.9
Newspapers	227	71.4
Cartoons	38	11.9
Charts	318	100
Extracts from storybooks	9	2.8

Table 4.1 shows that when the students were engaged in groups, they made use of charts (100%) and newspapers (71.9%), vocabulary (28%), cartoons (11.9%), pictures (7.9%), picture stories (5.7%), statement (3.1%) and extracts from storybooks (2. 8%). The activities the students are involved in are discussion (44%), reading set books (17.3%), writing skills (3.8%), comprehension activities (3.5%), listening skills (1.6%), communication skills (1.3%) and role play (0.6%). The findings shows that students were engaged in an array of activities during group work in order to enhance

their writing skills. Most importantly though the most common activities were discussions, newspapers and charts.

During the interview, respondents indicated that teachers' utilization of group work is key in enhancing the writing skills among the students. For instance, one participant explained:

> As writing skill is highly a process activity, one can develop accuracy and confidence in writing through repeated practice of discussion, reading set books, writing skills, comprehension activities, listening skills and communication skills. There is therefore exposure to and an increase in understanding of diverse perspectives of the English language (Teacher, 007).

Observation on the lesson development in the schools yielded four categories of writing activities that the teachers were engaged in. These included one; stimulation writing involving dictation, story rewriting, visualization and writing a common song two; controlled practice that helped the beginning writer and offer support, repetition and guidance three; Free writing activities like writing about a certain picture, description, bookmaking which activate student learning and allow them to practice what they already know.

Further the study sought to establish the learning activities the teacher of English engaged students in using group work to teach writing skills. Table 4.2 shows the results of the analyzed information. Multiple responses were allowed in this study since one student could have more than two activities.

Table 4.2: Student Responses on activities used by Teachers of English During Group work

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Graphs and figures	5	0.6
Sentence construction	58	7.5
Spelling	139	18.0
Paragraphing	107	13.9
Vocabulary	57	7.4
Grammar	32	4.1
Handwriting	145	18.8
Coherence	84	10.9
Punctuation	145	18.8
	772	100.0

Table 4.2 points out that teachers of English involved the students in punctuation (18.8%), handwriting (18.8%), spelling (18.0%), paragraphing (13.9%), coherence (10.9%), sentence construction (7.5%), vocabulary (7.4%) and graphs and figures (0.6%). The responses pointed out that among the major activities that teachers of English involved their students while engaged in group work was punctuations, handwriting, spelling, paragraphing and, coherency. In this instance members of a group may assist the others with writing, pronouncing certain words, punctuating sentences and overcoming their mother tongue influence among others.

Interviews with one of the teachers noted that:

> Before the start of any English lesson, there is dictation of new vocabulary to students. Afterwards, students are required to search for the meaning of those words and construct sentences using them. Besides, students are given an opportunity to assess other students' works and identify their strengths and weaknesses and the areas that need to be improved on (Teacher, 004).

Further students were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale items in the questionnaire on activities they use while in groups. The results of the analyzed information is presented in Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Student Responses on Activities undertaken During Group Work

Activity	SD		D		UD		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Our teacher introduces new vocabulary for a group to discuss	21	6.3	24	7.1	12	3.6	120	35.7	159	47.3
Each group should present a story in various ways based on skill level	33	9.8	46	13.7	8	2.4	103	30.6	146	43.5
Our teacher groups us to share events of our lives to inspire us in writing	47	14.1	62	18.4	13	3.9	99	29.5	115	34.2
We use group work to analyze text by imagining dialogue between authors	50	14.9	38	11.3	30	8.9	88	26.2	130	38.7
We use group work to reflect on and write about our experiences	11	3.3	41	12.2	18	5.4	167	49.7	99	29.5
We use group work to talk about verbs and adverbs	35	10.4	44	13.1	37	11.0	134	39.9	86	25.6
We use group work to discuss and analyze poem	48	14.3	59	17.6	11	3.3	90	26.8	128	38.1

Table 4.3 shows that 159(47.3%) students strongly agreed with the statement that their teachers introduces new vocabulary for a group to discuss, 120 (35.7%) students agreed with the statement, 24(7.1%) students disagreed with the statement and 21(6.3%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 12(3.6%) students were undecided on the statement. The study findings showed that the majority (83.0%) of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that their teachers introduced new vocabularies for groups to discuss them. This

implies that there was student improvement in vocabulary as a result of group discussions. Interviews pointed out that enhancement of understanding of new vocabularies can be attained through group discussions among the students in a class.

Similarly, 146 (43.5%) students strongly agreed with the statement that each group in a class presents a story in various ways based on skill level, 103(30.6%) students agreed with the statement, 46(13.7%) students disagreed with the statement and 33(9.8%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 8(2.4%) students were undecided on the statement. As shown by the responses, it emerged that majority (74.1%) of the students cited that each group presented a story in various ways based on skill level. This shows that teachers grouped students according to their intellectual capacities and assigned tasks based on each group.

Regarding group presentation of stories, one of the teachers reflected that:

> Group work presentation of stories is one of my common strategy in present day teaching method that enable learners to learn more through sharing their experiences to one another. This method enhances the comprehension of different concepts by discussing together (Teacher, 010).

A further, 115(34.2%) students strongly agreed with the statement that their teachers grouped them to share events of their lives so as to inspire them in writing skills, 99(29.5%) students agreed with the statement, 62(18.4%) students disagreed with the statement and 47(14.1%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 13(3.9%) students were undecided on the statement. As shown by the student responses, it can be argued that majority (63.7%) of the secondary school students in Keiyo North Sub-County were grouped by teachers of English so share events which inspired their peers to learn to write.

This was supported by sentiments made by teachers of English where one pointed out that:

> Group work has made it easier for students to develop their language skills in advance. In addition, the knowledge on writing skills may help them in understanding things in systematic way. Other than learning writing skills, they can share events of their lives with other students and discuss on how to improve their individual writing skills (Teacher, 009).

In addition, 130(38.7%) students strongly agreed with the statement that they used group work to analyze text by imagining dialogue between authors, 88(26.2%) students agreed with the statement, 50(14.9%) students strongly disagreed with the statement and 38(11.3%) students disagreed with the statement while 30(8.9%) students were undecided on the statement. The study showed that majority (64.9%) of the students reported that they used group work to analyze text by imagining dialogue between authors.

This was supported by one of the interviewed teachers who noted that:

> Group work is of essence in the English classroom for a number of reasons. For instance, through group work, students are able to understand different aspects of the English language and diverse writing perspectives of other students. As well, they can share their experiences and how to overcome error of punctuation and spelling. Besides, they will gain insights on how to write words in logical order and a meaningful way (Teacher 001)

Further, 167(49.7%) students agreed with the statement that they used group work to reflect on and write about their experiences, 99(29.5%) students strongly agreed with

the statement, 51(15.5%) respondents were in disagreement while 18(5.4%) students were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it emerged that majority (79.2%) of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub-County reported that they used group work to reflect on and write about their experiences

In a more similar way, one teacher mentioned his experiences that:

> In promoting, writing skills in the English class rooms, during teaching and learning process, I tell my students how to write and then I ask them to make a classroom presentation. In most cases, the students are not well motivated to write because they lack basic knowledge of the skill. At times, there is difficulty in reading the manuscripts that the students write. However, group work has been an effective strategy in enhancing students writing skills and an avenue for them to reflect on and write about their experiences (Teacher, 012).

Moreover, 134(39.9%) students agreed with the statement that they used group work to talk about verbs and adverbs, 86(25.6%) students strongly agreed with the statement, 44(13.1%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 35(10.4%) students strongly agreed with the statement while 37(11.0%) respondents were undecided on the statement. It seems therefore that majority (65.5%) of the students in secondary schools in the region cited that they were using group work to talk about verbs and adverbs

Another teacher shared the above ideas in the following reflection:

> Students can effectively learn about verbs and adverbs in a group setting. The learners that are capable of easily comprehending information assist those that are slow to learn. There is also individual attention to learners form the teacher. Besides, learning is interesting

> for the learners since they make use of charts, share stories and individual experiences while learning grammar (Teacher, 003).

Similarly, 128(38.1%) students strongly agreed with the statement that they used group work to discuss and analyze poem, 90(26.8%) students agreed with the statement, 59(17.6%) students disagreed with the statement and 48(14.35) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 11(3.35) students were undecided on the statement. The responses showed that majority (54.9%) of the students in the region reported that they were using work to discuss and analyze poems.

One of the teachers explained:

> Students work in groups to discuss poems. Working in groups encourages the students to think about the meaning and then express their interpretation in their own way. After the group discussions, the students can share their illustrations with the class so that everyone has a chance to think about the different meanings that their classmates discovered. Additionally, students discuss the vocabulary used in different poems. In such a case, students discuss how the poem would be if a different vocabulary would have been used (Teacher, 005).

4.5 Learning Activities Teachers in Keiyo North Use when Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills

The second objective of this study was to determine the learning activities teachers in Keiyo North use when using group work to teach writing skills. To achieve this objective, the respondents were requested to rate their level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale items in the questionnaire on learning activities involved when using group work to teach writing skills. Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Students' Responses on Learning Activities Involved When Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
We are encouraged as groups to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means in sentence	12	3.6	23	6.8	9	2.7	164	48.8	128	38.1	336 (100%)
We are made to share ideas together on understanding the words	32	9.5	20	5.9	16	4.8	137	40.8	131	39.0	336 (100%)
We are made to focus on different meanings of words; why certain words are written the way they are, not just how	40	11.9	48	14.3	10	3.0	129	38.4	109	32.4	336 (100%)
We are allowed as groups to summarize a text from the text book, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies	35	10.4	46	13.7	17	5.1	111	33.0	127	37.8	336 (100%)
We are encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to us as individual	21	6.3	39	11.6	18	5.3	125	37.2	133	39.6	336 (100%)
We are allowed as students to devise our own strategies for writing words	56	16.7	40	11.9	19	5.7	104	30.9	117	34.8	336 (100%)

Table 4.4 shows that 164 (48.8%) students agreed with the statement that they are encouraged as groups to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means

in sentence, 128 (38.1%) students strongly agreed with the statement, 23 (6.8%) students disagreed with the statement and 12 (3.6%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 9 (2.75) students were undecided on the statement. The study showed that majority (86.9%) of the secondary school learners in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that they were encouraged to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means in sentence. This shows that students were able to develop their learning strategies and can make learning practical and enjoyable. Working as a group is characterized by common effort, the utilization of the group's competence, and the presence of problem solving and reflection. This implies that when students work in groups while providing meaning to certain words, they will be in a position of providing the right meaning to the word and using it clearly in sentence construction.

One of the teachers interviewed pointed out that:

> In high school, engaging in group work while learning the English language may help students in understanding things in a systematic way, may facilitate the meaning of words and make sense of what it means in a sentence (Teacher, 011).

In addition, 137 (40.8%) students agreed with the statement that they are made to share ideas together on understanding the words, 131 (39.0%) students strongly agreed with the statement, 32 (9.2%) students strongly disagreed with the statement and 20 (5.9%) students disagreed with the statement while 16 (4.8%) students were undecided on the statement. The responses showed that majority (79.8%) of the secondary school students cited that through group work, they were made them to share ideas together on understanding the words. This implies that group work enabled students to have a discussion and come up a clear understanding of words in English.

In supporting of this view one participant mentioned:

> Sharing ideas together on understanding words is beneficial because students share their experiences to one another and make the teaching and learning process of writing skills more enjoyable, easier and faster for them to understand. During the process of drafting a composition, lots of discussions takes place. It encourages students to think in the English language (Teacher, 009).

Similarly, 129 (38.4%) students agreed with the statement that they were made to focus on different meanings of words; why certain words are written the way they are, not just how, 109 (32.5%) students strongly agreed with the statement, 48 (14.3%) students disagreed with the statement and 40 (11.9%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 10(3.0%) students were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it emerged that majority (70.9%) of the secondary school students reported that they were made to focus on different meanings of words. This implies that from the group works students are able to achieve certain skills in English as a result of collaborations.

Moreover, 127 (37.8%) students strongly agreed with the statement that they were allowed as groups to summarize a text from the text book, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies, 111 (33.0%) students agreed with the statement, 46 (13.7%) students disagreed with the statement and 35 (10.4%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 17 (5.1%) students were undecided on the statement. The responses showed that majority (70.8%) of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that they were allowed to summarize texts from the text book, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies. This implies that through group work students are able to develop vocabulary skills in English.

Interviews with one of the teachers pointed out that:

> In promoting writing skills in the English class rooms, we usually give students the opportunity as groups to summarize a text, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies and make class presentations. In so doing, the students are able to rectify the error of punctuation, spelling, and writing words in logical order in a meaningful way (Teacher, 012).

Further, 133 (39.6%) students strongly agreed with the statement that they were encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to them as individuals, 125 (37.2%) students agreed with the statement, 39 (11.6%) students disagreed with the statement and 21(6.3%) students strongly disagreed with the statement while 18 (5.3%) students were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it can be shown that majority of the secondary school learners in Keiyo North sub-county reported that they were encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to them as individuals. This implies that students were encouraged to be in groups so as to solve individual problems. Similarly, 117 (34.8%) students strongly agreed with the statement that they were allowed as students to devise their own strategies for writing words, 104 (30.9%) students agreed with the statement and 96 (28.6%) students were in disagreement with the statement while 19 (5.7%) students were undecided on the statement. From the responses, it emerged that majority (65.7%) of the students in secondary schools in the study area reported that they were allowed to devise their own strategies of writing words.

Finding from the observation supported these responses. Teachers told students the purpose of the project, the learning objective, and the skills that needed to be developed through group work. The teachers reinforced the writing skills.

4.6 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy

The first objective of this study was to find out teachers' knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy. In order to achieve this objective, the teachers of English were asked to indicate whether they used group work or not. Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Figure 4.1.

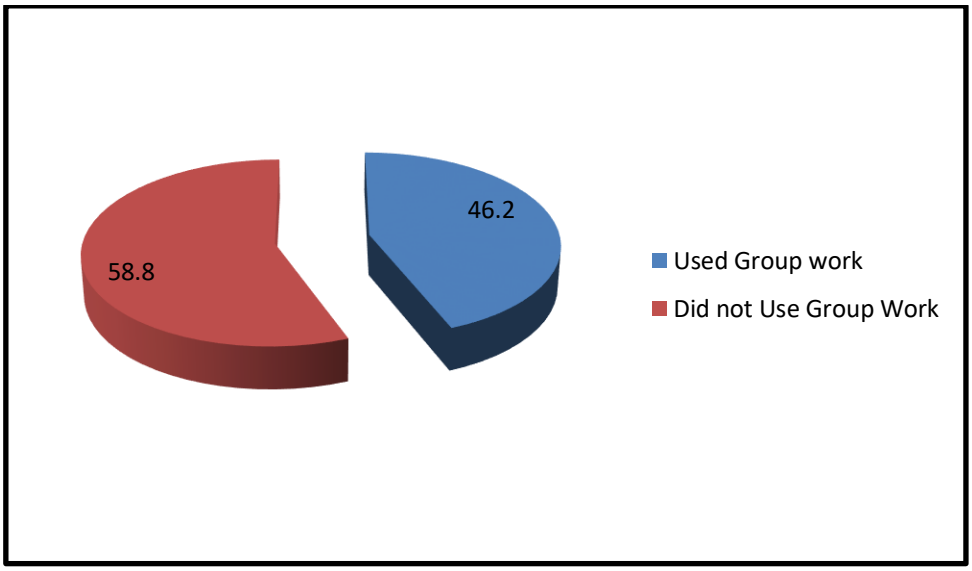

Figure 4.1: Teachers' Responses on Use of Group work

Figure 4.1 shows that 7(53.8%) teachers reported that they were not using group work during the teaching process, while 6(46.2%) teachers acknowledged that they used group work while teaching. The responses pointed out that the majority (53.8%) of the teachers acknowledged that they did not utilize group work in teaching of writing skills. The above data indicates that the English teacher gave less emphasis on group work in the teaching of writing skills.

These sentiments are supported by findings from the observation which pointed out that most teachers don't use group work because they feel that it takes most of their time during the lessons.

During the interview, one teacher indicated that:

> In most cases, as a classroom teacher of English I assign groups to work during grammar sections as opposed to writing skills (Teacher, 002).

The above points out that even though group work is considered to have positive effects on learning and most teachers do not use it during the teaching and learning process. In addition, the researcher sought to establish the frequency of use of group work by teachers while teaching. Teachers noted that they used group work less often while teaching English. This implies that the positive effects associated with group work were not well utilized in teaching of English in secondary schools in the study area. This led to difficulties among students in advancing their writing skills.

Teachers were asked during the interview to indicate there preparedness in the usage of group work as a strategy. Their responses are indicated in the following excerpts:-

> I prepare in advance for group work assignments. I scheme at the beginning of the term then later on I do a lesson plan.

Another teacher had a similar response by stating that:

> Group work calls for early preparation for it to be effective. In order to achieve this I plan my work well in advance. I do prepare my class early enough like a day or two to the material day so that we save time during the lesson.

Regarding being trained or not the teachers said that:

> The skills I use are based on the methodological skills that we went through during our studies

Another teacher responded saying that:

> Once in a while we attend workshops at the county level intended to sharpen our skills in teaching and learning using group work

Another teacher said the following:

> I read a lot of books that enable me to update my skills in the application of group work to teaching of writing skills.

These are a few excerpts from teachers who used group work indicating that, teachers were prepared in using group work.

Data from the observation schedules support this information indicating that indeed the few teachers mentioned used group work. From the observation the few teachers started from beginning. The teachers determined the topics and themes for the group work. It is at this time that the instructors thought about how they will form their groups, help negotiate the group process, and decide how to evaluate the final product. Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1991) suggest that group tasks should be integral to the course objectives. This means that the group work should complement the learning objectives outlined in the syllabus. If one of the learning objectives is to promote critical thinking skills or writing enhancement, then the group work should support these areas.

The findings here pointed out that those teachers who frequently used group work had a better chance of enhancing the achievement of writing skills among secondary school learners.

Interviews with the teachers of English further pointed out that use of group work had positive effects on students' learning. However, they pointed out that group work required time for it to be effectively used. One of the teachers interviewed noted that:

> There is no doubt that group work improves the writing skills in the English language. Particularly, it plays a great role in language learning. In group work, students share ideas, express their feeling and attitude thus enhancing their learning (Teacher 013).

Further, one other teacher of English added that:

> If students practice writing skills in groups, they tend to improve their paragraph writing skills and develop confidence in both writing and speaking skills. These help them in improving their writing skills both in the English classroom and outside class room (Teacher 001).

Findings from the observation prove that "More hands make for lighter work." "Two heads are better than one." "The more the merrier." These adages speak about he potential benefits of groups. These include the class being more productive, more creative, and motivated than individuals on their own. On the part of the students the group projects seemed to help students develop their writing skills. Students were able to come up with a host of ideas that were important in their writing. This is similar to what National Survey of Student Engagement (2006) explained that positive group experiences have been found to contribute to student learning, retention and overall school. The observation further indicated that complex writing tasks were broken into parts thereby simplifying students writing. It is important to note that not all groups were guaranteed success. From the observation it was noted that groups that were not well designed, supervised and assessed did not develop students writing skills.

Observation also noted that apart from students, teachers gained in terms of assigning more complex, authentic problems to groups of students than they could to individuals. Group work also introduced more unpredictability to teaching, since groups may approach tasks and solve problems in novel, interesting ways. This was seen to be refreshing for teachers.

4.7 Challenges Faced by Teachers of English in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

The fourth objective of this study was to establish the challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills. In order to achieve this objective, teachers were interviewed on specific items on challenges they face in the use of group work in teaching writing skills. It emerged that when group work was used a teaching methodology, students were not able to complete their assignments on time. One of the teachers pointed out that use of group work as a teaching methodology is time consuming, thus, students are not in a position to complete their assignments on time. This is attributed to the fact that students have to arrive at a consensus on a specific issue before writing it down. This implies that group work as a teaching strategy consumed a lot of time.

In addition, some of the teachers interviewed pointed out that in some cases students may just want to complete their assignments without getting the right concept a pointer that ideas are not sometimes thoroughly discussed during group works. This is attributed to the fact that high performing students did not want to share what they knew with their colleagues.

In one of the instance a teacher had this to say;

> It is sometimes proving to be difficult to put students in discussion groups since bright students sometimes refuse to be in the same discussion groups as non-performing students. When you force them to be in the same groups, they do not give their views on tasks assigned and sometimes give wrong views thus misleading other students (Teacher, 002).

Furthermore, from the interviews conducted it emerged that there was ineffective communication within groups during group work learning process. This shows that ineffective communication hindered the use of group work as a teaching strategy in secondary schools in the study area. This shows that group work as a teaching strategy, had not enabled students to be effective in communication. From the current research it seems that despite use of group work in secondary schools, students had not developed effective communication skills.

In addition, one of the teachers interviewed pointed out that there was conflict between team members during discussion groups. In this situation some members of the group would want to dominate in the discussions without giving a chance to other members thus causing conflicts. This shows that conflicts between team members hinder the use of group work as a teaching methodology. The domineering nature of some group members hindered effective use of group work since all students have not chances of participating in discussions. Some students get praise for doing very little work while others do most of the work. Similarly, some teachers pointed out that there was inability among group members to focus on tasks assigned. In this case students tend to lose focus during discussions and therefore they need guidance from their teachers so as to be effective in group works.

4.8 Students Performance in Writing

Table 4.5 presents the findings on how the individual schools scored in terms of writing.

Table 4.5 Schools score in Writing Skills

	Writing skill	Mean
1	Spelling. Spelling skills are appropriate	2.384615
2	Timely Submission. Turns in written assignments (class work, homework) on time	2.384615
3	Word Choice. Distinguishes word choices that are appropriate for informal (colloquial, slang) written discourse vs. formal discourse	2.307692
4	Writing Speed. Writes words on the page at a rate equal or nearly equal to that of classmates	2.153846
5	Adequate 'Seat Time'. Allocates realistic amount of time to the act of writing to ensure a quality final product	2.076923
6	Handwriting. Handwriting is legible to most readers	1.923077
7	Grammar & Syntax. Knowledge of grammar (rules governing use of language) and syntax (grammatical arrangement of words in sentences) is appropriate for age and/or grade placement	1.307692
8	Revision Process. Revises initial written draft before turning in for a grade or evaluation	1.307692

Findings in Table 4.5 indicate that the students performed well in two aspects. These were one spelling skill that entailed appropriateness of words with a Mean of 2.384615 and timely submission whereby they were able to turn in written assignments on time. The other skills that followed involved word choice (Mean = 2.3076, writing speed (Mean = 2.1538), adequate seat time (Mean = 2.0769), handwriting (Mean = 1.9230), grammar and syntax (Mean = 1.3076) and the least performed writing skill was revision practices (Mean = 1.3076) which entailed students revising the initial written draft before turning in for evaluation. These findings shows that use group work in teaching influenced writing skills

4.9 Discussion of Findings

The return rate for questionnaires used for data analysis in this study was 92.3%, while that of interviews was 84.6% and this was therefore considered sufficient to

provide adequate and reliable information to assess the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools. It has been argued that potential bias could result from low response rate (Boutorwick, 2017) and therefore in this study, high response rate was associated with high reliability in information gathered. Further Pike, (2007) noted that survey investigators have for a long time presumed that the best method to obtain impartial estimations is to attain a high response proportion. However, most researchers have begun to query the extensively-held supposition that low response levels may give biased outcomes (Magut, 2000). In this study, a high response rate of 92.3% for questionnaires and 84.6% for interviews was associated with high reliability in information provided.

Though findings indicated that the majority (53.8%) of the teachers did not utilize group work in teaching of writing skills previous research show an increase in students' cooperation in the classroom through group work (Gellis, et., 2004). This is as a result of teachers awareness of the positive effects that collaboration might have on students' ability to learn (Hammar Chiriac, 2014). It is critical therefore for teachers to be encouraged to use group-work during teaching so as to enhance learners' acquisition of writing skills. Contrary to the conclusion in the study by Hammar (2014) on "group work as an incentive for learning from students' experiences of group work" that group work was frequently used in higher education as a pedagogical mode in the classroom, and it was viewed as equivalent to any other pedagogical practice (whole class lesson or individual work); teachers noted in the findings that they used group work less often while teaching English. This led to difficulties among students in advancing their writing skills. Additionally, Frykedal, and Chiriac (2011) amongst other researchers pointed out that reflective choice of group work results in positive experiences and enhanced learning.

The study showed that majority (86.9%) of the learners was encouraged to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means in sentence. This shows that students were able to develop their learning strategies and make learning practical and enjoyable. This was found to be consistent with the work of Frykedal and Chiriac, (2011) who pointed out that working as a group presupposes collaboration, and that all group members will be involved in and working on a common task to produce a joint outcome. It emerged that majority (70.9%) of the secondary school students were made to focus on different meanings of words. This implies that from the group works students are able to achieve certain skills in English as a result of collaborations. This supports earlier works of Johnson and Johnson, (2004) and Boutorwick (2017) who pointed out in their research that group work is considered to be a means of acquiring academic knowledge where students' groups become a base for students' knowledge acquisition.

Finding showed that through group work students are able to develop vocabulary skills in English. These findings are similar to those of Boutorwick (2017) who found out that extensive reading in groups which were encouraged to read, and also completed warm-up activities enhanced their reading skills, and post-reading activities including vocabulary learning strategies and general discussion on reactions to the books they read. Majority of the secondary school learners in Keiyo North sub-county reported that they were encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to them as individuals. This implies that students were encouraged to be in groups so as to solve individual problems. This is consistent with the findings of Chiriac (2015) which found out that students learn much more by working in groups than working individually.

The responses pointed out that among the major activities that teachers of English involved their students while engaged in group work was punctuations, handwriting, spelling, paragraphing and, coherency. This is consistent with the works of Ward and Masgoret (2004) who pointed that students in a group may have different aptitudes and talents. In this instance members of a group may assist the others with writing, pronouncing certain words, punctuating sentences and overcoming their mother tongue influence among others.

The study findings showed that majority (83.0%) of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that their teachers introduced new vocabularies for groups to discuss them. This implies that there was student improvement in vocabulary as a result of group discussions. This is consistent to the work of Boutorwick (2017) which pointed out that vocabulary can be learned through the activities, especially those which involve learners producing language collaboratively.

As shown by the student responses, it can be argued that majority (63.7%) of the secondary school students in Keiyo North Sub-County were grouped by teachers of English so share events which inspired their peers to learn. This was found to be in congruence with the work of Gupta (2004) who noted that focusing on the participants' experiences of group work, different aspects of students' positive experiences can be identified. Inferences from the study indicated that group work as a teaching strategy consumed a lot of time. This was found to be in agreement with the arguments of Hammar Chiriac (2014) who pointed out that for efficiency in group work, students should be allotted a reasonable amount of time for discussions and personal contributions. Similar sentiments were put by McGourty and DeMeuse

(2001) who pointed out that time was an obstacle in group work as many teachers complained that group work was time consuming.

In addition, some of the teachers interviewed pointed out that in some cases students may just want to complete their assignments without getting the right concept a pointer that ideas are not sometimes thoroughly discussed during group works. This is attributed to the fact that high performing students did not want to share what they knew with their colleagues. This is contrary to what most researcher's belief about group work. For example, Hammar Chiriac (2014) among other researchers pointed out that group work is beneficial to all group members since all students contribute certain positive works in a group.

It emerged that there was ineffective communication within groups during group work learning process. This shows that group work as a teaching strategy, had not enabled students to be effective in communication contrary to the works of Race, (2005), who pointed out that group work can be an effective method to motivate students, encourage active learning, and develop key critical-thinking, communication, and decision-making skills. In addition, one of the teachers interviewed pointed out that there was conflict between team members during discussion groups. In this situation some members of the group would want to dominate in the discussions without giving a chance to other members thus causing conflicts. This is in agreement with the findings of Tuckman (2014) who noted that teachers tend to face internal conflicts when trying to decide which performance norms to accept during group work. This shows that conflicts between team members hinder the use of group work as a teaching methodology. The domineering nature of some group members hindered effective use of group work since all students have not

chances of participating in discussions. Dominance by one group member affects negatively the group as pointed by Mulat (2007) who noted that when one group member dominates the group, group performance reflects the groups' member level instead of the whole group together. Some students get praise for doing very little work while others do most of the work.

4.10 Chapter Summary

In this chapter 4, explanations on use of group work as a teaching strategy, learning activities involved when using group work, how teachers utilize group work to teach writing skills and challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work for teaching writing skills have been analyzed, presented interpreted and discussed. This information gives the study valuable information for the introduction of chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the findings on the strategies used in integrated English approach on the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub County, Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya. These are based on the four objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

This section covers the summary of the four objectives of the study;

5.2.1 How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

The first objective of this study was to examine how teachers plan group work in teaching writing skills. First, the researcher sought to understand from the students' various ways and activities in which the teacher involved them while being engaged in group work. The study pointed out that the activities the students were involved in were discussions, reading set books, writing skills, comprehension activities, listening skills, communication skills and role play. During the interview, respondents indicated that teachers' utilization of group work is key in enhancing the writing skills among the students.

Further the study found out that that among the major activities that teachers of English involved their students while engaged in group work was punctuations, handwriting, spelling, paragraphing and, coherency. This is consistent with the works of Waterloo, (2014) students in a group may have different aptitudes and talents. In this instance members of a group may assist the others with writing, pronouncing

certain words, punctuating sentences and overcoming their mother tongue influence among others.

A further, majority of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that their teachers introduced new vocabularies for groups to discuss them. This implies that there was student improvement in vocabulary as a result of group discussions. Interviews pointed out that enhancement of understanding of new vocabularies can be attained through group discussions among the students in a class. Similarly, majority of the students cited that each group presented a story in various ways based on skill level. This shows that teachers grouped students according to their intellectual capacities and assigned tasks based on each group. In addition, majority of the secondary school students in Keiyo North Sub-County were grouped by teachers of English so share events which inspired their peers to learn.

Further, majority of the students reported that they used group work to analyze text by imagining dialogue between authors. Moreover, majority of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub-County reported that they used group work to reflect on and write about their experiences. The responses further showed that slightly more than half of the students in the region reported that they were using work to discuss and analyze poems.

5.2.2 Learning Activities Teachers in Keiyo North Use When Using Group Work to Teach Writing Skills

The second objective of this study was to determine the learning activities teachers in Keiyo North use when using group work to teach writing skills. The study showed that majority of the secondary school learners in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that they were encouraged to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it

means in sentence. This shows that students were able to develop their learning strategies and can make learning practical and enjoyable. Working as a group is characterized by common effort, the utilization of the group's competence, and the presence of problem solving and reflection. This implies that when students work in groups while providing meaning to certain words, they will be in a position of providing the right meaning to the word and using it clearly in sentence construction.

In addition, majority of the secondary school students cited that through group work, they were made them to share ideas together on understanding the words. This implies that group work enabled students to have a discussion and come up a clear understanding of words in English.

Similarly, majority of the secondary school students reported that they were made to focus on different meanings of words. This implies that from the group works students are able to achieve certain skills in English as a result of collaborations. Moreover, majority of the students in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub-County reported that they were allowed to summarize texts from the text book, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies. This implies that through group work students are able to develop vocabulary skills in English.

Further, majority of the secondary school learners in Keiyo North sub-county reported that they were encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to them as individuals. This implies that students were encouraged to be in groups so as to solve individual problems. Similarly, majority of the students in secondary schools in the study area reported that they were allowed to devise their own strategies of writing words.

5.2.3 Teachers' Use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy

The third objective of this study was to observe teachers' use of group work as a teaching strategy. The study found out that majority of the teachers acknowledged that they did not utilize group work in teaching of writing skills. The above data indicates that the English teacher gave less emphasis for group work in the teaching of writing skills. The review of previous research shows that in the 20th century, there has been an increase in students' cooperation in the classroom through group work. This increasing interest can be traced back to the fact that both researchers and teachers have become aware of the positive effects that collaboration might have on students' ability to learn. The above points out that even though group work is considered to have positive effects on learning, most teachers do not use it during the teaching and learning process.

In addition, the researcher sought to establish the frequency of use of group work by teachers while teaching. Results of the analyzed information showed that most of the teachers used group work less often while teaching English. This implies that the positive effects associated with group work were not well utilized in teaching of English in secondary schools in the study area. This led to difficulties among students in advancing their writing skills. The findings here pointed out that those teachers who frequently used group work had a better chance of enhancing the achievement of writing skills among secondary school learners. Interviews with the teachers of English further pointed out that use of group work had positive effects on students' learning. However, they pointed out that group work required time for it to be effectively used.

5.2.4 Challenges Faced by Teachers of English in the Use of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

The study found out from the interviews conducted with teachers of English that when group work was used a teaching methodology, students were not able to complete their assignments on time. One of the teachers pointed out that use of group work as a teaching methodology is time consuming thus students are not in a position to complete their assignments on time. This is attributed to the fact that students have to arrive at a consensus on a specific issue before writing it down. This implies that group work as a teaching strategy consumed a lot of time. In addition, some of the teachers interviewed pointed out that in some cases students may want to complete their assignments without getting the right concept a pointer that ideas are not sometimes thoroughly discussed during group works. This is attributed to the fact that high performing students did not want to share what they knew with their colleagues.

Furthermore, from the interviews conducted it emerged that there was ineffective communication within groups during group work learning process. This shows that ineffective communication hindered the use of group work as a teaching strategy in secondary schools in the study area. This shows that group work as a teaching strategy, had not enabled students to be effective in communication. From the current research it seems that despite use of group work in secondary schools, students had not developed effective communication skills.

In addition, one of the teachers interviewed pointed out that there was conflict between team members during discussion groups. In this situation some members of ta group would want to dominate in the discussions without giving a chance to other members thus causing conflicts. This shows that conflicts between team members

hinder the use of group work as a teaching methodology. The domineering nature of some group members hindered effective use of group work since all students have not chances of participating in discussions. Similarly, some teachers pointed out that there was inability among group members to focus on tasks assigned. In this case students tend to lose focus during discussions and therefore they need guidance from their teachers so as to be effective in group works.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

Based on the study findings and in line with objective one the study concludes that teachers make use of group work in teaching writing skills thereby creating an opportunity to assess the effectiveness of their content delivery as students work on writing skills. Teachers introduced new vocabulary for students to discuss in groups and also learn important aspects of grammar such as verbs and adverbs. Students also have acumen on how to discuss a poem and understand it. As a result, their comprehension skills and writing skills are improved. It can be concluded that group work encourages students to be more engaged in material and thereby enhance their writing skills.

In relation to objective two, the study concluded that there is a wide array of activities that the teachers engage learners in when using group work to teach writing skills. These included punctuation, handwriting, spelling and paragraphing. As a result, the students have insights on how to organize ideas in a coherent manner. Students also read set books which improve on their vocabulary, sentence construction as well as grammar. There are also comprehension activities and role play which encourage participation of each student and increase their understanding on writing skills.

Based on the study findings and in line with objective three it can be concluded that teachers utilize group work as a teaching strategy though they have not fully utilized group work in teaching writing skills. It could be that the teachers find it a challenge to effectively group students with differing rates of teaching and diverse ability to study in groups. Besides, group work can be time consuming and difficult to implement. Despite these challenges, students were able to provide meaning of words and shared ideas together on understanding words. The implication is that students have a lot to gain in terms of acquiring knowledge on writing skills when done in groups.

Finally, based on objective four the study concluded that teachers were faced with a number of challenges in the use of group work for teaching writing skills. In certain instances, there was poor communication network and incompatibility among the students making it difficult for them to complete assigned tasks. Besides, since students have differing rates of teaching and diverse ability to study in groups, it becomes a challenge for group members to thoroughly discuss and to focus on the group tasks.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the study findings the and with respect to group work the study recommends that teachers should effectively utilize it in teaching writing skills. Through group work, students can practice a wide range of language functions such as verbs and adverbs and vocabulary. As well, students can be autonomous, self-reliant and more engaged in writing skills through discussions and have the opportunity to articulate their explanations to the whole class. In so doing, students can assess their

understanding and gain new knowledge through interactions with each other and the course content of the English language.

In order to reap the benefits of learning activities such as writing skills, comprehension activities, listening skills and communication skills, the study recommends that teachers need to encourage ideas from students and carefully listen to them so as to identify their strengths and weaknesses with regard to writing. Besides, it is of utmost importance for the teacher of English to maintain a positive atmosphere by observing the manner in which students are participating so as to enhance students focus on the learning materials.

Based on the study findings the study recommends that teachers of English should enhance their knowledge and understanding of group work as a teaching strategy. Particularly, teachers need to group students in smaller groups so that it is easier to cater for the needs of each and every member of the group. Also, the teacher should be able to check the participation of the students and identify the areas of weakness with regard to writing skills. Moreover, teachers of English should take advantage of differing student ability by providing a program of balanced activities that will be motivational and most beneficial to the students. Precisely, by knowing the needs of the students and their ability, the teachers will adjust the mode of grouping to meet the needs of the learners.

Finally, to overcome the challenges in the use of group work for teaching writing skills, teachers of English need to ensure that there is compatibility among the group members so that there is no misunderstanding in the groups. There should also be a good communication network and teachers need to take an initiative to share their experiences so as to enhance a conducive learning atmosphere. Consequently, learners

will be able to learn more through sharing their experiences to one another and enhance the comprehensiveness of different writing concepts by discussing together.

5.5 Areas for Further Research

This study focused on the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North sub county, Elgeyo - Marakwet County. It can be replicated with a larger, more representative sample.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to know whether the observed findings hold for secondary schools in other counties. More research is needed in this subject area with the use of both descriptive and inferential statistics to establish the relationship between the study variables.

Moreover, major contextual and settings to be considered in future researches should consider insights from this study influencing development of students' writing ability including teachers' knowledge and understanding of group work, nature of learning activities teachers engage learners in when using group work, teachers utilizing group work and challenges teachers of English face in the use of group work.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Questionnaire for Students

Dear respondent,

I am a student at Moi University carrying out a research on "the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North Sub County, Elgeyo Marakwet County". The research is meant for academic purpose only. You are kindly requested to provide answers to these questions as honestly and precisely as possible. The information provided will be kept **confidential**. In case of any questions kindly contact me on.

Dear students, the purpose of this study is to describe use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools. Therefore, through this questionnaire, the researcher wants to find out how you think, feel and behave when working with other students. Use your experiences from the class to answer these statements below. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

SECTION A: Demographic information (Tick (√) appropriately)

1. What is your Gender (sex) Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. What grade did you get in your previous compositions ……

SECTION B: How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

3. Below are various ways your teacher engages you in group writing, please tick appropriately

	SA	A	N	D	SD
Our teacher introduces new vocabulary for a group to discuss					

Each group should present a story in various ways based on skill level					
Our teacher groups us to share events of our lives to inspire us in writing					
We use group work to analyze text by imagining dialogue between authors.					
We use group work to reflect on and write about our experiences.					
We use group work to talk about verbs and adverbs					
We use group work to discuss and analyze poem					

SECTION C: Learning Activities Teachers in Keiyo North Use When Using Group Work To Teach Writing Skills

4. Below are some of the learning activities your teacher of English engages you in when using group work to teach writing skills. Please tick ones you use in your class

	SA	A	N	D	SD
We are encouraged as groups to provide meaning of words and make sense of what it means in sentence					
We are made to share ideas together on understanding the words					
We are made to focus on different meanings of words; why certain words are written the way they are, not just how.					
We are allowed as groups to summarize a text from the text					

book, critique, rectify and come up with new vocabularies					
We are encouraged to rework in groups on words that seem difficult to us as individual					
We are allowed as students to devise our own strategies for writing words					

5. Identify and explain the various ways and activities in which the teacher involves you in when engaged in group work.

……

……

6. More specifically, identify and explain the learning activities your teacher of English engages you in when using group work to teach you writing skills

……

……

……

SECTION D: How Teachers' Plan Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

7. Does your teacher use group work when teaching you?.....
8. How often does your teacher use group work when teaching you?
9. Identify from the following areas when your teacher uses group work when teaching you.

a) Listening skills ☐
b) Speaking skills ☐
c) Reading skills ☐
d) Writing skills ☐
e) Grammar skills ☐

SECTION E: Challenges do you and your teachers face when using group work in the learning and teaching of writing skills

….....

.....

.....

APPENDIX II: Interview Schedule for Teachers' of English

PART A: Teachers' preparedness in use of Group Work as a Teaching Strategy

a) Have you ever attended any training on group work? Please elaborate

……

……

……

b) Can group work be used as a teaching technique/strategy?

……

……

……

PART B Teachers' Utilization of Group Work in Teaching Writing Skills

d) What are the learning activities you engage your learners in when using group work to teach writing skills in class? Outline them below:

……

……

……

……

……

e) How do you utilize the above techniques in teaching writing skills?

……

……

……

f) State the advantages of using each group work activity

……

……

……

g) What is your role as a teacher during the use of group work activities during the lesson?

……

……

……

h) What challenges do you face in the use of group work in teaching of writing skills?

……

……

……

……

……

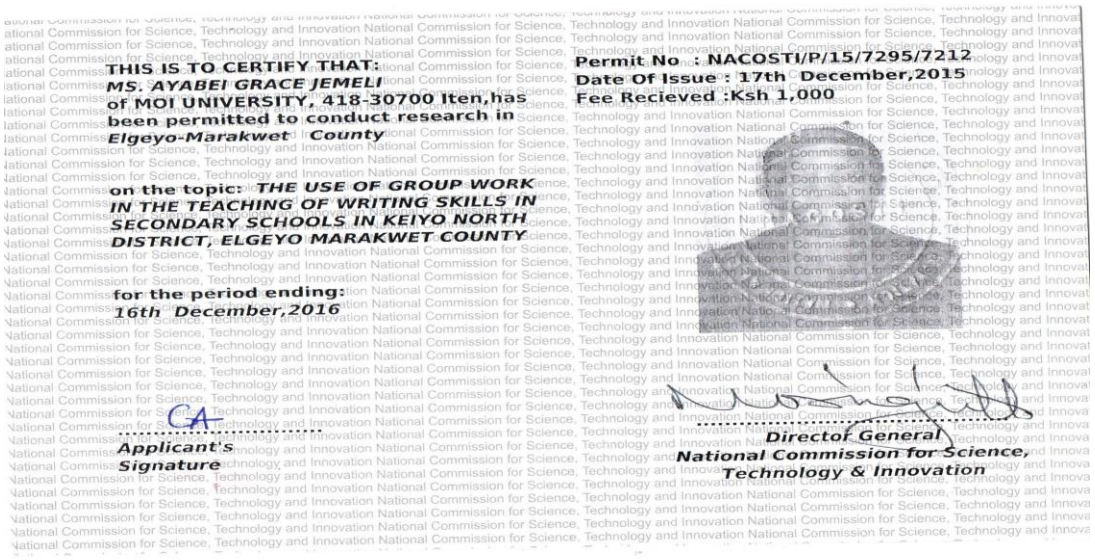
APPENDIX III: Observation Schedule

Items	**Present**	**Not Present**	**Descriptions of how it is used**	**Teacher's role**	**Learners role**
Beginning/introduction of lesson					
Group arrangement					
Lesson development					
Size of the group					
Types of textbooks used in group discussions					
Gender diversity					
Number of time they use group work					
Lesson conclusion					

Performance Check List

	Writing skill	**Poor**	**Moderate**	**Good**
1	Writing Speed. Writes words on the page at a rate equal or nearly equal to that of classmates			
2	Handwriting. Handwriting is legible to most readers			
	Grammar & Syntax. Knowledge of grammar (rules governing use of language) and syntax (grammatical arrangement of words in sentences) is appropriate			
3	Spelling. Spelling skills are appropriate			
4	Word Choice. Distinguishes word choices that are appropriate for informal (colloquial, slang) written discourse vs. formal discourse			
5	Adequate 'Seat Time'. Allocates realistic amount of time to the act of writing to ensure a quality final product			
6	Revision Process. Revises initial written draft before turning in for a grade or evaluation			
7	Timely Submission. Turns in written assignments (class work, homework) on time			

APPENDIX IV Research Permit



THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. AYABEI GRACE JEMELI
of MOI UNIVERSITY, 418-30700 Iten,has
been permitted to conduct research in
Elgeyo-Marakwet County
on the topic: THE USE OF GROUP WORK IN THE TEACHING OF WRITING SKILLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KEIYO NORTH DISTRICT, ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY
for the period ending:
16th December,2016

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/15/7295/7212
Date Of Issue : 17th December,2015
Fee Recieved :Ksh 1,000

Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed without prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2) hard copies and one(1) soft copy of your final report.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NACOSTI

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

Serial No. A 7597

CONDITIONS: see back page

APPENDIX V: Research Authorization (NACOSTI)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:
17th December, 2015

NACOSTI/P/15/7295/7212

Ayabei Grace Jemeli
Moi University
P.O. Box 3900-30100
ELDORET.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on ***"The use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North District, Elgeyo Marakwet County,"*** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Elgeyo Marakwet County** for a period ending **16th December, 2016.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Elgeyo Marakwet County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.
DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Elgeyo Marakwet County.

The County Director of Education
Elgeyo Marakwet County.

APPENDIX VI: Research Authorization (County Commission)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR & COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telegrams: "DISTRICDTER" Iten
Telephone: (053) 42007
Fax : (053) 42289
E-mail: ccelgeyomarakwet@yahoo.com
ccelgeyomarakwet@gmail.com
When replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
ELGEYO-MARAKWET COUNTY,
P.O. BOX 200-30700
ITEN

Ref. PUB/CC/24/2 VOL.1/179

Date 30th May, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Ayabei Grace Jemeli

This is to confirm that the above named has been authorized to carry out research on ***"the use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North "*** in Elgeyo Marakwet County for the period ending 16th December,2016.

Please accord her the necessary assistance.

FREDRICK K. NDAMBUKI
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY

ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY
COUNTY COMMISSIONER

c.c. Deputy County Commissioner,
KEIYO NORTH.

FKN/sjk

APPENDIX VII: Formal Research Authorization

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TELEGRAM:.....
TELEPHONE NO: 0534142207
WHEN REPYLING PLEASE QUOTE OUR REFERENCE
EMAIL: *cdeelgeyomarakwet@gmail.com*

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION,
ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY,
P.O. BOX 214-30700,
ITEN.

DATE: 30th May,2016

REF No: CDE/EMC/R/26/VOL.I/ (194)

Ayabei Grace Jemeli,
Moi University
P.o. Box 39002-30100,
ELDORET.

RE: FORMAL RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION:

Following the authorization by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation **(NACOSTI)** to carry out research in **Elgeyo Marakwet County** vide Authority letter **Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/15/7295/7212** dated **17th December, 2015,** you are hereby formally granted authority by this office to proceed with your study on **"The use of group work in the teaching of writing skills in secondary schools in Keiyo North District, Elgeyo Marakwet County. "** for a period ending, **16th December, 2016**.

You are further required to report to all Sub-County Director of Education – **Keiyo Sub County** before you embark on your research.

By copy of this letter, the Sub-County Director of Education-Keiyo Sub County are requested to accord you the necessary assistance.

FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
ELGEYO MARAKWET
P. O. Box 214 - 30700
ITEN

Rose C.Boiyo
For: County Director of Education,
ELGEYO MARAKWET.
Copy to:
1. The Sub-County Directors of Education-Elgeyo Marakwet.
2. The Director General/CEO -NACOSTI

APPENDIX VIII: Map of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Keiyo North