

**ROLE OF ORAL QUESTIONING ON PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH  
LANGUAGE:  
A CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
ELDORET MUNICIPALITY- KENYA**

**BY**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH EDUCATION**

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**NOVEMBER, 2010**

## DECLARATION

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to the following:

My parents, James and Rebecca

My husband, David

And children, Nixon, Joy and Eric

Whose wishes I have fulfilled.

## ABSTRACT

This study sought to determine the role of oral questioning on the performance of students in English language as a subject. The objectives of the study were: to find out the relationship between oral questioning skills and student performance in English in Eldoret Municipality; to identify other teaching strategies that are employed by English language teachers in secondary schools and to recommend how oral questioning can be improved in secondary schools within Eldoret Municipality. This study was guided by the Input Hypothesis derived from Krashen's Monitor Model (1981b, 1982). The other theory was the Output Hypothesis (Krashen 1981, 1998). Information-Processing Approach Theory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968) has also been applied to give an educational basis. The study employed mixed method design. Population for this study was all form three students and the study relied on a sample size of 180 form three students drawn from six secondary schools within Eldoret Municipality, form three English language teachers, head teachers of the selected schools and education officials in the district. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques, specifically purposive and stratified random sampling. To collect data, the study used questionnaires, interviews, documentary data and non-participant observation. Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were employed. The study found that oral questioning as a method of teaching is not being utilized as recommended in secondary schools. Improvement in oral questioning is likely to improve the performance of English language in secondary schools, since it is a language at the centre of the education system of the country. The study recommends that teachers should strive to harness their perception of oral questions in order to improve their questioning behaviour. This has the potential of enriching the oral questions they ask. Similarly, this will enhance the oral responses learners provide as a way of not only boosting the language input and output which facilitates the learning of English language but also as a means of performing better in the subject. The Ministry of Education should organise frequent seminars, workshops and in-service courses for teachers to enlighten, refresh and sharpen teachers' knowledge and skills of questioning in relation to current developments in theory and practice.

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**ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE STUDY**

<b>CAR</b>	Classroom Audio Recording
<b>COS</b>	Classroom Observation Schedule
<b>DEO</b>	District Education Officer
<b>FPE</b>	Free Primary Education
<b>HOD</b>	Head of Department
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>JKF</b>	Jomo Kenyatta Foundation
<b>KIE</b>	Kenya Institute of Education
<b>KLB</b>	Kenya Literature Bureau
<b>KNEC</b>	Kenya National Examinations Council
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>TSC</b>	Teachers Service Commission
<b>QUASO</b>	Quality Assurance Officer

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is what it is today because of the guidance, instruction, patience and support I received from various people and institutions. Special thanks go to Moi University for granting me the opportunity to pursue this degree course. My university supervisors, Dr. L. P. Barasa and Mr. Wamakonjio for their comments, suggestions and encouragement that have been extremely valuable. To all my colleagues in the School of Education, Moi University, who offered sound educational guidance. Their ideas and corrections have been of great value. To all teachers, students and District education staff who participated in the study and sacrificed their time to answer questionnaires, and attend to interviews. In addition, they allowed me to observe and tape record some of their lessons. This provided me with the necessary information and data that formed the base of this study. To all my close friends and relatives who in one way or the other provided all kinds of support in my endeavour to climb the academic ladder. My gratitude would not be complete without the mention of my husband David and children Nixon, Joy and Eric who sacrificed so much to make this study a success.

Above all, I would like to thank the Almighty God, who granted me good health, gave me a sound mind, strength and wisdom during this period of study. To all, may the Lord God Almighty abundantly bless you.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a general introduction to the study. It presents the background to the study, the problem statement, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study, and the theoretical framework guiding the study.

#### 1.1 Background to the study

English plays a key role in Kenya's educational system, not only as an important subject but also as the medium of instruction (Barasa, 2005:3). It has been claimed that the model and the norm of the English used in Kenya, apart from pidgin varieties, is the British Standard variety and in particular, Received Pronunciation (RP) (Schmied, 1990; Zuengler, 1982).

Language in education in Kenya has faced and still faces many challenges. The challenges often revolve around the place and development of the local indigenous languages (Kioko, 2000; Mbaabu, 1996; Ryanga, 2000); the need and means to strengthen English as it is the national language (Mazrui & Mazrui, 1995; Mbaabu, 1996; Musau, 1999, 2000); and concerns about the usefulness of the English language, its effective teaching and/or its falling standards (Abdulaziz, 1982; Angogo & Hancock, 1980; Kembo-Sure, 1994; Nyamasyo, 1992, 1994). Sometimes the problems have had to do with the competition that the languages have had in the nation and especially in the education system due to the fact that each language was, and still is, associated with a certain social meaning (Mbaabu, 1996; Muthwii, 1994; Whiteley, 1974). For example,

English, introduced early in Kenya's colonial history, played a significant role in the growth of nationalism (Crampton, 1986; Whiteley, 1974), a role which it no longer enjoys. It also played and still plays a key role in the country's legal, economic and educational systems.

In the school system, English is not only one of the most important subjects in the curriculum but is itself the medium of instruction. The roots of this significant function of English can be traced back to Kenya's colonial period when it was instrumental to an individual's access to white collar jobs, European thought, and other privileges (Mazrui, 1992; Whiteley, 1974). English was a language with a lot of prestige and power and the British model was unquestionably the one used in Kenya.

Kenyans learnt it from the native speakers and unlike Kiswahili, English in Kenya, as in all non-native contexts, was/is largely a taught language, conveyed through formal education.

The issue of how English is taught and acquired is, therefore, very important but this must be looked at in the light of the fact that it is also a second language in Kenya. The main focus of this study is oral questioning as one of the important teaching skills that teachers need to use in class. "Next to lecturing, questioning is the single most common teaching method employed in schools in the world" (Orlich et al., 1985: 168). There is no doubt that questioning is crucial in the performance of both teachers and learners because questioning can be facilitative of teaching and learning (Ondiek, 1974). In life, peoples' need to ask and respond to questions is imperative. The centrality of questioning in life and especially in classroom cannot therefore, be underscored.

Questioning is a means of getting feedback to evaluate students' progress as well as an important way to increase student learning. Just as important, it is a way to force students to think during class. The proposed study conceived oral questioning as a critical asset in every good teacher's toolbox. The students are not sponges: devices to soak up content without expecting them to think.

The Kenya National Examinations Council report (KNEC, 2004:12) indicates weaknesses in the way English is taught in secondary schools, which affects the students' overall performance in national examinations. The most important aspect in this report is the fact that most candidates can neither comprehend questions asked nor infer meanings from the narratives, which highlights under utilization of oral questioning skills by English teachers.

With the emphasis on educational goals shifting from mere acquisition of facts and information to development of effective teaching and intelligent manipulation of materials (Ole Takona, 1996), the technique of questioning has become even more important for the teacher. Lewis and Hill (1985) suggest that the most prominent way of leading to effective language input and output in the classroom is the questioning technique.

Wood and Wood's (1983) study cited in Dyanda (1997) found that demanding questions produced initiativeness and talkativeness in preschool children. Reviews by Lewis cited

in Dillon (1988) support the view that the level of student responses corresponds to the level of teacher questions.

A study by Dyanda (1997) also found that there was a correspondence between the level of teacher questions and the level of children responses. There was the predominance of one category of question, the lower order constituting 74 per cent.

However, reviews by Winnie in Dyanda (1997) did not find consistent effects of increasing higher order questions on achievement. Perrot (1982) and Dillon (1981) had earlier provided arguments similar to these findings. Perrot is even more emphatic when she states that it is not always possible that simple teacher questions will elicit short answers while demanding questions provoke long, complex and creative answers.

Studies by Dillon (1988) reported that only about half the students' responses were at the same level as the teacher's questions. One third to one half were of a lower cognitive level than the teachers' questions. These findings contradict the popular view that higher order questions elicit higher order responses. Ole Takona (1996) after extensive reviews concedes that it is reasonable to assume even without research evidence, that teachers who ask challenging questions encourage their students to think at a higher level than teachers who ask low-level questions.

But as pointed out by Hight (1951), almost half a century ago, not every single question type or questioning technique can accomplish meaningful language learning. The situation is similar in language teaching. Although language teachers spend more time eliciting oral contributions from class than do teachers of any other subject (Cross, 1991),

research findings in language teaching have not been conclusive about the impact of questions on performance (Hargie, 1983). For example, they have not demonstrated whether there is correlation between teacher questions and meaningful student' language production in the classroom or not.

Abundant information on oral questioning pertaining to the classroom teaching of various subjects and lesson topics was documented in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but neither of the known studies conducted focused on the teaching of English language as a subject. The amount, nature and purpose of English language, teachers' oral questions as well as their effects on learners' language production and performance remain unclear.

The absence of adequate data on these aspects has resulted in a knowledge gap and it is the aim of this study to generate information to fill it. Findings of studies such as those by Ondiek (1974), Okere (1984), Dillon (1988), Ole Takona (1996), Dyanda (1997) and Ipara (2003) are not definitive as to the number of classroom questions and whether they are an effective pedagogical device or not.

This study therefore, looked at the influence of oral questioning on performance of students in English language as a subject in selected schools in Eldoret Municipality. It evaluates the discrepancies that exist between theoretical curriculum norms and expectations, which are the ideals, and the actual teaching skills employed by teachers and how these affect performance of students in English language.



## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

In Kenya, the poor language proficiency in English by students in secondary schools in 1990's and the preceding years turned on the spotlight on the teaching and learning of English language (Barasa, 2005). Oladejo (1991: 195) observes, "the major threat comes from lack of professionalism in English as a Second Language (ESL)." Barasa (2005: 2) identifies various instances recorded including:

1. The Minister of Education, stating that performance in English had deteriorated when announcing the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education results for the year 1994 (Daily Nation, March 1, 1995).
2. In its Annual Report for 1991 and 1992 the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) states to teachers, "the performance of English remained unsatisfactory" (KNEC Examination Report, 1994: 249).
3. Universities have voiced concern about receiving first year students who can hardly write, read, and hold discussions in English.

The question that the study sought to answer was what happens in class at the secondary level that leads to this scenario? What challenges does this state of affairs present to an education system that relies heavily on the use of the English language?

Concerns have also been raised over the discrepancies that exist between theoretical curriculum norms, regulations and expectations, which are the ideals, and actual teaching skills employed by teachers (KNEC, 2004 and Barasa, 2005). From the researcher's practical observation, it seems that the way English is being taught in secondary schools

within Eldoret Municipality has a bearing on students' overall performance in national examinations.

That English teachers either do not adequately apply teaching skills in English as specified by the curriculum of the Ministry of Education (MOE) or they do but inappropriately. Therefore, the need to link teaching skills, specifically oral questioning, and students' performance in English is real. The problem of this study, therefore, is to generate information into oral questioning practice of English language teachers in selected secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality. The main purpose of the study was to answer the question 'what is the relationship between oral questioning and performance of English in selected secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality'?

### **1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the study**

The main purpose of this study was to find out the influence of oral questioning on performance of English language in secondary schools. Specific objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the relationship between oral questioning skills and student performance in English language in Eldoret Municipality secondary schools.
2. To identify other teaching strategies that are employed by English language teachers in secondary schools of Eldoret municipality.
3. To recommend how oral questioning can be improved in secondary schools within Eldoret Municipality.

## **1.4 Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between oral questioning skills and student performance in English language in secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality?
2. What other teaching strategies do English language teachers in secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality employ?
3. How can oral questioning be improved in secondary schools within Eldoret municipality?

## **1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Scope of the study**

This study focused on oral questioning skills as an aspect of classroom verbal interaction, used by English teachers. The findings of this research to some extent were expected to apply to other areas or districts in Kenya. Firstly, there are similarities in learning environments, resources, the curriculum and teacher training among other aspects in most districts in Kenya. Secondly, the instruments that were used for data collection were tested for validity and reliability. The sample that was used was hoped to be a good representation of the population characteristics on which the judgement is based, however, because of unique individual, regional or district characteristics, caution should be taken when generalizing the results.

### **1.5.2 Limitations of the study**

To work within the scope of the study, the research methodology did not allow the researcher to have a wider population. This enabled the study to be manageable and thus, be completed on time. Furthermore, due to limited finances, no research assistants were

used. The study was limited to responses that were obtained from the questionnaires, the interviews and observations. These actually formed the bulk of data upon which the analysis and findings were based. As indicated by Barasa (1997: 73), the study only went as far as observing, investigating and analysing data given by sources. The study has no control over the exact information the subjects will give or withhold.

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

Teaching and use of English in Kenyan secondary schools have implications on mastery of knowledge and general improvement of education standards countrywide. Gurray (1954) argues that education standards can be raised appreciably by improving the teaching of language: for clarity of language indicates clarity of thought that leads to certainty of comprehension and certainty of comprehension leads to mastery of knowledge. Therefore, investigation into teachers' classroom competence yields findings, which can be used for the betterment of teaching. Hence, the findings of this study may be a step towards the improvement of the teaching and learning of English in secondary schools, as well as a milestone towards the improvement in general performance in other subjects that rely on English as the language of instruction. The findings of this research will also assist English teachers in utilizing the most appropriate resources in ensuring that English is effectively taught, learnt and more so that the objectives of teaching these skills are obtained.

If this happens, the performance in English will improve and by extension the performance in other subjects.

It was further hoped thought-examining bodies such as Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) would benefit from this study. By using findings of the study as a means of moderating examination, the KNEC may strike a balance between what goes on in the classroom and the examination that the learner takes.

From the conceptual dimension, the findings of this study it is believed will provide a database for future researchers studying issues related to this topic. The findings of the study will also provide information on the link between oral questioning and student performance in language subjects in secondary schools. This will be crucial because little is known on this area of research.

### **1.7 Assumptions of the study**

The study assumes that:

1. Teachers of English language in secondary schools are aware of and use the questioning technique when teaching.
2. The students participating in the study will give sincere responses to the questions in the questionnaire and give correct data.
3. Students' performance in English is determined by the interplay of factors surrounding the learning process that the students go through.

### **1.8 Theoretical framework**

This study is grounded in the Input Hypothesis derived from Krashen's Monitor Model (1981b, 1982). This theory is supported by the Output Hypothesis (Krashen 1981, 1998).

Information-Processing Approach theory (Atkinson and Shiffrin, 1968) has also been applied to give an educational basis.

### **1.8.1 The Input Hypothesis**

This hypothesis has been derived from Krashen's Monitor Model (1981b, 1982). It is a language learning theory that has four other hypotheses: The input hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, and the affective filter hypothesis. This study is mainly concerned with the input hypothesis.

Although there are other theories, Krashen (1987) asserts that the input hypothesis: "may be the single most important concept in second language acquisition theory today" (p. 9).

The input hypothesis postulates that:

Humans acquire language in only one way – by understanding messages or by receiving 'comprehensible input'. We move from 'i', our current level, to 'i+1', the next level along the natural order by understanding input containing 'i+1' (Krashen, 1985:2).

The input hypothesis states that people only acquire language when they receive and understand language that contains grammatical structures that are 'a little beyond' their current level of competence. Krashen (1987:20) argues that the only effective input is that which contains structures just beyond the syntactic complexity of those found in the current grammar of the learner. In addition there must be sensible and enough of such input.

Krashen further argues that speaking fluency cannot be taught directly; instead it emerges over time on its own following comprehensible input. According to Krashen (1987)

failure of second language learners to speak should not worry a teacher, as they will speak when they are ready. The hypothesis continues to state that teacher talk is central to language acquisition because it is probably the major source of comprehensible language input the learner is likely to get. Learners' output (speech) may also supplement teacher talk. In this case teachers' questions could help the learners in the process of reorganizing rules and structures already acquired to create new grammatical forms, which are then produced as output. Teacher talk may also provide opportunities, which foster the development of competence in the functional use of English.

Lastly, the input hypothesis states that no single grammar teaching method is a panacea. Krashen, nevertheless, argued that methods that provide learners with comprehensible input are superior to grammar or drilled-based methods. The reason being that rules, patterns and other language forms are established in the learner's repertoire on the basis of exposure to comprehensible input and not by drilling, repetition and practice.

Despite the fact that Krashen's input hypothesis is flawed (McLaughlin 1987:36-51, Swain 1985), "we feel just as Krashen does that comprehensible input is not just important but necessary for grammar learning. Being a relatively proficient speaker in class, teacher talk and the teacher's questions provide, in many cases a crucial source of input."

Krashen suggests that the classroom should provide learners with good and grammatical comprehensible input than what is available for them on the outside. This is important for Kenya's secondary school learners of English as a second language. Sources of input for

learning English language outside the classroom are not rich and comprehensible enough for a majority of students.

The input hypothesis was found appropriate for this study. The strength of the input hypothesis lies in the numerous concepts it offers on the value of input. Despite the criticism the researcher maintains that it is the most relevant for a study of this nature because the study focuses on input in the classroom setting. Input in the form of teacher questions and learners' oral responses, is particularly useful in the learning and acquisition of language. Incorporating the output concept below filled the gaps arising from the limitations of Krashen's input hypothesis.

### **1.8.2 The Output Hypothesis**

The output hypothesis is a concept that has existed alongside the input hypothesis. Although Krashen (1981b, 1998) argued that it is not as fundamental as input in language learning he posits that it has a role to play in language acquisition but only under certain conditions. Output through conversation is one way of providing language intake so long as this occurs in circumstances in which the learner has some control of the topic and the partner's utterances are understood (Krashen, 1981b:108-109). As do Swain and Lapkin (1995), Ipara (2003) concedes that output facilitates both learning and acquisition in ways that are different from or enhance those of input.

There are many roles output can play in a classroom. Firstly, understanding new grammar forms is not enough. The learner must be given the opportunity to produce the new forms through application and practice. In the case of English as a second language in Kenya, the classroom may offer the only rare chance of production for majority of learners



(Ipara, 2003:32). Secondly, talking according to Long and Porter (1985) can benefit learners not just by providing an avenue for practice, but also by providing them feedback.

Thirdly the learners' output is an indicator of their inter-language (Ipara, 2003:32). The term inter-language has been used roughly to imply the learner's language. Fourthly, conversational partners often try to help one understand by modifying their speech.

The researcher found it necessary to incorporate the output concept because it offers various explanations regarding the value of output and its reciprocal relationship with input. Larsen-Freeman (1975) quoted in Gaies (1983) reports research findings in support of this to the effect that production of certain features by second language learners is related to the frequency with which those features occur in linguistic input. The speech produced by learners may also have an effect on the learning and acquisition of language by fellow students.

### **1.8.3 Information-Processing Approach**

This is a learning theory that was propounded by Atkinson and Shiffrin (1968). It focuses on how human beings interpret and manipulate the information they encounter. In most instances we attend to some things (or parts of things) and not others, we mentally change the form and organizational properties of information we integrate into existing bodies of knowledge, we retrieve certain aspects of stored information to solve a variety of everyday problems.

Research in this field supports the following view of learning:

1. Information moves through a series of mental storehouses that vary in the way in which information is stored and for how long.
2. Learning occurs gradually because of limits on how much information we can attend to and think about at any point in time.
3. What we know strongly influences what we learn.
4. We can exert a great deal of control over the cognitive processes that result in learning.

In summary, for information to be meaningfully learned it must be attended to, its critical features must be noticed, and it must be coded in an organized and meaningful way so as to make its retrieval more likely (Searleman, A. and Herrmann, D., 1994; cited in Snowman and Biehler, 2000).

### **1.9 Operational definition of terms**

**First language** - This is the language that is acquired in childhood as mother tongue before any other is learnt. It is a major medium of communication at home. In Kenya vernacular languages represent the first language for most people. However, some Kenyans in certain instances, also use Kiswahili and English as first languages.

**Language of instruction** - Refers to the language used by a teacher or an instructor as the medium of issuing or conveying information and meanings to learners in any given field of study. In Kenya, students in schools are taught the rest of the subjects in English except for Kiswahili subject from primary four, so English is the language of instruction.

**Oral questions** - These are statements which function to elicit an obligatory verbal or non-verbal response from a learner and which entails the demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to English language.

**Oral questioning-** Refers to the process of making oral statements which function to elicit an obligatory verbal or non-verbal response from a learner and which entails the demonstration of knowledge, skills and attitudes pertaining to English language.

**Second language** - A medium of communication among people who have acquired a first language. In Kenya, many people from diverse linguistic background use Kiswahili and/or English as second languages.

**Low order questions** - These are questions that emphasize memory and recall of information. For our purpose, it refers to an oral statement, which directs a learner to state, repeat, recall or recapitulate simple facts, definitions, rules and structures pertaining to English language he/she has already been exposed to.

**High order questions** - These are questions that call for complex and abstract thinking. It is used to refer to an oral statement that requires a learner to apply, generate, reconstruct, analyze, transform, create, formulate, integrate, and evaluate English language facts, concepts, processes and structures.

**Secondary school** - A public institution of learning that offers four years of formal schooling preceding university education in Kenya. The education offered at this level is

based on the four-year curriculum, which is broad-based and builds on concepts, principles, skills and attitudes established at the primary level. This level of education is terminal for majority of students.

**Inter- language** – A language system produced by somebody who is learning a language, which has features of the language which they are learning and also features of their first language.

**Oral questioning skills** - This is being proficient in asking oral questions through practice and use in English language teaching.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In order for a meaningful study to be carried out, prior relationship between variables in the chosen area must be explored, examined, reviewed in order to build both context and a case for subsequent investigation that has potential merit and applicability.

This chapter therefore discusses some of the literature available that is related to the present study, and it seeks to elucidate the relationship between previous studies related to this one in creating a relevant basis for this study as well as avoiding replication of work. More importantly, past work can and should be reviewed as a springboard into subsequent work, the latter building upon and extending the former (Tuckman, 1978:38).

#### **2.2 Centrality of Use of Questions in Teaching English**

Questioning is probably one of the most versatile and most readily available techniques in the hands of the teacher (Orlich et al., 1985). For Perrot (1982), she asserts, "in fact it may well be the most important activity in which the teacher engages [in]...Teachers certainly rely on question asking as a major part of their teaching repertoire (p. 41)." According to Ondiek (1974), questions constitute about one-third of classroom discourse and teachers ask 86 per cent of the questions in the classroom. Floyd (1960) cited in Perrot (1982) found out that primary teachers asked an average of 384 questions during each class day. At issues here is not how many questions the teacher asks, but how the questions are asked, the time given for students to respond and the kind of questions

asked. English being a language, there is need to emphasize oral questioning because this enhances mastery of the language by students based on the principal that practice makes perfect.

Ondiek (1974) cited several studies, which had been carried out to investigate the role of questioning in teaching and language learning. On one hand, some of these studies found that questions can be facilitative to teaching and learning. He argues that with skilful handling, the questioning techniques can accomplish a host of important instructional goals. On the other hand, other studies reviewed by Ondiek revealed that questions can be a hindrance to classroom teaching and learning if misused or over-used. In an apparent exemplification of such inhibiteness in classroom encounter, Nacino-Brown et al (1982) lamented, "...the teacher went on asking question after question,

sometimes without any apparent reason, until some students became restless and started looking miserable (p. 112). " Therefore, despite the fact that there is no doubt that questions are crucial in the performance of both teachers and learners, this will depend on their types and functions in addition to skill and care in their use.

With the emphasis in educational goals shifting from mere acquisition of facts and information to development of reflective thinking and intelligent manipulation of materials (Nacino-Brown et al 1982; Ole Takona, 1996), the technique of questioning has become even more vital for the teacher. When considered in the context of grammar, this concept should be manifested not through mere memorization, recall and items of structure, but through involvement of the students in active participation and the provision of opportunities for the student to listen to, manipulate syntactical elements and use

language naturally to communicate real meanings in circumstances which approximate real life situations (Ipara, 2003).

Ipara further argues that there are many opportunities in a typical lesson for guiding students towards reflective thinking, listening to, and production of grammatical elements as means to meaningful learning. Other scholars like Cross (1991) have also stated that questioning directly provokes and promotes oral (and aural) language activities. Indeed, of all methods available to a teacher for moving students towards oral conversation, questioning is the quickest and the easiest (Stevick, 1982). According to Callahan and Clarke (1988), the use of questioning is one of the most important of all teaching techniques. Callahan and Clark argue that "use of questioning during class stimulate thinking, assess student progress, check on teacher clarity, motivate students to pay attention, maintain classroom control, provide repetition, emphasize key points, and many more things" (p. 1). However, they warn that the level of student's response to questioning is more often determined by the teacher's questioning techniques.

Ole Takona (1996) argues that teachers who ask challenging questions encourage their students to think at a higher level than teachers who ask low-level questions. However, as pointed out by Highet (1995) cited in Ipara (2003), not every questioning technique can accomplish meaningful language learning. Only questions asked in the right atmosphere and carried out in the right spirit can provide enormous opportunity for practice and enable students to make connection between grammar that they have learned and the way to apply it to things that have real meaning for them (p. 4).

These arguments clearly highlight the fact that oral questioning is just one of the skills used in teaching, which can only be effective if used well and along other teaching techniques. The above literature is also not conclusive about the impact of questioning on student performance, which this study seeks to clearly show.

According to Kogan (1976),

English is the heart of the National Curriculum. All other learning depend crucially upon the mastery of the fundamental skills of the English language, which are vital not only for educational purposes ...but...also for our economic growth and competitiveness (p.80).

Although these words were addressed to a British audience, they could apply to the position of English in the Kenyan education system. English is hereby underlined not just as an international language but also an important language based on the role it plays in the country's economy.

The Ministry of Education (1995) announced that "English is the medium of instruction in Kenyan schools," which shows the importance of the subject both in our curriculum and as a service subject. It is the latter statement, which highlights the function of English in the system of education. The purposes of English are varied, including "the school leavers will require good English in a large variety of professional, commercial and day to day transactions in the Kenyan and International environment" (Barasa, 2005: 10). Eshiwani (1990) as cited in Barasa (2005) reiterates, "English is there...to facilitate discussion among many African states (p. 10)."



English like all other foreign languages that are official languages is taught and learnt in Kenya to achieve several objectives that include:

1. To develop the learner's intellectual powers.
2. To increase the learner's personal culture by reading literature and philosophy.
3. To increase the learner's knowledge on how language works.
4. To teach to the learner a language so that he/she can do research.
5. To bring to a better understanding of international issues (Ministry of Education, 1994).

These objectives are found in other African states that have embraced English as a medium of instruction (Barasa, 2005).

However, there are other scholars who are very critical of the African governments' language policies with regard to the choice of foreign languages as media of instruction. Rubagumya (1994) for instance, believes that the present language policies and practices in Africa lead to the entrenchment of the status quo. That Africa's language policies and practices have found themselves into this position because of the relationship between language and power. He however, is aware that Africans do not need to reject English and French altogether.

But as Barasa (2005) notes, there are others who take this debate further and insist that English and French or any other foreign language should not have a place in the school curriculum because of their socio-political ideological influence.

In the Kenyan context, one cannot underscore the role of English in cementing national unity. In multi-lingual and multi-cultural societies such as Kenya, English facilitates the needed mobility for students among the different provinces (Barasa, 2005). English therefore, "promotes uniformity of teacher education and all national curricula" (p.12). Overall, it is evident enough from the above literature that English is at the heart of the education system in Kenya, and the students' performance in the subject is an issue of national concern.

### **2.2.1 Purposes of questioning**

In the classroom, questions are used for a number of purposes. By understanding the range of purposes teachers can expand their use of questioning in instruction. Among other purposes, Kisko and Iyortsuun (1984: 6) state that questions can be used to:

- Develop processes of thinking and guide inquiry and decision-making.
- Acquire and clarify information, answer concerns, and develop skills.
- Determine the knowledge students bring to the class so lessons can be made to meet their needs.
- Provide motivation by encouraging active participation in learning.
- Lead students to consider new ideas and make use of ideas already learned.
- Help students clarify their ideas, structure their study, and learn about things that interest them.
- Encourage students to ask their own questions.
- Gain information from pupils on which to judge their performance and understanding.
- Provoke students and teachers to share ideas they have.
- Help teachers assess the effectiveness of their own teaching.

### 2.2.2 Types of questions

Questions can be categorised in many ways. According to Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, we have low-level questions that emphasize memory and recall of information. High-level questions call for complex and abstract thinking. Low-level and high-level questions form the cognitive domain questions concerned with intellectual understanding. Divergent questions demand no specific answer. Convergent questions demand specific answers. There are also affective domain questions (Krathwohl et al, 1964). These are concerned with emotions attitudes and values, and are beyond the scope of this study. Therefore the cognitive domain forms the basis on which oral questions will be analysed in this study.

There are also written and oral questions. Written are typically presented on homework assignments, worksheets, in textbooks and readings, and on examinations of all kinds. Oral questions, the focus of this study, are statements, which elicit obligatory verbal and non-verbal responses from a learner through teacher-led drills or one-to-one, small-group, and large group discussion. We will discuss each type of questions in detail.

#### 2.2.2.1 Major Categories in Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom 1956)

1. **Knowledge** of terminology; specific facts; ways and means of dealing with specifics (conventions, trends and sequences, classifications and categories, criteria, methodology); universals and abstractions in a field (principles and generalizations, theories and structures):

Knowledge is (here) defined as the remembering (recalling) of appropriate, previously learned information.

- defines; describes; enumerates; identifies; labels; lists; matches; names; reads; records; reproduces; selects; states; views.

2. **Comprehension:** Grasping (understanding) the meaning of informational materials.

- classifies; cites; converts; describes; discusses; estimates; explains; generalizes; gives examples; makes sense out of; paraphrases; restates (in own words); summarizes; traces; understands.

3. **Application:** The use of previously learned information in new and concrete situations to solve problems that have single or best answers.

- acts; administers; articulates; assesses; charts; collects; computes; constructs; contributes; controls; determines; develops; discovers; establishes; extends; implements; includes; informs; instructs; operationalizes; participates; predicts; prepares; preserves; produces; projects; provides; relates; reports; shows; solves; teaches; transfers; uses; utilizes.

4. **Analysis:** The breaking down of informational materials into their component parts, examining (and trying to understand the organizational structure of) such information to develop divergent conclusions by identifying motives or causes, making inferences, and/or finding evidence to support generalizations.

- breaks down; correlates; diagrams; differentiates; discriminates; distinguishes; focuses; illustrates; infers; limits; outlines; points out; prioritises; recognizes; separates; subdivides.

5. **Synthesis:** Creatively or divergently applying prior knowledge and skills to produce a new or original whole.

- adapts; anticipates; categorizes; collaborates; combines; communicates; compares; compiles; composes; contrasts; creates; designs; devises; expresses; facilitates; formulates; generates; incorporates; individualizes; initiates; integrates; intervenes; models; modifies; negotiates; plans; progresses; rearranges; reconstructs; reinforces; reorganizes; revises; structures; substitutes; validates.

**6. Evaluation:** Judging the value of material based on personal values/opinions, resulting in an end product, with a given purpose, without real right or wrong answers.

- appraises; compares & contrasts; concludes; criticizes; critiques; decides; defends; interprets; judges; justifies; reframes; supports.

#### **2.2.2.2 Convergent, Divergent and Evaluative Questions**

For convenience, all questioning strategies may be classified into three convenient categories: convergent, divergent and evaluative. This classification is a very slightly modified version of that proposed by James Gallagher and his associates (Verduin, 1967). Studies indicate that the three categories would be an efficient method by which to tabulate the kinds of questions being used in the classroom (Orlich, et al 1985). This study will use this category in classifying classroom oral questions.

Convergent questions focus on a narrow objective. They are used to encourage student responses to converge on a central theme. Convergent questions for the most part elicit short responses from students. Furthermore, they focus on lower levels of thinking- that is, the knowledge or comprehension levels. It should be noted that the use of a convergent technique per se is not to be construed as being “bad.” There are many

situations in which the teacher decides that the students need to demonstrate knowledge of specifics; in such cases, lower level questioning strategies are appropriate.

Divergent questions are the opposite of convergent questions. Their focus is broad and evokes student responses that vary greatly and are longer in nature. This technique is ideal in building the self-concepts of children of minority groups or of lower socio-economic status, because divergent questions often have few “right” or “wrong” responses. A teacher who uses divergent technique elicits from the students responses in the higher-level thinking categories of the cognitive domain- that is, application, analysis, and synthesis. These stimulate analytical and systematic thinking. Since the method is appropriate for eliciting multiple student responses, the teacher should *not* repeat student responses for other class members, unless only if a student speaks in such a low voice that it is impossible for some class members to hear. Repeating student responses makes most students become conditioned to listening only for the teacher’s repetition of the response (Orlich, et al 1985:172).

Evaluative questions use divergent questions but with one added component- evaluation, the only difference being that an evaluative question has a built in evaluative or judgmental set of criteria. Emphasis here must be placed on the specificity of the criteria by which a student judges the value or appropriateness of an object or an idea.

The objective of the above classification scheme is to provide an efficient convenient system by which to categorize questions quickly so that the teacher is always aware of

the specific questioning strategy being used and may anticipate an appropriate set of responses from the students.

### **2.2.3 Oral Questioning**

Oral questioning - through teacher-led drills or one-to-one, small group, and large-group discussion serves a number of purposes. It is used to introduce a topic, determine what pupils already know about a subject, develop interest, clarify and focus attention on important ideas, promote new ways of looking at an issue, develop attitudes and values, gain information about student understanding and progress, summarize or review a lesson, encourage further inquiry or prepare for formal evaluations and examinations (Kissock and Iyortsuun, 1984).

When using oral-questioning teachers should phrase and present the questions well. They also need to react to answers, summarize, elaborate, shape, focus, rephrase, highlight important points, encourage, probe and reward learners.

### **2.2.4 Guidelines in asking questions**

Good questioning is both a methodology and an art, there are certain rules to follow that have been known to apply in most cases, but good judgment is also needed. Below are four main guidelines in asking questions.

#### **2.2.4.1 Wait-time**

This is the interval between asking a question and the student's response. One study by Rowe (1974) indicated that the average amount of time teachers wait is 1 second.

Increasing the wait-time to 3 – 4 seconds has several beneficial effects on student responses as listed below:

- Length of response increases
- Unsolicited but appropriate responses increase
- Failure to respond decreases
- Confidence increases
- Speculative responses increase
- Student-to-student responses increase
- Evidence-inference statements increase
- Student questions increase
- Responses from students rated by teacher as relatively slow increase (op cit: 81).

No negative side effects of increasing wait-time have been observed, and the positive effects are numerous. Yet many teachers do not employ this instructional strategy. Other data suggest that asking one to four questions per minute is reasonable and that beginning teachers ask too many questions, averaging only 1½ seconds wait-time (Harris and Swick, 1985: 13). Also, although all students need time to process information, low-achieving students need more time. The need is to be willing to slow down the lesson, cover fewer topics, focus on the most important ideas, ask more questions, and develop explanations (Ornstein, 1995: 177).



#### **2.2.4.2 Directing**

The recommended strategy in directing questions to students is to ask the question and then call a student's name, because more students will think about the question (Ornstein, 1995). Research on classroom management also confirms that it is better to be unpredictable in calling on students to answer questions than to follow a predictable order (Evertson, et al 1994 in Ornstein, 1995:178); though this is effective when reading in lower grades and with low achieving students. The research also indicates that calling on non-volunteers can be effective as long as students who are called on can answer the question most of the time. This is true at all grade levels and subjects. By emphasizing volunteers, there is a tendency to call on high-achieving students more often than low-achieving students.

#### **2.2.4.3 Redirecting and probing**

If a student's response to a question is incorrect or inadequate, an effective strategy for the teacher is not to provide the answer, but to redirect the question to another student or to probe for a better answer from the same student. Redirecting the question is better for high-achieving students, but probing is better for low-achieving students. In probing, the teacher stays with the same student, asking for clarification, rephrasing the question or asking related questions, and restating the student's ideas.

It is important not to overdo it lest it becomes a cross-examination (Ruggiero, 1992). Probing is acceptable for all students, high-achieving and low-achieving; it is positively correlated with increased student achievement.

#### **2.2.4.4 Commenting and praising**

It is generally agreed that honest praise increases achievement and motivation. Positive reactions can simply mean a smile, nod of approval, or brief comment (“Good”, “Correct”, “That’s true”) indicating approval or acceptance. Phoney praise or too much praise can have detrimental effects. Criticism and disapproval can also have a detrimental effect on student achievement. If used as answer to a student question, it can curtail student’s asking questions or responding to teacher’s questions (Dillon, 1981:136). Criticism is justified when the answer is wrong or the behaviour is interfering with the rules or the procedures of the classroom – however, it is not only what you say that counts, but how you say it, and how you follow up.

### **2.3 Common teaching methods**

The following are some of the teaching methods employed by English teachers in secondary schools as given by McCarthy (1992) except for debate. Some methods have been left out since they are outside the scope of this study.

#### **2.3.1 Lecture**

Lecture is a method where factual material is presented in a logical manner. It contains experience that inspires and stimulates thinking to open discussion. Lecture needs clear introduction and summary that should include examples and anecdotes. The limitations of lecture include the idea that the experts are not always good teachers, audience is passive, learning is difficult to gauge and communication is one way.

### **2.3.2 Group discussion**

Group discussion involves preparing specific tasks or questions for group to answer. It allows participation of everyone. People are often comfortable in small groups and the group can reach a consensus. The disadvantage is that groups may get side-tracked and therefore careful thought as to purpose of group is needed.

### **2.3.3 Role-playing**

Role-playing introduces problem situation dramatically, it provides opportunity for learners to assume roles of others and thus appreciate another point of view. It allows for exploration of situations and provides opportunity to practice skills. The instructor has to define problem situation and roles clearly. S/He must give very clear instructions. The limitations of role-playing include that people may be too self-conscious and it is not appropriate for large groups.

### **2.3.4 Debate**

Debate is a verbal activity where points in favour of or against a topic are presented. There is a topic called the *motion* and speakers either support the motion or oppose it. The instructor divides the class into two groups; proposers and opposers. Each group then subdivides into smaller groups of say five, to prepare the points and a speaker is chosen to present the points. This gives an opportunity for all the learners to participate in the debate. The disadvantage with the debate is that organisation is time-consuming and the class can be very noisy during presentation (KIE, 1989: 18). This study sought to find out the relationship between oral questioning and performance in English language.

## **2.4 Factors affecting teachers and learners in handling oral questions**

Teachers of secondary schools hold various views on factors affecting their work in school. These are factors that also contribute to poor results or that have some effect on performance and proficiency in English. Barasa (2005) lists these factors as:

### **2.4.1 Teachers as role models**

Teaching of English in Kenya is suffering because there is no role model for the language learners. "There is no deliberate attempt to make English remain English" (p.48). The practitioners in schools argue that better role models are found in teachers with good language background. Barasa further says that teachers' training in phonetics is hampered by lack of language laboratories, meaning that they are inadequately prepared in phonetics. Further, students in rural areas are probably affected most because these schools lack an appropriate linguistic environment to aid their learning a second language. In such a situation, where they experience problems with the First Language (L1) interference, the teachers' inability to be a role model perpetuates the problem. In this way learners may not comprehend oral questions posed by the teachers.

### **2.4.2 Learners' levels of speech**

While the student is seen to lack a role model, the teachers also say that they have a very serious problem of trying to harmonize the varying levels of language which the students come with into secondary schools (p. 50). As Barasa laments, it appears that in cases where the teachers are not consciously aware of these levels or when they are overwhelmed by other factors such as too much work, the learners suffer. The majority view is that the problem should be addressed by improving the curriculum/syllabus at

primary level. The objective in this would be to expose the pupils to both the spoken and written language (Barasa, 2005). These two factors affect the performance of English language in secondary schools apart from the initial training which teachers receive. This study sought to find out how oral questioning as a skill affects performance in English language.

## **2.5 Related Studies**

Although questioning as an interactive activity has probably existed since mankind's invention of language and its use as an instructional device dates back to the days of the great philosopher, Socrates, known research of its use in Pedagogy according to Ondiek (1974), only started towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the 100 or so years it has been studied, investigators have focused on diverse aspects of classroom teacher questions.

As early as 1912, Romiett Stevens, cited in Orlich et al (1985) carried out a study on amount of questions. She estimated that 80 percent of school time was used for question and answer recitation. Corely (1970) cited in Hargie (1983) carried out a study in which she had an expert stenographer make verbatim records of all classroom talk in six classes, it was found out that, on average, the teacher asked a question once every 72 seconds.

Gall (1970) also reported in Orlich et al (1985) in a highly acclaimed research paper in which he reviewed eight studies that spanned a period from 1912 to 1967 concluded that elementary teachers used large numbers of questions. He reported that this ranged from 64 to 180 questions in one 30-minute class period to an average of 348 questions in a day.

Dunkin and Biddle (1974) cited in Dunkin (1987) reported three Flanders Interaction Analysis Category (FIAC) – based studies that included individual category frequencies. They concluded that, in the total sample of 189 United States elementary and secondary classrooms, one-tenth to one-sixth of the classroom interaction time was occupied by teacher questions.

Ondiek (1974) in a review work indicated that questions constitute one-third of classroom discourse and that teachers ask 86 per cent of the questions. This study sought to find out how oral questioning as a skill affects performance.

In research concerning type of teacher questions Barnes (1971) in Delamont (1976) analysed tape recordings of a small number of lessons in the first year of a comprehensive school. In all subjects but science, factual questions predominated while the number of open questions was small. Gall (1970) cited in Dunkin (1987) after reviewing several studies had concluded that teachers' questions seemed not to have changed over time, with about 60 per cent requiring the recall of facts, 20 per cent requiring thinking and the remainder requiring procedural activities. Dunkin and Biddle (1974) also cited in Dunkin (1987) have identified eight Bloom-based studies in which knowledge questions were commonly used.

In a study of the cognitive level of classroom questions in social studies primary school classrooms in Kenya, Okere (1984) concluded that most questions asked by teachers were lower level regardless of the teachers' grades or teaching experience. Results of Ole Takona, however, focused on written examination questions. Results of a more recent study by Dyanda (1997) are also corroborative. Following an investigation on oral

questioning in Zimbabwean infant classes he concluded that there was a predominance of lower order questions in the repertoire of teachers.

Research has also been carried out on the relationship between question types and achievement. Ondiek (1974) in his review of literature cited De Gamo (1902) who conceded that the art of questioning has a significant effect upon the mental development of children. Despite this important relationship, there have been relatively few studies reported on this.

An experimental study carried out by Ondiek (1974) using 86 college juniors in 4 intact class groups at Indiana State University in the United States of America found that the use of diagnostic questions, corrective feedback, and instructional feedback do significantly improve student's concept attainment. The issue of question type and achievement has also interested investigators in language classrooms.

Nunan (1982) cited in Nunan (1991) found that the use of inferential questions by the teacher resulted in more complex language by students and also that student interaction was more like natural discourse typical of out-of-class encounters. However, analyses of published studies in Orlich et al (1985) and Dillon (1988) reveal discrepancies in the relationships between type of question and response. Biddle and Dunkin (1974) cited in Dunkin (1987), in a review of studies based on classroom situations in general, concluded that process-product research had not produced strong evidence of a positive relationship between teacher's use of higher order questioning and student achievement.

Literature in textbooks, however, is conclusive about the relationship between questions and achievement, Kisko and Iyortsuum (1984) and Orlich et al (1985) argue that higher order questions are positively related to students' overall achievement and are crucial throughout the world where various higher order mental processes are required particularly in classroom situations.

Studies on oral and written questions point to the fact that oral questions are superior to written questions in the classroom teaching and learning context. For instance, Rothkopf and Bloom (1970) also cited in Hargie (1983) presented 63 pupils from Highland Park High School, New Jersey, with text slides relating to geology materials. The pupils were divided into three groups: one group was given written questions to be answered in written form; the second group was asked oral questions and responded orally; and the control group had no questions at all.

Results indicated that the oral questions were significantly more successful than the written questions, and that both types of questions were significantly more successful than no questions at all. Unfortunately, there are no known studies of this nature focusing on oral questioning versus performance in the teaching of English as a second language. Among the few documented classroom language research is that by Makhulo (1984). He carried out a study on verbal classroom interaction in English in upper primary in some selected schools in Hamisi Division, Kenya. To collect data he used an unstructured interaction system based on Flanders Interaction Analysis Categories (FIAC). His results confirmed that teachers dominated classroom verbal interaction.



A similar study was conducted by Theuri (1985). In his study of communication and English language use in rural primary classrooms, Theuri selected 3 standard IV classrooms where he focused on English, Social Studies and Science lessons taught by different teachers. Data was collected during classroom observation incorporating modified versions of Fanselow's (1977) Communications Used in Wettings (FOCUS) system and Bellack's (1969) system. In that study Theuri also found that teachers dominated classroom interaction. On the contrary he found that there was more language production in social studies than English language lessons.

Another study by Agalo (1986) on aspects of discourse analysis and English language teaching, found out that through probe questions, a pupil is challenged to attempt to expand his usage of particular functions in order to communicate effectively. Although Agalo mentioned probing questions, his study did not set out to investigate their use in teaching. This conclusion could have been based on incidental data that is sometimes collected in research. A more recent study by Ipara (2003) on secondary teachers' oral questioning practices in Kiswahili grammar revealed that even though teachers of Kiswahili grammar are aware of the general functions and characteristics of the classroom oral questions they posed, the awareness is limited to only the lower cognitive level of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom, 1956). That study had teachers as the main subjects and was carried out in Bungoma district. The current study focused on secondary students in Eldoret Municipality.

The focus of this research on the effect of oral questioning on performance of English language emanated from the fact that no other comprehensive study involving secondary

school English language teaching has been conducted. Some studies carried out in other content subjects and languages, using a variety of research approaches and reviewed in the preceding section have pointed to the high incidence of low order questions in classroom teaching. Relating questions in English language to students' performance could have its own unique features. Eldoret Municipality has many teachers of English with diverse training backgrounds and levels of experience. The municipality also has secondary school students with different linguistic backgrounds. It was the aim of this study to investigate English teachers' oral questioning skills as well as learners' responses, in the context of these factors.

## **2.6 Summary**

In summary, these studies were quite important because each piece of research in this field yielded rather different results, and one reason for that is simply that each report was based on different kinds of student population in different learning situations and stages of education (McDonough, 1995). In Conclusion, in regard to the above studies and available literature, there is reason for the present study to be carried out.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the various methodological procedures that the study employed during its execution. Here, the study area, research design, study population and sample size, sampling strategies and research instruments are explained. In addition, the chapter also provides details of validity and reliability, pilot's study, data analysis and data collection procedures.

#### **3.2 Study area**

The study was conducted in Eldoret Municipality, Uasin Gishu District in the Rift valley Province of Kenya. It is half way between Nairobi and Kampala, the capital cities of Kenya and Uganda respectively. A map showing its exact location is given in Appendix VII. Eldoret Municipality has been growing rapidly as a result of the various agricultural activities taking place in Uasin Gishu District. This has consequently led to population explosion in the Municipality that has warranted development of many secondary schools: both private and public. These schools are also of different categories, that is, day or boarding, and single sex or co-educational. The total enrolment of students as at 1998 was 5,017 in secondary schools. The total number of teachers for secondary schools stood at 342 (EMC education department 1998). Currently, there are 20 secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality (EMC education department 2005).

The Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) done at the end of secondary school has also not been well performed with only three of the municipal schools being amongst the top one hundred schools in the nation in 2004. These were Chebisaas (5<sup>th</sup> position nationally in the district category), Moi Girls (4<sup>th</sup> position amongst the national schools) and Mother of Apostles (7<sup>th</sup> position nationally amongst the private schools in Kenya).

### **3.3 Research design**

This study mainly employed the mixed methods research design, a design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. It involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process (Creswell, 2003). As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.

### **3.4 Population and Sample size**

The target population in this study was all Form 3 students, English language teachers, heads of English Department and head teachers of the selected schools in the municipality, the inspector of schools and the District Education Officer (DEO) in charge of Uasin Gishu District. Form 3 students were chosen as the main subjects because they are the ones being taught English and hence the ones expected to benefit from the way

the subject is taught. Therefore, they were in the best position to evaluate their teachers and also give the real picture of what happens in class during English lessons.

The study relied on a sample size of 180 students drawn from six secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality. Being a survey study, the researcher expected this sample size to be representative enough because students in similar type of schools share common experiences and so even a small fraction of the whole student-population was representative enough for the purpose of a survey study. The researcher selected Form 3 students on the assumption that they were able to differentiate oral questioning from the other skills. Furthermore, the researcher believed that Form 3 students were more mature and experienced than the Form 1 and 2 students. The Form 4 students were candidates and therefore, they require ample time to prepare for examinations without any external or internal interference.

### **3.5 Sampling procedures**

Eldoret Municipality has a total number of 20 secondary schools. For the purpose of this study, the schools were divided into two major categories:

- 1 (a) Public schools
  - (b) Private schools
- 2 (a) Girls
  - (b) Boys
  - (c) Mixed

Since it was not possible or practical to obtain measures from a population due to factors of time,

expense and accessibility (Cohen and Manion, 1994:87) various sampling procedures were used during the study. First, the researcher used stratified random sampling to select 3 public and 3 private secondary schools within Eldoret Municipality. This was followed by a systematic random sampling technique to select 30 students from each school. From a total of 686 Form 3 students in the six schools, 90 students were selected from each category. A sampling interval was reached by dividing the total number of students in each school by the sample size. The method was used so as to enhance representation in the population of the study, and also for the purpose of comparison.

Purposive sampling was used to specifically select students who were in form three in the six schools. This is because at form three, the students are in a position to critically give an evaluation on how they are taught, basing on their experience of being in the school for three years. Purposive sampling was also used in selecting Form 3 English teachers for observation and tape-recording and later questionnaire; and head teachers of the selected schools, heads of English Department, Inspector of schools and the DEO for key informant interviews. The techniques were used because they were not only time saving and simple to apply, but also allowed the researcher to target and focus on a specific population of interest (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999:50).

### **3.6 Research instruments**

The researcher used a questionnaire for students; the Form 3 English teachers had their lessons observed and tape-recorded and were later given a questionnaire after the observation. Heads of the English departments, heads of the selected schools, and the DEO all responded to key informant interviews.

### **3.6.1 Questionnaire**

Being the main method of data collection, a semi-structured, self-administered standard questionnaire was used to collect raw data. This was a self-administered questionnaire for students randomly selected from six secondary schools within Eldoret Municipality. The questionnaire elicited both qualitative and quantitative data, which is focused and relevant to all issues raised in the objectives of the study. The teachers of the selected schools also had their questionnaire to counter-check student responses.

#### **3.6.1.1 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The questionnaires were administered after the observation. This helped to avoid learners and teachers manipulating their lessons during the observation sessions. All the 180 questionnaires for students were returned since the researcher administered them. Twelve teachers whose lessons were observed filled and returned the questionnaires.

### **3. 6. 2 Observation**

Observation is an important method of data collection in research. It involves an approach in which the researcher's presence in the study area is maintained for scientific investigation.

During visits to the selected schools in Eldoret Municipality, the researcher observed the general situation in schools, the teaching skills used by English teachers in class, students' verbal and non-verbal responses during class time, and the type of questions that the English teacher asked students when teaching. Observation method mainly took the form of non-participant observation where the researcher was present in class but did not take

part in activities that were taking place during English lessons: hers was just to observe. The method was important because it was used to verify some of the information produced by other methods. Observation was expected to produce detailed qualitative data.

### **3.6.2.1 Administration of observation.**

The Form 3 lessons that were observed were randomly selected in each school before the material day of observation. This was accomplished by ‘Yes’, ‘No’ given to all Form 3 English teachers. The lesson of the teacher who picked ‘Yes’ was observed. During observation the verbal behaviour was recorded on columns and a tick was placed whenever it occurred. Also on the schedule, information about the school type and lesson context was indicated. Classroom Observation Schedule (COS) was used to record the events of the classroom. The purpose was to supplement audio recording by providing more information on the classroom context. Some of this data were used as backdrop during the description and interpretation of teachers’ oral questioning practices and learners’ responses.

The COS was divided into two sections; A and B. The top part indicated the serial number of observation, the topic of discussion in class, the date, the number of students and the time. Section A comprised the administration or characteristics of oral questions and Section B comprised classroom activities or setting.



### **3.6.3 Audio-recording**

Classroom Audio Recording (CAR) went on throughout the 12 lessons that were observed. It was done to collect a record of all the verbal interaction between the teachers and learners. The method was important because it was used to verify the type of questions asked. Further, recording was not only to ensure quality transcription and coding, but also to provide additional data. A small audio machine was used. It was placed strategically in order to capture any verbal communication that went on.

### **3.6.4 Key Informant Interview**

The key informants for this study included head-teachers, heads of English departments in the selected schools, Quality Assurance Officers (QUASO) and District Education Officer. Key informant interview was important because the respondents are assumed to be having the most knowledgeable information on the topic of study. It also provided an in-depth understanding of the crucial issues for the study.

The method produced qualitative data on performance trends in English as a subject, methods of teaching employed by teachers, factors affecting performance of students in English, and the implication of poor performance of English to Kenya's education system, which relies on English as the main language of instruction.

Key informant interviews took the form of unstructured interview between the researcher and the informants, and the researcher relied mainly on open-ended interview questions

with the help of an interview guide. The method was advantageous in the sense that, the key informants provided and even expounded precisely on most issues in details.

#### **3.6.4.1 Administration of Key Informant Interviews**

The respondents of key informant interviews were sampled purposely and it included heads of departments and heads of the selected schools. The DEO and the inspector of schools were also among this group. With the help of an interview guide, the researcher was able to elicit information from the key informants.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability**

#### **3.7.1 Validity**

This is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

For content validity the research instruments were given to language experts from Moi University and other professionals from the department. Further discussions were carried out with colleagues. After several consultations relevant corrections were made. This ensured the validity of the research instrument. Further corrections were made after the pilot study.

#### **3.7.2 Reliability**

This is the measure of degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To test reliability of the instruments in quantitative research, the

researcher used the test-retest technique to arrive at the coefficient of reliability (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999: 97) and the value of  $r$  was 0.05. This ensured that the data collection instruments were reliable to collect data. For credibility in qualitative research, the researcher utilised different resources to gain information, that is, questionnaires and interviews.

### **3.8 Pilot study**

Ideally a pilot study tries out the research tools on respondents who would be eligible to take part in the main study. One actually wants to find out whether the respondents have the same understanding of the questions and thus would offer the information required.

Piloting of research tools is very important. It's not until a researcher has some completed questionnaires, and information obtained using all the instruments in the study that one can be sure the research needs are going to be met by the information one has asked for. Commenting on classroom observation, Croll (1986) notes that a pilot study is necessary because

‘... researcher embarking on classroom research for the first time will find it valuable to spend some time in the classroom using one or more established systems and looking at the data these provide in order to gain experience of the kind of issues which will arise in turning his/her own research questions into a set of criteria and definitions for use in classroom’ (p. 50).

Despite this information having been narrowed down to observation by Croll (1986), the aim of carrying out the pilot study can be applied to all other methods of data collection

in any research conducted. Furthermore, Peter (1994) has the view that ‘even the most carefully constructed instrument cannot guarantee to obtain 100% reliable data.’

Therefore, pre-testing research instruments on a small sample of respondents in a preparatory exercise was vital. This called for a pilot study. Research instruments may be pre-tested on a sample of at least ten respondents (Mulusa, 1990: 72) who do not have to be representative (Babbie, 1972: 207, in Peter, 1994:89).

For this particular study, the validity of the questionnaire, observation, tape recording and interview guide, were ascertained through consultation with various course experts in the language education section of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media - Moi University. The specialists carried out an analysis of the contents of the instruments and offered suggestions and corrections. Their suggestions were used in making the necessary corrections and improvements on all the instruments.

To ascertain the reliability of the questionnaires, observation, tape-recording schedule, and interview guide, a test-retest design was used. The researcher administered questionnaires to students and teachers in two pilot schools in Keiyo Municipality, Keiyo District.

### **3.8.1 Pilot Study Results**

Tuckman (1978:161) discussing on the test-retest reliability approach for determining reliability says, ‘one way to measure reliability is to give the same people the same test on more than one occasion and then compare each person’s performance on both testing.’ In doing so, one actually wants to establish the extent to which the test or instrument in

this case is measuring stable and enduring characteristics of the test taken. This particular study in employing a similar approach compared the results of 10 students who answered the questionnaire and their teachers whose lessons were observed and answered the questionnaires from the 2 schools where the pilot study was carried out.

Using the results obtained the researcher with the help of the various course experts in the department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Media – Moi University found out that some of the responses given by students and teachers to the questionnaires had certain weaknesses. Changes to the questionnaires were found necessary especially on the basis of which questionnaires were left unanswered or where answers given suggested the students and teachers had no idea what the question required. This necessitated the adjustment, alteration and deletion of certain items as a way of improving on the reliability of the questionnaires as a whole.

Section A of the questionnaire had no problem. In section B, question 5d of the student questionnaire initially read,

‘ If yes to 4a, what duration does your English teacher give you to answer the oral questions? 0-2seconds( ) 2-3 seconds( ) 3-4 seconds( ) more than 4 seconds( ).’

This was altered to read,

‘If yes to 4a, how long does your teacher pause before calling a student’s name after asking a question?

0-2 seconds( ) 2-3 seconds( ) 3-4 seconds( ) more than 4 seconds( ).’

The teacher’s questionnaire had a similar problem and it was duly corrected.

### **3.9 Data collection procedures**

After clearing with the graduate committee of the school of education, just before the pilot study, the researcher had to get a research permit from the Ministry of Education. This is an important document that gave the researcher the authority to collect information from respondents. With this permit, the researcher proceeded to the District Commissioner Uasin Gishu district who issued an introductory letter to the education administrators to allow her carry on with data collection in Eldoret municipality, Uasin Gishu district.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Both quantitative and qualitative data analyses were employed. Qualitative analysis involved the derivation of explanations and making of interpretations of the findings based on descriptions. The concern was on description of patterns, singularities or uniqueness in the data collected.

Quantitative analysis on the other hand involved the derivation of statistical descriptions and interpretation of data by use of descriptive statistics. This describes a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices or statistics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999:118). These consist of percentages, means and standard deviations.

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter has focused on the various details concerning the research design and methodology the study employed. In addition, details on specific study area, population,

research instruments, pilot study, data analysis and data collection procedures have been given. The next chapter focuses on presentation, data analysis and interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers presentation, data analysis and interpretation using the methodology stated in chapter three to examine the relationship between oral questioning as a method of instruction and English language performance. The data is presented as sub-topics under the three main objectives as follows;

1. Relationship between oral questioning and student performance of English language
2. Other teaching strategies employed by English language teachers
3. Recommendations on how to improve oral questioning

#### 4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study for the following reasons found it necessary to find out the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Firstly, it was to establish whether there is a correlation between oral questioning and academic achievement. Secondly, the diversity of the schools provided a heterogeneous sample whose opinions may not represent biased characteristics.

Table 4.1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Respondents who were 14 and 20 years of age were represented by 1 (0.6%), 15 years were 12 (6.7%), 16 years 63 (35%), 17 years 80 (44.4%), 18 years 21(11.7%), and 19 years 2 (1.1%). An equal number of “male” and “female” respondents 90 (50%) participated in the study. Also, an equal number of respondents 90 (50%) were drawn from “private” and “public” schools. The schools in the category of “Girls’ schools”, “Boys’ schools” and “Mixed”



were each represented by 60 (33.3%) of the sample size. This is as summarised in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
14	1	0.6
15	12	6.7
16	63	35.0
17	80	44.4
18	21	11.7
19	2	1.1
20	1	0.6
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	90	50.0
Female	90	50.0
<b>Type of School</b>		
Private	90	50.0
Public	90	50.0
<b>Gender of School</b>		
Girls' School	60	33.3
Boys' School	60	33.3
Mixed	60	33.3

### 4.3 Views on oral questioning

The respondents were asked to give their views on oral questioning. It was important to find out whether teachers use oral questions in a class session or not. Out of the total number of respondents 173 (96.1%) indicated, “Yes” and 7 (3.9%) indicated “No”. Table 4.2 shows these statistics.

**Table 4.2** whether Learners are asked oral questions

Whether learners are asked oral questions	Frequency	Percent
Yes	173	96.1
No	7	3.9
Total	180	100.0

The table shows that most students (173) were in agreement that they are asked oral questions and a few (7) said they were not. Teachers responding to whether they use oral questions in class session indicated that 18 (100%) use oral questions. These results are almost similar to those of the learners.

Oral questions can be divided into different types. For the purpose of this study, they were divided into “Academic fact” (recall questions), “Academic opinion” (thought – provoking questions) and “Non academic.” From the study 123 (68.3%) of the respondents said they are asked “Academic fact” questions, 52 (28.9%) said they are

asked “Academic opinion questions and 5 (2.8%) said they are asked “Non academic questions”. Table 4.3 gives this representation.

**Table 4.3 Types of Questions**

Type of question asked	Frequency	Percent
Academic facts	123	68.3
Academic opinion	52	28.9
Non- academic	5	2.8
Total	180	100.0

The table shows that the questions posed to the learners are mostly “academic fact” type of questions which require learners to recall what they have been taught. For example:

“What is a paragraph?”

“What do the initials VCT stand for?”

“Academic opinion” questions which are questions that are thought provoking are not as common as the academic fact questions. For instance:

“Any example of irregular verb?”

“What is another function of a noun in a sentence?”

“Non academic” questions, were the least asked. For example:

“The people this side are very dead today. You did not take tea?”

“Why are you writing in pencil?”

These results seem to tally with those of observation and tape-recording where the total number of questions asked in the classroom session were divided into the aforementioned types and their percentages determined. The results showed that 524 (77%) of the questions were “academic fact” (convergent), 114 (17%) were “academic opinion”(divergent), 26 (4%) were “non-academic” and 16 (2%) were “evaluative.” Figure 1 shows the statistics.

Views on oral questions also sought to find out how the respondents rated the nature of oral questions asked. Out of the total number of respondents, 31 (17%) said the questions were “very easy” 103 (57%) said they were “easy”, 34 (19%) “difficult”, 6 (3.5%) said they “did not know” how to rate the questions asked and 6 (3.5%) said the questions were “very difficult”.

**Table 4.4          Rating nature of questions asked**

Rating nature of questions	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	31	17.0
Easy	103	57.0
Don't know	6	3.5
Difficult	34	19.0
Very difficult	6	3.5
Total	180	100.0

Table 4.4 shows the representation. The table shows that a majority of the questions the learners are asked are “easy” and “very easy” as represented by 134 (74%). Those who said they are “difficult” were 34 (19%), a smaller percentage compared to that of “easy”.

It was important to find out whether the learners were given time to think about their responses after being asked a question. This is sometimes called wait-time (pause) or think-time.

From the study out of the total number of respondents 90 (50%) reported that teachers pause for “0-2 seconds” before calling a student’s name after asking a question, 54 (30%) said the teacher pauses for “2-3 seconds”, 22 (12%) for “3-4 seconds” and 14 (8%) for “more than 4 seconds”. These are shown in Table 4.5. The table shows that half of the respondents are in agreement that the “pause lasts 0-2 seconds”. Another 54 (30%) said the “pause lasts 2–3 seconds.” This could mean that the pause given to the learners is not enough to enable them to think of the response. During the study it was observed in the classrooms that instead of pausing to give time to the student to think of the response, most teachers either repeat the question or allow for instantaneous chorus answers. This seems to show that the teachers do not keep to the guidelines of asking oral questions.

**Table 4.5 Duration of pauses in oral questioning**

Pause	Frequency	Percent
0 - 2 seconds	90	50.0
2 - 3 seconds	54	30.0
3 - 4 seconds	22	12.2
More than 4 seconds	14	7.8
Total	180	100.0

The researcher went further to find out how “frequently oral questions were asked.” Table 4.6 shows the statistics of the findings that 68 (37.8%) of the respondents said they are asked an oral question “after every 2 minutes”, 18 ((10%) “after every 1 minute”, 29 (16.1%) “after more than 4 minutes”, 33 (18.3%) “after every 3 minutes” and 32 (17.8%) “after every 4 minutes”. The statistics in the table show that most questions in a class session, 86 (47.8%), are asked “after every 1 and 2 minutes.” “after every 3 and 4 minutes” were 33 (18.3%) and 32 (17.8%) each respectively.

These results infer that during a class session learners are asked a question at a frequency between every 1 and 2 minutes. The results from the teachers questionnaire seem to tally with these results as 10 (58%) of them reported that they asked a question “after every 1 minute”. Furthermore, classroom observation and tape-recording of 12 lessons revealed that a total of 680 questions were asked in 370 minutes, an average of 1.8 questions per minute.

**Table 4.6**      **Frequency of oral questions**

Frequency of oral questions	Frequency	Percent
After every 1 minute	18	10.0
After every 2 minutes	68	37.8
After every 3 minutes	33	18.3
After every 4 minutes	32	17.8
After more than 4 minutes	29	16.1
Total	180	100.0

This study also sought to find out the factors affecting use of oral questions. Out of the total number of respondents, 45 (25%) strongly disagreed that “limited time during the lesson” hinders the teacher from asking oral questions, 32 (17.8%) disagreed, 67 (37.2%) agreed and 28 (15.6%) strongly agreed. The statistics are represented in Table 4.7. The statistics in the table show that 77 (42.8%) of the respondents disagreed and 95 (52.8%) agreed that “limited time” inhibits the teacher from asking oral questions.

The higher percentage shows that a majority of the learners agree that “time” is a factor that affects asking oral questions. The findings from the teachers’ questionnaire show that 11(65%) agree “time” is a factor. Basing on these findings one can conclude that because of “limited time during the lesson” the teachers tend to move at the pace determined by the bright students in class and therefore do not ask oral questions to all the students.

It was important to find out whether “limited classroom space,” relates to oral questioning. Of the respondents, 90 (50.0%) strongly disagreed that “limited classroom

space” is not a factor in asking oral questions, 34 (18.9%) disagreed, 26 (14.4%) agreed and 15 (8.3%) strongly agreed. Table 4.7 shows these statistics. The table shows that a majority of the respondents 132 (73.3%) disagreed that “limited classroom space” hinders them from being asked oral questions and therefore it can be deduced that “limited classroom space” does not hinder learners from being asked oral questions. These results seem to tally with those from the teachers’ questionnaire where 13 (77%) disagreed.

Another factor, which the study sought to find out, was whether “learners’ indiscipline” during the lesson hindered oral questions. From the total number of respondents those who strongly disagreed were 98 (54.4%), 26 (14.4%) strongly agreed, 25 (13.9%) agreed and 21 (11.7%) disagreed. Table 4.7 shows the findings. The table shows that a majority of the respondents, 119 (66.1%) disagreed that “student indiscipline” interfered with oral questioning. A majority of the teachers 12 (71%) agreed that it could be the learners’ negative attitude towards English as a subject and not their indiscipline that hindered oral questions. Because of this negative attitude, the learner may not be willing to answer the teacher’s oral questions.

It was important to find out whether “limited time to cover the syllabus” as a factor hindered oral questioning. As shown in Table 4.7, 69 (38.3%) strongly agreed that limited time to cover syllabus was a constraint, 54 (30%) agreed, 26 (14.5%) disagreed and 18 (10.0%) strongly disagreed. From the table, it can be deduced that a majority of the respondents 123 (68.3%), agreed that “limited time to cover the syllabus” was a factor that hindered oral questioning. Those who disagreed were 44 (24.5%). According to the new syllabus the time allocated for the teaching of English language in Forms 1 and 2 is



6 lessons and 8 lessons in Forms 3 and 4 (Syllabus for schools 2005). This is as shown in

Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7 Factors affecting use of oral questions**

Limited time during the lesson	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	45	25.5
Disagree	32	17.8
Don't know	8	4.4
Agree	67	37.2
Strongly agree	28	15.6
Total	180	100.0
<u>Limited classroom space</u>		
Strongly disagree	98	54.4
Disagree	34	18.9
Don't know	7	3.9
Agree	26	14.4
Strongly agree	15	8.3
Total	180	100.0
<u>Students indiscipline during learning</u>		
Strongly disagree	98	54.4
Disagree	21	11.7
Don't know	10	5.6
Agree	25	13.9
Strongly agree	26	14.4
Total	180	100.0
<u>Limited time to cover the syllabus</u>		
Strongly disagree	18	10.0
Disagree	26	14.5
Don't know	13	7.2
Agree	54	30.0
Strongly agree	69	38.3
Total	180	100.0
<u>Too many students in a classroom</u>		
Strongly disagree	11	6.1
Disagree	27	15.0
Don't know	16	8.9
Agree	46	25.6
Strongly agree	80	44.4
Total	180	100.0
<u>Students' inability to cope with frequent oral questions</u>		
Strongly disagree	74	44.1
Disagree	26	14.4
Don't know	22	12.2
Agree	31	17.2
Strongly agree	27	15.0
Total	180	100.0

Since the respondents are in agreement that “syllabus coverage” is a factor, one can say that the time allocated for English language teaching in secondary school is not enough, in this case, the learners may not be asked oral questions because of lack of time.

The study also looked at the factor of “too many students in a classroom”. Findings in Table 4.7 indicated that 80 (44.4%) strongly agreed, 46 (25.6%) agreed as 27 (15.0%) disagreed and 11 (6.1%) strongly disagreed. From the table, a majority of learners, 126 (70%) are in agreement with the statement that “too many students in a classroom” is a factor which hinders asking oral questions as a minority, 38 (21.1%) disagreed. These results are almost the same with those from the teacher questionnaire where 13 (76.4%) agreed as 4 (23.6%) disagreed. From these results one can therefore say that “too many students in a class” hinder teachers from asking oral questions, since s/he may not involve every student.

“Students’ inability” to cope with frequent oral questions was another factor considered in the study. Most students, 74 (41.1%) strongly disagreed, 22 (14.4%) disagreed as 31 (17.2%) agreed and 27 (15.0%) strongly agreed. Table 4.7 shows these results that a majority of the respondents, 100 (55.5%) disagreed that “Their inability to cope with oral questions” is a hindrance as 58 (32.2%) agreed to the statement. On the contrary the teacher’s results show that 9 (53.0%) disagreed with the statement as 7 (41.2%) agreed. One can, therefore, infer that oral questions posed by English teachers are recall questions within the learners understanding and therefore students can cope with the questions.

The study sought to find out the comments, which teachers give after a student's response. The study results show that 97 (53.9%) of the respondents reported that the teacher never gives "a brief positive comment" after a student response, 47 (26.1%) rarely do so as 23 (12.8%) do so but occasionally, while 10 (5.6%) frequently do so. Table 4.8 shows these representations where a majority of the respondents, 144 (80.0%) do not receive a "positive comment" after responding to a question as 33 (18.4%) do. These results seem to tally with what was observed in the classroom where after analysing the questions asked 17 (2.5%) of them received a "positive comment". This shows that teachers hardly give positive comments to their learners.

The study also sought to find out whether "a smile or nod of approval" was used as a reward after correct student response.

From the study, 71 (39.5%) of the respondents reported that the English teacher never responds by a "smile or a nod," 51 (28.3%) rarely do it as 42 (23.3%) do it occasionally and 10 (5.6%) do so frequently. Table 4.8 shows statistics of the findings. The results in the table indicate that a majority of the respondents, 122 (67.8%) do not receive a "smile or nod" for their responses as 52 (28.9%) do. It was observed during the study that most teachers listened keenly as students respond to questions after which they talked. "Smiling", only occurred if the class was sharing a joke.

Respondents were asked to say whether the teacher "criticized" them when they gave a wrong response. The results of the study in Table 4.8 show that 72 (40.0%) of the respondents said the teacher never "criticizes," 42 (23.3%) rarely does so as 30 (16.7%) do so occasionally and 18 (10.0%) frequently do so. The table shows that though a few

respondents, 48 (26.7%) said they are “criticized,” a majority, 114 (63.3%) are not “criticized or disapproved”. One can infer from these results that “criticism” is not a common practice by the English language teachers. In addition, an analysis of observation results show that of the questions asked, 2 (0.5%) received a negative comment from the teacher. One can therefore, infer from these results that teachers could be aware of the detrimental effects of using “negative comments or criticism.” Further analysis of responses given by the teacher during observation showed that 476 (70.0%) of the questions asked received no comments, 117 (17%) were a repetition of student responses by the teacher and comments like “Okay” “Yes” or “Yeah” took 79 (17%). This is as shown in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8 Use of rewards**

Brief positive comments	Frequency	Percent
Never	97	53.9
Rarely	47	26.1
Don't know	3	1.7
Occasionally	23	12.8
Frequently	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0
Nod of approval or smile		
Never	71	39.5
Rarely	51	28.3
Don't know	6	3.3
Occasionally	42	23.3
Frequently	10	5.6
Total	180	100.0
Criticism of wrong responses		
Never	72	40.0
Rarely	42	23.3
Don't know	18	10.0
Occasionally	30	16.7
Frequently	18	10.0
Total	180	100.0

The study further looked at the correcting procedures employed by the teacher. The statistics shown in Table 4.9 indicate that 95 (52.8%) of the respondents said the “teacher corrects all mistakes” frequently, 42 (23.3%) do so occasionally as 25 (13.9%) rarely do so and 15 (8.3%) never do so. The statistics shown in the table show that a majority of teachers “correct all the mistakes” made by the learners as represented by 137 (76.1%).

The study also sought to find out whether the teacher “corrects mistakes selectively”. From the study 68 (37.8%) of the respondents said the teacher frequently “corrects mistakes selectively” 40 (22.2%) do so occasionally, 37 (20.6%) never do so and 30 (16.7%) rarely do so. Table 4.9 shows this representation. The results in the table show that a majority of the teachers “Correct all the mistakes” though in this case a majority of the teachers represented by 108 (60%) of the respondents “correct mistakes selectively.”

Another response on whether the teacher “helps to correct a mistake by indicating it” showed that of the respondents, 90 (50.0%) reported that the teacher does so occasionally, 52 (28.8%) said he/she rarely does so as 23 (12.8%) do so frequently and 14 (7.8%) never do so. The statistics are represented in Table 4.9. The results in the table show that the teacher, represented by 90 (50.0%) of the respondents, occasionally probes the students to correct their mistakes.

In the behaviour where the teacher asks another student to “identify the mistake and correct it,” of the respondents, 61 (33.9%) said the teacher never practises this, 58 (32.2%) said he does so rarely, 29 (16.1%) occasionally and 27 (15.0%) said he does so frequently. The responses are presented in Table 4.9. The figures in the table show that

when a student gives a wrong response, the question is not redirected to another student as represented by 119 (66.1%) of the respondents. The idea is to let the learners venture until they get the right response with very little assistance from the teacher. This is as summarised in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9 Correcting procedures**

Teacher corrects all mistakes	Frequency	Percent
Never	15	8.3
Rarely	25	13.9
Don't know	3	1.7
Occasionally	42	23.3
Frequently	95	52.8
Total	180	100.0
Teacher corrects mistakes selectively		
Never	37	20.6
Rarely	30	16.7
Don't know	5	2.8
Occasionally	40	22.2
Frequently	68	37.8
Total	180	100.0
Teacher helps correct mistake by indicating		
Never	14	7.8
Rarely	52	28.9
Don't know	3	0.6
Occasionally	90	50.0
Frequently	23	12.8
Total	180	100.0
Teacher asks another student to identify mistake and correct it		
Never	61	33.9
Rarely	58	32.2
Don't know	5	2.8
Occasionally	29	16.1
Frequently	27	15.0
Total	180	100.0

Another area in oral questioning which the study sought to find out is how oral questions are directed to the learners. From the study, 61 (33.9%) of the respondents affirmed that the teacher never “calls a name of the learner” before asking a question, 46 (25.5%) said

the teacher rarely does so as 45 (25.0%) said it is done frequently and 27 (15.0%) said it is done occasionally. Table 4.10 shows these statistics. The results in the table show that although 107 (59.4%) of the respondents said the teacher avoids “calling a student’s name before asking a question” another 72 (40.0%) said they do. These results were almost similar with those from the teacher questionnaire where 11 (64.7%) of the teachers said that they do not “call a name before asking a question” as 5 (29.4%) said they do.

Directing oral questions by “calling on volunteer”, after asking a question was another area the study sought to find out. The results show that 93 (51.7%) of the respondents reported that the teacher frequently does so, 40 (22.2%) said the teacher does so occasionally, 31 (17.2%) said the teacher rarely does and 13 (7.2%) said the teacher never does so. The statistics are in Table 4.10. The results in the table show that a majority of the respondents 133 (73.9%) reported that the teacher occasionally and frequently “calls a volunteer after asking a question”. This is in agreement with teacher results where a majority 12 (70.6%) reported that they frequently “call on a volunteer after asking a question”. Furthermore, observation results showed that volunteers responded to a majority of the questions asked.

“Calling on non-volunteers after asking a question” was seen as something rare by 52 (28.9%) of the respondents, 38 (21.0%) said it is done occasionally, 59 (32.8%) said the teachers never do so as 21 (11.7%) said it is done frequently. Table 4.10 shows the statistics. The table shows statistics which reveal that few teachers “call on non-volunteers” to respond to their questions as represented by 59 (26.6%) of the respondents

as those who do not were represented by 111 (61.7%). In addition, observation revealed that of the questions asked, very few were directed to non-volunteers.

**Table 4.10 Directing oral questions**

Teacher calls the name of the learner before asking question	Frequency	Percent
Never	61	33.9
Rarely	46	25.5
Don't know	1	0.6
Occasionally	27	15.0
Frequently	45	25.0
Total	180	100.0
Teacher calls on volunteer after asking a question		
Never	13	7.2
Rarely	31	17.2
Don't know	3	1.7
Occasionally	40	22.2
Frequently	93	51.7
Total	180	100.0
Teacher calls non-volunteer after asking a question		
Never	59	32.8
Rarely	52	28.9
Don't know	10	5.6
Occasionally	38	21.0
Frequently	21	5.6
Total	180	100.0



#### **4.4 Teaching methods employed by teachers of English**

There are various teaching methods a teacher can employ in teaching apart from oral questioning. In this study the learners were asked to state how frequently the teacher used those activities. From the results of the study as shown in Table 4.11, 63 (35.0%) of the respondents ascertained that the teacher “organizes group discussion” occasionally, 49 (27.2%) said they do so frequently, 38 (21.1%) said they rarely do so and 29 (16.1%) never do so. The table shows that the respondents who reported that the teacher occasionally and frequently “organizes group discussion” were 112 (62.2%) as 67 (37.2%) said they rarely and never do so. These results seem to correspond with those of teachers as 11 (64.7%) said they organized occasionally as 2 (11.8%) rarely do so. Observation in class session also showed that after explanation by the teacher, most of them assigned their students to groups for discussion.

Debating was another learning activity, which the study sought to clarify whether teachers employ it in their teaching or not. From the study 51 (28.3%) ascertained that their teachers never organized debates, 59 (32.3%) said they rarely organize, 42 (23.3%) said they organize occasionally and 23 (12.8%) do so frequently. Table 4.11 gives the summary of these findings. As represented by 110 (61.1%) of the respondents, the results in the table show that a majority of the teachers do not “organize debates” as a learning activity. Those who organize were represented by 65 (36.1%) of the respondents. During observation there was no debate organized in all the lessons observed.

On the same note, the study sought to find out whether teachers use “lecture” as a learning activity. From the study, 90 (50.0%) said it is organized occasionally, as 22 (12.2%) said it is rarely organized and 9 (5.0%) said it is never organized.

Table 4.11 gives a summary of these results. As represented by 140 (77.7%) of the respondents “lecture method” like “group discussion” is used by a majority of the teachers as shown in the table whereas those who do not use were represented by 31 (17.2%). In addition, it was observed that many teachers employ “lecture method” in the classroom in form of introducing the lesson, explaining and concluding,

Another learning strategy that the study sought to find out whether teachers employ it is “role play or drama.” From the study, 72 (40.0%) of the respondents affirmed that their teachers never use

“role play or drama,” 50 (27.8%) said they rarely use it, as 45 (25.0%) said they use it occasionally and 11 (6.1%) use it frequently. These statistics are presented in Table 4.11. The results in the table show that as represented by 56 (31.1%) of the respondents, few teachers organize “role play or drama” in their teaching sessions, 122 (67.8%) represented those who do not. None of the teachers who were observed used “role play or drama” in their lessons. It is possible, therefore, to infer that even though teachers know that they need to employ the method in their teaching, few of them put this to practice.

**Table 4.11 Learning activities**

Learning activities	Frequency	Percent
Organizing group discussion		
Never	29	16.1
Rarely	38	21.1
Don't know	1	0.6
Occasionally	63	35.0
Frequently	49	27.2
Total	180	100.0
Organising debates		
Never	51	28.3
Rarely	59	32.8
Don't know	5	2.8
Occasionally	42	33.3
Frequently	23	12.8
Total	180	100.0
Use of lecture method		
Never	9	5.0
Rarely	22	12.2
Don't know	9	5.0
Occasionally	50	27.7
Frequently	90	50.0
Total	180	100.0
Organising role play or drama		
Never	72	40.0
Rarely	50	27.8
Don't know	2	1.1
Occasionally	45	25.0
Frequently	11	6.1
Total	180	100.0

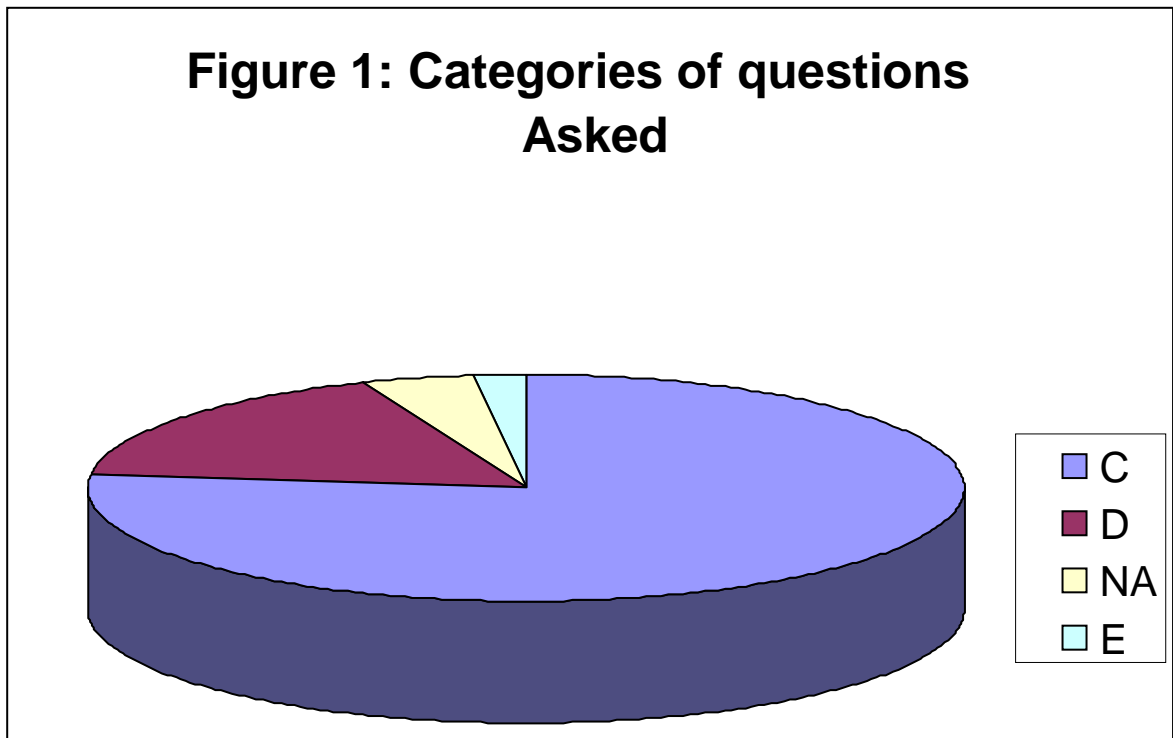
## **4.5 Categories of questions and responding procedures**

The study also looked at the categories of questions asked by the teachers and the type of response the learners gave.

### **4.5.1 Categories of questions asked**

The transcriptions of the tape-recorded sessions showed that teachers asked different types of questions. These questions have been classified into different categories: 1) convergent 2) Divergent and 3) Evaluative as proposed by Orlich et al (1985: 169). This classification is a slightly modified version of that proposed by Gallagher et al (1967). The last classification 'non-academic' is an addition by the researcher due to data collected in the classroom. From the study, 524 (77%) of the questions asked were convergent, 114 (17%) were divergent, 26 (4%) were non-academic and the least percentage was that of evaluative questions which took 16 (2%). The results are presented in Figure 1. The results in the pie chart show that most of the questions asked, (524, 77%) were convergent (low-order) and divergent (high- order) was represented by 114(17%).

**Figure 1: Categories of questions Asked**



**KEY**

**C** - Convergent

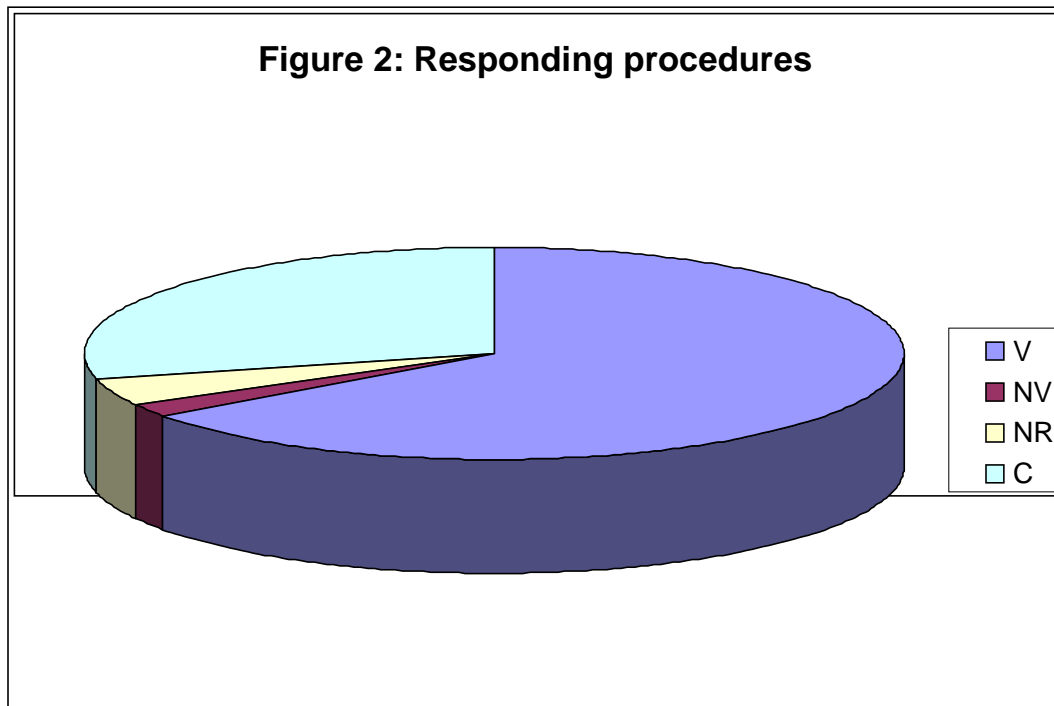
**D** - Divergent

**NA** - Non-academic

**E** - Evaluative

#### 4.5.2 Responding procedures

The analysis of the tape-recorded sessions and the Classroom Observation Schedule (COS) revealed that most oral questions asked by the teachers, represented by 440 (65%), were responded to by volunteers, 13 (2%) by non-volunteers, 200 (29%) received chorus answers and 27 (4%) got no response. Figure 2 shows these statistics. From the figure, a majority of the questions (440) were responded to by volunteers followed by chorus answers that took 200 questions.



#### KEY

- V - Volunteers
- NV - Non-volunteers
- NR - No Response
- C - Chorus

#### 4.6 Recommendations on how to improve oral questioning

The study sought suggestions from the informants on “recommendations on how to improve oral questioning.” An analysis of the responses showed that the interviewees had

varied views. One informant said that *'learners should be discouraged not to give chorus answers to questions posed by the teachers.'* These words underline the importance of the teacher knowing whether any learning has taken place by letting individual students to respond to the questions. Another interviewee said that *'both volunteers and non-volunteers should be allowed to respond to the questions by encouraging them to respond freely.'* These words reiterate the importance of uniform participation of the students in the classroom.

One of the informants felt that the reward system should be improved when he said that *'the students who respond to oral questions should be reinforced and given appropriate reward.'* One interviewee responded that *'the teacher should plan in advance (organise the questions) and decide on the method to use to avoid confusion in class.'* He further said that *'the questions asked by the teacher should be within the learners' level of difficulty, the questions should be simplified for those students who do not understand.'* The statement underscores starting from the known to the unknown.

Another interviewee said that *'teachers should not criticise or embarrass a learner who has given a wrong response; instead the learner should be asked to give a correct response.'* Another view was that *'the teacher should create rapport with the learners so that they respond freely to questions.'* This statement underscores the importance of having an environment conducive to learning where learners are free to ask and answer questions.

#### **4.7 Discussion of the findings basing on objectives of the study**

From the study, the findings reveal that a relationship exists between oral questioning and performance. It is that information that this chapter sets against the objectives of the study in order to draw conclusions.

##### **4.7.1 Objective based on views on oral questioning**

The results of the study reveal that oral questioning is a strategy that is utilized by most teachers as 173 (96.1%) of the respondents indicated that they are asked oral questions. Teachers responding to “whether they use oral questions in a class session” indicated that 18 (100%) asked oral questions. That oral questioning is utilized by most teachers was also confirmed by Orlich et al (1985) and Kissock and Iyortsuun, (1984). Ondiek (1974) also reiterates that questions constitute about one third of classroom discourse and teachers ask 86% of the questions in the classroom. It was further confirmed from the results of the study that teachers ask “recall questions”- represented by 123 (68.3%) of the respondents- more often than “thought-provoking” ones- represented by 52 (28.9%). Higher levels of thinking are required if pupils and adults are to solve problems, which demand reflective decision-making. The idea is to reach a balance between the two types of questions as proposed by Ornstein (1995:165) so as to avoid such comments by Ndirangu (2005) in an article entitled “Lets review our language policy” in the Daily Nation that, “graduates of Kenyan Universities have been accused of having appalling English language skills and inability to ask or answer oral questions appropriately” (P.9).

The results of the study revealed that teachers of English language do not utilize the expected guidelines of oral questions as given in section 2.2.4 of the literature review.



Firstly, teachers do not pause to give time to the learners to think about the response. Waiting for 3–4 seconds has several beneficial effects on students' responses. Instead of pausing, it was observed that most teachers either repeat the questions or allow for instantaneous chorus answers; a practice that inhibits the teacher from getting feedback from individual students, in this way, the slow learners are disadvantaged.

Secondly, the practice of calling the name of the learner before asking a question prevents other learners from thinking about the response. The question should be posed, the learners given time to think, then call a student's name.

Directing questions to volunteers only limits the teacher to call on high achieving students more often than low-achieving ones. Non-volunteers should be encouraged to participate in a classroom session. The recommended strategy is to be unpredictable in calling on students to respond to questions than to follow a predictable order. Another strategy is to ask the question and then call a student's name, whether the learner has volunteered or not, since more students will think about the question.

Time to cover the syllabus was seen as one of the factors that affects oral questioning. In an ideal situation the English language teacher is supposed to handle only two classes: in the extreme three. When a teacher handles more than three classes, as was discovered during the study, the teacher lacks the time to put oral questioning guidelines into practice. Language teachers need participatory experiences to focus attention on the fundamental concepts in language teaching while sharpening observation skills and ability to analyse and evaluate classroom events. This will ensure that a language teacher has a combination of knowledge and skills required for teaching. If teachers concentrate

on the participatory (oral questioning) sessions during English lessons, the low performance in English language (KNEC, 2005) will be improved.

The study showed that teachers correct most of students' wrong responses. Giving the answers by the teacher to students' incorrect responses will not help the student to achieve much in learning. An effective strategy for the teacher is to redirect the question to another student or to probe for a better response from the same student. This is positively co-related with increased students achievement. Giving a positive comment, it was realized, is a habit many teachers do not put into practice. The idea is to encourage a learner after responding correctly.

Brief comments like 'Good', "Correct" or "That's true" indicating approval or acceptance should be used as these increase student achievements and motivations. Repeating student responses instead of giving a positive comment is a practice that not only wastes time, but also causes the class to ignore their peers as sources of information and subtly conditions the class to wait until the word comes from the fount of all wisdom. The teacher should avoid any other comment without a positive connotation for example, "Ok", "Yes" and "Yeah". Though giving negative comments was a rare practice among the teachers it should be discouraged for those who still use them.

Students' achievement can be affected by criticism and it can also curtail their asking questions or responding to questions. Criticisms is justified only when the answer is wrong or the behaviour is interfering with the rules or the procedures of the classroom - however, it is not only what you say that counts, but how you say it, and how you follow

up. Chorus answers that characterized student response should be avoided, as the teacher cannot attend to student's individual needs when they all shout the answer.

#### **4.7.2 Objective based on other teaching methods employed by English teachers**

Apart from oral questioning strategy that is utilized by all teachers, lecture and group discussion are the other methods that are frequently used. Suggestions given to improve the performance of English indicate that interactive learner-centred approaches like debating and role-play or drama still need to be employed by the teachers frequently to enable the learners to participate actively in the learning process.

#### **4.7.3 Objective based on recommendations on how to improve oral questioning**

The results from the study revealed that oral questioning could be improved. If the teacher discourages learners from giving chorus answers, if he/she directs both volunteers and non-volunteers to answer questions, if he/she reinforces and rewards learners for correct responses, if he proceeds from the known to the unknown and probes a learner to give a correct response, and if he creates rapport with the learners so that they respond freely then oral questioning can be improved which will further improve the performance of English language.

#### **4.8 Emerging insights**

During the research on oral questioning in English language teaching some interesting insights emerged. These insights were found relevant to the quantity and quality of teacher's oral questions and learner's responses. The cases reported were tabulated from

the Classroom Observation Schedule (COS) and field notes made by the researcher during classroom observation.

#### **4.8.1 Students' population during lessons**

It emerged from the data that population of students during lessons varied among classes. The results of the COS given in Appendix IV show that the class with the smallest number of pupils, 27, was that taught by Teacher L whereas the class with the highest number, 48,

was that taught by Teacher F. In the latter class, it was difficult to direct the questions to non-volunteers and the teacher found himself moving with the bright students the weak ones being left behind.

#### **4.8.2 Lesson length**

Lesson length is tabulated in Table 4.12. Data analysis revealed that the length of lessons observed varied. Whereas only one lesson took exactly 40 minutes, 10 lessons took less than 40 minutes each with 3 of these, the shortest, taking 30 minutes. One lesson took more than 40 minutes. This shows that teachers got late both in starting and ending the lessons.

### **4.8.3 Settling before lessons**

An investigation of field and transcription notes found that the first few moments of each lesson were not spent on pedagogical tasks but on settling the learners. The noise accompanying this exercise was in all cases caused by learners' chattering, learners own movement as well as that of their furniture. Computation of time shows that an average of 2 minutes per lesson was wasted in this way. Therefore, when this was subtracted from the lesson time recorded in Table 4.12, then in eleven lessons less than 40 minutes were spent in actual learning tasks.

### **4.8.4 Learners' behaviour outside classroom**

From the scrutiny of data it emerged that all learners were talkative and freely asked and responded to questions outside the classroom just before the commencement of teaching and learning and also immediately the teacher left the classroom. However, data shows that learners' excitement ceased the moment the teacher called the class to order, except for rare 'flashes' during a few of the lessons.

### **4.8.5 Learners' movement in the classroom**

After studying the COS and field notes, it emerged that students spend most of their time seated at their desks arranged in rows either writing in exercise books, reading textbooks, listening to teachers, or watching the teacher writing on the chalkboard. Cases of learners' movements were evident in 6 out of the 12 lessons. In 4 of these classes, students moved to small groups where they could share a textbook with their classmates and in 2 of the cases, students moved to form small groups of 5 or 6 to carry out a discussion for approximately 10 minutes. Table 4.12 below shows this representation.

**Table 4.12 Lesson length and time wasted in minutes**

Class	Lesson length	Time wasted	Learning time
I	40	8	32
II	40	0	40
III	40	5	35
IV	40	4	36+5
V	40	8	32
VI	40	10	30
VII	40	8	32
VIII	40	8	32
IX	40	8	32
X	40	6	34
XI	40	8	32
XII	40	10	30
Total	480	83	402

#### 4.8.6 Teachers' movement in the classroom

Similarly, an examination of teacher's individual cases found that apart from 3 lessons where teachers moved around the classroom, although in most cases for one or two instances, throughout the 9 other lessons the teachers were either stationary or moved in front of their classes only.

#### **4.9 Summary**

Chapter four dealt with data analysis, presentation and interpretation with regard to the role of oral questioning on students' performance in English language. What has emerged from this chapter is that oral questions are not being utilized as recommended in secondary schools, most teachers still use lecture method and group work in classroom teaching; interactive and learner-centred methods like dramatization or role-play and debate are not being utilized effectively, that oral questioning techniques by the teachers can be improved, that population of students during lessons varied, that some learning time is wasted, that learners were talkative outside the classroom, and that learner movement, and that of teachers in the classroom was minimal. The next chapter draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides a summary of the findings. The second part expounds on the conclusions. Some recommendations and suggestions for further research are detailed in the final portion.

#### **5.2 Summary of the major findings**

The main objective of the present study was to explore the role of oral questioning on performance of English language in secondary schools. Basic to this was significance of questions as pedagogical devices that enhance classroom language input and output. What is implied therefore is the view that if questioning is such a crucial phenomenon, it could improve the performance of English as a school subject and in its use as a language of communication.

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. Relationship between oral questioning and student performance of English language
2. Other teaching strategies employed by English language teachers
3. Recommendations on how to improve oral questioning

The study revealed that all secondary school teachers of English language are aware of the general functions and characteristics of the classroom oral questions they posed. However the study has shown that this awareness is limited to only the lower cognitive



level of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom et al, 1956) of classifying questions. It was also found that teachers do not apply this awareness to their practical use of oral questions.

The study found that teachers asked an average of 2 oral questions per minute, the most frequent ones being the lower order oral question type. Also revealed was that one out of twenty five of the questions did not receive responses while a notable number were unclear. In this study findings also disclosed that less than half of the learners responded individually with the majority responding only once or at most twice. It was shown that the rest of the responses were either by groups of learners, teachers or whole classes (chorus answers); also 65% of the responses were given by volunteers whereas 29% by non-volunteers and 4% got no response.

The study also revealed that the pause (wait-time) given to the learners after asking a question is not enough to enable them to think about the response. It was observed that during this time most teachers either repeat the question, or allow for chorus answers. It was also shown that during a class session the learners are asked a question at a frequency between every 1 and 2 minutes. From the study it was revealed that "limited time during the lesson" and "limited time to cover the syllabus" were factors that affected the use of oral questions. "limited classroom space", "learners' indiscipline during the lesson", "too many students in a classroom", "students inability to cope with oral questions" did not interfere with asking oral questions as seen from the study. It was also found out that teachers hardly give "positive comments" to their learners and that very few students represented by 26.7%, are "criticised" for giving wrong response.

Findings further established that teachers “correct all the mistakes” made by learners as represented by 76.1% and that half of the learners said that the teacher occasionally “probes” the students to correct their mistakes. From the study 40% of the learners said that the teachers call a name of the learner before asking a question. It also emerged from the results of the study that the teacher occasionally and frequently calls on a volunteer to answer the question, represented by 73.9%. The teachers rarely called on non-volunteers to respond to their questions.

Concerning the teaching methods employed by the teachers, the study further established that lecture and group discussion are the common methods employed by teachers in their teaching. Debating and role-play or drama are not utilised to the required standards. The study also established that oral questioning practices in the classroom can be improved if the teachers follow the guidelines. Finally, the study found that some questioning and responding idiosyncrasies existed among learners, classes, teachers and groups of teachers. Also revealed were variations in class attendance, conditions and lesson lengths.

Following the discussions of these findings in chapter four, several conclusions were made and they are expounded in the ensuing section.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

First, it is concluded that teachers’ awareness of the oral questions they ask in the classroom is limited. Findings revealed that this awareness is limited to only the lower level of classifying questions. Second, is that secondary school teachers of English do not formulate or use oral questions for any specific purpose, that is, they do not put the

awareness into practice. It seems that teachers ask oral questions spontaneously without reflecting on their source, purpose, structure, style of enactment or expected learner response. Perhaps that is the reason why some teachers said students have an attitude towards English lessons.

The third is that teachers ask numerous oral questions during the teaching of English language. Findings illustrate that this amounted approximately to 2 oral questions per minute. A similar trend seemed to link these questions. Even where the oral questions appeared different in terms of form, in most cases they concentrated at the lower cognitive level.

The number of oral questions at an average of 57 questions per lesson is probably not surprising for content lessons. However, this is low for language classroom that are the only reliable opportunity for exposure to target language input and output in situations where this is scarce outside the classroom. The revelation that lower order oral questions predominate English language lessons is of great concern because of the pedagogical and practical implication this has. Apart from failing to spur learners to ask and respond to higher order oral questions which is a way of facilitating language acquisition, the propensity of low order oral questions and responses implants in the learners the false impression that such is appropriate verbal behaviour to emulate.

Fourth, from the study is that the teachers are not following the guidelines of asking oral questions. Teachers do not pause to give learners time to respond to the questions. Instead, they repeat the question or allow for chorus answers. Most teachers call on volunteers to respond to their questions and some of them call a name of a learner before

asking a question. Teachers also correct most of the learners wrong responses and instead of commenting positively to a correct response by a student, they either repeat students response or give such comments as “ok”, “yes” or “yeah” which do not have positive connotation.

Fifth, lecture and group discussion are the common methods employed by teachers in their teaching. Debating and drama or role-play are not fully utilized.

Another conclusion is that English language performance by learners in secondary schools can be improved. Apart from oral questioning which should be appropriately employed by the teachers, other interplay of factors that should be improved include entry behaviour of learners, methodology, teacher training, provision of materials and equipments, integration and attitude towards the subject.

Sixth, is that there is unnecessary wastage of time. Findings suggest that secondary school English language teachers treat the issue of time rather casually. Data from classroom observation reveal that not only did teachers go to class late, they left early or long after the bell. It seems teachers don't plan and allocate time for their oral questions, classroom responses and other activities appropriately. And if they do, then they don't adhere to their plans and allocations. For second language instruction such as the case is for English, any reduction of time of lessons that would provide opportunity for exposure of optimum language input and output means learners are short-changed.

The present study was not able to identify all questioning and responding behaviours of teachers and learners. It certainly did not dichotomise the good and the bad ones. In

addition a wide range of these questioning and responding styles seem to be distributed among the teachers and learners such that no single behaviour or groups of behaviour emerged as a correlate of good or bad questioning or responding. Of serious concern now is whether teachers are aware of these practices and their effects.

In view of the conclusions made above, the assumption can be made that the right questions asked at the right level and number might lead to the improved performance of English language in secondary schools. This in essence implies the acquisition of English language.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

- The study revealed that teachers' awareness of oral questions and responses they elicit is limited. It seems desirable for teachers to strive to harness their perception in order to improve their questioning behaviour. This has the potential of enriching the oral questions they ask. Similarly, this will enhance the oral responses learners provide as a way of not only boosting the language input and output which facilitates the learning of English language but also as a means of performing better in the subject. Ultimately this will stop the vicious circle where learners exposed to poor questioning and responding behaviour end up as language teachers and thus perpetuating the same bad practices to another generation of learners. Improvement can be achieved through the teacher's own initiative by way of self-academic and professional development resulting from current publications on oral questioning and responding.
- The study found out that teachers rely on class textbooks as a major source of English language content. It was also disclosed that teachers depend on the same textbooks not

only as a direct source of classroom oral questions but also as a fountain from which to draw and formulate oral questions. It is recommended that textbook writers and publishers include in their texts a good repertoire of questions which when used by teachers may provide a comprehensive input as well as elicit appropriate oral responses. The potential of such questions to provide rich language production exercises in addition to facilitating communicative language use in the classroom is immense.

- There's need to organise frequent seminars, workshops and in-service courses for teachers. The purpose of such activities should among others specifically focus on enlightening, refreshing and sharpening teachers' knowledge and skills of questioning in relation to current developments in theory and practice.
- The additional information gathered during the study underscores the importance of classroom research. This could be done in three dimensions. By teachers investigating their own classrooms, or lessons taught by their colleagues or by analysing learners' observations of their own teaching behaviour. Through such studies it is possible for teachers to gain insights into their own classroom behaviour particularly those pertaining to oral questioning and responding and conceptualising what they see. Teachers may then isolate fruitful practices from harmful ones.
- Time management in the classroom is casual. It is recommended that the inspectorate, heads of schools, departments and teachers should ensure that time is valued and that time allocated for English language is utilised.
- It is also recommended that English language teachers should strive to improve second language classroom interactional situations so that they approximate first language acquisition conditions. For this to be accomplished a number of conditions have to be fulfilled. First, the teachers must get away from the teacher dominated classroom

teaching partly exemplified by a tendency to answer even their own questions. Second, it is necessary to pose questions that link the outside and the classroom by creating contexts where pupils are encouraged to draw responses from real life experiences. It is important for teachers to identify inhibitions such as shyness, noise and language problems and address them so that they do not become an impediment. Teachers should generate an inventory of learner characteristics through keen observation that should be used to encourage and motivate learners to speak freely than to ridicule them.

- Lastly, motivation for meaningful language use and scope of practice is crucial. Teachers should do this by asking oral questions that lead learners to use English language in a way that fosters communicative abilities needed in life for sharing accumulated knowledge.

### **5.5 Suggestions for further research**

Classroom questioning behaviour is complex and the present study may not have exhaustively addressed all the aspects. There is therefore need to conduct more research to provide a better perspective of classroom oral questioning and responding practices. New directions to be taken in future research that flow from the present study are suggested below.

1. An analysis of the current course book questions should be carried out to determine a balance between low level and high-level questions.
2. How increased time for English language lessons can help the teacher employ oral questioning techniques.
3. Inaudibility and silence in English language classrooms need to be studied for purposes of revealing what perpetuates them.

4. Finally, a study needs to be carried out to find out why teachers frequently ask certain kind of questions and whether they are conscious of these questions and their outcomes.



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**APPENDIX 1: STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

I am a student in Moi University taking a Masters of Philosophy Degree in Language Education. I am undertaking a research project on 'Role of oral questioning on performance of English language. A case of selected secondary schools in Eldoret Municipality'. In order to collect relevant data, I have designed this questionnaire, which I am kindly requesting you to complete. Your views together with those of other students will enable this study to achieve its objectives.

All the information you provide will be used only for the purpose of this study and treated confidentially. Therefore do not write your name on the questionnaire. The questionnaire has been field – tested and takes only ----- minutes to complete. Please respond to all questions as truthfully as you can.

Yours sincerely,

**KOECH C. N. MUTAI**





- After every 1 minutes [ ]
- After every 2 minutes [ ]
- After every 3 minutes [ ]
- After every 4 minutes [ ]
- After more than 4 minutes [ ]

5. During English lessons how often does your teacher organize the following learning activities before asking questions verbally?

### Responses

Learning activities	Never	Rarely	Don't Know	Occasionally	Frequently
Group discussion	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Debates	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Lecture/long talks	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Role play/Drama	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

6. Do you think that the following shortcomings may be contributing for you not to be asked oral questions by your English teacher? To what extend do you agree with them?

### Shortcomings

### Responses

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
Limited time during the lesson	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Limited class-room space	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Your indiscipline

during the learning [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

activities

Limited time to

cover syllabus [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Too many students

in class [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Your inability to cope

with frequent oral

questions [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Others(specify)

.....

7. How frequently does your English teacher use the methods listed below to reward your oral answering abilities during times of oral questioning in class?

**Methods**

**Responses**

Never Rarely Don't Know Occasionally

Frequently

Brief positive

comment (Good etc) [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Nod of approval

or smile [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Criticism or

disapproval [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Others (specify).....

8. How frequently does your English teacher use the following to correct wrong oral responses from you?

Correcting procedures	Responses				
	Never	Rarely	Don't Know	Occasionally	Frequently
<u>Corrects all mistakes</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Corrects mistakes					
<u>selectively</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Helps you to correct					
your mistake by					
<u>indicating it</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Asks another student					
to identify and					
<u>correct your mistake</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
others (specify)					

.....

9. How frequently does your English teacher use the following methods to direct an oral question to a learner?

Methods	Responses				
	Never	Rarely	Don't Know	Occasionally	Frequently
Calls the name of					
learner before asking					
<u>question</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Calls on volunteer					

after asking questions [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Calls on non-volunteer

after asking questions [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

10. In your opinion, what suggestions would you make towards the improvement of oral questioning in English language at secondary school.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

END

## **APPENDIX II: TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Respondent,

Thank you for allowing me to observe your lesson. Kindly spare a few minutes to answer the following questions in the questionnaire. The questions aim at recording some of your information and views regarding the use of oral questions in teaching English language.

This research is being conducted purely for academic purposes. It is not meant to evaluate your performance. Your answers will be strictly used to provide a better understanding of classroom questions. That is why your identity and answers will be treated in strict confidence. Please respond to ALL questions as truthfully as you can. The questionnaire has been field – tested and only takes -----minutes to complete.

Yours sincerely,

Koech C.N. Mutai

### Teaching skills employed

1. a) Oral questions are the verbal questions which teachers and/or students ask as the lesson is going on. Do you ask oral questions in English lessons?

Yes  No

b) If yes, what type of questions do you ask?

1. Academic: Fact

2. Academic: Opinion

3. Non-academic:

4. All of the above:

c) If yes, what duration do you pause to give students time to think before responding?

0 – 2 sec.  2 – 3 sec.  3 – 4 sec.  more than 4 sec.

d) If yes, how frequent do you ask oral questions?

After every 1 minute

After every 2 minutes

After every 3 minutes

After every 4 minutes

After more than 4 minutes

2. How would you grade the use of oral questions in English in comparison to other skills?

Very easy  Easy  Don't know  Difficult  Very Difficult

3. During English lessons how often do you organize the following learning activities before asking questions verbally?

Learning activities		Responses			
Never	Rarely	Don't Know	Occasionally	Frequently	
Group discussion	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Debates	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Lectures	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Role play	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4. The following are some of the constraints that make it difficult for a teacher not to ask oral questions in English lessons. To what extent do you agree with these?

Constraints	Responses				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
Limited time					
<u>during the lesson</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Limited classroom					
<u>space</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Limited time to					
<u>cover syllabus</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Learners negative					
attitude towards					
answering oral					
<u>questions</u>	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Too many students					



in a class [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Poor foundation in

primary schools [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Learners lack of skill

on how to answer

questions orally [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Others,

specify.....

5. How frequently do you use the following methods to direct an oral question to a learner?

**Method**

**Responses**

**Never Rarely Don't Know Occasionally Frequently**

Call a name of learner

before asking questions [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Call on volunteer after

asking question [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Call on non-volunteer

after asking questions [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

6. Suggest how oral questioning can be improved.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

END

**APPENDIX III: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW**

1. What is your job designation?
2. What are some of the methods employed by English language teachers in their teaching?
3. Do they sometimes use oral questioning?
4. What can be done to improve oral questioning as a method of teaching?

**END**





## **APPENDIX V: TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS FOR CLASSROOM ORAL QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES**

### **Guiding notes**

1. Generous margins left to permit written comments.
2. Text double-spaced for easy reading.
3. Identification of transcripts is done at the top of first page by indicating serial number, school, class, lesson topic and date of audio recording.
4. All pages are numbered at the top right corner.
5. Names of participants are not indicated in order to uphold confidentiality.

### **Symbols used**

**T** – Teacher

**L<sub>1</sub>** – Identified learner, continues as **L<sub>2</sub>**, **L<sub>3</sub>** etc.

**LL** – Unidentified sub-group of learners

**LLL** – Whole class speaking in chorus

**NR** – No response

**NR** – No response needed

- Used to indicate incomplete word or statement (for example ‘Juma sa-)

**LT** – Used to indicate simultaneous talk.

**APPENDIX VI: SAMPLE TRANSCRIBED CLASSROOM ORAL QUESTIONS  
AND RESPONSES**

**Serial No:** 08

**School:** Uasin Gishu

**Class:** Form 3

**Topic:** Transitive and Intransitive Verbs

**Date of recording:** March 8<sup>th</sup> 2006

**T:** Good morning class?

**LLL:** Good morning Madam.

**T:** Yesterday what did we say about transitive verbs?

**NR**

**T:** What did we say about transitive verbs? Yes Jane?

**L<sub>1</sub>:** They are verbs that have a direct object.

**T:** Yeah we said that transitive verbs are verbs that take a direct?

**LT:** Object.

**T:** Now we looked at transitive verbs that take one direct object and we also looked at transitive verbs that take two?

**LT:** Objects.

**T:** We said transitive verbs take two objects, normally which object comes first?

**LL:** Indirect.

**T:** Eh?

**LL:** Indirect.

**T:** The indirect comes first then we have the direct?

**LT:** Object.

**T:** So I still want us to move on with that and look at transitive verbs then we will look at intransitive verbs. Now we also have – (pause). Now we said one way of identifying a transitive verb in a sentence is by asking which kind of questions?

**LL:** Who and what.

**T:** Who and?

**LT:** What.

**T:** Now we also have another way of identifying transitive verbs and that is trying to change the sentences from active to?

**LT:** Passive.

**T:** You remember we normally have the two types of sentences that is the active and the passive?

**LT:** Sentences.

**T:** So apart from asking the questions what and who, we can also change the verbs, the sentences from active to?

**LT:** Passive.

**T:** Now lets look at er... the sentences that we were dealing with yesterday and that is on Page 43. (Pause). Exercise 3. We have sentences there: ‘The children bought grandmother food.’ Now which voice, in which voice is that sentence, is it active or passive? ‘The children bought grandmother food’. Which voice is it? Jack?

**L<sub>2</sub>:** Active.

**T:** Active voice. So if you want to test there whether the verb there has been used transitively or intransitively we can try to change that particular sentence into the?

**LT:** Passive.

**T:** So if we have that sentence ‘The children – The children bought grandmother some food’ and we said the sentence is active, when we change it to the passive what do we have? Alex?

**L<sub>3</sub>:** Some food was bought for grandmother.

**T:** Is it?

**LLL:** Yes.

**L<sub>3</sub>:** ‘Grandmother was bought some food by the children.’

**T:** Yeah ‘Grandmother – Normally when you change from active to passive, if you remember your Form 2 work, the rules are the object of the active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb. So we have ‘Grandmother - what?

**LLL:** - was bought some food by the children.’

**T:** ‘Grandmother was bought some food by the children.’ So the object of the active sentence becomes the subject of the passive sentence and the subject of the active sentence becomes the object of the passive sentence. So this shows that we had identified yesterday this verb ‘bought’ here had been used transitively. Now we also have the other sentences that have been changed. ‘The teacher asked the new student several questions.’ It becomes ‘The new student was asked several questions by the teacher.’ Then ‘The tycoon lend the government money?’ ‘The government was lend money by the?

**LT:** Tycoon.

**T:** Then ‘The woman promised Asha a dress?’

**LT:** ‘Asha was promised a dress by the woman.’

**T:** Then ‘The visiting speaker told us a fascinating story.’

**LT:** ‘We were told a fascinating story by the visiting speaker.’



**T:** So this shows that all those verbs have been used in a transitive way. So can we try out Exercise 5. We have 'A', indicate which of the italicised verbs in the following sentences are transitive. So we had looked at the sentences. Try and see if you can ask the questions 'what' or 'who' to identify if the verbs that have been italicised are used transitively. Then secondly, we re-write the sentences with the transitive verbs in their passive voice. So lets look at sentence 1. 'Wako answered the question.' Chepkorir?

**L4:** 'The question was answered by Wako.'

**T:** No, you tell me whether the verb has been used transitively or not. (Pause). Look at the question, has it been used transitively or not. 'Wako answered the question.'

**L4:** Transitively.

**T:** Transitively. Now the first thing you do you ask, 'What did Wako answer?' Then your answer will be?

**LT:** The question.

**T:** Now the question is a ?

**LT:** Noun.

**T:** So that shows the verb has been used ?

**LLL:** Transitively.

**T:** Then 'The visitors left in the morning?' 'The visitors left in the morning?'

**LL:** When.

**T:** No, remember we only have two questions to ask, which one and which one? Whom and ?

**LT:** What.

**LL:** Intransitively.

**T:** Intransitively because we cannot ask those questions, we cannot ask ‘whom’ we cannot ask ‘what.’ So that verb there ‘left’ has been used intransitively. Then ‘The students asked many questions?’ (Pause). ‘The students asked many questions?’

**L<sub>5</sub>:** Transitively.

**T:** Transitively because we can ask the question ‘What did the students ask?’ And what will be your answer?

**LT:** Many questions.

**T:** ‘The competitions started late.’ ‘The competitions started late?’

**LLL:** Intransitive.

**T:** Intransitively. ‘Likobe grows tomatoes behind his house?’ ‘Likobe grows tomatoes behind his house?’

**LLL:** Transitive.

**T:** Transitively. Then part ‘B’, rewrite the sentences with the transitive verbs in their passive voice. So how many sentences did we identify that have used the transitive verbs?

**LLL:** (Murmurs).

**T:** We have sentence one, sentence three, four and? (Pause). No sentence one, sentence three and five. So sentence one if we were to write it in the passive, what would we have? (Pointing at a student).

**L<sub>6</sub>:** ‘The question was answered by Wako.’

**T:** ‘The question was answered by Wako.’ Then sentence three?

**L<sub>7</sub>:** ‘Many questions were asked by the students.’

**T:** ‘Many questions were asked by the students.’ Then sentence five? (Pause) Sentence five? Let us change sentence five into the passive. (Pause, then to a student who doesn’t have a textbook). Where is your textbook?

**NR**

**T:** Yes? Evelyn make an attempt?

**L<sub>8</sub>:** ‘Tomatoes are grown behind the house.’

**T:** Is it? Another attempt? Change it into the passive.

**L<sub>9</sub>:** ‘Tomatoes are grown by Likobe behind his house.’

**T:** Ok, yeah, ‘Tomatoes are grown by Likobe behind his?’

**LT:** ‘House.’

**T:** ‘Tomatoes are grown by Likobe behind his house.’ Now I want er... having looked at transitive verbs here, I want to give you some verbs here and I want you to try and construct very short sentences. (Writes the verbs on the chalkboard). Now use these four verbs to construct four sentences of your own.

Just – I am not telling you whether the verbs are transitive or intransitive but I want you to construct some short sentences using those verbs. We have ‘walk’, ‘run’, ‘come’ and ‘laugh.’ Try and construct four sentences, (pause, as the teacher goes round to check students work). Now let’s have some examples of sentences, of a sentence that has used the verb ‘walk.’

**L<sub>10</sub>:** (Not clear).

**T:** When?

**L<sub>10</sub>:** (Not clear).

**T:** Can I have a shorter sentence?

**L<sub>11</sub>:** ‘The teacher walked into the class.’

**T:** So, the class, a sentence using ‘come’?

**L1:** ‘He was to come to school today.’

**T:** Another one using ‘run’?

**L6:** ‘Please run home.’

**T:** ‘Laughed’, ‘laugh’?

**L4:** ‘They laughed after the show.’

**T:** No matter we have the examples of sentences that we have been given, you can also study the ones you have in your exercise books and try to see what is common about these ‘walk’, ‘laugh’, ‘come’, ‘run.’ ‘The teacher walked into the class.’ Now if we look at that sentence, if we are to divide it into the various components that we have in a sentence, we have ‘the teacher’ as our subject, then ‘walked’ as our?

**LLL:** Verb.

**T:** Verb, then what part of the sentence is the rest of the sentence? (Pause). After the verb it is followed by a?

**LLL:** Preposition.

**T:** It’s followed by a preposition. Now if we look at this... this particular er... sentence, what we notice is that this verb ‘walk’, if you remember yesterday when we were talking about transitive verbs we said that a transitive verb is followed immediately by a direct object we do not have a preposition in between the verb and the object. So definitely this other part of the sentence is our object. So it means this particular sentence here, ‘The teacher walked into the class’, now if you want to get this part of the answer, if you want to get ‘into the class’ as the answer, what questions are you likely to ask?

**LLL:** ‘Where.’

**T:** ‘Where?’ What questions are you likely to answer to... to, sorry, to ask?

**LL:** ‘Where did the teacher walk into?’

**T:** ‘Where did the teacher walk into?’ So here we are asking the question ‘where’, then we get the answer, ‘into the class.’ Then ‘He was to come to school today.’ We still ask which question?

**LLL:** Where.

**T:** ‘Where was he to come?’ Then you get ‘to school.’ ‘Please run home.’

**LLL:** ‘Where.’

**T:** ‘Where.’ ‘They laughed after the show?’

**LLL:** ‘When.’

**T:** ‘They laughed after the show.’

**LLL:** ‘When.’

**T:** ‘When did they laugh?’ So here again we are likely to ask the question ‘when.’ Now all these verbs the way we have used them in our sentences, we have used them intransitively because we have not used the direct objects there. So when we use verbs intransitively, if you want to know that the verb has been used intransitively, then we have three types of questions that we ask. We ask ‘when’, ‘where’ or ‘how.’ So we can ask ‘when’, ‘where’ or ‘how’ then you will get the other part of your answer. And the... the... the answer is normally not a noun or a pronoun. Remember when we were talking about transitive verbs we said the answer is always a noun or a?

**LT:** Pronoun.

**T:** But in transitive verbs the answer is not always a noun or a pronoun, instead it is normally an adverb or a prepositional?

**LT:** Phrase.

**T:** You see the first one is a prepositional phrase, 'into the class.' Then 'after the show' is also a prepositional phrase. I think in all these sentences we have the prepositional phrases. So when we ask these questions 'how', 'where' or 'when' we normally get prepositional phrases or an adverb as the?

**LT:** Answer.

**T:** But in transitive verbs we get a noun or a?

**LT:** Pronoun.

**T:** - as the answer. Now if you look at er... our books on Page 51, (pause). Let us study the examples which we are given on our books on Page 51. Now another thing about intransitive verbs is that is that they can also be used, or they can also occur at the end of a sentence on their own.

For example, you can have this sentence here. 'They laughed after the show.' It can simply be 'They laughed', you'll understand what the person means. It's a complete sentence on its own. So an intransitive verb can be used at the end of a?

**LT:** Sentence.

**T:** They can also be used er... for commands, we can say, 'Come here!', that is a command, when you tell somebody 'Come here!'. So intransitive verbs can also be used like that. Now study the sentences that we have been given there. 'Many people waited for?'

**LT:** 'Mbeki.'

**T:** 'Many people waited for?'

**LT:** 'Mbeki.'

**T:** 'Mbeki arrived late.' 'Many people are worried about HIV/AIDS.' Now if you look at the verbs that we are given there, 'waited', 'arrived' and 'worried' all the three verbs

have been – are intransitive verbs. The way they have been used, the first one is followed by a prepositional phrase, that is, ‘for Mbeki’, ‘Mbeki arrived late’ and ‘Many people are worried about HIV/AIDS.’ So we can also see that eh... intransitive verbs are meaningful even when used alone in commands. The way we’ve said you can say ‘come here.’ They can also occur at the end of a sentence as in the examples above, and then transitive verbs on the other hand are verbs that need a noun a pronoun to make them meaningful. So that is the difference of the two, transitive verbs that take a direct object then they also need a noun or pronoun to make them meaningful then intransitive verbs do not need any. Then most of the time however an intransitive verb is followed by an adverb or a prepositional phrase, we’ve mentioned that we have, ‘She is sleeping here’ followed by the adverb ‘here’, ‘She went to bed at three o’clock’, which is the prepositional phrase there? Which is the prepositional phrase?

**LLL:** ‘At three o’clock.’

**T:** ‘At three o’clock.’ ‘They are going soon’, which is the adverb? Which is the adverb?

**LLL:** ‘Soon.’

**T:** ‘Soon.’ ‘They are going to the market’, which is our prepositional phrase there?

**LLL:** ‘To the market.’

**T:** ‘To the market.’ ‘We will wait patiently.’ ‘Patiently’ is the adverb. ‘We will not wait because we are late?’ ‘Because we are late’ is a prepositional?

**LT:** ‘Clause.’

**T:** Then in these sentences we can ask the question ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘how’ or ‘why.’ Like, for example, in sentence one, ‘She is sleeping here’, you can ask, ‘Where is she?’

**LT:** ‘Sleeping.’

**T:** Then you will get the adverb as your answer. ‘She went to bed at three o’clock’ you can ask ‘When did she go to bed?’ What will be the answer?

**LLL:** ‘At three o’clock.’

**T:** ‘At three o’clock.’ So you can get the prepositional phrase as the answer. Now we have a practice exercise there, ‘In the sentences below, say whether the italicised verb is transitive or intransitive.’ Now using what we have learned about transitive verbs and intransitive, I want us to look at those sentences and try to identify whether the verbs that we have there have been used transitively or intransitively. So let us try out sentence one and two orally then we do the rest in our exercise books from three to ten. ‘Frustrated with the official call Ethuro kicked the bench.’ Which is the verb there?

**LLL:** ‘Kicked.’

**T:** ‘Kicked’, so is it -, has it been used transitively or intransitively?

**LLL:** Transitively.

**T:** Lets have one person at a time. Lillian?

**L<sub>12</sub>:** Transitively.

**T:** Why?

**L<sub>12</sub>:** It has a direct object.

**T:** ‘What did he kick, then the answer will be?’

**LT:** ‘The bench.’

**T:** So ‘the bench’ is our?

**LLL:** Object.

**T:** Object, isn’t it? The bench is our object. Then ‘The students procrastinated so much that they failed to finish the project.’ (Pause). ‘The students procrastinated so much that they failed to finish the project.’



**L7:** (Not clear).

**T:** Why?

**L7:** (Not clear).

**T:** Is it? Do we ask, 'Why did the students fail to finish the project or what question will we ask there?'

**L7:** (Not clear).

**T:** Look at the sentence keenly. (Pause). Look at the sentence and try to see whether the verb has been used transitively or intransitively. And if it is intransitively you should be able to give a reason why. (Pause). 'Sasa hakuna?' (Pause). Yes.

**L10:** Intransitive.

**T:** Actually the verb has been used intransitively but I wanted you to give an adequate reason why you think it has been used intransitively. So let us try out the same sentences three to ten. Sentences three to ten, I want you to identify whether the verbs have been used transitively or intransitively. Now as we wait to do that let us just clear up the bit of that. Now we also have another eh... group of verbs that can be used both in a transitive way and in an intransitive way. So I want to give you two examples of sentences then you identify the verb and tell me how they have been used in those sentences. (Pause, as the teacher writes on the chalkboard). Now look at the two sentences, 'As I walked towards the room, the door opened', 'Robert opened the door.' Which is eh... which are our verbs in the first sentence?

**LL:** 'Walked' and 'opened.'

**T:** Ok, we have 'walked' as a verb.

**LL:** And 'opened'.

**T:** ‘Opened’ as the other verb. Then in the other sentence, ‘Robert opened the door quickly.’

**LLL:** ‘Opened.’

**T:** ‘Opened.’ Now I want us to concentrate on the verb ‘opened.’ Look at the way the verb ‘opened’ has been used in the first sentence, ‘As I walked towards the room the door opened.’ Has it been used transitively or intransitively?

**LLL:** Intransitively.

**T:** Intransitively, why?

**L<sub>2</sub>:** Because if we ask the question we’ll use ‘when.’

**T:** Yeah ‘When did the door open?’ ‘As I walked towards the room.’ Then the second part, ‘Robert opened the door quickly.’

**L<sub>9</sub>:** There we ask the question, ‘What did Robert open?’

**T:** It is?

**L<sub>9</sub>:** What?

**T:** So it has been used transitively or intransitively?

**LLL:** Transitively.

**T:** Transitively. So which is our object?

**LLL:** ‘The door.’

**T:** SO we find that we have a direct object there where the action of opening was performed. It was performed on the?

**LLL:** ‘The door.’

**T:** ‘Door.’ So this -, the door here is our direct object which means ‘opened’ here has been used in a? transitive? Manner while in the first sentence it has been used intransitively. So we have these groups of verbs which can be used transitively and?

**LT:** Intransitively.

**T:** Depending on how you construct your sentence. So we can also have a like eh... 'broke', a verb like 'broke.' Can you attempt to give me some two sentences using the verb 'broke' both transitively and intransitively? Lets construct two sentences very fast using the verb 'broke.' One in a transitive way the other in an intransitive.(Pause). Construct the sentences first. (Pause). So make sure one has a direct object and the other one does not have. The other one should have an adverb or a prepositional phrase. (Pause). Have you done that? Can we have examples, yes?

**L<sub>13</sub>:** 'John broke the glass.' 'As I walked to the kitchen the glass broke.'

**T:** Another example? Our time is over we will stop there today.

**END.**



