



Blogs Instructional Use and its Effect on Learner's Performance in Kiswahili Creative Writing in Secondary Schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract

Kiswahili creative writing continues to be performed dismally, according to reports from the Kenya National Examinations Council. This performance can, however, be addressed by using technology, specifically using blogs, to teach creative writing skills. Integrating blogging is one such strategy that allows learners not only to learn from their teachers but also from their peers, using different technology tools that enable them to write blogs and collaborate in one document. This study investigated the influence of blogs on Kiswahili creative writing skills in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The study objective was to determine the use of blogs and its influence on learners' performance in Kiswahili creative writing skills in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The study was anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model. The study used a quasi-experimental research design and tools that supported the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The target population was the public day secondary schools in Westland sub-county in Nairobi. The data was analysed using SPSS version 22. Descriptive statistics (measures of central tendency; mean and standard deviation) were used in the analysis of quantitative data. Further, correlation analysis was conducted to establish the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis was also applied to test the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables of the study at the 95% confidence level. The study established that the use of blogs by learners positively influenced their performance in Kiswahili creative writing skills. The study recommended that the government, through the Ministry of Education, should amplify the provision of ICT resources in schools so that learners can leverage the available technologies.

Keywords: blogging, performance, Technology Acceptance Model, creative writing

Introduction

The application of technology has made significant advances in contemporary language teaching strategies (Alsamadani, 2018)^[2]. The use of current technology in the instruction of Kiswahili is widely perceived to involve the innovative application of approaches, resources, devices, tools, strategies, and systems that can directly affect Kiswahili language instruction and lead to the attainment of the preferred objectives (Mugaya, 2018)^[13]. Hence, it is now normal that technology has been accepted as a significant informative and supportive instrument across all contexts of teaching and learning (Mugo 2013). This is particularly true of Kiswahili language instruction, since it offers several potential opportunities to improve both the delivery of learning content and the pedagogies typically associated with traditional Kiswahili language instruction. Further, according to Ahmad (2024)^[1], blogs have been embraced in educational settings because they offer multimedia features, an easy-to-publish web presence, interactivity, and the ability to support both cooperative and independent learning. Additionally, by providing a real-world audience and immediate feedback, blogs encourage students to take ownership of their writing and to experiment with various styles and themes.

Since the onset of COVID-19, which saw schools close worldwide, the use of ICT for instruction has become the single most important platform for delivering content to learners in the absence of physical contact with their teachers. There are several platforms that offer content to learners using technology. They include Google Classroom, Zoom, Facebook Live streaming, YouTube, WhatsApp Chatbots, among others. These platforms can be useful in enhancing learning beyond the classroom. The collaborative and interactive nature of blog writing further enriches the creative writing process. By reading and commenting on their peers' work, students engage in critical evaluation, learning from others' strengths and areas for improvement (Giannikas, 2019)^[8].

In Kenya, the government introduced the competence-based curriculum (CBC), which teaches computer literacy as a core competence. Digital literacy involves the use of technology to deliver content in class or outside the classroom. Gadgets such as computers and portable devices are the key media through which learners access the internet to watch live lessons, download or upload learning materials, and learn subjects like Kiswahili (RoK, 2017).

According to the KNEC report 2023, many KCSE candidates have been performing dismally in Kiswahili for a period of time. The candidates lacked good writing skills. They lacked the ability to organize their work. They therefore displayed weak use of the mechanics of writing. In general, they did not have skills in using creative language. The report recommended that learners needed to be introduced to imaginative writing skills.

Consequently, learners ought to make their creative works to be effortlessly understood. Additionally, such works should not bore their readers or even make them disinterested. The writing ought to engage the reader's imagination by providing images and presenting things in a remarkable way. Candidates ought to employ language imaginatively to activate the readers' emotional response (KNEC Report, 2023).

According to Chepkemai (2019)^[5], learning writing can be enhanced by integrating the various ICT platforms available, for example, blogging, in teaching and learning Kiswahili writing skills.

Since blogging is a popular platform among the youthful creative writers, this study argues that the expanded space

provided by blogging should translate to better performance in creative writing. Specifically, the study aimed at answering the following research question:

How does the use of blogs affect learners' performance in creative writing skills in public secondary schools in Nairobi County?

Theoretical Framework

The study was underpinned by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989)^[7]. TAM examines a user's motivation to adopt technology in relation to their behaviour. The theory holds that a person's intention to use technology is largely driven by how they perceive it as useful and how easily they can use it. The theory asserts that usefulness and user-friendliness are key factors that influence a user's attitude towards adopting such a service. Schorr (2023)^[18] consequently suggests that the importance of any technology revolves around meeting the user's necessities, which again relies on their awareness of how beneficial it is, rather than an objective evaluation of the technology. Critics of this perspective disagree with its emphasis on methodological features and ignore crucial social features of technology users, including ability, time, and environmental/organizational limits, all of which can affect user freedom (Olumide, 2016).

This theory was acquired in this study as it addresses the key elements that define the acquisition and usage of technology, in this case, blogging. In other words, the study investigated the extent to which blogs were used (as influenced by end users perceived usefulness) and how the teachers' skill level determined the perception on ease of use of technology, while still evaluating the challenges experienced in using blogging to teach the creative writing skills.

Specifically, to determine the influence of using blogs on learners' performance in Kiswahili creative writing skills, perceived ease of use is central here, as learners must perceive blogs as useful tools that improve their creative writing skills. If students see improved outcomes (better overall grades, improved sentence structure formation, improved feedback from peers, or recognition), they are more likely to embrace blogs as a learning tool. Further, if blogs are easy to use, students will engage more, leading to better performance.

Conceptual framework

Independent Variables Intervening Variable Dependent variable

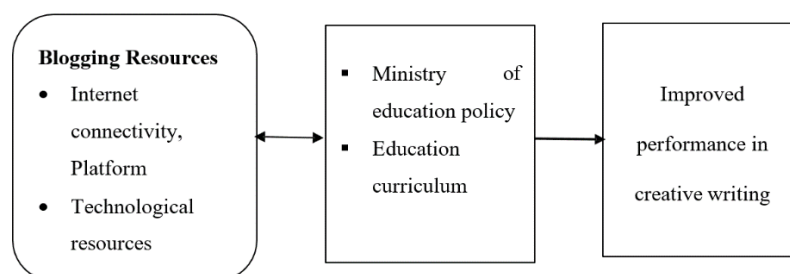


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

From figure 1.1 the independent variable of the study was blogging resources while the dependent variable improved performance in creative writing. The intervening variable was the Ministry of Education policy.

Blogs and performance in creative writing skills

Research indicates that the use of blogs has a crucial role in improving relationships among learners and among teachers and learners in the targeted language learning. As Reinhardt

(2019) notes, writing contexts such as blogs and wikis improve exchanges and communicative processes among learners. Furthermore, as Pardede (2020)'s study established, using blogs by trainee for EFL teachers not only raises their motivation, but it also enhances the debates and interactions. Likewise, Miceli *et al.* (2010) integrated a class blog into an advanced Italian language course and observed that blogs played a central part in improving writing skills, stimulating relations and enhancing class communities. The experiment was carried out at Bangkok University, where undergraduate learners in nine departments took three essential English courses. Each course had combined: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Results from the assessment, indicated that a large number of learners scored lower in writing, more so in summary writing. In the university, summary writing skills were important as students needed to do away with the irrelevant information, or compress the material from texts; periodicals and other sources related what they were studying.

Although summary writing was a fundamental skill; it was observed that their summary writing skills were inadequate. Most of their sentences had grammatical errors, and the learners were unable to decide which information was appropriate and essential to be included in their summaries. Additionally, they copied the sentences from the original writings in their summaries. It consequently became essential to adopt new methods to inspire students to better their summary skills. Educational technologies such as blogging has the possibility of generating thought-provoking, active, and friendly learning environment. Blogging would be useful to students, especially while promoting group work, getting feedback, peer reviews, and encouraging teamwork. The study however focuses on Italian and English, leaving a gap in understanding how blogs might influence writing skills in other languages, such as Kiswahili, which has different linguistic structures and cultural contexts. Further, the research emphasizes summary writing and general writing skills but does not explore the impact of blogging on creative writing, which requires a distinct set of skills such as imagination, style, and originality.

Belle (2018) conducted a study entitled the effect of using blogs in teaching writing skills. The study was conducted in Texas USA. Correlational research design was used in surveying the high schools' learners in 56 schools. School principals responded to questions from the interviews, while questionnaires were filled by the teachers. The study discovered that using blogs had a significant positive effect on the learners' writing skills. There is, however, a need to assess the current status of the effect of schools' preparedness to adopt blogs in enhancing Kiswahili writing skills in Nairobi City County.

Idu and Ojedapo (2017) studied the effect of use of blogs on teaching writing skills among elementary schools in Northern Nigeria. The study sampled 85 urban schools. Descriptive research design was used to target language teachers and school administrators. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Data analysis showed a notable positive correlation between use of blogs and performance in English language writing skills. The study, however, involved elementary education learners and teachers of English; therefore, there is a need to find out whether similar findings can be validated among secondary school learners and in the Kiswahili language. The study does not either elaborate on how teachers integrated blogs into

their teaching, which could be critical in understanding the methods and strategies that maximize their effectiveness. The current study was to establish if similar results can be corroborated among Kenyan public secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

Research Methodology and Methods

The study used the quasi-experimental research design, which is a non-equivalent group, post-test only. This design is popular with the assessment of education-based curricula, where it is not practical to have random assignment (Gibbons *et al.*, 2017) ^[9]. This design was suitable since it allowed the researcher to assess cause-and-effect relationships without random assignment, making it suitable for classroom settings. By combining quantitative and qualitative methods, the study gained depth and breadth, providing a more holistic understanding of the intervention's effectiveness.

Using the quantitative method, learners from experimental and control groups were subjected to a creative writing assessment before and after blogging. The experimental group used blogs for writing, while the control group employed old-fashioned methods. Scores from the test provided data for comparison.

Through the qualitative method, the researcher observed the integration of blogging into creative writing lessons, noting teaching strategies, student participation, and interactions during the feedback process.

The target population was Form 3 learners and Kiswahili teachers from the 10 public day secondary schools in Westlands Sub-County. The study population was as summarized on Table 3.1

Table 1: Study population

Category	Population
Schools	10
Teachers	10
Students	520

Sampling techniques and Sample size Sampling techniques

Purposive sampling was adopted to identify the 10 schools, which were day schools, the form three learners, and the Kiswahili teachers in those schools, in Westlands Sub-County. Purposive sampling ensures that the sample includes participants who are most relevant to the research. This targeted approach enhances the depth and relevance of the data collected (Creswell & Poth, 2018) ^[6].

The researcher used 30% of the population for the study. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) ^[14] argues that 10-30% sample is adequate for analysis. This provided a sample of 3 schools, 3 teachers, and 156 learners as shown on Table 3.2

Table 2: Sample size

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	%
Schools	10	3	30
Teachers	10	3	30
Learners	520	156	30
Total	530	159	30

The researcher then stratified the learners according to gender (that is, male and female). Stratified sampling allows for meaningful comparisons between different strata, providing

insights into subgroup-specific behaviours or characteristics (Creswell & Poth, 2018)^[6].

Simple random sampling was then used to either assign the learners to the experimental or control group. A simple random sampling technique provides each member of the population with an equivalent probability of being included in the sample (Kothari, 2004)^[12]. Each group had 78 participants.

Data were collected using questionnaires, writing essays and interviews. Field data was organized, coded, and input into SPSS. Quantitative data from the closed-ended parts of the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e., through the use of mean and standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages (Kothari, 2014). Qualitative data from the open-ended parts of the questionnaire and the interview guide were grouped according to themes guided by the research objectives. It was then analyzed through content analysis and presented using narration and verbatim quotes as appropriate. Correlation analysis was also done to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This was done with the help of SPSS version

22. It was then integrated within the quantitative data and discussed in line with the relevant literature. Tables, charts, and graphs were generated appropriately for presenting data.

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations included voluntary participation and informed consent from the respondents. The respondents were given assurance that the research process was entirely for academic purposes and that the details shared would be confidential.

Findings and Discussion

The main objective of the study was to determine the use of blogs and its influence on learners' performance in Kiswahili creative writing skills in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. As such, they were required to indicate the areas in which they used blogging using a scale where N = Never; R = Rarely; Reg = Regularly; A = Always. The findings were as shown on Table 4.4

Table 3: Findings on areas where blogs were used

Teaching area	N		R		Reg		A	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Writing essays	0	0	11	61	3	17	4	22
Class presentations	10	56	4	22	1	5	3	17
Online interactive quizzes	0	0	14	78	4	22	3	17
Giving writing assignments	0	0	12	67	5	28	1	5
Enhancing pronunciation skills	15	83	3	17	0	0	0	0
Creating own teaching materials	0	0	6	33	11	62	1	5
Researching for reference materials	2	11	9	50	3	17	4	22
Online interaction with learners	0	0	1	5	4	22	13	72

From Table 4.4, majority (83%) of the teachers reported that they never used blogs to improve pronunciation abilities. This implied that the teachers almost unanimously agreed that pronunciation skills had not been addressed through blogging and therefore the learners were missing this skill. Perhaps there was a limitation in the available resources to teach the skill, given that blogs are more oriented towards writing skills rather than speaking skills. In any case, Kiswahili may not be as well developed and resourced like English, which is an internationally recognised official language. These findings contradict the views of Alsubaie and Madini (2018)^[3] who

state that blogging is variously used in enhancing the instructional process of a language, rather than its performance. Again, (78%) of the teachers reported that they rarely used blogs to engage learners in online interactive quizzes. This implied that the teachers used blogging to engage learners in very few occasions. Perhaps there was no motivation to use blogging especially given that it involved tasks to be completed outside of the school. The teachers may have felt that they had no control over the learners outside of the classroom, and that whether they did the assignment depended on the learners' goodwill to do the exercise. It could be that without strict supervision from their teachers; the learners may have decided not to do the tasks assigned after all. These findings are opposed to those of Hava (2019)^[10] who posits that use of the web as a resource, including online interactive quizzes, dictionaries, encyclopedia and grammar reference materials, web quests, scavenger hunts as well as generic tools such as search engines is integrated in a language classroom to make it more interactive.

Further, 72% reported that they always had an online interaction with learners. This implied that the teachers had a way of reaching their learners online, away from school, albeit not through face-to-face interaction. It could have been that the interaction was through other online platforms and not necessarily through the blogs; afterall, the internet has provided numerous platforms for interaction. Perhaps the teacher could have exploited these other avenues to impart the language skills that they intended to impart. These findings echo those of Hava (2019)^[10] who posits that use of the web as a resource, including online interactive quizzes, dictionaries, encyclopedia and grammar reference materials, web quests, scavenger hunts as well as generic tools such as search engines is integrated in a language classroom to make it more interactive.

In addition, 67% reported that they rarely used blogging to give writing assignments. This implied that the majority of the teachers did not practice the online platform to post writing assignments for learners. Perhaps the teachers felt that the use of blogs did not yield the intended results, and therefore were not keen on its continued use. The findings oppose those of Soffer and Nachmias (2018)^[19] who indicate that many students in higher learning institutions use blogging in learning various curricula, especially away from school. Again, the researchers note that 3.2 million learners in America assimilate blogging in learning Science subjects. Moreover, 62% reported that they regularly used blogs to create their own teaching materials. This implied that teachers were indeed using blogs to access teaching resources for classroom instruction. Perhaps they exploited the internet resources since the internet provide up-to-date learning resources for any user and therefore teachers were using it to enrich their instructional process. This is despite the observation teachers would not use the same platform to engage their learners with writing tasks. The findings nevertheless relate with those of Chawinga (2017)^[4] who avers that teachers can integrate blogging by creating their own materials such as essays and presentations into it to enrich their teaching experience.

Additionally, 61% of the teachers reported that they rarely used blogs to help learners with writing essays. This implied that the teachers were not keen on using blogging to improve the learner's writing skills. It could be that the teachers did not find a connection between use of blogs and teaching Kiswahili writing skills. However, blogging should be seen

as a platform for imparting skills rather than a teaching aid. The findings agree with those of Kafyulilo, Fisser and Voogt (2016) ^[11] who state that blogging in itself may not make better the unproductive training practices. Actually, blogging can only add value to the education process when used in the teaching process, as a delivery rather than a content tool in the classroom. It is paramount that blogging is also infused in teaching and learning Kiswahili writing skills.

Similarly, another 56% of the teachers reported that they never used blogs for class presentations. This implied that the teachers, and their learners by extension, did not have a chance to benefit from the opportunities afforded by the use of online resources during instruction. Perhaps the content that was available in these blogs was not related to Kiswahili language, in which case then it becomes available but not useful. This connects with the observation by Rieckmann (2018) ^[17], who states that for successful integration of blogging into the curriculum, teachers must understand how it works. The study states that a major difficulty is that the technology related educational resources are not linked with the learning materials that ought to be used by the facilitators. Besides, many ICT tools are rarely aligned with the curriculum. Finally, another 50% of the teachers reported that they rarely used blogs for researching for reference materials.

This implied that half of the teachers did not benefit from blogging which is an important resource for updating their instructional materials. Given the various education blogging platforms that are available for use, failure to use them puts the teacher (and the learner by extension) at a disadvantage. These views disagree with those of Ngavana, Mutua and Koech, 2018) ^[15] who argue that Kiswahili can be imparted using various methods that inspire learners' participation. They note that incorporation of blogs in learning, if handled well by teachers, could improve the learning process and improve learners' overall performance.

Inferential Statistics

The study assessed the effect of blogging on learners' performance in Kiswahili creative writing by comparing scores between the experimental group (n = 52) and the control group (n = 52). Both groups started at the same pre-test level. The experimental group was then taught using blogs while the control group was taught using traditional methods for three months. Post-test was then conducted and the scores of both groups compared.

An ANCOVA was conducted to determine the effect of blogging instruction on the two groups of the learners. The results were presented on Table 4.

Table 4: ANCOVA Summary Table

Dependent Variable: Post-test scores

Covariate: Pre-test scores

Fixed Factor: Teaching Method (Blogs vs Traditional Instruction)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p)	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	18452.36	2	9226.18	36.84	.000	.323
Intercept	11240.57	1	11240.57	44.89	.000	.225
Pre-test Scores (Covariate)	2985.14	1	2985.14	11.92	.001	.072
Group (Teaching Method)	14620.48	1	14620.48	58.38	.000	.274
Error	38315.27	153	250.43			
Total	710240.00	156				
Corrected Total	56767.63	155				

The analysis revealed that the teaching method had a statistically significant effect on post-test scores, $F(1,153) = 58.38$, $p < .001$ with a large effect size ($\eta_p^2 = .274$). Learners in the experimental group exposed to blogs achieved significantly higher adjusted post-test mean scores ($M = 74.6$) compared to those in the control group who were taught using the traditional strategies ($M = 55.8$). It was also noted that the initial learner ability contributed to subsequent achievement: $F(1,153) = 11.92$, $p = .001$. These findings suggest that the use of blogs as an instructional strategy substantially enhanced learners' academic performance compared to the outdated teaching methods. Additionally, during the intervention, it was observed that the learners who were taught using the blogs became more interested in creative writing, they were motivated to answer questions through

blogs and tended to expose better critical thinking and problem-solving skills compared to the group that was taught using the transitional methods. The findings of this study conformed with the findings of other studies conducted concerning the use of blogs in the instruction for example, Reinhardt (2019), observed that blogs instructional use plays a crucial part in fostering collaboration among learners and teachers and learners in the targeted language.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to test the relationship between the dependent variable (performance in creative writing) and the independent variable (use of blogs in instruction) of the study at 95% confidence level or at 5% level of significance. The results were as shown on Table 5.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variable	Performance in Creative Writing (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Extent of Use of Blogs (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Performance in Creative Writing	1	—	0.615*	0.031
Use of Blogs	0.615*	0.031	1	—

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source: Research data (2025)

Results (as illustrated on Table 4.4) indicate that there was a

significant positive relationship between use of blogs in instruction ($\rho = 0.615$, $p\text{-value} < 0.05$). This implied that a unit improvement in the use of blogs in instruction was

associated with 0.615 units better performance in creative writing.

Limitation

The study however had a geographical location limitation in that Nairobi City County was only one of the 47 counties in the country, therefore the sample drawn from only one county may not adequately represent the whole country. As such generalization of the study findings to the whole country should be approached with adequate caution.

Conclusion

The study concluded that use of blogs in instruction positively influenced performance in creative writing.

Recommendations

Since the use of blogging influenced instruction of creative writing skills, the government through the Ministry of Education should enhance the provision of IT resources in schools so the schools can take advantage of the benefits that blogging offers to the learners.

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