

## **TEACHERS' COMMONLY HELD COGNITION ON USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MEDIA IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper examined teachers' commonly held cognitions on use of instructional media in English language pedagogy among secondary school teachers of English in Kenya. It focuses on teacher beliefs, knowledge and thoughts on instructional media and how they interact with classroom pedagogical practices. Fifteen schools were stratified as National, Extra County, County and Sub-county to obtain 45 participants comprising fifteen (15) heads of department sampled purposively and thirty (30) teachers of English who were randomly selected. Data was generated using interviews, lesson observation and document analysis. The study was guided by Vygotsky social learning theory. Qualitative approach and Multiple Case study method were utilized. Data was analyzed qualitatively based on the themes and sub- themes arising from interview transcripts and observation notes. The findings of the study revealed that teachers have cognitions about the use of instructional media and these cognitions in turn shape classroom pedagogical practices. Preparation of instructional media was said to be time consuming and their utilization in language lessons was minimal.

**Key words: Teacher Cognition, Instructional media, English language pedagogy, pedagogical practices**

### **1.0 Introduction**

Teacher cognition refers to the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching. It encompasses what teachers know, believe and think regarding their pedagogical endeavours (Borg, 2003). Teachers have cognitions about all that they do and the use of instructional media is not an exception. Language teacher's cognitions shape teacher's classroom practices. The use of instructional media in language teaching is of paramount importance. However utilization of these media resources is largely dependent on teachers' cognitions. This is because teachers have instructional reflections, principles, maxims, pedagogical knowledge or beliefs that shape their classroom procedures (Borg, 2006). The personal practical knowledge perspective views teaching more holistically taking into account the role of effective moral and emotional factors in shaping teachers' classroom practices. Often times, teachers make cognitive decisions on the basis of what is going on in the classroom. The decision may be taken to ensure students' understanding and motivation as well as for instructional management reasons (Johnsons, 1992). This study looked at teachers' cognitions on instructional media hereafter (IM) and how they manifest in their classroom pedagogical practices.

## 1.2 theoretical framework

The study was guided by Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory. The main principles of Vygotsky's work are the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The MKO refers to someone who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The concept of ZPD is 'the distance between the actual development level as regulated by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.' (1978, p. 86). Vygotsky's theory plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. According to him, every function in the child's cultural development appears on the social level first and then, on the individual level. Vygotsky (ibid), asserts that children engage as individuals in social interactions between themselves and peers or more experienced members of the same culture. They then consciously become unique through three levels of regulation namely object regulation, other regulation, and self-regulation. Teachers' cognitions develop over time through their schooling, training and experience. In the process, teachers interact with more knowledgeable others such as teachers, tutors, lectures and peers who influence their beliefs, knowledge and thought process on instructional procedures. In the school context, teachers are other regulated by colleagues. Most teachers in the study explained how their current perceptions on IM and the way they handle their lessons is traceable to what their colleagues do and what they saw their teachers/lecturers do.

## 2.0 Literature review

This section discusses literature related to teacher cognition, and the use of instructional media in English language pedagogy. Borg (2006), defines teacher cognition as 'the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching, which is what teachers know, believe and think.' Studies on teacher cognition research recognizes the impact of teachers' cognitions on teachers' professional lives. The overriding view of teaching in the 1970s was that learning was seen to be a product of teaching and teaching was regarded as behaviour performed by teachers in class. However, cognitive psychology held a different opinion by emphasizing on the influence of thinking on behavior, and to understand teachers therefore, one should recognize their mental lives rather than focus on their actions (Borg, 2006). The active role played by teachers in pedagogical processes necessitated examining decisions teachers made, and the search for generalizable models of teacher effectiveness which examined individual teachers work, and cognition in a more holistic and qualitative manner (Borg, 2006:6).

In 1975 the National Institute of Education in the United States organized a conference to define an agenda for research in teaching and among its outcomes was the suggestion that:

It is obvious that what teachers do is directed in no small measure by what they think...to the extent that, observed or intended teacher behaviour is 'thoughtless' it makes no use of the human teachers' most unique attributes. In so doing, it becomes mechanical and might well be done by a machine. If, however, teaching is done and, in all likelihood will continue to be done by human teachers, the question of relationship between thought and action becomes crucial.

(National Institute of Education, 1975:1 in Borg, 2006:6)

Generally studies in this era viewed teachers as active information processors who plan, make judgment, make decisions and take actions that influence their behaviour (Borg, 2006). Stern (1981) provides two justifications for examining teachers' mental activities: one is that behavioural model of teaching by not accounting for teachers' cognition is conceptually incomplete and what happens in the classroom is shaped by teachers' school related knowledge and how teachers cope with complexities of the teaching learning process.'

In the 1990s, studies on cognition focused on knowledge beliefs and learning to teach. Cater (1990) identifies three categories of teachers' knowledge: teachers' decision making, teachers' practical knowledge (personal and classroom knowledge) and pedagogical content knowledge. Cater (1990:2a) gives a summary of the differences in thinking between novice and experts. He asserts that expert teachers as opposed to novices draw on richly elaborate knowledge structures derived from class experience to understand teaching tasks and interpret classroom events. Pajares (1992) defines belief as individual judgment of the truth or falsity of a proposition, a judgment that can only be inferred from collective understanding of what human

beings say, intend and examines a number of cognitive processes of different types. These include knowledge about language, knowledge about students and cognitions of beliefs, perceptions and attitudes all explored from within the context of teachers' classroom practices (Baker, 2011). Grossmann, Shulman and Wilson (1989) contend that the concept of teacher cognition is an intricate one. In their study, they argue that although the terms teachers' knowledge and teachers' beliefs may be separated for the purpose of clarity, there is no clear cut distinction between them. This is because, in the teachers' mind, the components of knowledge, beliefs, conceptions and intuitions are inextricably intertwined

Baker (2011) summarizes the several re-appearing notions that embody the core meaning of teacher cognition. These are: personal, practical tact, systematic and dynamic. Generally, teacher cognition can be characterized as an implicit personally held practical system of mental constructions held by teachers which are dynamic. These constructions are active because they are defined, and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences throughout teachers' lives. This implies that, teachers' cognitions are personal but experience and classroom practice play a crucial role in shaping these cognitions.

## **2.2 Components of Teacher Cognition**

### *i) Knowledge*

Advanced Learners Dictionary defines knowledge as an organized body of information. It may also be viewed as the general awareness or possession of information, facts ideas, truths or principles. Philosophers view knowledge as a kind of belief: a "justified true belief" a belief which one has good reason to believe and which is also true (Ferthermacher, 1994). In Second Language teacher Cognition (L2TC), researchers ascribe to different models of teacher knowledge. One of the models commonly referred to is that of Shulman (1986, 1987). Baker (2011) citing Shulman (1987) distinguishes among seven categories of teacher knowledge which include:

- Subject matter content knowledge – (knowledge about language, KAL)
- General pedagogical knowledge- (general teaching methodology and techniques).
- Curriculum knowledge – knowledge about language program and relevant resources)
- Pedagogical content knowledge – knowledge about how to teach a particular subjects using illustrations and techniques.
- Knowledge of learners – (First Language( L1) backgrounds and student's motivation)
- Knowledge of educational contexts- (English as a second language, English as an international language and intensive English programs)
- Knowledge of educational ends- (purposes and values, and their philosophical and historical grounds)

Suwannasom (2010) avers that teachers are rational professionals who make choices in delicate and complex environments. The cognitive and affective components are often tacitly held and represent a complex interrelated system of personal and professional knowledge. Similarly, Shulman (1987) suggests that teacher knowledge comprises knowledge of subject matter and pedagogical content knowledge. This includes classroom strategies adopted in order to make learning meaningful to a particular cadre of learners (Cater 1990). Suwannasom (2010) concurs that teacher knowledge is made up of knowledge of self, subject matter, learning context, curriculum development and instruction.

### **Beliefs**

In L2 belief literature, a number of labels are ascribed to the construct teacher beliefs. These include: teacher thinking, teacher cognition, hidden agendas, pedagogical knowledge, etc. Borg (2003) reviewed 64 L2 teacher belief studies and documented seventeen different teacher belief terminologies. From these studies it is commonly accepted that, L2 teachers acquire their beliefs about teaching through their life experiences in society, prior schooling, professional education and teaching experience. Teachers' beliefs, like all other beliefs, have both a cultural facet as well as personal one. Cultural beliefs that reflect views of the society, and the individual form a ground from which the individual constructs other beliefs This implies

that, L2 teachers' prior learning contexts play a central role in shaping their beliefs and therefore their instructional processes (Holt Reyholds 1992)

Birello, & Borg (2012) points out that beliefs present challenges because they are not observable. He argues that we can observe behaviour but we cannot see what teacher's belief. Thus the only way beliefs can be elicited is by asking teachers to say their beliefs or to produce work in which beliefs can be implied. They distinguish between two types of beliefs: core beliefs and peripheral beliefs. Core beliefs are stable and powerful in what we do while peripheral beliefs are less stable and we are less committed to them and they may be compromised in case of tension between the core belief and the peripheral. Woods (1996) notes that teachers may report their beliefs according to what they believe to be the popular narrative and not their long held beliefs which shape their classroom practices. Teachers are regarded as active thinking decision-makers who make instructional choices based on their knowledge, thoughts and beliefs (Borg, 2003:81). This assertion implies that teachers have their own opinions about L<sub>2</sub> teaching which guide their instructional procedures. Lynch (1990) argues that teachers make tactical decisions to adopt a particular classroom procedure which is 'entwined in their mental script'. In the current study, the thought component is very crucial because it will suggest the decisions and choices teacher's makes as regards instructional media use in English language pedagogy.

### 2.3 Teacher Cognition and Teacher Education

The issue of TC is central to understanding and investigating assumptions and hypothesis about second language teacher education (SLTE) because it focuses on what knowledge teachers use, how they acquire such knowledge and how they use it. Emotional processing and individual values influence these processes and must be included into any construct of TC (Nathaniel, 2007). Studies indicate that knowledge transfer from SLTE programs to L2 teaching is very difficult and problematic and language teachers find it very challenging to use academic knowledge or theoretical principals in their practice. Generally humans tend to have a challenge taking knowledge gained from one activity and using it in another and will even resist knowledge they already possess. Transfer seems only to occur when learning activities (SLTE activities) are similar to target activities (L2 teaching activities) at both surface and structural levels.

Teachers' decisions are based on factors specific to their contexts and students and not on general principles. Practice -specific implicit knowledge is acquired when participating in activities in which detailed context and teaching specific information is available and necessary for participating in an activity (Lersen Freeman, 1983). He adds that the process of education is a process of preparing people to make choices and making informed choices is what teaching is all about. SLTE should therefore enable teachers to develop and improve their own ideas about language.

Teacher education programs both professional and pedagogical equip teachers with professional knowledge, subject matter knowledge, knowledge on teaching methods and knowledge on how students learn language (language learning theories) – parenthesis mine- which guide them in adjusting their beliefs (Hall, 2005). However, as (Borg 2003:89) observes the precise nature of impact of teacher education on trainees' cognitions varies across studies and among different trainees in the same study. This may as well be attributed to personal idiosyncrasies which individual teacher trainees carry into the learning program.

Although teacher education plays a significant role in shaping the student teachers' behaviours during practice, it does not alter significantly the cognitions they bring to the course. This is further authenticated by Freeman's (1993), study which presents the conceptions held by teachers during training as tensions defined as competing demands within their teaching. The implication here is that although some change in TC, is noted in teacher education programmes, there are patterns of teachers' activities which remain unaltered. Therefore changes in novice teachers' conceptions in SLTE would result in changes in teachers' practices. (MacDonald, Badger, 2001; Peacock 2001).

The classroom plays a significant role in the instructional process. It is in the classroom where the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and procedures interact with the learners'. The success or failure of the teaching learning process depends on what goes on in the classroom. It is from this position that studies in mainstream educational research content that 'teacher cognition and classroom practice exist in a symbiotic relationship' (Foss and Kleinsasser, 1996).

### **2.3. Instructional media**

Instructional media resources include anything that can facilitate teaching and learning. Owuso (2009) citing Romiszowski (1988) defines the term “instructional media” as devices and materials employed in teaching and learning. The same is opined by Wamalwa and Wamalwa (2014) who view IM as means by which learners are taught to enable them understand concepts easily according to the set objectives. IM comprises hardware like blackboards, radio, television, tape recorders, video tapes and recorders and projectors; and, software like transparencies, films, slides, teacher-made diagrams, real objects, cartoons, models, maps and photographs. Instructional media encompasses all the materials and physical means an instructor might use to implement instruction and facilitate students' achievement of instructional objectives. This may include traditional materials such as chalkboards, handouts, charts, slides, overheads, real objects, and videotape or film, as well newer materials and methods such as computers, DVDs, CD-ROMs, the Internet, and interactive video conferencing. Different writers have classified media resources in different ways. Wamalwa & Wamalwa (2014), for instance, classified media resources for teaching and learning into printed materials, audio resources, visual resources, audio-visual resources.

Instructional media are generally designed to provide realistic images and substitute experience to reach curriculum experiences. IM media are considered the most efficient facilitators in the learning and not a substitutes for the teacher. The use IM however, requires expertise on the part of the teacher who needs to constantly be informed of the new ideas and techniques to make the lessons presented with different instructional media achieve effectiveness (Owuso, 2009). Instructional media helps the pupil grasp the underlying structure of a phenomenon. Visual media are primarily for seeing, audio devices for hearing, and multi-sensory materials for use via two or more senses.

Several studies done on the effectiveness of media in language teaching indicated that students react with enthusiasm to the lessons where instructional media is used. Bullough (1978) maintained that in order for basic concepts to be learned, it is necessary that the individual has direct encounter with instructional resources, the elements that make up the concepts somewhere in his or her experience. Taylor (2007) as supported this by arguing that it is insufficient for learners to merely read or write about a topic because the brain learns best through multi-sensory processing. This means that in order for effective teaching and learning to take place, as many senses such as hearing, seeing, feeling and tasting as possible, should be involved in the process. He also asserted that: ‘the brain comprehends complex topics when they are imbedded in a rich sensory input and it needs multi path, multi model, and multi-sensory experiences to create as many associations as possible’ p 42. The more complex the topic, the more likely the brain will master and retain the concept if the learning experience includes rich sensory inputs.

The place of instructional media in the teaching and learning process is undoubtedly essential. Media are used whenever, in the best judgment of the teacher, it can facilitate learning or increase understanding of material being presented. It must be noted that different instructional media exist to meet the different capabilities of learners. They are intended to bring about meaningful understanding and hence learning. Gabler and Schroeder (2003) cited by Syomwene (2014), avers that these technologies can only be said to be educational when they are used with activities designed with academic intent. Teachers should thus be equipped with skills on selection and development of IM so that they utilize those media effective learning.

### **3.0 Research Methodology and Design**

This section looks at the research philosophical paradigm, the research approach and research method adopted in the study.

#### **3.1 Research Philosophical Paradigm**

The study adopted the interpretivist- constructivist paradigm. To begin with a research paradigm is defined as a way of looking at the world and interpreting what is studied. It involves how research is carried out, and the level of involvement and interpretation (Rubin and Robin, 2005). In addition, Creswell, 2007) defines a paradigm as a general orientation about the world and the nature of research. He further argues that

the world views are fashioned by the subject of study, beliefs of research supervisors, and past experience. A research paradigm explains the researcher's ontological and epistemological inclination. Ontology is the nature of reality or assumptions about reality or knowledge while Epistemology refers to the way reality is studied. It is 'the nature of evidence and knowledge, the rules and principles by which we decide how knowledge can be demonstrated or a phenomenon known' (Mason 2002:16). The current study being a survey of teachers' cognitions on use of IM, in ELP, is based on the fact that language teaching is an interactive endeavour between students, teachers and the environment each influencing the learning process in one way or another. Teachers are also active participants in the teaching learning process who have beliefs and thoughts about their work and their philosophical orientations shape their classroom pedagogical practices. A constructive understanding of their world view is best done through the interpretivist-constructivist paradigm.

### **3.2 The Qualitative Research approach**

The study adopted the qualitative approach. A qualitative research is a study, which is conducted in a natural setting where the researcher 'as an instrument of data collection gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively and describes the process in a persuasive and expressive manner (Nsubuga and Katamba (2013, Donyei (2007). The researcher collected data from the natural setting specifically schools where participants experience the problem under study. The purpose of using qualitative approach in this study was to gather in-depth knowledge on teacher cognition and use of instructional media in English language pedagogy.

### **3.3 Case Study method**

The study investigated 45 participants hence multiple case study method was utilized.

### **3.4 Data generation instruments**

The instruments employed for data generation were: interview, observation, and document analysis. Ong'ondo (2010), points out that the relativist- interpretivist paradigm works well with qualitative approach, case study method and data generation process. Participants were interviewed and observed in their natural contexts. Professional documents such schemes of work and lesson plans analyzed and English language lessons observed. Data from the three sources was evaluated and organized thematically.

### **3.5 Sample and sampling procedures**

The sample consisted of 45 participants that is fifteen heads of department (languages) 30 teachers of English from the selected secondary schools. The heads of department (HODs) were selected purposively while teachers of English were selected using simple random as well as convenient sampling. This was done to ensure that relevant information is obtained. The information sought was on teacher beliefs, knowledge and how these influenced their use of IM.

### **3.6 Data Analysis procedure**

With regard to the paradigm adopted in this study that is relativist-interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, data was analyzed qualitatively. This includes giving descriptions and interpretations of the data generated through interviews, observation and selected documents. The interview sessions were audio recorded and transcribed. The data from interview transcripts, lesson observation notes and document analysis were coded then organized and presented thematically as recommended by (Jwan and Ongondo2011).

### **4.0 Findings of the study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' cognitions on use of instructional media in English language pedagogy among secondary school teachers of English in Kenya. Data was generated qualitatively using interviews, lesson observation and document analysis then presented thematically. The

interview sessions were recorded then transcribed. The information from teachers of English and heads of department interview transcripts were presented thematically and presented in narrative form. In some cases the exact words of the participants were presented.

#### **4.1 Teachers Thoughts and Beliefs on the use of IM in English Language Pedagogy.**

Here the main purpose was to establish the beliefs and thoughts of TOEs and HODs on the use of IM. As indicated earlier, thoughts and beliefs are difficult to separate, so, whatever the respondents stated as beliefs or thoughts, are all put together under this sub theme. From the interviews sessions, the respondents (TOEs and HODs) attested that IM plays a crucial role in English language teaching (ELT). They indicated that IM makes teaching of new concepts easy for the learner to comprehend. Apart from making learning of concepts easy, IM vary stimulus in the lesson and thus makes learners enjoy the lesson. They also indicated that 'IM is essential in language teaching for they help vary the teaching methods and enhance learning activity.' They generally held the view that when teaching with IM, learners tend to be more enthusiastic in the lesson since some aspects become self-explanatory. Without IM they said, the lesson becomes flat, and often time learners lose interest. On the same note, respondents generally consented that IM are essential in ELT because they reinforce instruction, vary stimulus and hence make learners to not only enjoy the lesson, but also better their understanding of concepts. They felt that the use of IM speaks a lot more than just a lesson. It gives learners a whole new experience and breaks monotony in the lesson. This is clearly seen in the words of one of the respondents as quoted here below:

IM is quite essential in language teaching. It gives the learners an opportunity to experience a new item. It makes them get excitement in the lesson and generally it enhances learning. It breaks monotony and gives a spark to a learner. Aids acts as a variety in instructional process. (TOEEC3).

Teachers further held the belief that IM is beneficial to both the teacher and students. To the teacher, the respondents reiterated that IM is quite instrumental because it makes it easy for him/her to explain concepts. The learners are able to visualize what is being taught and this makes the teachers' work easier, as opposed to when they rely on abstract explanation of concepts. They agreed that in a classroom there are learners of mixed abilities and among them are those who need to see things practically before they grasp the content. The use of IM thus becomes very critical in enabling such learners comprehend concepts.

From the words of one respondent, 'a good teacher cannot do without IM in the classroom if he/she expects to meet the needs of all learners.' In her perception, there are topics which cannot be effectively taught without the use of a teaching aids such as flash cards, charts, and projectors among others. She continued to add that 'some concepts /topics are quite abstract and need to be demonstrated so that the teacher can easily break down the learning points for the learner to grasp well.' The importance of IM in ELT can be summarized in the following excerpt as reported by one of the TOE from a national school:

*I believe the use of IM in language teaching is quite important because of integration, media plays a critical role. It concretizes learning and helps the teacher achieve objectives. Without IM, you can spend endless time teaching and you don't achieve the set objectives. You see, there are topics that are quite abstract, so if you use IM for instance you can draw a chart, or use a projector, the learners are able to visualize what you are teaching and this makes them understand better, moreover, the use of IM will break the monotony of the teacher just talking and learners listening. The media will vary the stimulus and makes learners more receptive to the lesson. TOEN1*

Another popular belief among the responds is that the use of IM is quite valuable when dealing with beginners, that is, the lower forms (form 1 and form 2) and not the upper classes, (form 3 and form 4). In the upper forms, teachers are grappling with the completion of the syllabus and preparation for exams and they may not have time to plan for IM. One of the respondents a TOE at a sub county school reiterated that, he beliefs that IM will only work well with beginners; that is the lower forms (Form one and Form two).

According to him, this reduces as one gets to form three and four. In the lower forms, he says, there is need for the learner to grasp the content but in form three and four as the students gear towards exams, they will need more of revision and coaching on techniques of answering questions hence little is done on the use of IM. What he commented on this sub- theme is quoted here below:

*We have various levels of learners in high school. That is, learners in Form one and Form two, and those in Form three and Form four. In Form one and Form two that is foundational level, where every aid you marshal to teach them, every aid you marshal to pass instruction or to help them especially in later classes that is Form three and Form four, where you zero in to examination and past papers become IM. The use of IM often reduces as I go to Form two, and reduce even further as I get to Form three and four as we gear towards exams. Actually, the learners tend to understand concepts which I would be interested in them answering exam questions in Form four. In fact, much of the teaching I do in Form one and two and it actually reduces as I get to form three and four. It is now we gear towards exams that is in a very honest opinion, not learning. Teaching we do in Form one and two, and ensure they grasp the content; what we're teaching. Failure to do this, even the approach to exam will be a problem. Yes. At higher levels the issue of exams comes in and so teachers tend to ignore the use of IM and you will realize that the learners on their part will appreciate the use of IM in lower classes. When it gets to upper classes, they are not interested in what you use to teach, but what you are teaching them. They are more interested in how they can answer examination questions. (TOEC1).*

Although all the participants concurred that IM is essential in language teaching and should be encouraged at all levels, some held the opinion that they should only be used with the low achievers because they need to visualize something before they understand. To them, using IM with the high achievers is a waste of time. One TOE from a sub county school with such opinion argued that IM are instrumental when dealing with low achievers. When asked whether IM influences her learners' understanding of the lesson content, these were her comments:

*I think IM does well with low achievers. If you have students that are low achievers the use of instructional media can assist them grasp the content, but high achievers are able to grasp the content without IM. I really advise that they are used with low achievers. When you have students who are low achievers IM is handy (TOESC5)*

One contrary belief on the use of IM was that they are time consuming, especially when one has a heavy workload. They are time consuming in terms of preparation since some are not readily available. The respondents with this opinion said that some schools don't provide IM. They added that other schools have power problem and this makes it difficult to use modern technology. The excerpt below from one of the participants testifies to this assertion:

*I tend to believe the use of IM is time consuming. Again some of them are not available in schools hence difficult to plan to use them. Some schools, like my school, has power problem and using modern technology is sometimes a toll order. Some of these IM are also so expensive and the schools cannot procure them. I think the last time I used IM effectively was when I was on TP because when you ask for it you are told to wait and you see the syllabus does not wait so you end up teaching a lesson you had planned to use IM with just notes.*

A summary of teachers' thoughts and beliefs on the use of IM is given in table 4.4



**Table 4. 1: Teachers' thoughts and beliefs on the use of IM in ELT**

<p><b>Positive</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use of IM makes learning of concepts easy</li> <li>• The use of IM breaks monotony by creating variety</li> <li>• The use of IM motivates learners to learn</li> <li>• The use of IM makes learning of concepts memorable</li> <li>• The use of IM allows the teacher to break concepts into meaningful parts</li> <li>• The use of IM motivates learners to learn.</li> <li>• The use of IM improves learner participation in the classroom</li> <li>• The use of IM improves application skills</li> </ul> <p>The use of IM depends on teachers' length of service</p> <p><b>Negative</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of IM is time consuming</li> <li>• IM is only suitable for beginners Form and Form two</li> <li>• Preparation and use of IM requires skill</li> <li>• Some IM are quite costly hence difficult for the school to procure.</li> <li>• The use of IM a preserve of TPTs and novice teachers.</li> <li>• The use of IM works well with low achievers.</li> </ul>
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#### 4.2 Influence of Beliefs on Selection and Development of instructional media

From the interviews the teachers specified that the beliefs they hold indeed influence their selection, development and use of IM in their lessons. One of the respondents pointed out that what one believes; affects what he or she does. He argued that 'everything one does or fails to do is anchored on one's beliefs and the beliefs a teacher holds about IM will favour selection of certain IM. This was in agreement with the documents analyzed that is the respondents' professional documents namely lesson plans and schemes of work. While preparing schemes of work and lesson plans, teachers indicate the IM to be used in every topic. However, from the classroom observations done, it was crystal clear that teachers do not actually develop these resources. Although teachers had them well written out in their schemes of work and lesson plans, a number of teachers did not actually seem to prepare them. The respondents generally agreed that since they understood the value of IM in ELT, they plan for their lessons with a view to using IM. However, in most cases, this ends up at the planning stage but not actualized in the language classroom. This perception was common across the board, regardless of the category of school. One teacher of English from an extra county school from an extra county school while responding to this question had this to say:

*Well, eh, this influences me positively, since I know that IM is essential, vital, in language teaching. I do select IM and develop them for my lessons, but not always. To be sincere, it is just on some occasions that I use IM in the actual lessons. I may plan for them, select, but when it comes to the actual lesson, I just walk to class often with a piece of chalk and a text book. Yeah, may depend on how ready I am for the lesson; or sometimes, just how I feel at that particular time, yeah. TOEEC2*

#### 4.3 Influence of Beliefs on Utilization of IM in the Language Classroom

On this sub theme, I sought the participants' opinions on the use of IM in the language lessons. Given the fact that they had listed the various types of IM in their schemes of work and lesson plans, I further probed to ascertain whether these IM were utilized in their lessons. From interview, the participants candidly stated that they do plan for IM but they rarely use them in their lessons. This was a common position for both TOEs and HODs. Although the teachers were well aware of the use of IM and they believed that they are valuable; they attested that they hardly used them in their lessons. Some teachers attributed this to unavailability of the resources while others just felt it is an unnecessary burden. One of the respondents stated that 'IM, is hardly used when teaching English. Some schools, he said, don't have electricity to enable

teachers use IT and sometimes it is the lack of computer literacy skills. He confessed that he, personally, hardly used IM in teaching English.' Similar sentiments are echoed by other respondents who consent that IM can be used successively in language teaching but this is not done practically. The excerpt below presents the voice of a HOD from an Extra Country school:

*Well since I believe IM is essential in ELT, I do select IM for my language lessons. While preparing my schemes of work, I do indicate the IM in the resource column and I ensure that. Yeah, but to be sincere I may not utilize them for all lessons. I may prepare yes but fail to use them in the lessons. This may be because of time factor. As a HOD you may have so many responsibilities and you may fail, may be you have a meeting and the class has begun, and you are forced to go to class without the IM you had prepared. May be the one you planned for requires a lot of time so you end up going to class without any IM and life goes on. Well I can also say that the use of IM requires skill. So adequate training is crucial on the use of IM. So I believe teachers must be taken through vigorous training in the use of IM especially after working for some time because sincerely speaking after working for a few years teachers tend to overlook the benefits of IM as they just go to class with a textbook and a piece of chalk. As long as the message is delivered they don't pay attention to IM.*  
*HODECI*

The respondents who said they rarely used IM in their lessons attributed it to unavailability, the heavy workload, time factor and inadequate training especially with regard to modern technology. From the lessons observed, it actually emerged that most teachers did not use IM. The few who used them did not use them effectively. One participant who had prepared to use a chart to teach adverbs, only used the chalkboard and handed the chart to the class representative after the lesson to display it on the board. These are her words as he left the class: 'class prefect, take this, (a chart showing the different types of adjectives) you can pin it on the board later for the class to see.' In this case, the IM used did not contribute to the lesson in any way. It just became a by the way. Although the respondents generally concurred that the utilization of IM was a challenge, two HODs presented a different opinion. The revelations from the interview schedule were in congruence with the findings from lesson observation schedule which shows that teachers do not actually utilize IM effectively in their lessons. Some merely indicated the IM to be used but did not utilize them. Others used IM at the introduction stage of the lesson but did not do so at the development and conclusion stages. The findings from the document analyzed namely schemes and lesson plan are also in agreement with this. These professional documents had IM clearly listed in the resource column. In most of the lessons observed teachers only used the chalkboard/whiteboard and the textbook. Only a few teachers prepared charts but they did not use them effectively. The IM used especially the blackboard/whiteboard were strategically placed but the charts were not placed strategically as they were not clearly visible to the students at the back of the classroom. This is illustrated by the following comments made during lesson observation of a teacher of English from a national school (TOEN):

#### **4.0 Discussion of findings**

From the findings on the first research question, it is evident that teachers have cognitions about all pedagogical practices and the use of instructional media in English language pedagogy is not an exception. The current study revealed that the way teachers utilize IM to some extent is a function of their beliefs, thoughts and knowledge on IM use. Teachers' beliefs about IM informed the decisions they make on IM use. TC here is based on Borg (2006) who views TC as an all-inclusive term that embraces the complexity of teacher's mental lives. The current study like other studies on TC as discussed by Borg (2006) examines what language teachers at any stage of their careers think know and belief. These cognitions in turn shape how they execute their pedagogical procedures.

In the current study, a number of beliefs on IM were stated by the respondents. The beliefs were categorized as both positive and negative. (See table 4.3) although the general perception is that teachers' beliefs influence their actions, classroom observation revealed a mismatch between teacher beliefs and what they actually do in the classroom. A case in point is a situation where the respondent stated that the IM

makes learning of concepts easy and memorable but the same respondent did not utilize IM in his lessons. This is in agreement with Borg (2003) who stated that most studies of TC have endeavored to look at the congruence and incongruence between teacher beliefs and their actions. However, as Hill (2014) puts it, often times the mismatch between stated beliefs and actions may be seen as a contradiction of teacher's cognition. He adds that instructional practices may be quite complicated especially in structured language programs and the difference between stated beliefs and instructional practices may be as a result of curriculum constraints that may not necessarily give teachers an opportunity to connect their beliefs and practice (Yigitoglu 2011).

This position was evident in the remarks given by some respondents in the current study as they argued that their inability to use IM in their lessons successfully as planned was as a result of heavy workload, lack of support from their institutions they teach in, lack of proper training of the use of IM and examination pressure. Furthermore, the study revealed that teacher's perception and beliefs on the use of IM are developed not only through training, but much of it is also acquired through the long years of experience both as language learners and language teachers. Schooling as indicated by one of the respondent provided a platform from which language teachers built their beliefs. One respondent attested that what she does today in the language classroom is a replication of his primary school teachers' style of teaching. She stated that although she had gone through training and also sat in many language classrooms the experience she had with Mrs. Cosby (not her real name) her primary school teacher of English is such that it feels like yesterday. (His words). In fact, for some of his teachers along her study ladder, he says, he struggles to remember their names.

Planning is critical in a successful instructional process. A good teacher must plan for his lessons if he or she expects to attain the set objectives. In the current study, the respondents were asked to state how the beliefs they hold on IM influenced their decisions on selection, development and utilization of IM. From the interviews the study revealed that teacher beliefs in a way impacted on their choice of IM used in the language lessons. This is agreement with Pajerees (1992) cited in Borg (2006) who remarks that once a belief has been incorporated into the believe structure of an individual (in this case the teachers) the more it becomes difficult to alter. But newly acquired beliefs are more vulnerable. This explains why some teachers would still do things the way their primary and secondary school teachers did.

However, for most respondents, the use of IM was only evident as far as selection and development is concerned. When it came to actual use of these resources in the classroom the story was different. Majority of the respondents only stopped at the planning stage. This was evident from the documents analyzed that is the lesson plans and schemes of work but when it came to actual teaching in the classroom as revealed by classroom observation very little was done. This echoes the mismatch between cognition and actual pedagogical process as earlier stated (Hill 2014, Borg 2006).

From the interviews one common belief among the respondents was that the development and utilization of IM is time consuming given the fact that most of them had to cope with the heavy workload which not only included the number of lessons to be taught, but also other school responsibilities assigned to them. From the classroom observation as explained in the finding section above, it was observed that the respondents mainly used IM that were readily available: the chalkboard. The few who attempted to prepare IM used the charts, flash cards and newspaper cuttings. Although the respondents had the teaching aids column of schemes of work filled in the diverse instructional media including the audio visual aids such as the CDs, projectors, laptops and other technological appliances, only one actually used a computer in his lessons. Most of the long serving teachers suffered from 'technophobia' and confessed that they rarely used technology in their lessons. This agrees with Dudeney and Hockly (2007) cited by (Suwannasom 2010) who coined the term 'technophobe' to refer to teachers who fear to utilize new technologies. In their view, the negative attitude exhibited by teachers towards the use of technology is usually as a result of a lack of confidence, lack of facilities or lack of proper training. This makes such teachers not to see the benefit of using technology in the language classroom.

The study also revealed that the teachers' length of service plays a critical role in the development of teacher's cognitions on the use of IM. In the current study, it was evident that the long serving teacher (ten years and above) rarely used IM in their lessons. They attributed this confidence and experience they have gathered over the years. These teachers felt that they could handle the lessons topic without any assistance

from the IM and their learners are comfortable. The many responsibilities they shoulder also do not allow them to prepare and utilize IM. The novice teachers on the other hand are quite at home with technology and readily used IM in their lessons. This observation however differs from the study conducted by TOJET: Turkish online journal of Education and Training which revealed that the novice teachers who had received “state of the art” training in classroom technologies were less comfortable in their implementation than the more experienced teachers who had no formal training with computers but had a great deal of classroom experience (Meskil, Mossop Di Angelo and Pasquale 2002).

Although the length of service impacted on the use of IM, the study also revealed that there are a strand of teachers who would always utilize IM regardless of their length of service, such teachers as one TOE from an extra county school are always enthusiastic and ready to learn ways of doing things. provision of IM to the teachers does not assure utilization of the same.. This is in tandem with what was observed in some schools and from the submissions of HODS. In one school, the school had purchased a laptop and a projector but surprisingly the language teachers did not utilize them. The laptop had become almost exclusively a preserve for the science teachers.

Another reason given by the respondents to justify, the minimal utilization of IM by the experienced teachers is the curriculum. The respondents noted that the curriculum is exam oriented and the experienced teachers have learnt the rules of the game. They know which areas likely to be tested thus they go for these particular areas and tackle them since the system rewards those who excel in exams teachers therefore grapple with drilling learners for exams and the use of IM becomes an unnecessary burden. This explains why the Novice teachers who are quite excited as they join the service and wish to apply all they learned in Teacher Education institutions are soon discouraged and also start teaching for exam sake. These teachers are discouraged by their long serving colleagues who brand them teaching practice fellows hereafter TPFs. Even the long serving teachers who make use of IM are called names and are said to be degenerating into teaching practice fellows (TPFs)

Research shows that teachers use their long held beliefs and thinking patterns to create instructional visions: what they think, belief and know about their profession affects their instructional visions Holt Reyholds, 1992: Freeman, 1992. Lorte, 1978). This observation is made in the current study where participants carried with them the perceptions developed during their schooling years about the teaching and learning of English language. And no matter the training they got, they still do things the way their teacher did it. Hill (2014) concurs when he posits that teacher always already have a comfortable set of beliefs about their work and could be unaware of the incongruence in their practice or be resistant to growth through professional development. There is need to encourage them to disentangle from this especially if the beliefs are detrimental to their teaching practices (emphasis mine).

In the current study there was no connection between the use of IM and the teachers learning. The use of IM was largely dependent on the teachers own initiative, the structures put in place in the specific schools, and demands of the employer in this case Teachers Service commission (TSC). The level of education of teachers had no bearing on the use of IM. In some schools for instance, the teachers who had furthered their education rarely used IM. Those who have masters in language education, despite having done a number of courses on selection, developments and utilization of IM never showed any significant difference in the use of IM from their bachelor’s Degree and Diploma counterparts. In fact, from the words of one respondent ‘such teachers are too busy, and preoccupied with changing their career, getting into the university as lecturers and fighting for lucrative positions’. They feel that preparing and using IM is a preserve for the TPs and Novice teachers”

The respondents further held the belief that the use of IM is suitable for beginners (Form 1 and Form2) students. The argument here being that the upper classes struggle with completion of the syllabus and preparation for National Examinations, and the teacher may not have the luxury of time to prepare IM. This perhaps explains the fact that teachers view the use of IM as a preserve for the novice teachers because they are normally delegated the lower forms. Again, the respondents posited that the use of IM works well with low achievers but not the academically endowed students. They argued that the low achievers have a challenge of grasping the content and the use of IM by language teachers had much to do with attitude towards ELT and instructional media. One participant noted that English is a wide subject and there is a lot to be taught. Preparing for the lessons be quite time consuming and as such, the use of IM becomes an

unnecessary burden. They further revealed that teachers had sufficient knowledge and skills on the use of IM but the main challenge was utilization of these skills.

It was also observed that schools did not have programs tailored to sensitive teachers on the use of IM and this perhaps explains why teachers' use of IM in the language lessons was quite limited. The few seminars and workshops attended by teachers were generally on the teaching of the literature set texts especially when new set texts were being introduced. In as much as teachers may be blamed for failing to utilize IM, lack of support from the institutions contributed to this as it was cited by some of the participants. Teacher The HODs confirmed that indeed there were no programs put in place to sensitize teachers on the use of IM and but they just encouraged their members during departmental meetings. Even the seminars and the workshops organized by the county educations officials do not emphasize on IM.

## 5. Conclusion

The study concludes that teachers have cognitions on the use of IM in English language pedagogy. These' cognitions are formed throughout teachers' academic and professional life, and they in turn influence the way they carry out pedagogical practices. Teachers believe that IM are essential in English language teaching. They attested that they have knowledge and skills on the use of IM. They also believed that IM are essential in English language pedagogy because they make lessons more enjoyable and understanding of concepts easy. They further indicated that preparation of IM is time consuming and thus most of them did not utilize IM in their lessons effectively. The failure to utilize the available IM could be explained by the long held beliefs teachers have acquired over the years about the use of IM in language pedagogy. The long held beliefs may concur or contradict with their classroom practices. Teachers' length of service also came in as a powerful factor on the use of IM. The study concludes that the long serving teachers used IM less often than the novice teachers. This could be attributed to the fact that the novice teachers are more at home with modern technology as opposed to their long serving counterparts.

## Recommendation.

Education institutions (universities and teacher training colleges) the Kenyan context; are mandated with teacher preparation. They should be aware of the fact that teachers carry their own beliefs, knowledge and experiences' that they have acquired throughout their schooling life into their teacher training be it pre-service or in service. These beliefs should be factored into the LTE programs in order to improve their efficacy. Teachers of English should also endeavor to utilize IM in their lessons in order to make concepts easily understood by the learners.

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