# SCAFFOLDED ASSISTANCE IN KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOL CLASSROOMS: THE CASE OF MASENO UNIVERSITY STUDENT TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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# ABSTRACT

The thesis furthers understanding of sociocultural perspectives on teaching and learning by investigating the process of scaffolding in whole class interactions among pre-service teachers of English in the Kenyan secondary school context. While the linguistic features of scaffolding have been previously investigated, the research, most commonly undertaken in Western contexts such as Europe or North America, often assumes the availability of physical tools and artefacts, technological equipment and class sizes more commonly found in such contexts. This study provides insight into the linguistic features of scaffolding in a non-Western context where such resources are uncommonly available to teachers working with much larger classes. Further, this thesis provides insight into some of the factors limiting the practice of scaffolding as a social process of teaching English and proposes some ways of improving the use of scaffolding in terms of the pedagogy of teaching English in the Kenyan context.

A qualitative embedded case study design was employed using the case of Maseno University student teachers of English, during their teaching practicum in schools. Research data comprised of: 17 video-recorded English lessons; a selection of Maseno University teacher education documents relevant to the student teachers' education; and an interview with a Maseno University English teaching lecturer. A microanalysis of teacher discourse moves in 11 interactive episodes, labelled as learner-centred were compared with examples of the far more commonly found teacher-led episodes to reveal and understand the scaffolding strategies used by student teachers to assist learner's learning of English. A sociocultural analysis of Kenyan secondary school classroom environments, together with a content analysis of the course documents and key themes identified in the interview provided information on the background factors affecting the manner in which scaffolding is practiced in Kenyan classrooms.

The findings show that scaffolded assistance in the Kenyan context is characteristically achieved by teacher-learner interactions in whole-class activity. The learner-centred episodes revealed that in response to learner needs, student teachers guide interactions and create dialogic spaces for learner participation in joint and productive problem solving by contingently using discourse strategies. The discoursal strategies found fall under five key mechanisms of assistance namely: collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing. Challenges such as: the culture of teaching and learning in Kenya; an incoherence

between the teacher education syllabi and the prescribed syllabus for learning English in secondary schools; large class sizes and the scarcity of teaching resources were found to have a genuine impact on the use of pedagogical approaches encouraging learner-centred scaffolding. Moreover, student teachers' understanding of the practice of scaffolding as a process of teaching was also hindered by the lack of theoretical or pedagogical foundation work in relation to a sociocultural approach to learning in the language teacher education curriculum.

The findings imply a relationship between the education culture and language as mediational tools in different contexts and therefore the need for a context driven approach to the adoption and application of sociocultural theory in different teaching and learning contexts. Furthermore, it suggests that employing a sociocultural perspective to guide the policy and practice of teacher education could support improved quality in the teaching of English in Kenya. This thesis also presents ways forward for this complex task in educational contexts with large classes, limited physical resources, and a prescribed curriculum, such as Kenya.

# DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that I have correctly acknowledged the works of others. This thesis contains material which has already appeared in the following publication:

Lugendo, D. and Smith, H. (2014) 'Scaffolding for Mediated Learning during ‘whole-class exercises’ in Kenyan Secondary English Lessons', in Jenks, C. and Seedhouse, P. (ed.) *International Perspectives on Classroom Interaction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

# DEDICATION

*This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.* (Psalm 118:23 KJV)

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## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| IRF | Initiation, Response, Feedback |
| KIE | Kenya Institute of Education |
| L2 | Second Language (English and Literature) |
| SLA | Second Language Acquisition |
| TP | Teaching Practice |
| ZPD | Zone of Proximal Development |

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.0 Background

For second language (L2) teaching and learning, sociocultural theory emphasizes the role of teacher-pupil talk as a source of expert mediation. While the interactional features used in scaffolding to create communicative spaces facilitative of cognitive development have been identified by research mostly undertaken in western countries such as Europe and North America, this research often assumes the ready availability of particular culturally determined physical tools, artefacts, technology equipment and class sizes more often found in Western contexts. Research into L2 learning undertaken within a sociocultural theory of mind is very rarely conducted in classrooms around the world which are untypical of Western contexts. This study provides insight into the interactional features of scaffolding in a non-western context where learning resources are limited and teachers often work with much larger class sizes in poor classroom environments (discussed in section 5.2).

Recent research into effective pedagogic processes in east Africa by Hardman et al. (2011) and Hardman et al. (2012) acknowledges the importance of contextual factors such as the educational culture and traditions, policy environments and school conditions; as these have been found to interact with learning opportunities thus influencing educational quality. Whilst acknowledging this, studies on classroom interaction in Kenyan schools, conducted mainly in primary schools, show that teachers largely employ a combination of *questions* and *explanations* relating to the recollection of factual information during whole class interaction. Open-ended, thought-provoking questions aimed at higher mental capacities are rare, resulting in the promotion of rote learning (Ackers and Hardman, 2001; Hardman et al., 2009; Pontefract and Hardman, 2005; Hardman et al., 2012). The same situation applies in Kenyan secondary schools as previous research has shown that the *culture* of teaching and learning is the same at all levels of education in Kenya as teachers tend to teach as they were taught, and thereby perpetuating deeply internalised cultural influences (Sifuna 1997; Pontefract and Hardman 2005). In a bid to transform the quality of learning and teaching in the east African context, which is rife with knowledge recitation and the exposition of factual information, researchers such as O'Sullivan (2006), Alexander (2008) and Hardman et al. (2009) have advocated for the need to recognise the prevalence of whole-class teaching. In this regard, Hardman et al. (2012) have called for teacher education in alternative classroom interaction and discoursal

strategies aimed at the development of a more dialogic pedagogy so as to broaden the repertoire of interactive practices in whole-class teaching. The present study explores how talk functions as mediation during whole-class interactive episodes to support L2 learning by student teachers in Kenyan secondary school classrooms. The study therefore provides much needed evidence on how scaffolded assistance works in a non-western context, as well as responding to the calls for a change of practice in Kenyan teacher education.

In Kenya, a former British colony, English is spoken as second language (L2) and is one of the two official languages of everyday business in the country. English is the official language of instruction for all subjects except Kiswahili and is an examinable subject in the national secondary school syllabus. The secondary school syllabus for teaching L2 aims at attaining communicative competence among learners, and adopts an integrated approach to teaching English and English Literature[1] in order to achieve the aim. This is done with the belief that merging the two autonomous but related entities serves to strengthen and enrich both. It is hoped that through exposure to literature, learners improve their language skills which in turn enhances their appreciation of literary material. Teaching language structures in isolation is seen as boring and tending to produce learners who lack communicative competence. The main language skills prescribed by the national syllabus include: listening and speaking, grammar, reading and writing. These language skills are broken into sub skills taught across the four years of secondary school education in the national 8-4-4 curriculum, in which learners take 8 years of primary, 4 years secondary and 4 years of tertiary education. Literature, on the other hand, provides genuine and expressive samples of language in context from which learners can acquire new vocabulary and knowledge of the rich possibilities of language use. To facilitate the teaching of L2 skills, the school syllabus, which prescribes activities for both pupils and teachers in line with the expected learning outcomes, provides recommendations on how best to support these outcomes. The syllabus recommends a variety of interactive learning activities such as discussion, dramatization, debates and role play among others. Learning resources such as print and electronic material, models, real objects and audio-visual resources are also recommended for language pedagogy (KIE, 2002; 2005). Ideally, the suggested interactive activities and resources should enable teachers to engage learners in a variety of activities

[1] L2 as a subject in Kenyan secondary schools refers to both English and English Literature (material such as songs, poems, plays, novels, short stories written in English)

which provide opportunities for learners to think and use the L2 creatively, leading to communicative competence.

Despite these intentions, however, the goal of having communicatively competent learners remains elusive as national performance in English continues to decline. Results from the national secondary school examinations for the year 2013 show that the highest decline in performance was recorded in English (Standard Digital, 2014): a downward trend is observed as learners attained a mean score of 36.42% in the 2011 examinations, down from 38.90% in 2010 (Daily Nation, 2012). Poor performance in the subject has been attributed to low quality teaching alongside other factors such as increased enrolment in secondary schools. In 2008, the government introduced free secondary education which increased enrolment from 65% in 1999 to 91% in 2010 (UNESCO, 2012). The increased enrolment strained the already limited school facilities leading to even larger class sizes with an average teacher-to-pupil ratio of 52 (Verspoor, 2008), an increased shortage of teachers and limited learning resources (IPS, 2008; Chabari, 2010). The need to address pedagogic processes as a means of enhancing teaching quality in language teacher education is therefore critical in improving educational outcomes within these challenging contextual circumstances in Kenya.

Sociocultural theory, as described in chapter two, is used in this study as both a conceptual tool to understand learning, and as an analytic tool for applying sociocultural concepts as a lens through which to view teaching and learning in action in the course of investigating pedagogic processes in Kenyan classrooms. However, concerns have previously been raised over the adoption of universal theories of learning and 'best practices' from western countries by developing countries which ignore the everyday realities of such classrooms and their capacity to deliver such reforms (Hardman et al., 2011; Tabulawa, 2003).

With such concerns in mind, the use of sociocultural theory as a universally *relevant* theory of learning is adopted for this study for the following reasons. Firstly, it is relevant to the study of L2 learning in the Kenyan context given its focus on language as a semiotic tool for learning including learning a language. Secondly, the theory does not dictate particular teaching behaviours but sets in place guiding principles on learning in social contexts with expert assistance. Lastly, the Kenyan secondary school syllabus earlier described, aims at developing communicative competence and suggests the use of interactive activities which imply a sociocultural understanding of learning. Therefore, the findings in this study illuminate the

cultural and economic application of the sociocultural theory in context while providing the much needed evidence on the social processes used to support L2 learning in Kenyan secondary schools. This is done with cognisance to the economic, historic and cultural differences between western contexts where research is more commonly situated in a sociocultural framework, and the Kenyan context which echoes of its colonial past. Kenya's colonial past, subsumed in the educational systems, curricula, teaching methods and in the status of English as an official language, impacts on the status of L2 in Kenya and how it is taught and learnt (Kioko and Muthwii, 2001; Kiprono, 2005; Woolman, 2001). The next section provides an overview on the organisation of L2 teacher education at Maseno University.

## 1.1 L2 Teacher Education at Maseno University

Maseno University[2] was established in 1990 as a university college specialising in Educational studies; it became an independent University in the year 2001. Universities in Kenya are autonomous and free to design their own curricula; however, Maseno University has trained English teachers for secondary schools in Kenya, with a relatively unchanged curriculum which it inherited from its parent University in 1990.

The responsibility of training English teachers in the four year bachelor of education programme at Maseno University is shared between the school of Education and the Department of Languages in the school of Arts and Social Sciences. The School of Education equips students with pedagogic methods, professional studies in education and the teaching practicum. The Languages department services the school of Education by teaching students majoring in educational studies the subject content of English and English Literature.

At the end of the four year bachelor's programme, students are placed on teaching practice for a term in Kenyan secondary schools, with the aim of giving the student teachers an opportunity to, 'achieve growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes as required by the teaching profession for which they are being prepared' (Ong'ondo and Borg, 2011: 512). Student teachers on teaching practice are allocated two lower secondary classes, usually form 1 and form 2, where they teach L2 (English and English Literature) using the national secondary school language syllabus and prescribed textbooks. During the practicum, student teachers are given supportive professional advice by a cooperating teacher (a regular teacher teaching L2 at the school) and

[2] http://maseno.ac.ke/index/

are assessed on their teaching at least six times by their lecturers (Maseno University calendar, 2007-2012).

Since the present study was interested in investigating processes used for scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms, the research focused on practices in actual L2 classrooms. To this end, a sample of Maseno University student teachers were video-recorded teaching L2 during their teaching practice placement in various secondary schools. As the study was also interested in the background factors influencing these processes, it also focused on four teacher education courses (discussed in section 5.1) provided by the school of Education in which pedagogic skills are taught to student teachers of English as explained next. Whereas English and English Literature are taught as one subject in secondary schools, the two disciplines and taught separately at the teacher education level. In the first semester of the third year in bachelor of Education programme, students with a specialisation in the teaching of English and English Literature attend lectures for each of the two courses namely: *Methods of teaching English* and *Methods of teaching Literature in English*. In the second semester of the third studies, student teachers take a course on *Microteaching and Media practicals* where they produce learning resources and practice the skills of teaching in micro lessons. As earlier mentioned, the *Teaching Practice* course is offered at the end of fourth year in the bachelor of Education programme. Given the background information on L2 learning in Kenya and L2 teacher education at Maseno University, the next section provides a justification for investigating the processes of scaffolded assistance in the Kenyan context.

## 1.2 Rationale for the Study

Scaffolding (defined in section 2.1.3) as a social process of teaching has been found to enhance learning and opportunities for learning in L2 classrooms and has been extensively researched in many western studies (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994; Anton, 1999; Donato, 1994; Hakamaki, 2005; Gibbons, 2003; Mercer, 2002; McNeil, 2012; Swain, 2000; Ohta, 2000). Despite knowledge gained from such studies, Walsh (2011) observed that in western countries, a lot of research has described the interactional processes used in language classrooms, but few have actually used the knowledge to help teachers improve their classroom practices as most teacher education programmes devote a large amount of time to teaching methods and subject knowledge.

In developing countries such as Kenya the situation is not dissimilar to the focus of education research in the west, which Mercer (1995) described as dwelling on the measurement of results of teaching while neglecting the processes of teaching. Educational and research emphasis in Kenya continues to be placed on factors such as pupils passing examinations, coverage of the national syllabus and curriculum implementation rather than on the quality of the processes used for language teaching. With such views in mind, this study is motivated by the need to describe the processes of scaffolded assistance as practiced in a non-western context such as Kenya which is hitherto un-researched so as to recommend ways of helping pre-service teachers of L2 to improve their classroom practices. In the sections that follow, the research problem and significance is located from previous studies on L2 teacher education at Maseno University and classroom interaction in Kenya, paving way for the list of research questions and the study's anticipated outcome.

## 1.3 Research Gap, Significance and Aims

A previous study by Ng'on'ga (2002) investigated the Maseno University teacher education programme in light of what is required for L2 learning and teaching in secondary classrooms. The survey study described the mismatch between the pedagogical skills imparted during teacher education at Maseno University and actual classroom needs as stipulated by the national secondary schools syllabus for L2 in Kenya. To date no study has empirically explored the social processes of scaffolded assistance used by the student teachers or what the pedagogical skills as developed actually look like in real practice. Therefore, very little is known about the kind of skills the L2 teacher education programme develops, and specifically, the type of social or interactional processes used for scaffolding in L2 classrooms nor the factors influencing their appearance and use. There is therefore a gap in the literature on scaffolded assistance in an L2 context such as Kenya, as well as on what is taught during L2 teacher training in terms of processes of assistance and the actual practices used in L2 classrooms.

Furthermore, the focus of L2 research in Kenya has been on the suitability of the contents of English and Literature as subjects in the national curriculum and efficacy of the methods used for teaching them in secondary schools and universities in Kenya (Ng'ong'a, 2002; Lumala, 2007; Ong'ondo, 2011). None of these studies investigated the actual processes used for teaching L2 in secondary schools and thus actual classroom practice remains unobserved, un-described and undocumented. By using a sociocultural perspective to investigate the processes

of scaffolded assistance employed by student teachers of L2, along with the teacher education curriculum that develops them, the study will provide knowledge and understandings of the state of social processes used for teaching and learning L2 in Kenyan secondary schools. Providing such an understanding could then inform the policy and practice of L2 teacher education and pedagogy in Kenya as well as provide understandings on the application of the sociocultural theory in non-western contexts similar to Kenya.

Previous studies on classroom interaction in Kenya focused on in-service primary school teachers (Ackers and Hardman, 2001; Hardman et al., 2009; Pontefract and Hardman, 2005; Hardman et al., 2012), thus excluding University trained pre-service teachers in secondary schools. The present case study on Maseno University student teachers of L2 attempts to contribute to knowledge on scaffolding in teacher-learner interactions in secondary schools, while at the same time shedding some light on factors such as teacher education and the secondary school classroom environments which impact on the use of processes of scaffolded assistance in Kenyan classrooms.

Central to the study is the adoption of a sociocultural perspective on L2 teaching and learning, which underscores the importance of conceptualising language learning and teaching as a developmental process mediated by semiotic resources appropriated from the classroom (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; Donato, 2000; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). A sociocultural theory of mind (discussed in section 2.1) is particularly powerful for investigating the student teachers' practices of assistance as it explains how individuals learn, as well as the role of knowledgeable mediators such as the student teachers in the language learning process. Looking at language teaching and learning from this perspective allows us to centralise and observe the classroom practices in terms of the processes used, while at the same time allowing us to position the student teachers of L2 as having language awareness and being interactionally competent interlocutors who manage their roles and the roles of the learners in the classroom using resources available in response to emerging communicative needs for the purpose of building L2 knowledge.

Sociocultural theory also provides for investigating the *sociocultural* domain which accounts for different types of symbolic tools developed and used by human *cultures* and the impact of these artefacts on thinking. The culture of teaching and learning in Kenya is therefore explored from such an understanding.

**The research objectives are:**

1. To observe, analyse and describe the processes used by Maseno University student teachers for providing scaffolded assistance in secondary school L2 classrooms.
2. To explore the factors influencing the processes of scaffolded assistance used in secondary school L2 classrooms.
3. To recommend ways of improving the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance in L2 pedagogy.

## 1.4 Research Questions

In order to investigate the nature of language use and classroom interaction among Maseno university student teachers of English, this study is guided by three research questions:

- What strategies do student teachers use for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms?
- What factors influence the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in these classrooms?
- How can the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance be improved at the L2 teacher education level?

## 1.5 Anticipated Contribution

This study is an empirical investigation into the processes of scaffolded assistance in operation in Kenyan secondary school L2 lessons. As no other study has investigated the student teachers' classroom practices from a sociocultural perspective, it is expected that that the findings will be shared with colleagues in the faculty of Education and those in the department of Language, Linguistics and Literature. The sociocultural perspective of language learning and the concept of scaffolding may be disseminated and incorporated in the L2 methods and microteaching courses as a way of enhancing L2 learning and pedagogy amongst Maseno University trained teachers. Lastly, the research findings will be disseminated in conference presentations and by publication in journal articles. The book chapter cited on the declaration page in this thesis contributes to research on classroom interaction from a sociocultural perspective by reporting on the interactional strategies used by student teachers to provide scaffolding during whole-class exercises in L2 lessons.

## 1.6 Organisation of the Thesis

The rest of the dissertation is organised as follows:

In chapter 2, is a review of the literature on the sociocultural theory, it application in language teaching and learning and a synthesis of the mechanisms of assistance essential for effective scaffolding in L2 classrooms such as those found in Kenya.

Chapter 3 details the study's methodology by explaining the case study approach used, the research ethics and sampling procedures used, data collection methods, analysis procedures and a discussion on the study's validity, reliability and generalisation.

In chapter 4, the Kenyan L2 context is explained and the criteria used for identifying the scaffolding practices given. This is followed by the analysis of lesson transcripts for the actual practices used by student teachers to provide scaffolded assistance.

Chapter 5 presents the factors influencing the use of processes of scaffolded assistance in secondary school L2 classrooms and proffers some ways of improving the processes of scaffolded assistance in L2 teacher education.

Lastly, chapter 6 highlights the research aims and presents a discussion of the research findings. This is followed by the study's theoretical contribution and its pedagogical implications. Finally, the study's limitations are stated, followed by suggestions for further research and some final remarks which conclude the thesis.

# CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

## 2.0 Introduction

As mentioned earlier, sociocultural theory provides a framework for the conceptual and analytic constructs underlying this study. It provides the perspective for understanding the social processes involved in expert assistance for L2 learning and outlines the role of the teacher in the process. From an analytical point of view, sociocultural theory presents a framework through which the pedagogic dialogues between student teachers and their learners can be identified and explained.

In this chapter, literature general to sociocultural theory and specifically in relation to its application in research on L2 learning is extensively reviewed, in order to explore the theoretical connections of teaching as assisted performance from the Vygotskian perspective and its application in L2 practice. Within the exploration, the focus is on sociocultural theory and how it relates to pedagogic practices of assistance (scaffolding) within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Research from western studies which has applied these concepts to L2 learning specifically is reviewed in a bid to identify and synthesise core mechanisms of assistance[3] found within the studies together with the specific discourse strategies[4] used for effective scaffolding within the ZPD, into a new system for investigating the processes used for scaffolded assistance in Kenyan L2 classrooms.

## 2.1 Sociocultural Theory

This section presents a conceptualisation of the sociocultural theory of mind by introducing the key sociocultural concepts of mediation, the ZPD, scaffolding and the genetic method which underpin the present study.

The framework of a sociocultural theory of mind was originally conceived by Lev Vygotsky, a Russian educator and psychologist who stressed the social origins of language and thinking. Vygotsky emphasised sociocultural aspects in the development of an individual, a culture and

[3] Following from Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) who used the term 'mechanisms of effective help' also known as 'means of assisting performance' in Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and which stem from Vygotsky's insistence on the primacy of linguistic means (signs and symbols of speech) in the development of higher mental functions, the idea is herein employed to represent broad categories of linguistic means such as *collaboration*, *modelling*, *questioning*, *feedback* and *instructing*.

[4] Refers to the various discourse moves found under a broad category of 'mechanisms of assistance', for example 'recast' is a type of *feedback*.

also in language learning and use (Vygotsky, 1978; 1987). Central to Vygotsky's work, is the *genetic method* which is based on the view that human mental functions are best understood from their origins and the transformations they undergo (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000; Wertsch, 1990). The genetic approach can be applied in four domains namely; *phylogenics*, *ontogenics*, *sociocultural* and *microgenesis*. *Phylogenetic* development involves the changes over successive generations. The level of *ontogenesis* has to do with changes in thinking and behaviour in the course of the history of individuals. The *sociocultural* domain is concerned with how different types of symbolic tools developed by human cultures affect the kinds of mediation favoured, and with it the kind of thinking valued by these cultures, an example is the impact of artefacts such as numeracy, literacy and computers on thinking (Lantolf, 2000:3). Lastly is *microgenetic* development, which refers to moment-by-moment learning by individuals in problem solving contexts – and is the basis for the present study. The four genetic domains in Vygotsky's overall account are based on the unique set of forces underlying the mechanisms of developmental change in various learning situations. A sociocultural approach therefore investigates the ways in which human action, including mental action, is connected to the cultural, institutional and historical settings in which it occurs (Wertsch, 1990; 1991).

A further point from Vygotskian thinking is the idea that higher mental functioning in the individual has its origins in social activity. This implies that higher mental functions are inherently connected to the sociocultural milieu in which they emerge. Therefore in order to understand the individual, it is necessary to understand the social relations in which the individual exists. Vygotsky also claimed that human social processes are *mediated* by tools and signs. He argued that just as humans do not act directly on the physical world but rely instead on tools and labour activity, which allows them to change the world and with it the circumstances under which we live in the world, humans also use symbolic tools or signs to mediate and regulate their relationships with others and with themselves thus changing the nature of these relationships. Physical as well as symbolic (or psychological tools) are artefacts created by human culture over time; included among symbolic tools are numbers, arithmetic systems, music, art and above all *language* (Lantolf, 2000:1).

The goal of sociocultural theory is to illuminate how people (such as teachers and learners in classroom settings) organise their minds for the sake of carrying out activities. Vygotsky focused on understanding how human social and mental activity is organised through culturally

constructed artefacts. He conceived the human mind as a functional system in which the properties of the biological brain are organised into a higher culturally shaped mind, through the integration of symbolic artefacts into thinking. Examples of higher mental capacities are voluntary attention, intentional memory, planning, logical thought and problem solving, learning and the ability to gauge the effectiveness of these processes Lantolf, (2000).

Physical and symbolic artefacts differ from one culture to another and are generally modified as they are passed on from one generation to the next. Each generation reworks its inheritance to meet the needs of its communities and individuals, underscoring the importance of investigating the application of sociocultural perspectives in different learning contexts. Consequently, in this study, it is important to consider how the physical and symbolic tools employed by the student teachers are culturally situated and encapsulate historical developments in teaching and learning in Kenya.

### 2.1.1 Language and Interaction as Mediation

The notion of mediated learning is sociocultural theory's key construct with regards to learning a language. Lantolf and Thorne (2006:79) define mediation as "the process through which humans deploy culturally constructed artefacts, concepts and activities to regulate or gain voluntary control over and transform the material world or their own or each other's social and mental activity." Artefacts are social in nature and therefore serve to forge a connection between people; they can be concrete such as dictionaries or symbolic such as language and serve specific functions according to situational contexts. Language serves as mediation because as human beings acquire it, they are able to use it as an autonomous tool for organising and controlling thought. Semantically speaking, language also encodes cultural theories and experiences including the knowledge associated with the use of all other tools (Ellis, 2008). In the process of learning a second language, language is the object of attention and the tool for mediating acquisition, implying that L2 acquisition involves learning how to use language to mediate language learning (Swain, 2000).

Vygotsky propagated a psychological point concerning the relationship between language and thought for mediating higher levels of thinking, thus in the sociocultural theory, language is seen as a "communicative activity", where the focus is on communication, cognition and meaning rather than linguistic structure (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006). Language here is a means of accomplishing social interaction and of managing mental activity in an order where the

former is the basis for the later. Artigal (1992) theorised that from a sociocultural perspective, Chomsky's notion of 'the language acquisition device' would exist in the interactions that take place between participants rather than the mind as language learning in individuals occurs *through* interaction with others rather than *as a result* of interaction as suggested by cognitive perspectives on language learning. Social interactions are therefore seen as key in the mediation of L2 learning. According to Lantolf (2000), social interactions can involve others or the learner talking to him/herself through private speech as may arise in interactive settings. This is because mediation can occur externally as when a novice is given assistance to perform some function or internally as when individuals use their own resources to achieve control over a function. In both cases, the mediational resources are viewed as social in nature as they involve interaction with self or others.

The essence of sociocultural theory is that external mediation serves as a means by which internal mediation is achieved; internalisation takes place as learners move from being assisted to gaining independent control over a feature of language. In this case, L2 acquisition is not purely an individually based process but shared between the individual and other persons. Development in L2 is about appropriation by individuals and groups of the mediational means made available by others in their environment in order to improve control over their own mental activity (Lantolf, 2000).

In L2 classrooms, the primary means of mediation for learning are the verbal interactions between learners and others such as their peers or the teacher. These dialogic interactions enable experts such as the teacher to create contexts in which learners (novices) can participate actively in their own learning and in which the teacher can fine tune the support that learners are given (Anton, 1999). Moreover, these dialogic interactions are suitable for identifying what a learner can or cannot do without assistance and serve to create the intersubjectivity that enables verbal interactions to mediate learning. Intersubjectivity (Wertsch, 1984), refers to a state occurring when interlocutors realise that they share the same situated definition. It allows participants to negotiate definitions in situations, which may be different from their original ones so that effective communication can be established during joint activity (Ellis, 2008).
In the next section, the sociocultural notion of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and its importance in the process of language learning is discussed.

### 2.1.2 The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

The ZPD is an important construct in sociocultural theory because it is within it and through it that children appropriate and internalize mediational means (Lantolf, 2000). The ZPD, was proposed by Vygotsky who considered the role played by others in the learning process to be important through his claim that what was first achieved with someone's help could later be achieved independently beyond the area of our capability as is defined as:

> "the distance between the actual development level of the child as determined 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" (Vygotsky, 1978:86).

While, Lantolf and Aljaafreh (1995:620) describe the learner's ZPD as:

> "An act of negotiated discovery realised through dialogic interaction between the learner and expert... The learner and expert engage each other in an attempt to discover precisely what the learner is able to achieve without help and what the learner can achieve with assistance, or regulation, from the expert."

The two definitions describe a situation where within the ZPD; learning originates from an inter-mental phase in collaboration with others to the intra-mental phase within the individual, thus implying that learning in collaboration with others awakens a variety of internal development processes in an individual. Vygotsky himself did not propose a specific procedure for locating an individual's ZPD, nor did he specify how to perform dialogic interaction within it. He did however mention examples of works possible within the ZPD, such as giving demonstrations, asking leading questions, and giving part of a task's solution (Chaiklin, 2003), which relate to activities often engaged in during scaffolding. The ZPD has been conceived of as: the collaborative construction of opportunities (Lantolf, 2000); learning 'affordances' (van Lier, 2000); and 'occasions for learning' (Swain and Lapkin, 1998) from which individuals develop their mental abilities.

The size of leaner ZPDs could vary as exemplified in a case where two learners may have started out at the same developmental level, but one might progress much more quickly than the other. This was presumed to be evidence that the child who progressed more quickly was better able to take advantage of collaboration, and that that child had a larger ZPD and a greater number of maturing functions (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, the size of a child's ZPD was

not fixed but could change depending on the type of problem solving task undertaken (Chaiklin, 2003), hence the importance of considering the appropriateness of collaborative work performed during dialogic interactions within the ZPD. A learner's ZPD is also said to constitute of a range of functions and activities which the learner can perform independently to those which can only be performed with the assistance of an adult such as the teacher or a more capable peer. Hence, van Lier (1996) suggests that productive work in the ZPD can be accomplished when learners use a variety of different resources such as: assistance from adults and capable peers, interaction with equal peers, interaction with less capable peers and inner resources such as their own knowledge or expertise.

With regards to instruction within the ZPD, Vygotsky proposed that instruction was meant to provide tools for thinking and ways of acting in the world, rather than accumulation of facts or rote memorisation of pre-set solutions to specific problems or tasks (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). According to Vygotsky, pedagogic interventions were meant to lead to development of higher mental functions. For him each developmental stage or mental age had a leading or predominant activity considered a source of development for that stage, for example, fantasy play was considered a leading activity for pre-schoolers. Engaging in leading activities was seen as engaging in actions likely to contribute to the structural re-organisation of mental functions leading to a transformation that would usher in the next stage of development (Chaiklin, 2003). Vygotsky's main interest lay in promoting interventions that would make use of and focus on leading activities characterised by dynamic interactive procedures within a learners ZPD.

Various ways have been proposed on assisting learner performance within the ZPD, the work conducted there should not simply involve an expert giving general assistance to a novice. Instead assistance should be aimed at those maturing functions which would lead to a transition to the next stage (Dunn and Lantolf, 1998; van Lier, 1996). Lantolf (2000) suggested that teaching within the ZPD means that teachers need to develop sensitivity to the student's current abilities and their potential development, and teaching and learning is about developing the learner's abilities to engage with and participate in particular situations whether in the classroom or other cultural settings.

In Vygotskian terms, instruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development; good teaching awakens and rouses to life those functions which are in a stage of maturing, which lie

in the zone of proximal development (Wertsch and Stone 1985; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). The ZPD is therefore a dynamic space in which a learner's latent abilities are developed with the appropriate assistance from another person and hence cognitive transformations from the interpsychological to intrapsychological plane takes place through social interactions in the ZPD. On the basis of the ZPD, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) defined teaching as assisting performance (see section 2.3.1) through the ZPD and importantly, assistance is offered at the required points within the ZPD. Effective instruction within the ZPD is given to novices by more capable others whenever it is needed in joint activity and should be targeted at the functions that are still developing (the potential development level) and not those already developed (the actual development level). Effective instruction should therefore encourage novices to function at levels higher than their capabilities at the particular moment. The transfer of responsibility from expert to novice is also characteristic of effective instruction as it aims at enabling the independent functioning of the novice in the final stages of development. Ohta's (2000) study on the collaborative work done within the ZPD confirms these views as it showed that learner development in L2 cannot occur when too much assistance is provided or a task is too easy and unchallenging. Ohta (i*bid*) emphasised that learner development in L2 is impeded by assisting them with what they are already able to do and by not withdrawing the support when the students develop the ability to work independently. In a later study, Ohta (2001) concluded that progressing learner L2 knowledge within the ZPD requires clear goals, challenging activities and appropriate strategies or procedures, which arouse interest and engage learners in meaningful collaboration aimed at enabling them to function independently in the final stages of development.

The present study conceptualises the ZPD as the difference between the learners' independent performance in L2 and the higher level of development as determined by performance in L2 with expert assistance. In section 2.1.3, the sociocultural metaphor of scaffolding is discussed with regards to the role played by an expert in the process of assisting a novice learner's performance through the ZDP.

### 2.1.3 Scaffolding

According to Foley (1994) and Boblett (2012), the scaffolding metaphor originates from the work of Vygotsky's studies on early language learning. Scaffolding as operationalised by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) relates to Vygotsky's (1978) notion of ZPD, and is identified as the interactional work done within the ZPD; an area of potential development activated in

social interactions. Wood et al., (1976:90) defined scaffolding within the ZPD as, "a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task or achieve a goal which would be beyond his unassisted efforts."

The scaffolding metaphor is crucial to the purposes of this study, which examines the assistance strategies employed by student teachers in Kenyan secondary L2 classrooms. The study adopts the concept of scaffolding as defined by Wood et al.' (1976), where scaffolding is seen as consisting of verbal (telling), showing, praise, encouragement, prompting and corrective strategies employed by teachers during interactions with learners for collaborative problem solving and which are relevant and applicable to teaching and learning with an expert's support in the Kenyan L2 context.

Wood et al. (1976) studied adult-child interactions during problem solving in tutorial sessions, where adults guided children (aged 3-5) with appropriate support enabling them to successfully complete designated 'feature rich' tasks (21 blocks that combined to form a pyramid) designed to be entertaining yet challenging. The scaffolding support provided by adults had *six features* namely: *recruitment, reduction of degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking critical features, frustration control and modelling*. Recruitment involves interesting a novice into a task, the expert's role at this stage is concerned with "luring" a novice further and further into the joint activity (*ibid:*95). Secondly, an expert has to simplify the task so that the novice understands the requirements; however, Tharp and Gallimore, (1988), who employed the term *assisted performance* (see section 2.3.1), pointed out that scaffolding does not involve simplifying a task by breaking it into a series of steps towards the goal, rather, it does so by holding the task difficulty constant, while simplifying the child's role by means of graduated assistance from the adult or expert. After simplification, a novice's orientation towards the task's goals has to be maintained. Fourthly, an expert highlights features critical to the task that may be overlooked by the novice. Experts also help novices to control their frustration on task and finally demonstrate how to achieve an ideal solution to the task. Wood et al. (1976) concluded that an appropriate social interactional framework must be provided for learning to take place.

Also noteworthy, is the fact that scaffolding functions require a high degree of intuition or fine tuning on the expert's part (Wood et al. 1976). Effective assistance implies continuous assessment of learner needs and abilities and an expert's continual adaptation (Rogoff, 1990)

or tailoring (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994) of scaffolded support to a novice's emerging needs and capabilities. Scaffolding can therefore be seen as the guiding work of a more capable other occurring during collaborative interactions with a novice, from which the novice accomplishes tasks with assistance. An expert assists a novice to perform a skill that they are unable to perform independently, thus messages are co-constructed to the point where the novice can perform independently. In the language classroom, the teacher's role as an 'expert' is central to the process of scaffolding in terms of offering linguistic support to the learner for problem solving and language development. In classroom settings, scaffolding works in a system where the learner is aware of the teacher's support, which continues for the extent and duration of the learner's language needs. In this study, the scaffolding behaviours identified relate to instances where student teachers use dialogic moves in response to learner needs in order to help them complete a task at a higher level of competence than they would with individual effort. The present study adopts Wood et al.'s (1976) framework as it presents properties of an interactive system of exchange in which tutors such as student teachers operate in response to learner needs in order to assist their performance in L2 problem solving.

This section provided sociocultural concepts of mediation through interaction, the ZPD as a dynamic space within which effective instruction takes place, and scaffolding, as the support given to learners by an expert in problem solving. Section 2.2 below, discusses the application of sociocultural theory in L2 learning with examples of key findings from research in which the sociocultural constructs of scaffolding within the ZPD has been applied in L2 learning contexts.

## 2.2 Sociocultural Theory as Applied in Second Language Learning

The application of sociocultural theory to the study of second language acquisition (SLA) was advanced in the work of Lantolf (2000). As argued, central to the sociocultural framework is the Vygotskian idea that learning a language, which also applies to learning an L2, is a developmental mediated process. In L2 classrooms, as in other subjects, mediational means include tools and artefacts such as print materials, computers, teachers and peers. Importantly, however, the L2 is considered to be the main semiotic tool of mediation as it is the object of attention and the tool for mediating learning (Swain, 2000), in that the L2 is used for organising and controlling thought (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) as well as for participating in the social interactions and learning activities taking place (Walsh, 2006). The theory explains how knowledge of an L2 is internalized by individuals through experiences of a sociocultural nature.

L2 learning is said to be mediated by interaction in social contexts, leading to linguistic development through intermental and intramental processes. Mediation in L2 learning involves social interactions with others and occurs when a novice is given assistance in performing some functions so as to achieve control over the L2 function (Lantolf, 2000). As defined in this section, this study on mediated L2 learning in the Kenyan context is influenced by the sociocultural concept of *assisted performance*.

Vygotsky believed that higher mental functions or the connections between the interpersonal and the intrapersonal activities exist in conversations and collaborations among people before they exist in the individual. The relationship between the intermental and intramental dimensions of human learning and development in children, has been applied successfully in L2 studies, for example Ohta's (2000) study reported that L2 constructs such as vocabulary and grammar appear on both the interpsychological and intrapsychological planes. Results from Donato's (2000) study on collaborative processes for L2 learning showed that mediational means eventually become the means of the individual's own mental functioning when the social and individual planes of human psychological activity are woven when learners appropriate the language of interaction as their own. The studies by Ohta and Donato validate the view that social processes allow language to become a cognitive tool for individuals, since the two psychological planes are interrelated and linked by language, which enables social interaction to mediate the intrapsychological plane.

Similarly, a sociocultural SLA examines the dialogic and social nature of second language learning and emphasizes the important role played by interlocutors in the facilitation of learning. In the process of assisting the novice's performance by an expert, the L2 is used as a symbolic tool for clarifying and making sense of new knowledge and learners rely heavily on the expert knower. Later as the new ideas and knowledge are internalised, learners use the L2 to comment on what they have learnt, and spoken interactions are used to transmit and clarify new information and then reflect on and rationalise what has been learnt (Walsh, 2011). Through scaffolding (as in section 2.1.3) within the ZPD (in section 2.1.2), experts use interactional strategies to create dialogic spaces in which learners participate in L2 knowledge co-construction. According to Walsh (2012), the interactional strategies used help to: maintain the flow of discourse in pursuit of the pedagogic goals, shape learner responses, seek and offer clarification, demonstrate understanding, afford opportunities for participation and negotiate meanings for L2 learning and development.

### 2.2.1 Sociocultural Perspectives on Learning L2 Form and Meaning

As earlier mentioned in section 2.1.1, Lantolf and Thorne (2006), present a sociocultural perspective on language learning as a communicative activity, in which the semantic properties of language rather than its formal properties are at the fore front of language. Because sociocultural theory is a theory of mediated mental development, it focuses on communication, cognition and meaning rather than linguistic form and structure. Lantolf and Thorne (*ibid*) acknowledged that language form matters but argued that form cannot be considered in isolation from meaning because form and meaning are dialectically dependent on one another and should be studied in relation to the social contexts in which the utterances appear. This is because given aspects of form (such as some verbs) do not have a stable meaning but rather personal meanings or senses that are created through interaction according to the social events in which they appear. Lantolf and Thorne provided an example in which the same social activity such as Mr Smith pushing a machine across his lawn, can constitute different social events and therefore give rise to different meaning of the same linguistic form. For instance in response to a friend's enquiry on what her lazy husband was doing, Mrs Smith might respond that, 'He is working, he is mowing the lawn'. Whereas in response to an enquiry by one of Mr Smith's friends on whether Mr Smith is working that day she might respond that, 'He is not working, he is mowing the lawn'. This implies that under the sociocultural theory's perspective language as a communicative activity, meaning is considered conceptual rather than referential and provides a basis for how learners acquire cultural meanings of the L2. They view linguistic structure (form) as that which is derived out communicative activities as postulated by Hopper (1998:163) as cited in (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006) that it is, 'a set of sedimented conventions that have been routinized out of the more frequently occurring ways of saying things'. Thus language form is a by-product of communication and is essentially incomplete. Lantolf and Thorne claimed that from such understandings, learning a second language is about enhancing one's repertoire of fragments and patterns that enables participation in a wider array of communicative activities.

In an L2 classroom setting, Lantolf and Thorne's (2006) view suggests that learning L2 form and meaning entails participating in communicative activities which engage learners in collaborative activities in which learners participate and receive feedback on their utterances from the teacher and fellow learners. This view is important for the investigation on student teacher scaffolding practices because conceptualising second language learning (both form and meaning) as participation in communicative activities enables research into the processes used

to support L2 learning during joint activity rather than the products of learning. Previous sociocultural SLA research on learning processes employs the microgenetic method to uncover the scaffolding strategies used by teachers to assist learners until they attain self-regulation in a particular L2 feature. Such research has often been carried out in Western contexts featuring joint activity with smaller groups of learners, using of collaborative tasks and with teachers who are versed in the techniques required for providing scaffolded assistance in joint activity, access to which is often lacking in non-western contexts such as Kenya. Moreover, researchers as such Walsh (2012), Johnson and Golombek (2011) and Lantolf (2000) agree that the means of providing scaffolded assistance are highly context specific in a cultural, social and geographic sense. However, in order to study scaffolded assistance in Kenyan L2 classrooms, it was important to identify the core mechanisms and discourse strategies used for providing scaffolded assistance from previous western studies as they operationalised sociocultural principles on learning with expert assistance in actual classrooms. To this effect, the next section presents a sociocultural view on L2 teaching that draws on research from instructional approaches which utilised scaffolding.

## 2.3 Scaffolded Assistance in Second Language Learning

From the background of the sociocultural theory as applied in L2 pedagogy, instruction has a central role for L2 development in classroom settings. It focuses on instruction within the ZPD or what lies beyond the learner's actual development level. The theory emphasises that during instruction, awareness of L2 form and meaning is developed by using it socially, adding greater clarity to the issue of co-construction of meaning in classroom settings where the collaborative creation of meaning bridges the knowledge gap between others and the individual. Using dialogue in the classroom, teachers and learners are afforded opportunities to mediate and assist each other in the creation of ZPDs in which each person learns and develops. These dialogic utterances by the teachers and learners are seen as essential social practices of assistance that shape, construct and influence learning within interactional and instructional contexts (Donato, 2000). In instructional contexts, mediation through dialogue is achieved by *scaffolding* as was discussed in section 2.1.3. Likewise, in this study, scaffolding encompasses the discourse strategies used by the student teachers and learners in joint L2 problem solving. In the next section, six key studies on scaffolded instruction in language learning which were carried out in western classrooms are reviewed for the mechanisms and discourse strategies used for providing scaffolded assistance, as these provide a basis for identifying the core means essential for effective scaffolding and are synthesised into a new system for categorising

mechanisms of assistance. The new system created is then used to investigate student teacher scaffolding practices in the Kenyan non-Western L2 learning context.

### 2.3.1 Scaffolded Assistance in Pedagogical Approaches

Sociocultural research on scaffolding work done within the ZPD during teacher-learner classroom interactions has been utilised in new pedagogical approaches building upon Wood et al.'s (1976) framework. They include: *reciprocal teaching* (Palincsar and Brown, 1984), *instructional scaffolding* (Langer and Applebee, 1986; Applebee and Langer, 1983), *assisted performance* (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) and *guided participation* (Rogoff, 1990; 1995). In addition these, mechanisms and strategies of assistance were also identified from SLA studies on scaffolding by Anton (1999) and McNeil (2012) which are briefly reviewed below.

*Reciprocal teaching* is an instructional technique developed by Palincsar and Brown (1984). It involves dialogue between teachers and students for the purpose of jointly constructing the meaning of a text. The reading strategies are taught through teacher-learner dialogues in which the teacher *models* skills and scaffolds the use of strategies which a leaner may use for improving their reading comprehension skills. Learners participate at any level they are able to while observing and learning more complex forms from the teacher. Teacher involvement fades and gradually learners take on greater responsibility during the collaboration, eventually assuming the role of the teacher by leading discussions initially with assistance from the teacher through mechanisms such as feedback and encouragement. Through demonstration and practice, mastery of comprehension strategies and learner participation is increased through scaffolding strategies like; *summarising, predicting, clarifying, rephrasing, elaboration and asking questions.*

*Instructional scaffolding* is also known as 'instructional dialogue' (Applebee and Langer, 1983; Langer and Applebee, 1986) and is grounded in the sociocultural theory's approach to teaching reading and writing, in which scaffolding is tailored to fit the needs of a whole class. Langer and Applebee built upon the six characteristics of scaffolding in Wood et al. (1976) by focusing on integrating individual development and the social environment of the classroom. They suggested that in addition to guiding learners in grasping new concepts, teachers ought to encourage learners to complete those elements of a task which were within their range of competency because working within the range of a learner's competence helped locate the lower end of a learner's ZPD. Based on their research on effective instruction for reading and

writing, Langer and Applebee (1986) developed an instructional model characterised by the following five mechanisms: *Ownership*, *appropriateness*, *structure*, *collaboration* and *internalization*. *Ownership* is concerned with giving the learner a voice and a sense of purpose in relation to the task. *Appropriateness* refers to building tasks based on the learners' current knowledge, while at the same time providing guidance at stretching that knowledge. In *structure*, tasks are presented in a context of supportive dialogue which provides a natural sequence of thought, language and effective routines for learns to internalise. *Collaboration* refers to the process of building on and recasting student efforts through strategies such as: *telling*, *modelling*, *questioning*, *rephrasing*, *extending*, *praising* and *correcting*. Finally in *internalisation*, the control of interaction is gradually moved from the teacher to the learner, after which the scaffolds are self-destructed. Langer and Applebee's model of instructional scaffolding built on the understandings of scaffolding by proposing the idea of ownership, originally referred to as intentionality in Applebee and Langer (1983), which emphasises the importance of a leaner's contribution to the dialogic interaction that takes place during scaffolding.

*Assisted performance* is a type of scaffolding developed by Tharp and Gallimore (1988), it emphasises that the ZPD is not only important to child development but also to the learning and development of processes of older children and adults. Also building on Wood et al.'s (1976) metaphor of scaffolding, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) proposed six mechanisms characteristic of assisted performance for use with individual learners, small groups and whole classes. These are: *modelling, contingency management, feeding back, instructing, questioning and cognitive restructuring*. *Modelling* refers to offering behaviour for imitation during cultural activity, in which learning opportunities are seamlessly woven into the fabric of everyday life. *Contingency management* is a means of assisting performance by which rewards such as social reinforcement of praise and encouragement following behaviour. *Feeding back* in interactive teaching provides important information on accuracy for performance standards. *Instructing* refers to the teachers' use of instructions to assist performance through the ZPD by asking learners to perform strategic acts that achieve the pedagogic goals. *Questioning* calls for the use of language, provoking creations by leaners and in this way assists thinking and learning. Finally, *cognitive restructuring* assists by providing explanatory and brief structures that organise and justify. Cognitive structures are of two types: i) structures of explanation, which serve to organise perception in new ways, and ii) structures of cognitive activity, which are structures of mentation given to children for memorisation, recall or as rules for accumulating

evidence. The teachers work in cognitive structuring is to assist pupils to organise raw experiences from past and present like instances through statements and examples.

Of these mechanisms of assistance, feeding back and contingency management were additions to the description of the scaffolding process. Although feedback and contingency management had been implied in previous descriptions of scaffolding, Tharp and Gallimore (1988) explicitly stated these features as scaffolding techniques. For example, Langer and Applebee (1986) had mentioned giving praise and encouragement as techniques of contingency management and correction as a way of providing feedback. They also recognised *peer assistance* as constituting assisting performance, an idea further developed in 'collective scaffolding' by Donato (1994).

*Guided Participation* is based on Rogoff's (1990, 1995) work on children's cognitive development, it refers to the processes and systems of involvement between people as they communicate and coordinate efforts while participating in culturally valued activity. Guided participation was designed to include face-to-face interaction as well as side-by-side joint participation with an emphasis on non-verbal interactions strategies such as *gaze*, *hesitation* and *posture*. 'Guidance' to learners involves interaction with materials and fellow participants during lessons, as well as social and cultural values offered to the learners outside the classroom, while 'participation' involves observations as well as hands on involvement in activity. The study of the non-verbal interaction and the contribution of social and cultural values to learning expanded Wood et al.'s (1976) concept of scaffolding in adherence to Vygotsky's sociocultural and sociohistorical aspects of learning and development. The collaborative work performed during guided participation led to what Rogoff (1995) called *participatory appropriation*. Participatory appropriation, which has a strong emphasis on the role played by both participants and creativity during interactions and refers to the process by which individuals transform their understanding of and responsibility for activities through their own participation. Appropriation is seen to occur in the process of participation as the individuals change through involvement in the situation at hand. In participatory appropriation, an adult's role in the interaction requires constant adjustment to the structuring and pacing of instruction; however, both the adult and the child jointly co-construct the activity and play an active role in the structuring and pacing of instruction. Rogoff claimed that both the expert and the novice are changed as a result of the working collaboratively, an idea which relates to Vygotsky's views on learning and development in social settings.

In SLA research into scaffolding in western teacher fronted classrooms, a study by Anton (1999) provides a model for exploring how teachers use talk verbally and non-verbally to support oral production. By contrasting discourse patterns between two teachers, one using direct explanations and the other using a dialogic approach, Anton (1999) uncovered the communicative moves used in the dialogic approach to whole-class L2 teaching. Strategies such as *directives*, *assisting questions*, *repetition* and *non-verbal* discourse moves such as *pauses* and *gesturing* were found to perform the scaffolding functions found in Wood et al.'s (1976) framework such as marking the critical features of a problem, recruiting students' interest and reducing degrees of freedom and thereby assisting learners in L2 problem solving. Anton's study showed that scaffolding functions as set forth by Wood et al. (1976) are achieved by communicative moves arising from negotiations between teachers and learners in L2 problem solving. In contrast, the analysis of interactions in the traditional teacher-centred classroom approach where direct explanations were used showed that opportunities for learner engagement in negotiation and thus scaffolding within the ZPD were drastically reduced. The study provides model for investigating how teacher talk can be used to provide scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms and a better understanding of the communicative moves that effectively involve leaners in problem solving for eventual self-regulation in the subject.

In a later study, McNeil (2012) used Anton's (1999) research model to study how talk is used to scaffold referential questions for ESL learners and confirmed that talk served the same functions (directives, assisting questions, repetition and non-verbal discourse) as had been found in Anton's (1999) study. Further, McNeil's (2012) study revealed that scaffolding functions could be accomplished in other strategies such as by the use of *physical objects* and discourse moves such as providing extended *wait time*, offering *model answers* and *calling upon other students* to help in answering questions. Such moves were found to assist L2 learners in constructing responses through the dialogic spaces they created. McNeil's study has important implications for pre-service teacher education as it broadened the range of scaffolding talk by showing how teachers can draw upon the verbal and non-verbal communication along with the use of physical objects to assist learner performance in the ZPD.

Deriving from the six studies reviewed in this section and sociocultural perspectives on language learning with assistance, the next section presents a synthesis of key mechanisms of assistance deemed essential for scaffolding in a non-western context. This is in line with a

sociocultural theory's central claim that cognition needs to be investigated without isolating it from its social context (Ellis, 2008).

### 2.3.2 Mechanisms of Assistance: Towards A System for Non-Western Classrooms

The six studies reviewed in the previous provided insights on the various mechanisms and strategies of scaffolded assistance found in western classrooms. From these studies, key elements underlying the scaffolding process for language learning in general, inform the identification of key mechanisms necessary for scaffolding in a non-western context such as Kenya (keeping in mind the realities of teaching and learning in Kenyan classrooms which feature limited resources and large class sizes as is discussed in section 5.2).

As earlier explained in section 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, scaffolding work is carried out within the ZPD and is aimed enabling a learner to gain mastery over a function with adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. The theory of mediated learning (which includes learning a second language) as postulated by Vygotsky, acknowledges interactions between an individual and tools, symbols and people as sources of mediation from which individuals internalise knowledge. The Vygotskian notion of ZPD specifies that expert assistance plays a crucial role in cognitive change as novice learners get assistance to solve those problems that are beyond their individual capabilities. From this perspective, learning (also L2 learning), is a *collaborative* process that allows learners to participate and learn from activities with assistance from others. Thus, from a sociocultural standpoint, learning originates in and is observable from social relationships during joint activity. The roles played by the participants in joint activity are therefore crucial for the collaborative work performed during dialogic interactions within the ZPD (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Active learner participation and teacher guidance in joint activity are encouraged as higher mental functions are developed in this manner. In all the studies reviewed, learners actively participate in problem solving with teachers assisting in various ways. In reciprocal teaching, Palincsar and Brown (1984) state that learners participate at any level they are able to while observing and learning complex forms from teachers who model strategies. Similarly in instructional scaffolding, Langer and Applebee (1986) advice that teachers ought to give learners a voice or *ownership* in *appropriate* and *structured* tasks, thereby encouraging the learners to complete those elements of a task that are within their range of competency while receiving guidance for extending their range of competencies in language. The same view is advanced in guided participation (Rogoff,

1990; 1995) which strongly emphasises the active role played by both participants for creativity and co-construction of activities during interactions. ***Collaboration*** for problem solving is therefore identified as the 1st core mechanism for assistance as it ensures active learner participation with guidance from the teacher in appropriate L2 activities.

Vygotsky himself suggested that mechanisms such as demonstrations, leading questions and giving part of the solution facilitated instruction within the ZPD. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) added that; modelling, contingency management (praise and encouragement) and feedback (information on accuracy) are major mechanisms for assisting learners through the ZPDs. Additionally, Tharp and Gallimore (*ibid*) pointed out that instructing, questioning and cognitive restructuring (explanations and examples) are main linguistic means of assistance based on the specific actions they elicit from learners. These views offer a starting point for synthesising core mechanisms of assistance commonly found across the six studies reviewed.

Experts providing demonstrations as suggested by Vygotsky relates to work performed during modelling as both strategies involve an expert providing practical illustrations of target skills or behaviours to novice learners who observe and participate by practicing the same for appropriation and development in language skills. Demonstrations are therefore subsumed in ***modelling*** which is the commonly used term and was also suggested by Tharp and Gallimore, (1988) as a major means of assistance. Modelling as a 2nd core mechanism of assistance was found in: reciprocal teaching, instructional scaffolding, assisted performance and guided participation.

Deriving from Vygotsky's proposal that leading questions facilitate activities in the ZPD and Tharp and Gallimore's (1988) view that questions are a main avenue for activating learners mentally and verbally, the 3rd core mechanism is ***questioning***. In the studies reviewed, the use of questions for assistance is seen in: reciprocal teaching, instructional scaffolding, assisted performance, Anton (1999) and McNeil (2012).

A 4th core mechanism is ***feedback***, which Tharp and Gallimore (1988) relates to experts providing information on accuracy during collaborative problem solving, while Langer and Applebee (1986) termed it as *correction*. In addition to the corrective function of feedback, Smith and Higgins (2006) maintain that feedback moves facilitate pupils' subsequent use of

talk for thinking and learning. In the studies reviewed, feedback as a strategy of assistance is used in; instructional scaffolding and assisted performance.

The 5th core mechanism of assistance is ***instructing*** (defined in section 2.3.2). Using instructions, experts *tell* (Langer and Applebee, 1986) or *direct* (Anton, 1999) learners to perform certain strategic actions to achieve learning goals. Instructing as a mechanism of assistance was used in: Assisted performance, instructional scaffolding and the studies by Anton (1999) and McNeil (2012).

Although Tharp and Gallimore (1988) proposed contingency management (praise and encouragement) as a major means of assistance, Langer and Applebee (1986) had earlier identified praising as a collaborative technique. This study adopts Langer and Applebee's (1986) proposition which places praise and encouragement under collaboration, given that praise mainly functions to acknowledge learner efforts during problem solving, in order to encourage task completion. Also noteworthy is the place of non-verbal interactions in scaffolded assistance (Rogoff, 1990; 1995; Anton, 1999; McNeil, 2012). Non-verbal cues such as gestures, hesitation and postural changes can be used to convey messages to observing learners thereby assisting their performance. During negotiations, non-verbal cues such as hesitation signal the need for help, thereby prompting teachers to deploy assistance moves in response to learner needs. However, as the use of non-verbal cues seems to overlap various mechanisms of assistance, for example gesturing can be used in modelling as well as in collaborative work. For such reasons, non-verbal interactions are not assigned a category of their own, so as to allow for their appropriate use in different situations.

In summary, the core mechanism required for effective assistance within the ZPD include: *collaboration*, *modelling*, *questioning*, *feedback* and *instructing*. These five mechanisms of assistance provide a basis for investigating scaffolding in the Kenyan context in relation to L2 learning in a sociocultural sense in which learning (including language learning) is seen as dialogically based (Artigal, 1992; Swain, 2000; Donato, 2000; Ellis, 2008). The identified mechanisms are further discussed in the next section to explain how they operate as scaffolds.

#### *2.3.2.1 Mechanisms of Assistance: Strategies Used for Scaffolding*

Mechanisms of assistance such as collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing incorporate the verbal or non-verbal moves (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) which teachers may use to provide scaffolded assistance through the ZPD as discussed next.

***Collaboration***

The tutor's role in linking the novice's old and new knowledge through dialogic, graduated and contingent interventions together with the active role played by both participants underlies effective support within the ZPD (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). *Dialogue* plays an essential role given Wertsch's (1984) view that effective assistance within a novice's ZPD can only be managed through dialogic negotiation. This is because, the collaborative process in which the expert tries to discover a novice's ZPD in order to provide the required support, is facilitated by dialogic activity between at least two people. Dialogue is also the means by which support is given and adjusted and is an essential part of the sociocultural theory on scaffolded assistance within the ZPD.

The *learner's active role* is recognised as essential and with expert assistance, guided participation enables novices to play an active role in the learning, enabling them to contribute to the successful completion of given tasks (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988; Rogoff, 1990; 1995). The expert's role in the process is to provide *graduated* and *contingent* support to learners. Effective collaboration is graduated as it is meant to discover the learner's ZPD in order to determine the appropriate level of support required and to ensure that minimal support is used to create the intersubjectivity required for successful co-construction of L2 knowledge. Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) suggested that the most effective way of doing this is by starting with *implicit clues* and gradually moving to more *explicit instructions* until the appropriate level is achieved. Langer and Applebee (1986) proposed that the collaborative process of building on and recasting student efforts can be facilitated by strategies such as *telling*, *modelling*, *questioning*, *rephrasing*, *extending*, *praising* and *correcting*. Given that effective assistance is related to a novice's capability of performing the task, contingent help is given only when needed and is withdrawn as soon as the novice shows signs of performing independently. The mechanisms of graduation and contingency are actually one collaborative process in which an attempt is made to discover a novice's ZPD in order to estimate the appropriate level of help needed (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994).

### *Modelling*

Modelling is a principal mechanism by which new behaviours are initiated until maturity is reached. According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), acts of modelling take place during social and cultural activities such as domestic chores and children take part and learn from these activities through guided participation (Rogoff, 1990; 1995). Modelled behaviours are processed prior to performance and can be transformed into images and verbal symbols that guide subsequent performances. In educational settings, modelling behaviour through *words*, *pictures* or *live actions* (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) are important source of mediation for children and adults alike and can be used to assist performance in verbal cognitive activity, abstract or rule governed behaviour and psychomotor skills such as music. In language pedagogy, modelling has been used to assist cognitive performance in the area of reading comprehension, in Palincsar and Brown's (1984) study, reviewed in section 2.3.1, teachers modelled the exact strategies that learners could employ to comprehend texts. Strategies such as *summarising, predicting, clarifying, rephrasing, elaboration and asking questions* were modelled enabling the learners to gradually take on greater responsibility for controlling the collaboration, eventually mastering skills and assuming the role of teacher. The analysis in chapter four demonstrates how student teachers perform activities with learners which offer opportunities for internalising target L2 features.

### *Questions*

In L2 classrooms, teacher's questions make a large part of classroom interaction (Tsui, 1995). The use of questions enhances learner participation, negotiation of meaning and L2 learning based on the opportunities they provide for learners to think and use language creatively. McCormick and Donato (2000) maintained that questions are 'dynamic discursive tools' that serve to build collaboration and to scaffold comprehension and comprehensibility during L2 problem solving. According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), questioning has two teaching advantages. Firstly, it activates learners by providing them with practice and exercise. Secondly, during exercises of learners' speech and thought, teachers are able to assist and regulate the learner's assembling of evidence and their use of logic. Questioning therefore helps teachers see the images of their learners' minds projected through their language. With regards to the role of questions in facilitating interaction in joint activity, questions can be divided into two types: Those that *assess* and those that *assist*. *Assessment* questions inquire to discover pupils' abilities to perform without assistance and constitute a major interactive element in the

recitation script discourse. Assessment questions tend to be closed and seek short factual responses of low cognitive demand. These types of questions curtail learner utterances and do not promote collaborative knowledge building. *Assistance* questions on the other hand, inquire in order to produce a mental operation that the learner cannot or will not produce alone. They therefore promote joint meaning making with others from which individual learners make own meanings and extend their understandings. Assistance questions probe pupil understandings and cause them to reflect on ideas, refine them and extend them. This is achieved through discursive moves or strategies such as *wait time*, *comments* and varied used of *open questions* which invite learners to speculate, explore understandings, hypothesise, reason, evaluate and consider a range of possible answers in the process of constructing and reconstructing knowledge and understanding (Smith and Higgins, 2006). From a sociocultural perspective, the use of open questions during L2 interactions has been found to promote learner explorations and construction of pupils' own and shared understandings. Smith and Higgins (2006) suggested that the openness of questions can be enhanced by involving other learners in reasoned thinking which avails opportunities for others to argue and reflect on the correct answer. Instead of stopping at the expected factual answer, or performing evaluation in the follow-up move, teachers should request justifications, connections or counter arguments (Nassaji and Wells, 2000; Smith and Higgins, 2006). This is because the feedback provided in the follow-up move serves to extend a learner's answer, draw out its significance or make connections with parts of the learner's total experience. Opening up responses and probing learners also increases dialogic interaction and the feedback provided in the process facilitates thinking for L2 learning. The analysis in chapter four demonstrates how questions perform or fail to perform scaffolding functions in Kenyan secondary school classrooms.

### *Feedback*

In sociocultural research, corrective feedback and negotiations are conceptualised as collaborative processes where the dynamics of the interactions inform the nature of feedback given and its usefulness for promoting thinking during problem solving (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Feedback as a means of assistance is given to a learner to enable him carry out an activity, given their visible ability to utilise the forms of external assistance offered. However, in L2 classrooms feedback is corrective in nature as it provides information on accuracy and performance standards (Langer and Applebee, 1986; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). In this study, student teachers typically provide feedback when learners have difficulties in providing a response or respond incorrectly during whole-class activity. Corrective feedback here refers to

any implicit or explicit information given to a learner whose response in an L2 activity contains problematic or unacceptable features. To facilitate the identification of specific the feedback practices used in the implicit-to-explicit continuum mentioned by sociocultural researches such as Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994). Finding from SLA research on feedback practices are used to illuminate their use in classroom interaction.

Schachter's (1974) states that error correction can be explicit or implicit in a continuum ranging from explicit corrective feedback, confirmation checks, clarification requests to implicit corrective feedback and indications of non-comprehension. Lyster and Ranta (1997) proposed six kinds of error correction strategies, which are; *explicit correction*, *recasts*, *clarification requests*, *metalinguistic feedback*, *elicitation*, and *error repetition*. By description, explicit correction is conducted when teachers clearly show that an error has occurred and provide the correct form. Recasts are usually implicit and occur when teachers reformulate the student's utterance in a correct way instead of pointing the errors out. Clarification requests happen when the students' speech is unclear or hard to understand, teachers use phrases such as 'pardon me' to get the point of the utterance. Metalinguistic feedback refers to comments on student's language production, information of grammatical metalanguage and word definition, and questions that will lead to students' awareness of the errors. Elicitation is a kind of technique employed by teachers to evoke the correct forms from the students. Lastly, repetition of the student's erroneous utterance by the teacher can help stress the error, often conducted by adjusting intonation.

Studies on corrective feedback in L2 classrooms show that both implicit and explicit feedback and the negotiation processes used lead to L2 development as marked by learner responses towards them, as do the actual linguistic forms produced by the learner. Crucially, both types of feedback should be carried out within the ZPD to be beneficial for L2 learning. Nassaji and Swain (2000) investigated feedback as a means of assistance in the ZDP and non-ZPD help. They found that non-ZDP help is random on the implicit-to-explicit continuum. Their study showed that corrective feedback conducted within the ZPD and which is calibrated along the implicit to explicit continuum is interactionally negotiated so that it aligns with a learner's needs and is developmentally beneficial for L2 learning in comparison to random types of feedback which are not carried out in response to learner needs.

Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) study on the use of implicit and explicit feedback and self-regulation within the ZPD indicates the importance of dialogically negotiated feedback and the teacher's role in its delivery. They (*ibid*) describe the L2 developmental process moving from other regulated to self-regulated through a series of stages characterized with abilities to: notice an error, correct an error and the quantity and quality of assistance needed to do this. The strategies of assistance used involved the teacher initiating *prompts* to signal linguistic problems in learner utterances, after which focused and specific information on problematic areas would be given if the problems persist. The final strategy is the explicit pointing out of the problem, *giving cues* as to necessary correction and lastly *providing the learner with the correct answer or a grammatical explanation.*

From their study of French immersion classes, Lyster and Ranta (1997) discovered that recasts are the most often used by teachers, while repetition was the least applied technique. However, from the perspective of the students, it was found that elicitations and metalinguistic feedback were most likely to evoke self-correction. The findings showed that in the content-based L2 classrooms, students tended to pay less attention to the function of recasts in error correction because they assumed the teachers are giving feedbacks on the content rather than the form of their utterance (Lyster, 1998). For example in Samuda's (2001) study on modal verbs, appropriation of the verbs was absent in contexts where the focus was on meaning, while evidence of adoption was present in form and accuracy contexts, however, in a switch back to the focus on meaning, there was evidence of use of modal verbs. The conclusion was that at the beginning, the learners were yet to attain self-regulation of modal verbs and therefore could not use them in the earlier meaning and fluency context. It was also noted that implicit feedback in the form of recasts was insufficient to construct a ZPD for the targeted features. On the other hand, explicit feedback was successful and resulted in internalizing of targeted forms.

In some instances providing feedback can be problematic, Long (1977) stated that inconsistencies and lack of precision are manifested in teacher corrective feedback processes. Teachers give more than one type of feedback simultaneously which goes unnoticed by the learners, as teachers are likely to use the same overt behaviour for more than one purpose. A teacher repetition can occur after a learner error and serve as a model for imitation or it can function as a reinforcement of a correct response. Teachers also often fail to indicate where or how an utterance is deviant. They respond positively even when a learner continues to make

an error. Teachers may also correct errors in one part and ignore it in another part of the lesson and may give up on correction if learners cannot cope (Ellis, 2008).

Generally, most classroom learners like to be corrected during focus on form activities as well as those with focus on communication and meaning (Ellis, 2008; Seedhouse, 2004). Moreover, it has been reported that learners prefer explicit feedback (Kim and Mathes, 2001; Nagata, 1993). There is therefore a need to obtain information on real feedback practices used by student teachers in L2 classrooms as illustrated in section 4.5 for an effective teacher education on corrective feedback practices in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms.

***Instructing***

In L2 classrooms, instruction is a social process rooted in interactions between the teacher and the learner, from which individual learners gain power to use language, understand their world and to act within it (Langer and Applebee, 1986). Instructing calls for specific actions in two contexts: on matters of deportment and in assigning tasks (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). As with other means of support, instructing ought to be carried out in a system where the next specific act is needed by the learner to move through the ZPD. Teachers instruct learners during tasks by *guiding* them to perform strategic acts which support their abilities during problem solving. Instructing is also important because the teacher's instructing voice becomes the learner's self-instructing voice in the transition from apprentices to self-regulated performances.

Langer and Applebee (1986) maintained that in effective instructional interaction, the teacher should place value on the quality of the child's contribution to the dialogue in pursuit of higher order rather than basic skills. Effective instruction ought to emphasise the *mutual exploring* interpretations rather than the coverage of content and the evaluation of pupil learning, so that pupils can learn new knowledge and new strategies and how these are coordinated in the completion of particular tasks. For this to occur, learners must have clear understandings of both the task itself and the strategies that can be used to complete it and the teacher plays an import guiding role in the process as will be shown in the analysis of classroom episodes in chapter four.

In a nutshell, several mechanisms and strategies facilitating effective instruction within the ZPD have been identified based on previous sociocultural research on scaffolding. The interventions are encompassed in collaboration, modelling, questions, feedback, instruction

and the active role of both the expert and the novice in the process. By focusing on the interactions between student teachers and their learners in L2 classrooms, the present study aims at identifying and describing the discoursal scaffolding strategies used by student teachers under the five broad mechanisms identified, so as to bring about understandings on how the processes works in the Kenyan L2 context.

## 2.4 Criticisms on the Application of Scaffolding within the ZPD in L2 Teaching

Though research findings on scaffolding and the ZPD have reported numerous benefits associated with the practice in L2 teaching and learning, the notion of providing scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms is not without criticism. van Lier (1996) pointed out that there is not only one zone of uniform nature for every learner. In reality, learner abilities and levels of achievement in L2 classrooms differ at any one point in the course of instruction. While working within the ZPD learners are considered as being at the same level which may mislead the interlocutor into giving too little or too much support while applying this technique. van Lier's position is especially true in teacher fronted classrooms as in this study, where content coverage may motivate uniform instruction regardless of learner needs and abilities during lessons. In this regards, effective instruction in the ZPD, implies the need for teachers' sensitivity to learner needs so as to regulate their guidance to suit an individual learner's ZPD for progress in L2.

van Lier (1996) also argued that although the scaffolding and the ZPD metaphor works successfully with younger children, it may be less convincing in the case of adolescents or adults learning a second language. This is because older children and adults have increased inner resources on which they can rely for guidance and self-support. It has since been established that scaffolding within the ZPD works well in any field of learning and especially language learning were it works successfully with second language learners at any age or level of proficiency (Ellis, 2008).

Another criticism on the application of scaffolding relates to teacher competencies in the techniques required. Unless teachers are well trained to implement instruction through scaffolding, they may not fully understand its potential and effectiveness in L2 pedagogy. According to Ellis (2008), scaffolding requires teachers to give up some control and allow the

learners to make errors in the process of learning, which is difficult in teacher-centred contexts. On the other hand a teacher may provide more scaffolding than is required thereby failing to push the learners towards greater autonomy but this can be avoided by offering graduated and contingent help, tailored to the learner's emerging competencies.

Lastly, it has been observed that it is difficult to keep instruction within the ZPD according to the learner levels of proficiency and adjust teaching to correspond to the ZPDs of numerous students (Aldabbus, 2008; Ohta, 2001; van Lier 1996). As the ZPD is crucial for learner engagement and L2 development, a solution for effective scaffolding in contexts with large class sizes is to have learners help each other.

Despite the criticism mentioned above, a sociocultural perspective on L2 learning in general as advanced in the notions of *scaffolding* within the *ZPD* holds potential for enhancing pre-service teacher education in Kenya and in similar contexts in sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia. This is particularly from the view point that a teacher is an expert interlocutor who manages the language resources in the classroom for promoting L2 development and learning outcomes. As the student teachers in the study had not been trained on the sociocultural theory and its guiding principles on scaffolding within the ZPD, and no other research of this kind has been carried out among Kenyan student teachers to ascertain the relevance of scaffolded assistance in L2 pedagogy, the present study investigates its potential application in the Kenyan context.

Given the current state of L2 pedagogy where the syllabus and learning resources are prescribed, coupled with larger class sizes and poor physical conditions in the classrooms, an in-depth investigation into how scaffolding works ordinarily in the secondary school L2 classrooms appears to be relevant and beneficial for discovering its effect as a teaching strategy, which can be adopted and taught to student teachers during their training.

Although the scaffolding metaphor was originally used to describe how mother-child interactions foster language acquisition, it was later applied to interactions for joint problem solving in L1 contexts. The metaphor was later adapted and successfully applied in western L2 contexts which showed that scaffolded assistance by knowledgeable others such as teachers and peers, can provide learners with a framework for problem solving, until the learners become self-regulated and eventually automatize their performance. The present study extends

sociocultural research into scaffolded assistance by investigating the practice among student teacher in the Kenyan L2 context as reported in chapter four and five.

# CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter presented the sociocultural theoretical framework for investigating the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance in the Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms and will be used for answering the following research questions:

| Research Question | Data used |
|---|---|
| 1. What strategies do student teachers use for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms? | - Classroom observations |
| 2. What factors influence the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in these classrooms? | - Interview<br>- Documents<br>- Secondary school classroom environments |
| 3. How can the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance be improved at the L2 teacher education level? | - Findings from the data analysed, mechanisms of assistance 2.3.2 and literature on reflective practice and pair work in L2 classrooms |

This chapter presents the research procedures and analytical methods used for answering these questions.

## 3.0 Introducing the Research

Sociocultural theory presented in the previous chapter provides the framework for answering the research questions above. A qualitative case study method as described in section 3.4 was used to investigate the processes used by student teachers for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan L2 classrooms. The student teachers were recorded teaching English or English Literature in the normal school timetable. The video recordings were then transcribed and subjected to a microgenetic analysis of learner performance with 'expert' assistance as reported in chapter four.

To nuance the observation findings on the observed practices of assistance in L2 classrooms, an analysis of contextual factors known to influence interaction and joint activity in classrooms was carried out as reported in chapter five. This was facilitated by an analysis of secondary school classroom environments, Maseno University teacher education documents and a focused interview held with a Maseno University lecturer as discussed in the sections below.

## 3.1 Research Ethics

This study entailed working with Maseno university lecturers, student teachers and secondary school pupils so as to obtain data on the issues relating to the processes used by student teachers for assisting performance in L2. Prior to collecting data from the named sources, a number of considerations were taken into account in adherence to ethics in research. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Newcastle University's Humanities and Social Sciences graduate school. Before conducting fieldwork in Kenya, permission to carry out classroom observations, interviews and document collection was granted by the Kenyan ministry of Science and Technology (see appendix I). The principles of informed and voluntary consent of participants were used to design letters explaining the research purpose and methods, consent forms (see appendix H) and a debriefing protocol for the student teachers whose lessons were observed (Foreman-Peck and Winch, 2010). Importantly for classroom observation, permission to video record the pupils during lessons was obtained from their head teachers who gave consent on behalf of the participating pupils. All adult participants gave their consent and were briefed on the purposes of the study and the procedures to be used in data collection. The participants were given the right to withdraw and all the data obtained was stored securely on a server at Newcastle University. The identities of the participants were kept anonymous by the use of codes in this thesis.

## 3.2 Research Population and Sample

The samples in this study were taken from secondary school L2 classrooms, Maseno University student teachers of L2, a lecturer and course documents from the L2 teacher education programme at Maseno University. The sections that follow detail the procedures used for sampling.

### 3.2.1 The University Lecturers

A focused interview was held with the lecturer in charge of the teaching methods courses for English and Literature. This single lecturer was a key respondent and was purposively selected (Yin, 2011) as he had taught the courses since the inception of Maseno University College in 1990. At the time of the study, the same lecturer was also in charge of teaching practice exercise in secondary schools.

### 3.2.2 The Student Teachers in Secondary School Classrooms

In order to investigate the processes used by student teachers for assisting learner performance in L2, a stratified random sample (Bryman, 2012) of 16 student teachers was taken from a

population of 103 student teachers of English/Literature during their teaching practice (TP) placement in 96 Kenyan secondary schools between May and July 2011. According to Bryman (*ibid*) a stratified random sample is a probabilistic sampling technique which involves stratifying the sample by a criterion, and selecting either a simple random sample or a systematic sample from the resulting strata. To arrive at the sample of 16 student teachers to be observed, the demographics of the secondary schools in which they taught formed the basis of the sampling strata. As a stratified sample ensures that the sample exhibits a proportion representative of the population, selecting the student teachers in line with the school variations ensured that the sample of schools was taken from diverse contexts known to affect classroom interaction, such as the type of school and the resources available for teaching and learning at the school (Delamont, 1983). An advantage of using stratified sampling is that more than one stratifying criterion can be used and the technique ensures that the sample will be distributed in the same way as the population in terms of the stratifying criterion. The stratifying criteria for selecting secondary schools representative of the various categories of Kenyan secondary schools was carried out on the basis of the following:

Status of school: National, Provincial, District, Harambee (Community school)

Gender of pupils at school: Boys, Girl or Mixed gender

Funding: Public and Private Schools

The stratified sample of 14 schools for the study led to the observation of 16 student teachers, two of the schools in the study had two student teachers each who were assigned teaching duties in different classrooms in the schools. The student teachers whose English or Literature lessons were observed and video recorded were not in any way marked for observation. Sampling the schools rather than the student teacher meant that there was a chance that any of 103 student teachers might have been observed given that all of them had been trained in the same way and used the Kenyan national English syllabus for teaching during their teaching practicum.

The table 3.1 shows the profile of the student teachers observed and the different categories of schools in which they taught, along the four categories of secondary schools in Kenya.

The description of school categories and pupils is given in the key below.

**Key:**

**CAT1** – National schools (Admitting learners of above average academic ability)

**CAT2** – Provincial Schools (Admitting learners of average academic ability)

**CAT3** – District Schools (Admitting learners with a below average academic ability)

**PRIV** – Private schools run by individuals or organisations independent of the state

**Boys** – Schools enrolling boys only

**Girls** – Schools enrolling girls only

**Mixed** – Schools enrolling both girls and boys

**Form 1** – The first year of secondary education in Kenya

**Form 2** – The second year of secondary education in Kenya

**Table 3.1 Profile of student teachers in different categories of schools**

| | **CAT1** | **CAT2** | **CAT3** | **PRIVATE** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **MALE** | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| **FEMALE** | 1 | 5 | 1 | 1 |

Of the 17 lessons observed (one of the student teachers was observed teaching English and later Literature at different times and in different classrooms), 11 were English lessons while 6 were Literature lessons. The table 3.2 shows a summary of the types of lessons observed and the class levels in different categories of secondary schools.

**Table 3.2 Summary of lessons observed**

| ***ENGLISH LESSONS*** | ***SCHOOL TYPE AND CLASS LEVEL*** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adjectives | CAT1 - Boys Form 1 | CAT2 - Girls Form 1 | CAT3 - Mixed Form 1 | |
| Adverbs | CAT2 - Boys Form 1a | CAT2 - Boys Form 1b | | |
| Writing: Letters (Formal and Informal) | CAT 3 - Mixed Form 2 | CAT3 - Mixed Form 2 | PRIV - Mixed Form 2 | CAT2 - Girls Form 1 |
| Active/Passive Voice | CAT3 - Mixed Form 2 | | | |
| Simple Past Tense | CAT2 - Girls Form 1 | | | |
| | | | | |
| ***LITERATURE LESSONS*** | | | | |
| Oral Poetry | CAT1 - Girls Form 1 | | | |
| Features of Style | CAT2 - Girls Form 2 | | | |
| Songs: Listening & Speaking | PRIV - Mixed Form 2 | | | |
| Oral literature: Riddles | CAT2 - Girls Form 2 | | | |
| Fieldwork | CAT3 - Mixed Form 2 | | | |
| Trickster Narratives | PRIV-Mixed Form 1 | | | |

## 3.3 Sociocultural Research

SLA research has widely adopted the Vygotskian *genetic* method in investigating the social processes of second language acquisition. The genetic method focuses on discoursal contexts in which learner utterances are found rather than language in isolation and emphasizes an examination of the process by which new functions emerge rather than on the product of learning (Ellis, 2008). The present study employs a microgenetic method to investigate the strategies used by student teachers to scaffold learner performance in L2 lessons. Microgenesis, which refers to the process showing how development takes place over the course of a particular interaction in a specific social setting, seeks to uncover the stages through which within the ZPD, a learner passes enroute to achieving self-regulation or the ability to control the use of a particular L2 feature by using it independently or with support from the interlocutor. In this regard therefore this study which seeks to uncover the strategies used by student teachers to assist learner performance in Kenyan L2 classrooms lies within the scope of a sociocultural microgenetic research. In so doing the study extends the application of sociocultural theory to a non-western pedagogic context using the example of pre-service student teachers.

Microgenetic studies are largely qualitative as they do not entail counting of specific L2 phenomena but rather elucidate how particular functions and features come to be performed and internalized. This is in line with the aims of the present study seeking to uncover strategies used in assist learner performance in Kenyan L2 classrooms. The study is essentially a descriptive case study as it sets out to describe and shed light on a phenomenon within its context, using a defined case and unit of analysis (Yin, 2009; Gall et al., 2007). The case of 16 from the 103 Maseno University's student teachers of English and Literature (L2) on teaching practice (TP) is used to analyse the discoursal scaffolding strategies used for assisting learner performance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms. Such an understanding is achieved by inspecting the classroom interaction for examples of how scaffolded assistance shapes and builds L2 knowledge in the classroom. The study is typical of a naturalistic inquiry as it is conducted in the natural classroom a setting which brings out the contextual uniqueness of groups of learners and their teachers in order to arrive at rich descriptions of phenomena.

## 3.4 Case Study Methodology and Data Collection

This section outlines the qualitative case study method used for investigating scaffolded assistance as practiced by Maseno University student teachers. A case study approach was adopted for the present study because if used exhaustively, it yields insights into basic aspects of human behaviour and was deemed appropriate for investigating student teacher scaffolding behaviours. According to Yin (2009) a case study is a qualitative method of gathering data, which closely examines an individual, a small group of subjects or a single phenomenon and is employed in many academic disciplines such as law, psychology, sociology and education. He (*ibid*:18) defined it as, "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context when boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and multiple sources of evidence are used." Nunan (1992:74) describes the case study methodology as being 'hybrid' because it generally utilises a range of methods for collecting and analysing data rather than getting restricted to a single procedure." In this regard, Nunan emphasises the significance of triangulation, which aims at using more than one source of data for obtaining evidence on the phenomenon under investigation. Nunan also noted that in applied linguistics, case study usually involves the investigation of the language behaviour of a single individual or a limited number of individuals over a period of time (p.229), which justifies the sample of 16 student teachers from the 103 who were teaching L2 in secondary schools during their practicum. The rationale behind using the case study approach for the present study lies in its capacity to answer the "*how"* and "*why"* questions underlying the aims of the present study on the strategies used by student teachers to provide scaffolded assistance in L2 lessons. It also facilitates understandings of the educational, cultural and contextual factors influencing the scaffolding behaviours observed as a case study approach provides well grounded, extensive descriptions and explanations of behaviour in context (Nunan, 1992; Yin, 2009).

Yin (2009) describes four types of case study designs: holistic single-case (single unit of analysis), single-case embedded (one case with multiple units of analysis), holistic multiple-case (several cases with a global type of analysis) and embedded multiple-case (several cases with several units of analysis). The present study, adopts a single case embedded design as the whole population of 103 student teachers of L2 from which a sample of 16 is taken are treated as a single case, with two units of analysis for comparison. The two units of analysis are labelled as successful scaffolding practices (learner-centred episodes) and unsuccessful

practices (teacher-led episodes) relative to the notion of scaffolded assistance. Such an approach ensures an in-depth and contextualised (language context and learning activities) understanding on the scaffolding practices used and the conditions that facilitate or hinder their use in L2 pedagogy.

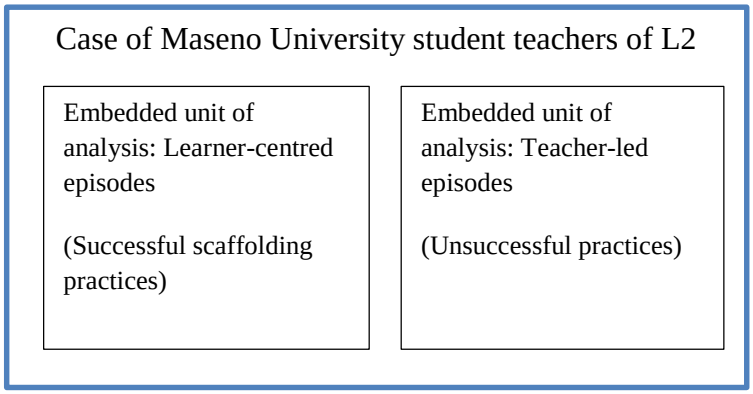



**Figure 3.1 The Case Study**

The case study method was considered as the most appropriate for this study because it is a holistic research method which utilises multiple sources of evidence to analyse and evaluate a specific phenomenon in its natural setting by employing qualitative methods and measures. An overriding principle in case study research is the use of multiple data sources aimed at converging at the same finding, which enhances the quality of the study (Yin, 2009; Creswell, 2013). In this regard, the conclusions on strategies used by student teachers to provide scaffolded assistance and the factors influencing them were drawn from three types of evidence. These were: classroom observations, documents and a focused interview as shown in the figure 3.2 below.

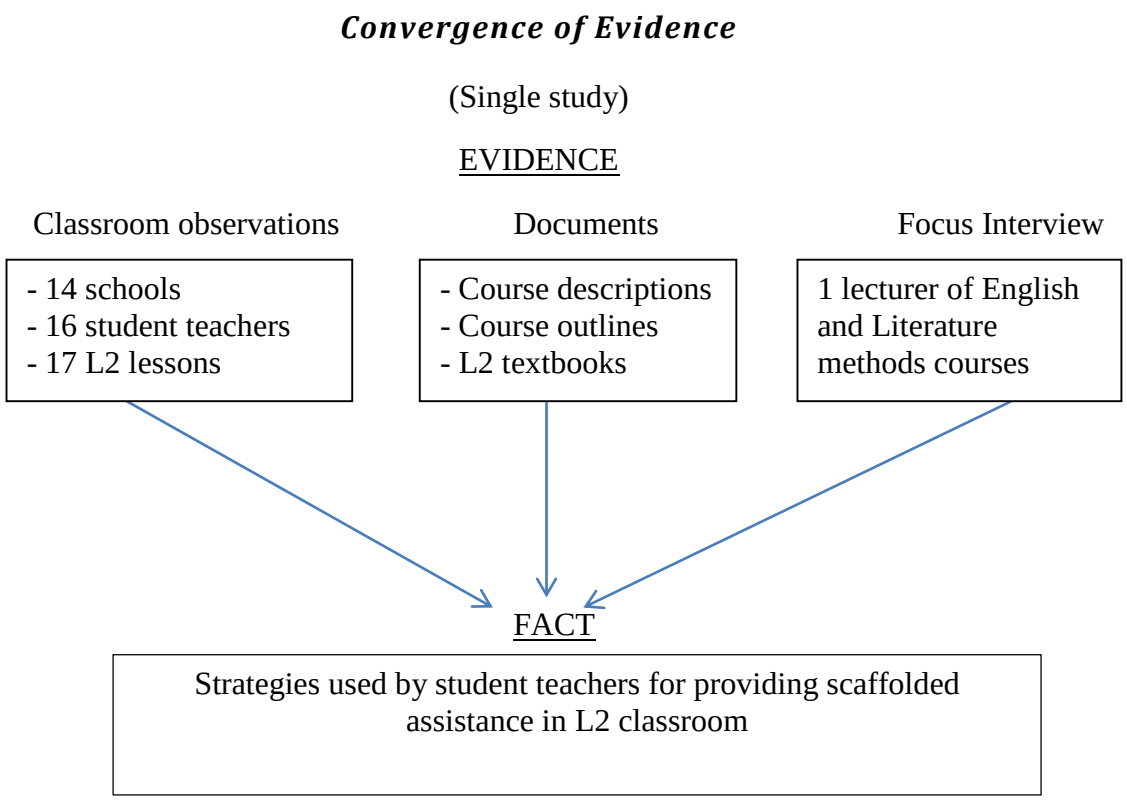



**Figure 3.2 Convergence of Multiple Sources of Evidence (adapted from Yin, 2009)**

The single case embedded technique was used to analyse the classroom observation data for scaffolding practices, whereas documents and the interview with a Maseno University lecturer provided insights to nuance understandings of the scaffolding practices used by student teachers in L2 classrooms. This approach proved advantageous as the evidence from multiple sources is considered compelling in case study research as the overall study is regarded as being more robust (Yin, 2009).

The next sections discuss the methods used to collect data from documents, observations and interview.

### 3.4.1 Documentation

In case study research, Bryman (2012) advocates for the use of official state and private company documents alongside methods such as participant observation or qualitative interviews as they provide important information on events and processes within the organisation. From documents it was possible to make inferences on the provisions available for teacher education on scaffolding strategies, as they provided information on the specific teaching skills and techniques taught to student teachers. Descriptions from the documents

augment the evidence from classroom observations and the focus interview in terms of what is taught at the teacher education level at Maseno University with regards to the pedagogic processes involved in scaffolded assistance. The types of documents used included:

i. Course descriptions
ii. Course outlines
iii. Textbooks approved by KIE (Kenya Institute of Education) for L2 teaching in Kenya

### 3.4.2 Classroom Observation

According to Wragg (2011), the methods of classroom observation used in a study should suit its purposes. In this study therefore, the classroom observation methods and procedures were carried out in line with the research's main purpose of explicating strategies used for providing scaffolded assistance. In this section, I describe the decisions taken in selecting the observational method used to answer the first research question on how the student teachers assist learner performance in the L2 classroom observed.

The investigation into student teachers as 'experts' assisting learner performance in Kenyan L2 classrooms, needed to capture naturalistic student teacher verbal interactions in order to determine the processes involved. The classroom observation method was deemed fit for purpose, as with this method, it would be possible to observe and record the classroom events in their natural contexts in real time (Yin, 2009) for transcription and analysis.

The researcher's role in the observational process was also taken into account. As the phenomenon under investigation required only the roles of the pupils and their student teachers, the researcher's role in the classroom was that of a non-participant observer.

Given the study's qualitative approach and quest for normal classrooms interactions as found in everyday learning, a naturalistic observation rather than a formal experiment was found apt. The non-participant observation in natural classroom settings was carried out by video recordings which were later transcribed using transcription conventions by Atkinson and Heritage (1984) in appendix A. The advantage of video recording the classrooms rather audio recording relates to the need to capture the verbal and non-verbal linguistic behaviour as a way of aiding the holistic interpretation of the meanings of the utterances in context of the interaction. However, Ochs (1979) had pointed out that the presence of any recording equipment, including video recording must be seen as a barrier to the 'naturalness' of the data.

Further, Ochs viewed transcripts from recordings as the researchers' extensions of data which may not represent the phenomena under investigation. For these reasons, care was taken to make minimal disruptions in the classrooms during the recording process and to listen to the video recordings over and over again in the transcription phase which ensured transcription fidelity.

### 3.4.3 Interview

A short and focused interview was carried out with the lecturer in charge of the teaching methods courses for English and Literature. As Maseno University student teachers are trained to use traditional teacher centred teaching methods, the purpose of the interview was to get the educator's views on any scaffolding strategies taught to teachers of L2 in order to triangulate and corroborate the findings from the course documents and the classroom observations. The use of a focused interview was advantageous as it provided for targeted questions focused directly on the issues under investigation. Similarly the information generated from using the focused interview proved insightful as it helped provide some perceived causal inferences and explanations (Yin, 2009) for the scaffolding behaviours practices by the student teachers in the observed L2 classrooms. One of the main limitations encountered in using focused interviews relates to poorly articulated questions, in this case, care was taken in the wording of the open ended questions used so as to guide the discussions in a way that allowed the interviewee to provide a fresh commentary on the training of teachers in processes such as classroom interaction and joint activity for L2 pedagogy.

## 3.5 Data Analysis Methods

This section details the approaches taken in the analysis of the classroom observations, course documents and interview data.

### 3.5.1 Microgenetic Analysis

After video recording the classroom data, transcripts were developed with the help an external transcriber according to the transcription conventions in Atkinson and Heritage (1984), also see appendix A. The transcripts were further improved by the researcher who checked the transcripts alongside the video recordings over and over again in order to ensure accuracy of terms and interactional practice. This was done in order to avoid dismissing any feature of interaction as insignificant a priori.

The next stage involved inspecting the transcripts for the processes by which new mental functions emerge, in line with the Vygotskian 'genetic' method. In the genetic method, representational activities and semiotic mediation are fundamental to Vygotsky's concept of internalization and the transformation of interpersonal processes into intrapersonal ones. Genetic analysis as used by Vygotsky examines the origins of phenomena focusing on the interconnectedness of speech and thought in joint activity. In describing his approach, Vygotsky emphasised the need to concentrate not on the *product* of development but on the very *process* by which higher forms are established (John-Steiner and Manh, 1996). This is made possible by three central tenets on whose basis the concept of internalization is made. These are: the social sources of development, semiotic development and genetic analysis, which are briefly explained here.

In the microanalysis of interactional episodes, the social development of knowledge in all its phases and changes they undergo are examined in order to discover the process by which the knowledge was constructed. Vygotsky, in his genetic law of development emphasised the primacy of social interaction in human behaviour. From studies on learning and development, he concluded that the developing individual relies on experiences transmitted by others and all higher psychological functions are internalized relations of the social kind, and constitute to the social structure of personality. This conclusion refers to a process situated in social interactions where individual development results from participation in activities where the learners depend on others with more experience for regulation. Over time they take on increasing responsibility for their learning and participation in activities. As mentioned before, scholars expanding Vygotsky's law of development have characterised it as; guided participation (Rogoff, 1990; 1995), assisted performance (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) and instructional scaffolding (Langer and Applebee, 1986). Learners participate in a wide range of joint activities which provide them with opportunities for synthesising various influences which are subsequently internalised as useful strategies for problem solving and crucial knowledge. Various studies discussed in chapter two validated the sociocultural claim that relationships between individuals form the basis for cognitive and linguistic development. The developmental process involves transmission, construction, transaction and transformation in a continuing complex interplay (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996).

The concept of semiotic mediation is crucial in the sense that the process of internalization is seen as transformative rather than transmissive, which explains the qualitative transformations

in the human mind microgenetically during social activity. To explicate processes used in facilitating internalization in this study, the analysis inspected the interaction for examples of how scaffolded assistance facilitated L2 problem solving and knowledge building in joint activity.

In microgenetic analysis, learning and development are known to take place in culturally shaped contexts. Historical conditions constantly change resulting in changed contexts and opportunities for learning. Consequently, there is no universal schema that adequately represents the dynamic relation between the external and internal aspects of development (John-Steiner and Mahn, 1996). For these reasons, the findings in this study are based on interpreting the observed developmental processes and the resulting transformations or higher order forms. The interdependence between the individual and social processes in the construction of knowledge can be understood through the examination of: i) The individual's development, including higher mental functioning originating in social sources as determined by their contributions in L2 problem solving, and ii) Human action on both social and individual planes mediated by tools and signs. These two issues were examined using a microgenetic analysis of lesson transcripts reported in chapter four; the specific procedures used are detailed in section 4.2.

### 3.5.2 Content Analysis

Data collected from the teacher education documents was analysed using a content analysis approach. In line with the sociocultural perspective on scaffolded assistance, the analysis was carried in a bid to identifying of the core mechanisms of assistance as detailed section 2.3.2 from the relevant courses. Content analysis is a flexible method for analysing textual data whose main purpose is to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study. According to Berg (2009), it is the careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings. Bryman (2012) refers to it as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) defined it as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic process of coding and identifying themes and patterns. Typically, textual data for content analysis may be in the form of written documents, photographs, motion pictures, video tapes and audio tapes (Berg, 2009). In this regard, the analysis of L2 teacher

education course documents listed in section 3.3.1 sought to identify the core mechanisms of assistance available in the program.

The analysis of course contents entailed searching out topics relating to core mechanisms of assistance such as collaboration, modelling, questions, feedback and instructing as detailed in section 2.3.2. As such a summative content analysis approach in which the appearance of particular words or contents in textual material (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), was used to identify subtopics containing the mechanisms of support. Further, interpretations on the identified mechanisms were carried out by examining students lecture notes and cross-examining the contents of related courses. For example to ascertain the presence or absence of 'collaboration' as a mechanism of assistance, the course contents for both methods courses for English and Literature were scrutinised as well as the course for microteaching and media practicals.

Hsein and Shannon (2005) reported that the summative approach to analysing contents has been used previously to analyse specific contents such as end-of-life care, critical care, palliative care, death and bereavement and spirituality in nursing textbooks. The researchers involved started by seeking the pages covering specific topics followed by descriptions and interpretations of the content including evaluating the quality of the contents.

In the present study, the same procedure was adopted. Data analysis began with searching for the occurrence of identified mechanisms (collaboration, modelling, questions, feedback, instructing) in course contents. Analysing the contents for pre-identified mechanisms of assistance served as a guide only; in real practice, other mechanisms of assistance were allowed to emerge for description, interpretation and reporting. The identified mechanisms were then described and evaluated from the sociocultural theory's perspective of assisting performance. This approach was found to be advantageous as it provides basic insight into phenomenon in an unobtrusive and nonreactive way and to ensure credibility of findings, the textual evidence is provided alongside their interpretation (Weber, 1990) in chapter five.

### 3.5.3 Thematic Analysis

A thematic approach was adopted for analysing the interview with a Maseno university lecturer, it involved identifying categories relating to the research focus and which provide a basis for theoretically understanding the data (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2009). Drawing on the literature on mechanisms and strategies of providing scaffolded assistance, the focused

interview with a Maseno University lecturer elicited perspectives on how processes of assistance are fostered in the L2 teacher education curriculum. The analysis process involved transcribing the interview and reading through for emerging features which were then placed in categories. The main features identified formed the basis for generating descriptions on the thematic category. The findings were interpreted from a sociocultural perspective on assisted performance and presented in narrative style.

## 3.6 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

Some measures were taken to ensure that the procedures used in the research process led to accurate findings.

### 3.6.1 Validity and Reliability

In qualitative research, validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures, while reliability indicates that the researcher's approach is consistent (Creswell, 2009). To ensure that the findings in this research were accurate and credible, a number of measures were taken. Validity strategies such as data triangulation and the use of thick and rich descriptions of the procedures and findings were used. For triangulation, data was obtained from course documents, an interview and classroom observations and later used to build coherent justifications for emerging themes. By converging data from the three sources, conclusions were drawn from various angles making the research findings trustworthy.

Regarding reliability, Yin (2009) suggested that qualitative researchers need to state the procedures of their case studies and to document as many of the steps used as possible. Furthermore, the use of a case study protocol and data base is recommended. To ensure consistency in approach during the study, the case study procedures were documented and applied consistently in the data collection phase. For example, the same procedure was used for all the seventeen classroom observations. Once a school had been selected for the study, the researcher called the student teacher informing them of intention to video record their L2 lesson. This was followed by seeking the school's consent and explaining to both the school administration and the student teachers the procedures to be used during the recording of lessons. Once classroom observation data had been obtained, it was transcribed externally and checked for accuracy to make sure that it did not contain mistakes. Measures were also taken in coding to ensure that were no drifts in the definitions of codes or shifts in the meaning of codes during the process of coding. For validity and reliability of course documents, the course

outlines where checked against their published descriptions in the Maseno University calendar (2007-2012).

### 3.6.2 Generalisation

Thomas (2011) noted that case studies are not good for generalisation as they study 'one thing' which cannot be generalised to others. He (*ibid*) explains that given the unitary nature of the thing being studied, it can only serve as an exemplary function of an analytical category. The present study, being specifically the case of how Maseno University student teachers assist performance in secondary school L2 classrooms is not generalizable to the wider Kenyan context. This is because whereas all teachers of L2 (those teaching in schools providing the national 8-4-4 curriculum) teach using the same national L2 syllabus and textbooks, they have not been trained under similar conditions as universities in Kenya are autonomous and free to draft their own curricula. Furthermore, private Universities which also train teachers for L2 teaching in secondary schools have smaller numbers of students and better teaching and learning facilities and resources. The present study is based on a sample of Maseno University student teachers who have been trained under similar conditions and therefore the findings shed light on the processes used by this specific group of teachers to provide scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms. However, theoretical generalisations are possible as the findings exemplify the contextual application of the sociocultural perspective on assisted performance by experts such as student teachers in secondary school ESL classrooms. Detailed descriptions of the research context and background features are provided in chapter four and five for reference by researchers and other lecturers in order to enable them to generalise the findings to their own contexts (Foreman-Peck and Winch, 2010).

# CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA

Chapter three presented the methodology adopted for answering the research questions from a sociocultural perspective. This chapter presents the analysis of data from the same perspective in relation to the first research questions on the social processes of assistance used by student teachers in L2 classrooms.

## 4.0 What strategies do student teachers use for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms?

In answering this question, the aim is to identify and describe the social processes used for assisting learner performance in L2 lessons. Below is a brief summary on the structure of the L2 lessons observed, followed by the analysis procedure and lastly, the analysis of episodes from the L2 classrooms.

## 4.1 Lesson Structure

This section presents an overview on the structure of the lessons observed and their interactional organisation. The aims and criteria for analysing the strategies used for scaffolding are given in the next section.

The data episodes presented in this section were obtained by observing and video-recording student teachers of English and Literature (L2) during their teaching practice (TP) in Kenyan secondary schools. Literature lessons are included in the analysis since Kenya adopts an integrated approach for language teaching, in which literary resources are used as authentic material for language studies. This section illustrates the interactional organisation of the lessons as well as the mediational means available for L2 pedagogy. Despite the differences in categories of schools, class levels and the gender of the student teachers in the study, there are general similarities in the lessons which last approximately forty minutes and presented in three phases: lesson introduction, development and conclusion.

***Lesson Introductions.*** The common features in this phase include: reviewing previous lessons, examination of learner experiences, examination of learner background knowledge or introductory remarks. Lesson introductions were characterised by student teachers eliciting the display of knowledge using closed questions, making introductory explanations or defining

concept for learners. The extract below shows how a lesson was introduced by reviewing a previous lesson. (See Appendix A for the transcription conventions).

*(Lesson on Adjectives from a Form 1 class in a mixed District school with 45 pupils aged 14-15)*

ST: Okay in our previous class (.) we talked about (.) adjectives (.) can someone tell us (.) the meaning of (.) an adjective (2.0) (name)
L1: it's a word that describes an object or a person
ST: a word used to describe (.) an object (.) or a person. any other definition
L2: it is a word (.) that explains more about an object
ST: a word that explains more about,
L2: an [object]

***Lesson Development.*** This phase of the lessons took place in two stages, the first stage involved explanations of concepts with examples. In the second stage further explanations were given with practice structures or exercises (oral or written) based on the topic. The characteristic features in this step were teacher explanations, whole class discussions or learners completing exercises individually in their notebooks. Below is an extract showing how lesson development was achieved using explanations and examples.

*(Lesson on Riddles from a form 2 class in Provincial girls' school with 40 pupils aged 15-16)*

ST: a riddle is a question (.) statement (.) or description in figurative language (1.0) that is intended to test the listener's ability (7.0) to use (.) their wits (.) to unravel (.) the meaning. (1.0) I'm sure all of us here have come (.) around riddles (.) at one point in life (1.0) isn't it so
LL: yes
ST: so (2.0) can you give (.) examples of riddles (1.0) a riddle you know in any language (.) it can be in English or (.) mother tongue. (.) okay? (1.0) let's have examples of riddles (8.0) yes
L1: (riddle riddle)
LL: say it
L1: who taught the Eur- (.) who taught the Europeans how to carry an umbrella
ST: yes (.) who taught the Europeans how to carry an umbrella (.) yes (name),
L2: mushroom
ST: mushroom (.) the answer is mushroom
LL: yes

***Conclusions.*** This section featured teacher-led closing activities such as recapitulations of the lesson content, review questions from the teacher, questions from the learners and instructions on assignments. Negotiation of meaning were found to be common at this stage as learners raise questions and comments on concepts covered during the lesson for further clarification by the teachers. The extract below is an example of learner questions and comments in the concluding phase of a lesson.

*(Oral Poetry lesson from a form 1 class in National girls' school with 68 pupils aged 14-15)*

ST: those are the major (1.0) styles we've looked at today (.) and the (.) er (.) your assignment you'll get it after this class (1.0) thank you for your [attention]
L1: [question] (.) question
ST: yes (.) somebody has a question
L1: in front of plot plot they've beginning and middle is middle also (.) called (.) the body,
ST: yes (1.0) good she (2.0) she has brought another new one, (.) the main part of a plot (.) is also the part was the body (.) because we have the the beginning which is the (.) introduction (.) the middle part is the body and, (.) the end the (.) conclusion. (.) any other questions. (.) yes (name)
L2: in the beginning or the introduction (.) can you say that that part is called the opening formula.
ST: opening formula, (.) that is a style on its own,
L2: so there are not anyhow related=

Throughout the lessons, learners listened to explanations, answered questions and wrote notes in their exercise books as dictated to them or arising from class discussions. There was no group work or pair-work in any of the seventeen lessons observed. Opportunities for intermental development were limited as negotiations occurred only between the teachers and the learners during whole class exercises and in the lesson conclusion phase. Teacher-led whole-class activity in which practice exercises were collectively solved was the main avenue for developing shared knowledge.

The roles of the student teachers and learners can be distinguished in different stages of lesson development. The student teachers played a dominant role in the interaction by controlling turn taking and used up the majority of turns to transmit L2 knowledge to the learners. The learners on the other hand, listened to the student teacher's explanations, answered questions, gave examples, completed exercises and took down notes as instructed by the student teachers. Whenever opportunities arose, the learners participate in negotiation of form and meaning, and asked questions to clarify their understandings of concepts taught to them during the lesson.

The types of activities used and interactional patterns are consistent with the recitation script as the bulk of lesson time was devoted to explanations, questions (closed) and answers and oral or written exercises. However, in a small number of learner-centred episodes explored in section 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5, the student teachers used talk to create opportunities for learners to participate in co-construction of L2 knowledge with expert assistance.

## 4.2 Analysis Criteria

The aim of the analysis was to describe how student teachers used talk as a scaffolding tool. The analysis was carried out within the sociocultural perspective, where learning is seen as

occurring within the zone of proximal development (ZPD), in collaboration with an 'expert' (Vygotsky, 1978; Donato, 1994). In assisting performance through the learner's ZPD, the 'expert' through scaffolding, supports the novice to perform a task that they are unable to perform independently, thus messages are co-constructed to the point where the novice can perform independently (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988, Wells, 1999).

Owing to the study's context in which teachers play a dominant role in classroom discourse, in this study ZPDs were marked by instances where learners could not produce the correct or most appropriate answer and therefore needed assistance from a student teacher to help them produce the correct response. In order to locate and characterise these instances, *first* all incidences where learners could not answer correctly were identified from various stages of the lessons featuring teacher-learner interaction in joint activity.

In line with the ZPD and scaffolding notion, the *second* step involved identifying the problem areas as defined by incorrect responses around which student teacher scaffolding occurred. This was made possible by focusing on the spots where student teachers and learners jointly used their cognitive resources for problem solving. The episodes identified in this step were then classified as having supportive mechanisms aimed at enabling learner performance. These types of episodes are referred to as *learner-centred episodes* in that the activities within them actively engage learners in information sharing or negotiation of meaning for problem solving (Anton, 1999).

Also in this step, alternative episodes were identified which provide a contrast to the scaffolding behaviour observed in learner-centred episodes. The contrasting episodes called *teacher-led episodes* were identified by locating instances (in activities similar to those in which scaffolding occurred in learner-centred episodes) in which learners were unable to respond without support and student teachers dominated the interaction by providing answers and explanations. By contrasting the dialogic strategies used in the learner-centred and teacher-led episodes, it was possible to describe how scaffolding is used to assist learner performance within the ZPD in these L2 classrooms.

The *third* step involved categorising the teacher's supportive talk into the six scaffolding functions provided for in Wood et al.'s (1976) framework:

1. Recruiting interest in the task

2. Simplifying the task
3. Maintaining pursuit of the goal
4. Marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution
5. Frustration control during problem solving
6. Demonstration an idealized version of the act to be performed.

Wood et al.'s (1976) framework, earlier discussed in section 2.1.3, was deemed fit for labelling the functions of expert assistance in the episodes as the framework describes the process of scaffolding and the ideal role played by the teacher as an expert in problem solving contexts.

The *fourth* stage involved a closer analysis of the identified scaffolding functions to reveal how teacher talk supported problem solving during whole-class interaction by stating the specific discoursal strategies used for scaffolding in line with the contributions from neo-Vygotskian researchers whose ideas were discussed in the synthesised system presented in section 2.3.2.1.

*Lastly,* the results in this section are discussed by summarising the main findings on strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in the Kenyan classrooms observed.

In order to draw conclusions on the nature of scaffolded assistance in the episodes, an analysis into the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance was carried out on L2 learning activities taken from English lessons as well as from Literature lessons. It emerged that learner participation in joint activity was found in the following language learning contexts:

- Form-focused instruction (It was found that questions, whole-class exercises and examples were commonly used to teach specific features of the L2 as presented in sections 4.3.1, 4.3.2 and 4.3.3)
- Focus-on-Meaning and Form
- Corrective feedback in L2 form and meaning

Even though feedback is identified as a mechanism of assistance in section 2.3.2, while form and meaning represent the two broad areas of language, corrective feedback occurred frequently in the lessons observed. Therefore in addition to the feedback practices studied within language form and meaning contexts, the scaffolding strategies used to provide feedback

in form or meaning activities were studied as a separate category in section 4.5. The sections below present the analysis of the strategies used for providing scaffolded assistance in the L2 lessons observed.

## 4.3 Form-focused Instruction

According to Spada (1997) a pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learner's attention to language form, either implicitly or explicitly is referred to as form-focused instruction. In order to teach language form, the student teachers used activities such as questions, whole-class exercises or examples to draw learners' attention to features. In this section, six episodes are presented for analysing scaffolded assistance in the classrooms observed. As suggested by the second procedure in section 4.2 above, there are two episodes for each of the three activity areas: use of questions, whole-class discussions and examples. The first episode illustrates scaffolded assistance in learner-centred dialogue while the second episode provides the contrast with a teacher-led dialogue in a similar activity type.

### 4.3.1 The use of Questions

Questions in L2 classrooms have been found to create communicative spaces for joint activity in which teachers are able to extend learners' content knowledge and strategic thinking (Mercer and Littleton, 2007; Gibbons, 2003). The episodes below illustrate how the feedback moves deployed by the student teacher can open or close communicative spaces with implications on the quality of learner participation in L2 problem solving.

The dialogue in Episode 1 is deemed learner-centred while episode 2 is teacher-led.

**Episode 1: CAT1, Boys – Form 1 Class, 54 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Adjectives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

(*A whole class discussion on the superlative degree*)

1 STa: when do we use the superlative degree (3.0) yes
2 L1: when comparing (.) two (.) or more (.) objects.
3 STa: when comparing (.) two or more (.) is it right?↑ (1.0) do you agree with him?↓ (1.0) yes go ahead,
4 L2: when comparing three or more objects
5 STa: very good (.) now when you are (.) comparing three (.) or more (.) objects

STa's display question (to test whether the learner has knowledge of a particular linguistic fact) and the 3 second wait time in line 1, invites learners (recruitment) to reflect on use of the

superlative degree. Following an incorrect response by L1 in line 2, in line 3 STa highlights erroneous part of L1's contribution by repeating it while at the same time eliciting views from the whole class by asking "*is it right?"* (marking critical features). STa waits 1 second and asks the class "*do you agree with him?"* (direction maintenance). He waits for a further second giving the learners more time to think and reflect on the initial question as well as L1's response. L2 makes a correct response in line 4, which STa evaluates positively in line by 5 and repeats the information as a way of confirming the knowledge.

In this episode, the scaffolding functions of recruitment, marking critical features and direction maintenance are achieved by STa's interactional moves, where assisting questions are used in the feedback move to open up the initial display question which creates opportunities for learning. The assisting question *is it right*? serves to stimulate reflection among learners on L1's incorrect response as well as the form under discussion. The reformulated assisting question, *do you agree with him?* serves to keep learners on task by eliciting their views on the task at hand. This approach to L2 knowledge construction is similar to that found in the studies by Anton (1999) and McNeil (2012), where teachers used assisting questions to scaffold knowledge construction. Moreover, the assisting questions posed by STa kept the learners on task through reflection, a process that has been found to be vital for task completion and collective knowledge building (Donato, 1994; Smith, 2006; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988).

**Episode 2: CAT2, Girls - Form 1 class, 45 pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Simple Past Tense**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(A teacher led presentation on the simple past tense)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | STb: | yes (.) now (1.0) we can write (.) in your exercise books, ((LL prepare books)) (13.0) write the date, (.) |
| 2 | | and then the topic simple past tense. (19.0) simple past tense (.) talk about things that happened, (1.0) |
| 3 | | in the past (1.0) just write ((writes on board)) (36.0) simple past tense talks about things that happened |
| 4 | | (.) in the past (2.0) let me ask a question (.) (nameL1) where did you go yesterday, |
| 5 | L1: | I came to school |
| 6 | STb: | you came to school (.) yesterday ((writes on board)) (13.0) (name) came to school (.) yesterday (.) |
| 7 | | looking at this sentence (nameL1) came to school yesterday (.) can we identify the verb in this |
| 8 | | sentence. (3.0) (name) |
| 9 | L2: | came |
| 10 | STb: | the verb here is↑, |
| 11 | L2: | came |
| 12 | STb: | came |
| 13 | STb: | and (2.0) (name) when you finish primary school |
| 14 | L3: | I finished (.) schoo primary school in the year two thousand and (.) ten |
| 15 | STb: | in the year two thousand and↑ |
| 16 | L3: | ten |

17 STb: (name) says she finished primary school in the year two thousand and ten (.) the verb there is (1.0) she
18 has said she finished primary school in the year two thousand and ten (name)
19 L4: finished
20 STb: the verb there is finished (1.0) now in looking at simple past tense (.) we basically deal with verbs, (.)
21 we majorly (.) deal with verbs and in looking at verbs we have two categories of verbs while looking at
22 past tense (.) the verbs are regular and irregular verbs, (3.0) today we shall look at the regular verbs and
23 we shall write in our books, ((LL prepare to write)) just write regular verbs (6.0) regular verbs that is
24 the subtopic, regular verbs, (5.0) and then regular verbs are those that end, regular verbs are those that
25 end (4.0) those that end in ed or d, regular verbs are those that end in ed (1.0) ((writes a dash on the
26 board)) put something like a dash before ed or d, regular verbs are those that end in ed or d in simple
27 past tense form (4.0) regular verbs are those that end in ed or d in simple past tense form (3.0) regular
28 verbs are those that end in ed or d in simple past tense, just as the sentence that said that (name) said,
29 (1.0) I finished primary school in the year two thousand and ten, we had the word, finish (.) and
30 because (.) the verb there is finish isn't it, but because it is something that happened in the past (.) she
31 has added ed in order (.) to make it (.) the in the past, (2.0) some of the verbs (.) some of the regular
32 verbs that we have include (6.0) ((writes on board)) we have walk (5.0) walk dance invite arrive
33 collect,

Episode 2 opens in lines 1 to 4 with STb giving introductory instructions and definitions which serve to establish the pedagogic focus and introduce the activity (Walsh, 2006). In line 4, STb uses a pseudo-authentic question (by which I mean the student teacher is not really interested in the answer, but uses it to elicit a particular linguistic form) "*where did you go yesterday?"* (recruitment) to elicit a sentence from L1, which L1 gives in line 5. Subsequently in line 7, STb uses a display question "*can we identify the verb in this sentence"* (recruitment) inviting the learners to identify the verb in sentence, to which L2 gives the correct answer *verb* in line 9. In the interaction that follows, with rising intonation, STb seeks to confirm L2's answer by asking "*the verb here is"* a move that leads to the repetition of the answer *came* in line 11 and 12. A new cycle starts when STb uses another pseudo-authentic question, "*when did you finish primary school"* (recruitment) to recruit L3 into stating when she finished primary school. L3 gives the answer in statement in line 14 and in line 15 STb repeats L3's response in an incomplete turn which L3 completes in 16. In line 17 and 18, STb repeats L3's response again and at the same time, uses a display question "*the verb there is"* (recruitment) asking the learners to identify the verb in L3's answer. L4 responds and STb acknowledges the response by echoing L4's response in line 20. This is followed by an extensive turn by STb in which she gives further explanations on the simple past tense in lines 20-22, dictates some notes on the simple past tense to the learners in lines 23-27 followed by an explanation with references to L3's earlier contribution in lines 28-31. Lastly in line 32 the student teacher gives more examples of verbs.

In episode 2, STb used pseudo-authentic and display questions which served the sole scaffolding function of recruitment. STb's questions in line 4 and 13 can be classed as pseudo-

authentic as learner responses to them supply information on their personal circumstances rather than the topic under discussion. For example since STb's pedagogic focus was *the simple past tense*, 'went' rather than 'came' should have replaced the verb 'go' in STb's question.

However as the questions used elicited factual information, the pseudo-authentic questions and display questions used in this episode serve as *assessment questions* (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). As discussed earlier in section 2.3.2, assessment questions elicit factual information and require learners to perform without assistance. The examples supplied by learners only served to provide information which was used in lengthy teacher explanations on how the simple past tense is formed from regular verbs. The pedagogic approach in episode two can be said to be deductive as the learners are given grammatical explanations (Anton, 1999). Such an approach fosters knowledge transmission as evidenced by STb's dominant and long turn in lines 20 to 32 in which she categorises verbs, zeroes in on regular verbs, states the simple past tense' rule by repeating it five times to reinforce the L2 knowledge. The learners on the other hand listen passively and take down the notes dictated to them.

The dialogic approach used in episode 2 differs from that in episode 1 in two ways. Firstly, the function of the questions used and their impact on the quality of learner participation was different in the two episodes. Secondly, the nature of feedback provided was different in the two episodes with regards to its role in shaping L2 knowledge through interaction. The display question used in episode 1 was cognitive in nature which posed a mental challenge for the learners, as result it made it possible for STa to assist performance through the use of thought provoking assisting questions in the feedback move. The same cannot be said of the pseudo-authentic and display questions used in episode 2 as they did not pose any challenge to the learners who were able to answer them without assistance. Considering the mental process involved in knowledge construction, the learners in episode 1 were active participants in problem solving while those in episode 2 passively received L2 knowledge on the forms under discussion.

Knowledge transmission through stating of facts and explanations as is the case in episode 2 is seen as fruitless in Vygotskian terms. Fani and Ghaemi (2011) citing Vygotsky (1962) state that the direct teaching of concepts is fruitless and a teacher who tries it would accomplish nothing but empty verbalism, a parrot-like repetition of words, simulating knowledge of the corresponding concepts but actually covering up a vacuum. Further the direct teaching of grammatical concepts was faulted by Negueruela (2008) who maintained that simplified

explanations of grammatical features have little effect on language performance. The implication here is that in L2 classrooms, the mediated learning of concept should go beyond the simple transfer of L2 facts. Learners need opportunities to engage in thoughtful reflections and talk from which they can appropriate L2 concepts as was the case in episode 1. Moreover, Donato's (1994) stated that, when teachers work to establish a communicative context with the learners in the first stage of ZPD, the distribution of talk favours the teacher in that once the context is firmly established the teacher can strategically deploy mediated assistance devices for the co-construction knowledge within the context. In so doing learners in their various ZPDs can take the facts and appropriate their own meanings (Golombek and Johnson, 2004).

### 4.3.2 The use of Whole-class Exercises

Whole-class exercises provide a social context for collective activity and L2 problem solving. During problem solving with an expert, social interactions are a mechanism for individual development as the expert draws the novice into strategic processes of problem solving (Donato, 1994). The novice's competencies are extended in the dialogic exchanges between individuals of unequal knowledge, and with the expert guiding, supporting and shaping the actions of the novice who in turn, internalizes the expert's strategic processes. The following episodes show how whole class-exercises are implemented in two different ways and their impact on social interaction for L2 knowledge building. Episode 3 is learner-centred while episode 4 is teacher-led.

**Episode 3: CAT2 Boys – Form 1 Class, 54 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Adverbs**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(An oral whole-class practice exercise on types of adverbs and how they are used in sentences)*

STc: I would like us to look at an exercise on your books, on page one (o) three, (.) make sure you have an ex-
(.) a textbook (.) near you, ((LL prepare books)) (16.0) so you have at exercise five, (.) you're being told,
(.) choose the suitable adverb from the list provided in the box to complete the following (.) sentences. to
complete the following (.) sentences. (.) so we have the first number you have number one, I would like
that (.) somebody to take up the first question, (.) yes (nameL1),
L1: Oluoch takes tea (.) daily.
STc: Oluoch takes tea (.) daily. so in this case daily (.) is an adverb telling us (.) about (.) er er: (.) is this an
adverb of? (.) first tell me what it is an adverb of, (1.0) one person (.) yes (nameL1),
L1: time
STc: yeah (.) daily an adverb of time, (.) not really, (.) yes (.) (nameL2),
L2: an adverb of frequency.
STc: yeah and adverb of (.) [frequency]
L2: [frequency]
STc: that is how often does (.) that he (.) texts (.) me that he texts me in this case you are talking of (.) daily.
he texts me (.) daily.

In lines 1 to 5, STc used a whole-class exercise in which she gives learners instructions for competing the task by *telling* (Langer and Applebee, 1986) them to complete sentences with the correct adverb form, from a list provided. With the statement "*I would like that somebody to take up the first question"* in line 5, the learners are directly asked to complete a task (recruitment). In line 6, L1 volunteers to answer. In line 7 by STc acknowledges L1's response by repeating it in the first part of line 7, after which STc moves to extend the activity by asking learners to categorise the adverb, *daily*. With this move, STc keeps the learners motivated in pursuit of the goal which is to classify the identified adverb *daily* (maintaining pursuit of the goal). In line 9, an attempt to classify the adverb by L1 is erroneous, prompting STc's explicit feedback in line 10. Moreover in line 10 STc points out the discrepancy between the adverb *daily*, and the learner's suggestion that it is an adverb of *time* (marking critical features). This prompts another learner L2 to produce the correct form in line 11, which the student teacher acknowledges in line 12. Once *daily* has been classified as an adverb of *frequency*, in lines 14 and 15, STc makes a confirmatory explanation of the knowledge collectively constructed.

Episode 3 shows a grammar presentation in which the scaffolding functions of recruitment, maintaining pursuit of the goal and marking critical features are achieved by a number of interactive moves, which enhance learner abilities for problem solving. Through the unfolding negotiations, STc supports the learners using moves such as repetition in lines 7 which served to confirm L2 knowledge, the probing question in line 8 which extended the task for further knowledge and the explicit feedback provided in line 10 had an error correction function. With regards to the role of social interaction and L2 development, STc's action in line 8, "*first tell me what it is an adverb of"* is very important as it extends the activity and in this instance uncovers L1's ZPD. As much as L1 could accurately complete the sentence in line 6 with the correct adverb from a supplied list, she could not classify the adverb daily as seen from her error in line 9. Following L1's error, STc opens the space to other learners who participate in problem solving as she called on another student to answer. In teacher fronted classrooms, calling others to answer is an effective knowledge development strategy through the use of social assistance. The shared responsibility for solving problems promotes shared understandings as learners who were unable such as L1 gets the opportunity to revise their earlier hypothesis. Moreover, pupils may learn from each other's ZPDs in collective activity (Donato, 1994). Earlier studies have shown that knowledge is pooled by classmates to create products during interaction and which is claimed to be an important stage in the process of internalization (Donato, 1994; McNeil, 2012).

The type of learner involvement in episode 3 where pupils were encouraged to socially participate in an oral class exercise differs from that in episode 4 where learners silently work individually on an exercise during the lesson as the teacher goes round marking the answers.

**Episode 4: CAT3 Mixed – Form 1 class, 45 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Gradable and Non-gradable adjectives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

(*Instructions for an individual written exercise on non-gradable adjectives*)

1 STd: okay let's turn to page (2.0) one hundred and twenty-three in our (.) exercise (1.0) textbooks. ((LL
2 prepare books)) (21.0) lesson twelve on page one twenty-three (6.0) exercise three. (8.0) exercise three,
3 (.) you are being told (.) pick out the non-gradable adjectives from the (.) from those in italics in (.) in the
4 sentences below and make your own (.) sentences. (.) so in the ten sentences (.) we have different
5 adjectives. some are (.) gradable and some are, (.) [non-gradable]
6 LL: [non-gradable]
7 STd: so you have been told pick the non-gradable adjectives (.) and construct sentences (.) using those (.)
8 adjectives. (8.0) you construct a sentence using non-gradable adjectives. (1.0) like for example the first
9 sentence (.) have you ever seen a live (.) snake (.) and the word live is in italics. (.) so is is the word live
10 (.) a gradable adjective or a non-gradable adjective. (2.0) yes (name)
11 L1: non-gradable
12 STd: non-gradable (.) adjective. so you are going to take the word (.) and construct a sentence using (.) that
13 adjective. (.) are we together
14 LL: yes
15 STd: so let's do the exercise.
16 LL: ((work individually and the teacher goes round marking the exercise))

In episode 4, the learners (LL) are required to individually complete a written exercise on non-gradable adjectives. STd gives the learners instructions on the written exercise in lines 1-5 and further explains how to complete the exercise in lines 7 to 8. In lines 9 and 10 STd provides an example for the class by recruiting L1 who categorise the adjective *live* as non-gradable. In line 12 STd confirms L1's answer by repeating it in line 12 and goes on in line 12 - 13 to instruct the learners to construct sentences using non-gradable adjectives in the same way. The learners LL agree in 14 and STd in line 15 asks the learners to start doing the individual exercise (recruitment) which the learners LL complete in silence as she goes round marking.

According to Anton's (1999) classification, STd's communicative moves in episode 4 are *directives* as she *instructs* (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) and guides the learners on how to carry out the exercise individually. However, as collaborative problem solving is lacking in episode 4, STd's communicative moves achieve the single scaffolding function of recruiting learners into carrying out the L2 activity without support.

From the sociocultural point of view, social interaction foments L2 development during social activity. In this respect, learners working individually as is the case in episode 4 are deprived

of the mediatory means available from capable others such as the expert and peers. Although the teacher goes round marking the right and wrong answers, communicative spaces for collaborative explorations, opportunities for extending the exercise or assistance for shaping responses are lost when learners work individually in silence. As evidenced by the oral exercise in episode 3, a pupil may know the correct form but not know how to categories it; in such cases extending the activity through dialogic interactions enables the teacher to identify learner ZPDs so as to contingently provide the assistance required to construct knowledge for L2 development.

### 4.3.3 The use of Examples

In the teaching of L2 grammar, examples are used to lead learners to reflect on the linguistic form under study by applying the rule. In this section, Episode 5 (learner-centred) and 6 (teacher-led) are used to demonstrate the nature of assisted performance in a focus on form context where examples are used as the basis of discussing language form.

**Episode 5: CAT3, Mixed – Form 2 Class, 44 Pupils aged 15-16 years**

**Lesson: The active and passive voice**

**Stage: Lesson development**

(*Following a teacher explanation on the 'direct object' and the 'indirect object' pupils are asked to give examples of sentences containing an 'indirect object' using 'for' or 'to'*)

STe: any other (3.0) yes
L1: I received the punishment on her behalf
STe: I received the punishment on her behalf (2.0) I received the punishment on her behalf (2.0) is she right (1.0) I received the punishment on her behalf (.) is she right↑ (.) yes (nameL2)
L2: she is not right because you have said since the indirect voice you said it is preceded or denoted by the word (.) for or to so the shet the sentence should have read (.) shhe received the pus I received the punishment (.) for her behalf
STe: for her behalf (2.0) you have tried (1.0) yes
L3: I am fully disagreeing with (nameL2) because he is repeating himself by saying for (.) her behalf (1.0) he has to say just to (1.0) to her behalf or he has to say on (.) on her behalf but for her behalf because for and behalf they are just the same word
STe: mgh (.) for and to her behalf are just the same words (nameL4)
L4: The sentence was supposed to be I received the punishment for her
STe: I received the punishment for her (2.0) yes that's now correct (.) I received the punishment for her on her behalf in other words she was to receive the punishment yes but you received instead of her so you were punished instead of the lady instead of her you were punished so you received it for her but (.) for her behalf is not grammatically correct

In this episode STe elicits examples from the learners in order to get them to reflect on the indirect object by applying the rule in a sentence. With the statement, *"any other"* and the wait time, STe invites the pupils to give further examples of the form under discussion (recruitment).

L1 responds in line 2 by giving a sentence containing an indirect object. In line 3, STe repeats L1's answer twice with two second pauses in-between and uses an assisting question "*is she right"* to get the class to reflect on L1's answer (marking critical features). Afterwards, STe repeats L1's answer and then asks if she is right again in line 4 (direction maintenance). In the context of this episode, the combination of repeating L1's answer and inviting other learners to reflect on it acts as a signal to the learners to get involved in the construction of an explanation for the linguistic form under study, to which L2 offers an explanation in lines 5, 6 by citing points raised earlier on in the lesson and offers a modification of L1's earlier example in lines 6, 7. In response to L2's explanation, in line 8 STe focuses on the erroneous part of L2's production "*for her behalf"* which he repeats followed by a pause, thereby marking it as problematic (simplifying the task). The student teacher's action acts as a signal for the learners to continue reflecting on the example given by L1 in relation to the rules of the form under study. In line 8, another learner L3 is nominated to try. In his contribution, L3 explains why he disagrees with L2's response as seen in lines 9 and 11. As part of his contribution, in line 10 L3 offers *to her behalf* and *on her behalf* as alternatives to the problematic part *for her behalf*. In responding to L3's contribution, STe ignores the two erroneous alternative forms offered by L3 and instead focuses on and reiterates L3's view that *for* and *behalf* are just the same word (frustration control), a move that reduces stress during problem solving . STe then nominates L4 who gives the gives the correct answer in line 13 which STe repeats and positively acknowledges in line 14, followed by an explanation in lines 15 and 16, importantly in line 17 STe explicitly corrects L2's earlier contribution by stating that *for her behalf* is not grammatically correct.

In the episode above, the scaffolding strategies used by STe include: recruitment, marking critical features, direction maintenance, task simplification and frustration control. These strategies brought out learner ZPDs and facilitated the collaborative restructuring of linguistic knowledge for collective learning (Anton, 1999; Donato, 1994). The scaffolding functions were achieved using interactional moves such as repetition, wait time, assisting questions and explicit feedback, which guided learners to notice aspects of the form being studied for collective L2 problem solving. The moves created opportunities for learners to apply the rule and to evaluate, reflect on and build on responses made by others on the form under study. The use of wait time facilitated student participation by allowing learners time to think before offering responses (Ohta, 2000; Anton, 1999; McNeil, 2012; Seedhouse and Walsh, 2010). The assisting question *is she right* was used to encourage reflection on form and also to keep

learners on task (Anton, 1999). According to Gibbons (2003), repetition facilitates further co-constructions which extends learner knowledge. In this episode, repetition was used in various ways. In lines 3 and 4 it was used to draw attention to the wrong form in the sentence supplied by L1 in 2. In line 8, it was used to highlight the erroneous part in L2's sentence and in lines 12 and 14, repetition was used to the confirm knowledge in the sentences supplied by L3 and L4 respectively. Lastly, the explicit feedback given by STe in line 17 serves to correct L2's error in line 7 (Lyster and Ranta, 1997). The scaffolding moves by STe facilitated the collaborative restructuring of linguistic knowledge for collective learning (Anton, 1999; Donato, 1994; Gass, 1991).

In the context of using examples to reflect on linguistic form, Episode 5 above is different from Episode 6 in which the student teacher explicitly corrects the learner without opening up a communicative space to negotiate the answer.

**Episode 6: CAT3, Mixed – Form 1 Class, 45 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: Gradable and Non-gradable adjectives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(Learners are asked to provide examples of non-gradable adjectives)*

1 STd: any other examples yes (nameL1)
2 L1: sad
3 STd: yeah?
4 L1: sad
5 STd: when you are sad (1.0) that one can be graded
6 L1: yes
7 STd: like you are sad, another person is sadder and the other one is saddest (.) that one can be (.) graded

In this episode, STd calls for more examples of non-gradable adjectives from the class (recruitment) and nominates L1 to answer in line 1. L1 gives a wrong answer in 2. In line 3, STd makes a clarification request to which L1 responds by repeating the wrong answer in line 4. In line 5, STd gives a reflective assessment of L1's answer with the statement *"when you are sad"* and after a one second pause, STd explicitly states that *sad* can be graded. L1 agrees in line 6. The episode ends with and explanation from STd in which she provides the degrees of the adjective sad and reiterates that it can graded.

Looking at STd's moves following a learner's incorrect response, we notice that in line 5 student teacher reflects on L1's answer by seeking confirmation *when you are sad (1.0)* and after a second of wait time, closes down the communicative space by declaring that *that one*

*can be graded*. This move leads L1 to agree in line 6 thus allowing STf room to give the grades of the adjective sad in line 7. The interaction in episode 6 is typical of the recitation script requiring factual answers from learners and only in rare cases are learners assisted to develop more complete or elaborate answers (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Similarly, the teacher plays a dominant role in the interaction, characterised by longer teacher turns and the straightforward transfer of knowledge from the teacher to the learner (Donato, 1994; Anton, 1999).

The type of interaction seen in episode 6 is different from that in episode 5 even though both student teachers use examples from the classroom as a basis for discussing language form. The main difference lies in the student teacher's role in facilitating joint co-construction of L2 knowledge. While STd in episode 6 controls the interaction and explicitly offers knowledge to passive learners, in episode 5 STe takes the role of a facilitator in the dialogic process which engages learners in reflections, information sharing and negotiation of meaning and thus maximising opportunities for problem solving with the teacher guiding the process. The learners in episode 5 played the role of communicators by actively engaging in negotiation of meaning by sharing ideas and opinions and had an increased responsibility for their own learning (Nunan, 1988; Anton, 1999). From a sociocultural perspective therefore, STe's communicative moves enhanced the negotiation of meaning and L2 knowledge building in intermental activity. STd on the hand controlled the interaction for knowledge transmission.

## 4.4 Focus-on-Meaning and Form

As earlier explained in section 2.2.1, a Sociocultural SLA espouses a focus on both language form and meaning during L2 pedagogy as it is considered effective in promoting L2 acquisition in social contexts (Ellis, 2008). This is evidenced by research on collaborative dialogue which shows that learners working in a collaborative environment negotiate message and form and provide assistance to each other in the production of meaningful accurate messages (Swain, 2000) and thereby extending their L2 knowledge. The episodes below are taken from literature lessons which are typically focus-on-meaning contexts. However language form is also addressed as required by the Kenyan integrated English and Literature syllabus for the development of L2 knowledge using authentic texts such as stories and poetry. Episode 7 presents a learner-centred approach for discussing meaning while episode 8 presents a teacher-directed approach.

**Episode 7: PRIV, Mixed – Form 2 Class, 33 Pupils aged 15-16 years**

**Lesson: Literature, Trickster Narratives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(A discussion on the character traits of the animals in a trickster narrative, Hare and Hyena)*

1 STf: give me the characteris- (.) ((cleaning board)) character traits of the hyena. (2.0) you have (.) identified
2 unfaithful another one? ((writes on board)) (20.0) you have identified the first one unfaithful? (4.0) and
3 you have explained it the second one yes (name),
4 L: the hyena was (.) glutton
5 STf: he was?
6 L: glutton
7 STf: he was a glutton
8 L: yes
9 STf: why do you say he was a glutton
10 L: yeah (.) you see (.) he decide to scare (.) the hare (.) the hare (.) and ta- (.) and take all the food to himself
11 (.) not considering (.) the other friend.
12 STf: so he's greedy
13 L: greedy

The discussions in this episode are based on a trickster narrative entitled 'Hare and the Hyena' which had just been read aloud for the whole class by learners in turns. The episode opens with STf using an open ended question to elicit learner responses on hyena's second character trait (recruitment) in lines 1 to 3. L responds in line 4 and a negotiation of meaning is triggered by the word 'glutton', as STf seeks clarification in line 5, L repeats her answer in line 6, to which STf seeks confirmation in 7 and L confirms in line 8. With a shared understanding of the word *glutton* achieved, linguistic form is addressed in line 7, as STf elects to covertly address a linguistic problem, the omission of the article 'a' in L's earlier utterance. In line 7, STf repeats and reformulates L's contribution by including the omitted article 'a' (marking critical features), which L acknowledges with a simple *"yes"* in line 8. In negotiations of form and meaning, a move such as the one undertaken by STf in line 7 present an opportunity for noticing of language forms; learners may notice gaps in their interlanguage and work to fill them thus facilitating L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2008; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Kowal and Swain, 1997).

Having obtained mutual understanding from the negotiations, the STf pursues the pedagogic goal which is to identify and explain hyena's second character trait by asking why in line 9 (direction maintenance). STf's probing question in line 9 extends the activity by asking L for elaboration which L gives in lines 10 and 11. In line 12, STf recasts L's contribution by modelling a more appropriate character trait *greedy* in line 16 to replace the earlier form *glutton*

as previously mentioned by L in lines 4 and 6. In so doing, the STf's communicative scaffolding function 6 (demonstration), which the learner adopts in line 13.

In this episode, scaffolding functioned to construct the appropriate idea by: marking of critical features, direction maintenance and demonstration. The scaffolding was facilitated by interactive moves such as: clarification, reformulation, a probing question and a recast. The clarification in line 5 ensured a shared meaning was achieved, whereas the reformulation in line 7 was used to implicitly correct the learner's error of omission (Long 1983; 1996). The probing question in line 9 elicited an elaboration of an earlier contribution from L in line with Cazden's (1983) proposition that vertical scaffolding involves an adult extending a child's language through questions such a probing for elaboration, relating to a child's preceding utterance. The recast in line 9 was used to model the appropriate concept, which Applebee and Langer (1983) argued extends or elaborates knowledge already possessed by the learner.

However, following the teacher's implicit error correction in reformulating L's statement in line 4, there is no evidence of further usage by L in later utterances of the article 'a'. In Sheen's (2004) study on corrective feedback strategies and variation in the rate and nature of uptake, she found that there was variation in the effectiveness of recasts in eliciting uptake and repair. She suggested that this variation reflected differences in the pedagogic focus of the contexts, the age of the students, their L2 proficiency and educational background. The absence of the learner's appropriation of the indefinite article 'a' in the second episode, which is taken from a focus on meaning context appears to confirm Sheen's (2004) finding that the pedagogic focus may produce variations in uptake of form in focus on meaning contexts as learners are preoccupied with expressing the meaning rather than accomplishing aspects of form.

In contrast to the episode above, dialogue in episode 8 below, also taken from a focus-on-meaning context is teacher-directed and lacks the collaborative processes of knowledge construction.

**Episode 8: CAT1, Girls – FORM 1 Class, 68 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: Literature, Oral Poetry**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(A discussion on features of oral poetry)*

1 STg: now I want you to recite the poem, (4.0) yeah, we start
2 LL: I can see the rain (.) as I walk along the lane (.) I can hear the lion roar (.) just as lions did of yore (.) I
3 can learn to run a race (.) and I can travel out some lace (.) I can fly and I can row (.) let my rich
4 imaginations flow.
5 STg: yeah, (.) read it again
6 **(Learners read the poem again).**
7 STg: yeah (.) now (.) from that poem (1.0) I want us to identify the features of oral poetry in that (.) poem. (.)
8 the poem is,
9 LL: goals=
10 STg: =the title is goals. (.) so goals you know what goals they are,
11 LL: yes
12 STg: this is an aim that this person wants to (.) achieve (.) his goal (.) he wants, the goal that he wants to
13 achieve the aim that (.) he or she let's say (.) this person wants to,
14 L1: achieve=
15 STg: =achieve. (.) now the first feature (.) we said it is composed and delivered by word of,
16 LL: mouth
17 STg: so (.) you have delivered this poem by word of mouth. (.) that is what you have done (.) in your reading.
18 L2: yes
19 STg: and then the second feature is (.) it may be recited or,
20 LL: sung
21 **(Learners sing the poem)**
22 STg: now you have recited the (.) [the poem]
23 LL: [the poem]
24 STg: [recited] the poem. (.) now the third feature is (.) in the sung (.) in sung poetry there is often (.) a [response]
25 L3: [response]
26 STg: yeah?
27 LL: yes
28 STg: there is often a response we said a response (.) (now we say) chorus (.) the chorus is a part (.) which is
29 repeated now (.) [and then]
30 LL: [and then]
31 STg: but I said its ((underlines word often on the chalkboard))
32 LL: often
33 STg: often so not (.) all the
34 LL: [poems]
35 STg: [the poems] (.) now (.) our poem does not have,
36 LL: [a chorus]
37 STg: [a chorus] (.) now the next feature is it is accompanied with movement and,
38 LL: dance=
39 STg: =dance (.) will you do that?
40 LL: yes

The episode opens with STg directing the learners to read a poem. Throughout the episode STg uses display questions to elicit the features of oral poetry from LL as in lines 7, 15 and 24

(recruitment). The use of explanations and incomplete turns to cue the learners into giving choral responses is common feature in this episode. Learner responses overlap with STg's speech as they only echo what STg says. Analysing the student teacher's communicative moves in the light of assisting L2 performance, we find that the display questions used serve the single scaffolding function of recruitment while the knowledge cues and explanations are geared for knowledge delivery rather than opening up communicative spaces for collaborative knowledge building which known to facilitate L2 development in individuals. The student teacher STg plays a dominant role in the interaction by cueing learner responses, making incomplete statements and overlapping or latching onto learner responses in response to her own questions. The learners on the other hand passively respond as cued and are denied opportunities to reflect and express their thoughts opinions on the subject. With regard to the sociocultural theory's central notion of mediation through interactions with others, cued elicitations and explanations were found to offer little in terms of opportunities for L2 learning (Aldabbus, 2008; Negueruela, 2008). From the interactive moves in both episode 7 and 8, it can be concluded that open ended exploration by the teacher encourages thought and oral production among learners in the knowledge building process.

## 4.5 Providing Feedback in L2 Form and Meaning

Apart from demonstrating how negotiation of form and meaning are achieved by scaffolding, sociocultural research on scaffolding also focuses on corrective feedback and its contribution to L2 learning. As earlier stated in section 2.3.2, feedback and negotiation are viewed as a collaborative process where the dynamics of the interaction itself shape the nature of the feedback provided and informs its usefulness to the learner (Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Ellis, 2008) and is achieved by the implicit-to-explicit information given to the learners in the course of problem solving. The nature and quality of feedback provided by student teachers is examined in three episodes below. Episode 9 which is learner-centred illustrates corrective scaffolded assistance, Episode 10 also learner-centred and illustrates negotiated feedback, while episode 11 is teacher-led and illustrates evaluative feedback.

**Episode 9: PRIV, Mixed – Form 2 Class, 33 Pupils aged 15-16 years**

**Lesson: Literature, Trickster Narratives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(Whole class reading of a trickster narrative)*

**This episode is taken from the same lesson as episode 7, it is first step in the lesson where individual learners take turns to read out sections of the story to the whole class.*

In course of reading passages, the student teacher STf responds to learner needs and provides corrective feedback on lexical/vocabulary items that pose problems for the learner. This 'feeding in' (Walsh, 2006) of the correct forms enables the learners to adopt and use the words provided, which helps them to accomplish to reading activity successfully.

1 L1: hare sat by the pot (.) stirring it with a stick and hoping to begin his meal (.) while hyena as soon as he
2 was (.) out of the sight of hare ((pauses))
3 STf: strip [ed]
4 L1: [stripp] ed off his (.) skin. (.) he looked like the most horrible (.) spectacle and (.) ran back to (.) hare (.)
5 [((unintelligible))]
6 STf: [((unintelligible))]
7 L1: ((unintelligible)) (.) poor hare was still ((unintelligible))
8 STf: hare screamed
9 L1: hare screamed (.) as he (.) ran for his life. (.) never (.) have I seen such a terrible creature (.) it must be
10 a very bad ((juju))
11 STf: next person,
12 ...
13 L2: Oh hyena (.) gasped hare (.) did you see (.) did you see it too? (.) see what (1.0) ask- asked the
14 [deciteful] and=
15 STf: =deceitful
16 L2: deceitful (.) hyena (.) I saw nothing (.) but come (.) let us now eat. (.) ((unintelligible)) (.) where is it, (.)
17 where is my food (.) what happened to it (.) cried hyena (.) pretending to be (.) in a (fine) way. (1.0) hare
18 looked (.) at the empty pot. (.) it was that terrible ((unintelligible)) (.) he explained (.) it frightened me
19 away (.) so that (it could) eat our food.
20 ….
21 L3: ha! (.) said the hare to himself. (.) if that's the way it is I shall be ready for you tomorrow my friend. (.)
22 that night (.) when hye- hyena was sleeping hare made another bow. (sharp), (.) it was a good strong
23 bow with no weak (.) points at all. and all three sharp arrows to go with it. (.) the hare (.) feeling
24 STf: ravenous=
25 L3: =ravenous by n- by now, (.) (returned) to the pot where they cooked their food. (.) hid the bow (.) and
26 arrows in some nearby long grass and (.) returning to find hyena still asleep (.) he lay down (close).

In the process taking turns to read out sections of a story to the whole class, a number of learners encounter difficulties. Two types of reading difficulties are evident in the episode above. The first type relates to words that may be unknown to learners. For example in line 2, L1 pauses indicating difficulty with reading thus prompting STf to feed in the word *stripped* in line 3 (demonstration). In a similar situation, the student teacher feeds in word *ravenous* for L3 in line 24. A second difficulty in reading evident from the episode is misread words as in line 14

where L2 pronounces the word *deceitful* as *deciteful* and the student teacher recasts the correct pronunciation in line 15 (demonstration).

The nature of the student teacher's feedback in the episode above is contingent yet explicit as correct forms are supplied as need arises so as to facilitate the flow the reading by the learners. In the context of episode 9, there is a focus on the topic under discussion rather than the reading activity. In this case, the student teacher listens carefully and feeds in language as it becomes necessary in order to facilitate the uninterrupted flow of reading for clearer understandings of the story. According to Walsh (2006), activities where teachers feed in language are not necessarily inferior to those where leaners work independently because giving leaners control over topic rather than the activity may increase opportunities for practice and acquisition and the teacher plays a scaffolding role by monitoring, supervising and feeding in language as needed. The main scaffolding function seen in episode 9 is demonstration, which is achieved by modelling or recasting of correct forms for learners. Through modelling, STf supplies the hard word to L1 and L3 enabling them to accomplish the reading activity. Recast was used to supply the ideal pronunciation of a misread word to L2, processes which may influence the restructuring the knowledge already held by the learners. The use of modelling is supported in sociocultural SLA research, scaffolding of reading activities by modelling the exact words to be used was found to lead to internalisation in studies by Palincsar and Brown (1984) and Tharp and Gallimore (1988). Recasting of correct forms creates opportunities for L2 acquisition as it may promote noticing of correct forms leading to revisions in learners' hypotheses on target language (Swain, 2005).

Feedback during a whole-class activity is examined in the learner-centred episode below.

**Episode 10: CAT1, Boys – FORM 1 Class, 54 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Adjectives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(A whole class exercise, using pictures to state the degrees of comparison)*

**This episode is taken from the same lesson as episode 1, this episode features an oral exercise in a later part of the lesson.*

1 STa: (in your book) (.) you could take any (picture) then (.) have it in the three different ways (9.0) have we
2 done that? (2.0) (name) which are the three pictures (degrees) that you've taken? (4.0) what do you
3 have in the book ((L shakes head to indicate no)) (5.0) (name) what is yours?
4 L: ((unintelligible)) comparative
5 STa: did you understand that statement?

6 LL: yes
7 STa: they are (.) adjectives that (.) exist in how many grades?
8 LL: three
9 STa: and you have talked of comparative, positive comparative and, (.) [superlative]
10 LL: [superlative]
11 STa: then we said that (.) we can take a picture (.) and then have it in the comparative (.) superlative and (.)
12 er (.) in the positive comparative and superlative. (.) (name) (.) which one have you taken (6.0)
13 (humming) (name)
14 L1: tall
15 STa: today it its for tall.. (3.0) er (.) yes!
16 L2: long
17 STa: you've taken long?
18 L2: yes
19 STa: uhuh (.) for him (.) ((writing long on board)) he has for the gradable, so we have said that gradable (.)
20 exists in the positive, (2.0) comparative (2.0) and,
21 LL: superlative
22 STa: superlative. (3.0) and (nameL2)'s is (.) a long (.) what is the comparative for the same?
23 LL: longer
24 STa: longer (.) and the superlative?
25 LL: longest
26 STa: longest (1.0) so gradable we can have (.) a long (.) object (.) a longer object and (.) longest. are we
27 together?
28 LL: yes
29 STa: yeah (.) then you can give another one (.) now that you see an example you have an example there, (.)
30 yes (.) (name) which is yours,
31 L3: I can say good better best
32 STa: good better best (.) very good (name),
33 L4: big bigger biggest
34 STa: big bigger biggest (1.0) yes (name)?
35 L5: weak weaker weakest
36 STa: weak weaker (.) weakest and so on and so forth

In the episode above, in lines 1, 2 and 3, STa recruits learners into the task of using the three degrees of adjectives to describe some pictures from a book. A learner displays lack of understanding by shaking his head from left to right, in line 3, to which STa initiates repair by checking for understanding with the question "*did you understand that statement"*. Even though the learners respond affirmatively in line 6, STa goes ahead to enhance understandings of the task by breaking it down "*adjectives that exist in how many grades"* (simplification), he points out key features in line 9 (marking critical features) and reformulates the task in lines 11 and 12. Further, in lines 16 to 27 by using the form 'long' which was given by L2 in line 16, STa in collaboration with learners works out an example for the class (demonstration), which enables three learners to independently produce similar forms in lines 31, 33 and 35.

In this episode, the scaffolding functions present include: recruitment, simplification, marking critical features and demonstration. The dialogic moves used to provide learners with feedback and a supportive framework for joint problem solving include: a comprehension check, assisting questions and modelling. Notably, L's non-verbal display of lack of understanding

triggers the student teacher's intervention. Rogoff's (1990; 1995) work on guided participation emphasises the use of non-verbal interaction such as gaze, hesitation and postural changes in identifying learners' needs after which an expert structures and adjusts the instruction leading to participatory appropriation. The student teacher's use of a comprehension check and task reformulation led to intersubjectivity on the task, while assisting questions and modelling led to active learner participation and joint co-construction of knowledge for problem solving in episode 10.

In contrast to the episode 9 and 10 above, the episode below is an example of teacher-led discourse where the student teacher's practices contradict the norms of feedback where discrepancies between the learner's utterances and the target L2 forms are pointed out for repair. The teacher's role in the process of providing feedback is to assess and shape dialogues in ways that assist the co-construct target form or meaning, a practice lacking in the teacher-directed episode below.

**Episode 11: CAT2, Girls – FORM 1 Class, 48 Pupils aged 14-15 years**

**Lesson: English, Gradable and Non Gradable Adjectives**

**Stage: Lesson development**

*(Learners are asked to give examples of adjectives expressing a complete idea)*

STh: I want us to give examples of these words that expresses a complete idea. (.) you cannot measure them. (.) examples of these words class (.) (name),
L1: colourful
STh: uh?
L1: colourful
STh: colourful good trial, (.) faithful, (.) (name),
L2: comfortable
STh: comfortable (.) (name),
L3: happiness.
STh: happiness, (.) good (.)
L4: extremely
STh: extremely, (.) (name),
L5: courageous.
STh: courageous, (.) (name),
L6: loving.
STh: loving, (.) (name),
L7: attractive.
STh: yes uh? (.) attractive,
L8: patient.
STh: patient, (.) uhum,
L9: woollen
STh: woollen, (.) (name),
L10: Kenyan.
STh: yes that is what I was looking for. (.) when we say somebody is Kenyan (.) do we measure the degree somebody is a Kenyan.
LL: no

In lines 1, 2 the student teacher initiates an activity by asking the learners to give words that express a complete idea (recruitment). Of interest is what transpires between lines 3-22. Nine different learners give wrong responses which the student teacher acknowledges by repetition and even with positive reinforcement 'good' as in lines 6 and 10. The student teacher by her own admission in line 24 is looking for a certain answer and moves from one learner to the next in search of the particular answer given by L10 in line 23 and which she acknowledges and extends in lines 24-25. Generally speaking, in classroom talk, teacher repetitions of learner utterances serve to confirm a desired response (unless they are accompanied by a particular intonation which suggests an inaccuracy). With specific application to feedback, repetitions of learner utterances by teachers are used to isolate the erroneous utterance for correction (Ellis, 2008). In this respect, therefore, the student teacher's repetitions in line 3-22 are contrary to the desired practice where repetitions of learner utterances in interaction serve to confirm or disconfirm the desired outcome and for promoting corrective measures. For the purpose of L2 learning, such an approach to giving feedback can be misleading in two ways. In the first instance, taking responses from one learner to the next without giving implicitly or explicit feedback on the incorrectness of the responses leaves the learners in suspense and promotes guessing as they lack ideas on how to work towards the desired outcome. Secondly and crucially, the practice deprives learners of opportunities to revise their language hypothesis through collaborative dialogue for L2 knowledge development. A few turns later in the same sequence, the learners continue to struggle with giving words that express a complete idea as seen in the extract below.

27 STh: I want you to give me other adjectives that expresses a complete idea. (2.0) (name)
28 L: careful.
29 STh: hmm when we say careful (.) does careful expresses a complete idea
30 LL: no
31 STh: class (.) can careful expresses a complete idea,
32 LL: NO
33 STh: no (.) (name)
34 L: tired
35 STh: when we say you are tired (.) can that express a complete idea
36 LL: no
37 STh: (name),
38 L: biologist
39 STh: yes when (.) one can say a biologist. (.) can this express a complete idea,
40 LL: yes
41 STh: (name),
42 L: dive- a diver
43 STh: come up again,
44 L: a diver

STh: a diver, (.) trial, (.) (name),
L: technician
STh: yes?
L: technician.
STh: technician, (.) uhum,
L: actually
STh: actually. (.) now let me give you another example. (.) when we say (.) someone has died (.) can we measure (.) how someone has died
LL: no
STh: it expresses what, (.) [a complete idea].
LL: [a complete idea].
STh: now I want you to give me other examples again (4.0) (name)
L: American
STh: when we say American (.) it expresses what, (.) [a complete idea].
LL: [a complete idea].
STh: (name),
L: comfortable.
STh: comfortable, (.) good. (.) (name),
L: alive
STh: yes (.) when we say alive (.) it ex- expresses what,
LL: a [complete idea]

In this case, student teacher's feedback practices neglected the assessment of learner ZPDs and provisions for support for learners to work through their ZPDs and thereby leaving gaps in the learners' L2 knowledge. Such practices may arguable slow down L2 development in the area of focus. Cognisant to the role of feedback from a sociocultural perspective, Anton (1999) advocated for the use of careful and particular error correction as a means of assisting learners through the ZPD. Immediate and explicit feedback is therefore desirable as was in the case in episode 9 and 10 as it promotes understandings for task accomplishment for L2 learning and development.

## 4.6 Summary of Findings

This section provides a summary of the study's main findings and is aimed at answering the first research question: What strategies do student teachers use to provide scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms?

The main purpose in this chapter was to identify and describe features of the scaffolding strategies that promote L2 learning in Kenyan secondary school classrooms, while at the same time highlighting some of the process obstructing the application of a scaffolding process. An effective scaffolding process was deemed as that in which learners were able to produce appropriate answers with assistance from the student teachers and was facilitated by the strategies described next.

***Strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance***

Scaffolding was successful in episodes 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 10, which were termed as learner-centred. In these episodes, the skilful student teachers used interactional moves to provide individual learners with the support needed to perform at a higher level than their actual level of competence during whole-class activity. Effective scaffolded assistance is therefore deemed possible in teacher-fronted whole-class activity in the Kenyan context.

The student teachers played a guiding role in the interaction by deploying discourse moves contingently and responsively, thereby creating dialogic spaces in which learners could participate in collaborative and productive problem solving in support of their L2 development. These dialogic spaces were facilitated by: repetition and assisting questions (Anton, 1999), extended wait time, offering model answers and calling on other students to answer McNeil (2012), reformulation, comprehension checks (Long, 1983; 1996), explicit feedback, probing questions and recasts. Assisting questions and probing questions resulted in longer learner turns in co-construction of meaning, which in turn, appeared to be received as an open opportunity for the wider participation of other learners. The use of extended wait time, clarification, reformulation, repetition, feedback, recasts and modelling, meant that student teachers could shape learner responses in a processes of co-construction so that appropriate L2 knowledge was available for appropriation by the wider class, including the many whose voices were not heard, who may have had similar linguistic misconceptions.

The study revealed that in the 'lesson development phase' in particular, whole-class activities such as practice exercises, open ended exploration of idea or those eliciting examples in which concepts are applied can provide avenues for meaningful and productive scaffolded activity. During such activity, the participation structure favoured the learners as they were actively involved in knowledge building in ways which promoted joint meaning making with others and which would in the process, extend the ideas and understandings held by individual learners. The table below provides a summary of the scaffolding strategies used by the student teachers.

**Table 4.3 Summary of scaffolding strategies and their functions**

| | **Dialogic Strategies used for scaffolding** | **Functions of scaffolding strategies** |
|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1**<br>**'use of questions'** | - Assisting questions and wait time<br>- Calling on other students to answer | - Stimulate reflection<br>- Keep learners on task<br>- Shared problem solving |
| **Episode 3**<br>**'whole-class exercise'** | - Telling<br>- Repetition<br>- Assisting question<br>- Explicit feedback<br>- Calling on other students to answer | - Giving instructions<br>- Confirm knowledge<br>- Extend the task<br>- Error correction<br>- Frustration control |
| **Episode 5**<br>**'use of examples'** | - Wait time and assisting questions<br>- Repetition<br>- Calling on other students to answer | - Stimulate reflection<br>- Keeping learners on task<br>- Highlight errors<br>- Confirm knowledge<br>- Shared problem solving |
| **Episode 7**<br>**'meaning and form context'** | - Clarification<br>- Reformulation<br>- Probing question<br>- Recast | - Intersubjectivity<br>- Error correction<br>- Extending knowledge<br>- Providing an ideal answer |
| **Episode 9**<br>**'feedback in reading'** | - Modelling<br>- Recast<br>*Non-verbal pauses and hesitation | - Supply hard words<br>- Provide correct pronunciation |
| **Episode 10**<br>**'feedback in exercises'** | - Comprehension check<br>- Assisting questions<br>- Modelling (demonstration)<br>*Head shaking to indicate lack understanding | - Checking for understanding<br>- Review of knowledge<br>- Improve understandings of task<br>- Knowledge elaboration |

In light of the mechanisms of assistance previously identified for non-Western countries in section 2.3.2, the scaffolding strategies found in Kenyan secondary L2 classrooms fall under each category as follows:

**Table 4.4 Mechanisms of assistance and successful scaffolding strategies**

| Collaboration | Modelling | Questioning | Feedback | Instructing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| - Comprehension checks<br>- Clarification<br>- Calling on others to answer<br>- Non-verbal *(pauses, hesitation, gestures)* | - Demonstration<br>- Recast | - Assisting questions<br>- Wait time<br>- Probing questions | - Explicit feedback<br>- Repetition<br>- Recast<br>- Implicit feedback *(reformulation)* | - Telling<br>- Directing |

***Processes obstructing scaffolded assistance***

Scaffolding was absent in teacher-led episodes in similar activities types because in sociocultural terms, effective instruction is seen as that which takes place within the ZPD with useful mediation and assistance that is sensitive to learner ZPDs resulting in development (Lantolf, 2000b). Furthermore, instruction is meant to provide tools for thinking, leading to the development of higher mental functions rather than an accumulation of facts (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Through scaffolded assistance, effective instruction and L2 learning is promoted in learning contexts featuring clear goals, challenging activities, appropriate strategies and meaningful collaboration (Ohta, 2000; 2001). With this background in mind, it emerged that student teachers in the teacher-led episodes did not provide learners ZPD based scaffolded assistance for the following reasons:

- Using display and pseudo questions to elicit factual information for use in teacher explanations as in episode 2 and 8.

  According to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), questions which elicit factual information are evaluative in nature and require the learners to perform without assistance. The closed nature of such questions lacked developmentally oriented challenge and curtailed learner utterances (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994; Smith and Higgins, 2006) as

the factual knowledge obtained from them could be hardly tailored further with interactional moves to suit learner needs. This elicitation strategy did not promote thought and reflections among learners and as further interactional moves were lacking, the elicitation strategy was found to promote rote learning and transfer of L2 facts to passive learners.

- Asking learners to complete exercises individually as the student teacher goes round marking right and wrong answers as in episode 4.

  Instructing in the context of assigning tasks is beneficial for L2 learning in a system where the teacher instructs learners during tasks by guiding them to perform strategic acts which support their abilities during problem solving (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Although the learners in episode 4 were given clear understandings of the task itself and a demonstration of the strategies that can be used to complete it, the element of collaboration for problem solving in which the teacher plays an import guiding role in the process (Langer and Applebee, 1986) was also required as it facilitates pursuit of higher order rather than basic skills. The practice of asking individual learners to complete exercises in silence for marking was therefore found to limit the amount and quality of L2 learning taking place as opportunities for extending their ideas with the help of other were lost.

- Overlooking wrong responses as in episode 10.

  The feedback practices observed in episode 10 confirm Ellis (2008) view that, teachers often fail to indicate where or how an utterance is deviant and may respond positively even when learners continue to make errors. In sociocultural terms, teacher feedback carried out within the ZPD is beneficial for L2 learning in that, in the first instance, it helps learners to notice errors and secondly to correct them with assistance (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994). Feedback practices such as the one seen in episode 10 limit opportunities for learning from errors. Smith and Higgins (2006) observed that accepting more answers without effective feedback may result in broad participation but not the quality of the participation in terms of knowledge co-construction. A desirable practice would be one where learner understandings are explored further using assisting questions which help them to construct L2 knowledge.

- Supplying the correct answer for the learner as in episode 6 and giving cues to closed questions as in episode 8.

  Smith and Higgins, (2006) argued that in the initiation-response-feedback (IRF) exchange, the quality of the feedback move facilitates interactive learning. Instead of

stopping at expected factual answers, opening up and probing learner responses facilitates their thinking for L2 learning. Quality learning is therefore seen to develop from the quality of feedback when teachers request for justifications, connections and counter arguments and thereby producing more elaborate ideas. Supplying the learners with factual ideas was found to promote the recitation script which limited learner thought and higher order L2 skills.

In these teacher-led episodes, the use of evaluative closed questions without quality follow on interactive moves fostered the transfer of L2 facts to passive learners. Moreover the participation structure in these types of episodes favoured the student teachers as they dominated the interaction as typical in a recitation script manner, in which teachers have numerous and longer turns used for knowledge transmission.

# CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF DOCUMENTS AND INTERVIEW DATA

Chapter four identified and described the scaffolding processes used by student teachers for assisting learner performance in L2 lessons. This chapter seeks to answer the second and third research question by describing the factors influencing the observed scaffolding practices. It also proposes some ways by which the training and practice of scaffolding can be improved in Kenyan L2 pedagogy.

Section 5.0 introduces the second research question (what factors influence the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in these classrooms) which is answered in sections 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3. Section 5.4 is dedicated to answering the third research question (How can the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance be improved at the L2 teacher education level) followed by a brief chapter summary in section 5.5.

## 5.0 What factors influence the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance used in these classrooms?

To answer this question, an analysis was carried out on relevant L2 teacher education courses and the secondary school classroom environments in which the student teachers taught. As was explained in chapter three, the data on L2 teacher education was collected from course documents and an interview with a Maseno University lecturer. The course documents were analysed using a summative content analysis approach as described in section 3.5.2. The process entailed using key words to search the course documents for core mechanisms of assistance such as collaboration, modelling, questions, feedback and instructing. The interpretation of the identified mechanisms, their description and the evaluation of the course contents was carried out in line with the sociocultural perspective on mediated learning.

The single interview was subjected to a thematic analysis which sought to isolate the main teacher education factors influencing the observed processes of assistance as practised by student teachers during their teaching practice in secondary schools. The emerging factors were placed in categories and used to generate descriptions on some of the teacher education factors which shape student teacher scaffolding practices in L2 lessons.

The secondary school classroom conditions were also examined as well as the L2 tasks used in the episodes earlier presented. Discussions are given from sociocultural understandings on

contextual settings and from research on physical conditions in classrooms (Delamont, 1983), seating arrangements in the classroom (Brown and Atkins, 2002) and learning tasks (Samuda and Bygate, 2008). Based on these understandings, the analysis illuminates some reasons behind the current practice of scaffolding in Kenyan L2 classrooms and reports the findings in the sections below.

## 5.1 The State of Social Processes of Teaching in Language Teacher Education

On L2 teacher education as a factor influencing classroom interaction and practices of expert assistance, as earlier mentioned, Walsh (2011) and Mercer, (1994) observed that most L2 teacher education programmes focus on the teaching methods and the subject knowledge while excluding social processes of teaching and learning. The quality of social processes of teaching continues to be neglected despite the knowledge that the interpersonal interactions operating at the heart of the teaching and learning exchange provide a link between the L2 knowledge taught and the teaching methods used (Freeman, 1989), which promotes learning.

To find out the status of social processes of teaching in the Maseno University teacher education program, the analysis of course contents and the lecturer's interview sought to find out whether social processes used in scaffolding are taught to student teachers. The scrutinised documents whose codes and titles were modified and coded were taken from the following courses:

- ED 1: Methods of Teaching English
- ED 2: Methods of Teaching Literature
- ED 3: Microteaching and Media Practicals
- ED 4: Teaching Practice

As discussed in the previous chapters, sociocultural research has shown that L2 pedagogy is enhanced in social settings where learners with the help of an expert such as the teacher, benefit from mediatory resources available in the classroom context (Lantolf, 2000). Mercer and Littleton (2007) argued that in classroom settings, teaching is facilitated by the use of talk and joint activity to create and negotiate a shared communicative space in which students' content knowledge and strategic thinking can be furthered through dialogue. The communicative spaces and opportunities for learning through talk are facilitated by mechanisms of assistance described in section 2.4 and 2.4.1, which form the basis for identifying contents dedicated to preparing student teachers for scaffolding in L2 pedagogy. The subsections below present the results from the course contents analysis.

### 5.1.1 ED1: Methods of Teaching English

This course unit provides student teachers with skills for teaching English as an L2 in Kenyan secondary schools. The course content is described in the Maseno University's program calendar as,

> Development of language skills necessary for the teaching of English as a second language; the recognition and identification of various purposes for which English is used; aims and objectives of the secondary school syllabus in English; teaching and learning strategies; preparation of scheme of work, lesson plan and record of work covered; production, selection and use of resource materials; print media, audio visual media, the language laboratory; evaluation; current issues and problems in the teaching of English language in Kenya (Maseno University Calendar, 2007-2012)

The course description broadly articulates the core elements required for implementing the national syllabus for teaching English in secondary schools in Kenya. A content analysis on the course outline for ED1 (Appendix A) found none of the mechanisms known to promote the practice of scaffolding. Moreover, it was found that the ED1 course trains student teachers to use traditional methods of language teaching such as grammar translation, direct method, structural approach, situational approach, audio-Lingual method and functional approach (Ongong'a et al., 2010). It was thus concluded that the ED1 course did not provide for teacher development in social processes of teaching used for scaffolding. The finding confirms Walsh's (2011) and Freeman's (1989) observation that teacher education programs neglect the development of teaching processes.

### 5.1.2 ED2: Methods of Teaching Literature in English

This course prepares student teachers to teach Literature as an integrated component of the national secondary school English syllabus. From the course description, the knowledge and skills to be covered are:

> Functions of literature, aims and objectives of teaching literature in English, the relationship between English language and Literature in English in the secondary school curriculum; the Kenya secondary school Literature syllabus, current issues in the teaching of literature in secondary schools, development of literary appreciation, selection and use of appropriate literary text and material; teaching oral literature,

poetry, plays, novels and short stories, schemes of work and lesson preparation; Testing and evaluation in Literature (Maseno University calendar, 2007-2012)

From the description above and the course outline (Appendix B). The topics covered focus on the literary skills taught in the secondary school language syllabus. The methods used for teaching literary skills in secondary schools are given in section 5.1.3b below. None of the topics addresses the development of social processes known to facilitate L2 learning and teaching through scaffolding.

### 5.1.3 ED3: Microteaching and Media Practicals

This course aims at equipping the student teachers with skills in lesson preparation and presentation. It has two parts, namely:

a) Educational media practicals

*How to use*: the chalkboard, graphics (2D), construction of 3D materials, operation of audiovisual equipment, preparation of radio broadcasts and audiovisual material.

b) Mini-lesson teaching

Lesson preparation; lesson planning and preparation of audiovisual media for the lesson;
*Lesson presentation and skills application*: set induction, lecturing, reinforcement, stimulus variation, questioning, providing for learner participation, feed back and closure.
(Maseno University calendar, 2007-2012)

The course outline (Appendix C) provides the course objectives and the subtopics to be covered under each skill. However, in light of the mechanisms required for scaffolding in joint activity, a closer look at the types of media resources taught in the course for L2 pedagogy, reveals that the whole range of resources are manipulated by the teacher from a central point in front of the classroom.

From the sociocultural perspective of mediated learning, Lantolf (2000) stated that *physical* and *symbolic artefacts* differ from one culture to another. Humans inherit and use them to mediate and regulate their relationships with others and with themselves leading to changes in themselves. The analysis revealed that the physical artefacts used to mediate and regulate behaviour with others in Kenyan L2 classrooms include; chalkboards, 2D graphics, 3D materials, audiovisual equipment, radio broadcasts, audiovisual material and textbooks. However in actual classroom practice, none of the seventeen lessons observed used audiovisual

materials and radio broadcasts for L2 pedagogy although most of the schools had electricity. The advocated artefacts promote teacher directed activity and teacher-learner interaction as the main type of dialogue in L2 classrooms. It was observed in the seventeen lessons recorded that resources such as the chalkboard and 2D charts facilitate extensive teacher talk as student teachers used them to summarize, display and present L2 facts to learners who listened and took notes from them as opposed to using them for presenting ideas for discussion and joint problem solving.

Below is an example of a 2D chart used by a student teacher to provide learners with explicit information on categories of adjectives. A discussed in section 2.1, a sociocultural perspective advocates for the use of artefacts to promote higher order mental capacities in problem solving. With such complete and direct information, there is little challenge and room for thoughtful problem solving through joint discussions among learners with help from their teachers.

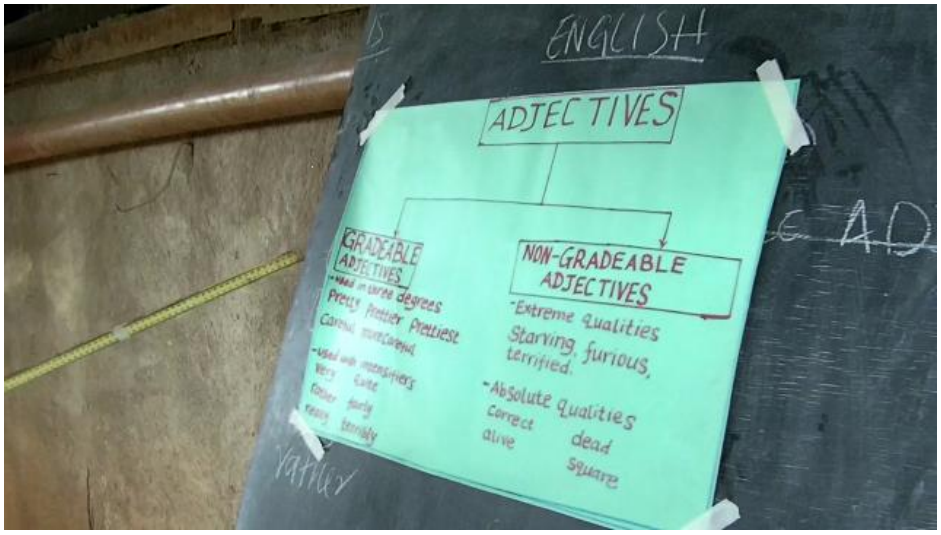



**Figure 5.3 A chart summarising types of adjectives**

Furthermore, the teaching skills taught to student teachers such as lecture, questioning (elicitation of facts) and the use of examples also give the student teachers control over talk and activity in the L2 classroom. From the sociocultural perspective on assisting performance, even expository strategies such as lecture, or *telling* (Langer and Applebee, 1986), *instructing* and *cognitive restructuring* by way of explanation (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) need to be carried out with respect to learner ZPDs, in a system where teacher guidance supports learner abilities during problem solving. In the lessons observed in this study, lectures were used by student teachers to transmit factual knowledge to the learners. There was no evidence of scaffolding activity used within the skill of lecturing.

Examples were used together with *evaluation and assisting questions* to illustrate concepts and to get learners to apply their knowledge on the topic. When used with evaluation questions, examples did not provide for scaffolding in L2 lessons. In the few instances where examples were used with *assisting questions*, scaffolding did occur.

Lastly the use of questioning, which has been referred to as a staple in the language classroom (Delamont, 1983; Walsh, 2006), was used to interrogate and check what learners know in relation to the knowledge base, which lay with the student teachers. Where skilfully applied, the *questioning* strategy is known to facilitate classroom negotiations when open ended questions are used to generate longer animated responses offering opportunities for open ended exploration and discussions aimed at achieving the pedagogic goals. Conversely, where classroom discussions require and are limited to short factual answers, learner intellectual activity is inhibited (Smith and Higgins 2006; Pontefract and Hardman, 2005; Mercer, 2002; Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). On the use of questions in the lessons observed, it was noted that majority of the questions asked by student teachers were evaluative and sought factual answers from learners. In a few instances, thought provoking assisting and probing questions were used for open ended explorations within learner ZPDs.

It can be concluded that the ED3 course provides for scaffolding mainly through questioning and by use of examples with assisting or probing questions. However, in majority of cases the overall questioning strategy was evaluative in nature as it was aimed at eliciting short factual answers from learners and was rarely accompanied by follow up moves which encourage open ended exportations for extending ideas.

### 5.1.4 ED4: Teaching Practice

At the end of the four year bachelor of Education, English and Literature program, the student teachers are placed on teaching practice (TP) in Kenyan secondary schools. The analysis examined the TP assessment criteria for mechanisms of providing scaffolded assistance.

The TP criteria is divided in four sections designed to check aspects of teaching such as lesson preparation, lesson presentation, teacher personality and progression from previous assessments (Appendix D). Of interest to this investigation on student teacher scaffolding practices is section two of the TP assessment criteria which contains the six core skills of effective teaching. They are:

a) Introduction – Use of learner experiences and link with current lesson

b) Lesson development
   i) Logical presentation of content
   ii) Relevance of content to class level
   iii) Adequacy of content to lesson time
   iv) Strategies and methods appropriate to content
   v) Use of teaching skills: motivation, reinforcement, questioning, stimulus variation, verbal exposition
   vi) Mastery of content
c) Communication
   i) Verbal (Fluency, pitch, appropriate language)
   ii) Non-verbal (appropriate gestures, eye contact, body movements, demeanour)
d) Use of resource materials
   i) Chalkboard layout and use
   ii) Timing and attractiveness
   iii) Appropriateness
   iv) Innovativeness, originality and creativity
e) Classroom organisation and management
   i) Control and knowledge of learners by name
   ii) Learner participation
   iii) Use of group work/provision for individual difference
   iv) Teacher/Learner rapport
f) Conclusion – closure skills: review, questions, concluding activities, evaluation, and assignment.

The verbal elicitation of learner experiences in section (a) provides an avenue for *dialogic* activity in L2 classrooms. On this platform skilful student teachers were seen to engage learners in genuine open ended collaborative activity, supported with questions, explanations and feedback (Burbules and Bruce, 2001) from the student teachers.

The second part (b) which addresses the quality of the subject content taught and the appropriacy of delivery techniques used, hardly provides for assessment in other mechanisms of assistance save for *questioning* in part b(v).

Part (c) on classroom communication focuses on the student teacher's verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviour and completely excludes the interpersonal dimension of communication which accounts for the *dialogic* activity that unfolds between the capable and less capable individuals (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994).

Part (d), evaluates the use of resource materials by considering their appearance and relevance to the topic under discussion. No attention is given to learning resources as *physical artefacts* and how they are used for mediating learning by promoting thinking and regulating behaviour (Lantolf, 2000) among participants.

In part (e), class room organisation and management, student teachers are assessed in skills of learner control, management of participation in lessons and use of group work or provisions for individualised learning. In theory, this section provides for assessment of components of assisted learning such as learner *participation* (Rogoff, 1990; 1995) and *collaboration* (Langer and Applebee, 1986) in joint activity in part c) ii - iii. However, on the contrary to this provision, no group or pair work was observed in any of the 17 lessons observed. The analysis revealed that the nature of participation was whole-class, teacher-led and limited to responding to teacher initiated questions and activities.

The concluding part (f) is used to examine lesson closure skills. This section contains some elements attributed to scaffolded assistance such as *questions*; however the classroom observations revealed that although learner questions and negotiations are common at this stage, the student teachers were the only ones to respond as activities at this stage were geared at recapitulating lesson content rather than the collaborative extensions of ideas held by learners.

***Summary***

The analysis of course contents revealed that in the 'methods' courses for English and Literature, there were no topics addressing training in processes of providing scaffolded assistance for L2 pedagogy. The contents of the microteaching and teaching practice courses were found to contain some scaffolding mechanisms and physical artefacts of mediation although audiovisual artefacts were seldom used. In the microteaching course, processes of assistance are developed mainly through the *questioning skill* and the *use of examples* which when skilfully used by student teachers encouraged learner participation and joint problem solving.

From the teaching practice assessment criteria, it was gleaned that in theory, processes of assistance should obtain through elicitations of learner experiences and background knowledge in lesson introductions, the use of questioning during lessons, encouraging learner participation and use of group work, and review questions in the lesson conclusion part. Of these, group work is *not* practiced while the others are practiced in a basic manner because in real classroom practice, the majority of the questions found in teacher-learner interactions were closed and sought factual information from learners.

### 5.1.5 Lecturer's Interview

As part of the investigations on the state of social processes for assisting learner performance in L2 classrooms, it was important to get views from the lecturer in charge of teaching practice and the methods of teaching English and Literature courses at Maseno University. The lecturer interviewed had been working at Maseno University for 21 years and was in charge of the two methods courses for teaching English and Literature as an L2 in Kenya. At the time of the interview, the same lecturer was also was heading the teaching practice exercise in secondary schools.

As mentioned before, processes of assisting learner performance in L2 classrooms involve the use of *dialogues* between teachers and learners as well as discussions amongst learners during *joint problems solving*, with potential value for L2 learning (Aljaafreh and Lantolf, 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Mercer and Littleton, 2007). Therefore, the interview with the lecturer in the L2 teacher education program at Maseno University sought to find out the training given to student teachers with regards to the processes of assisting performance in L2 classrooms. The findings from the focus interview are discussed below.

It emerged that that the university calendar provides the contents of what is to be taught to L2 student teachers in the methods of teaching courses, and that the material given to student teachers is an overview on the teaching of English as an L2 in Kenya, after which student teachers are expected to read further on the subject independently. The overview on L2 teaching is given to the student teachers in a single semester of 13 weeks which is not enough to do a good job according to the lecturer. In the 13 week period, the L2 teacher education syllabus directs that student teachers of L2 be trained on how to teach the four skills of language (reading, writing, listening and speaking) leaving little or no time to develop teaching processes such as interaction for L2 pedagogy. As social processes such as classroom interaction were not provided for under the syllabus, the lecturer explained that even if teaching processes were

to be taught to the student teachers of L2, it would be done in only 3 hours within the 13 week period provided. The lecturer suggested that training in the use of interaction as a social process of teaching could be addressed in the following manner,

> *"we can ask them to do that kind of thing (interaction) in grammar, two in comprehension, within the reading skill, after reading then we expect them to do a lot of interaction between the student and the teacher and student and student and then the student in a group, to bring up issues and iron out what the others have to say, and I want to say that we have very little time during which this can be done effectively, very little time. You will discover that within that period of 13 weeks we have only about 3 hours during which period we are to develop the skill of interaction, therefore we don't do a good job."*

The views here show that the current L2 teacher education syllabus is prescriptive and limited in its scope as social processes such as classroom interaction are not taken into account. It is also evident that a narrow view of interaction is envisioned for use in only a few areas of language such as grammar and reading comprehension as opposed to holistic use of interaction as a symbolic tool for mediating for L2 learning across the four skills of language.

With regards to the role of dialogue in process of L2 learning, Mercer and Littleton (2007:49) posit that,

> "the way teachers talk, act and structure classroom activities has a powerful contribution on children as collective thinkers… who use language as a tool for solitary and collective thinking, they need involvement in thoughtful and reasoned dialogue in which their teachers 'model' useful language strategies and which they can practice using language to reason, reflect, inquire and to explain their thinking to others."

Questioned on the strategies taught to student teachers of L2 for engaging learners in activities and assisting their performance, the lecturer interviewed explained that interactions between the teachers and learners relies on texts which student teachers use to elicits facts from the learners in line with the teaching goals.

> *"We depend on passages for comprehension, which they read and lend themselves to this kind of thing, yeah then you can now elicit responses from learners depending on what passages they read… for example new lexical items could be inbuilt in that reading, then the teacher uses that to elicit whatever is required, things like inferences,*

*things like knowledge of specific facts, things like the facts that have actually been presented, you can call for them from students after reading the passage."*

According to Mercer and Littleton (2007) and Smith (2006), the quality of interaction in the L2 classroom is enhanced when teachers use questions to draw out children's reasons for their views or actions as well as by seeking and compare different viewpoints, on the other hand, providing explanations and brief and factual answers to questions is not seen as appropriate for providing children with opportunities for language practice. Therefore, training student teachers to limit classroom activities to reading of prescribed texts and eliciting factual information from the texts as stated in the extract above provides limits opportunities for learners to engage in solitary and collective thinking and problem solving for L2 learning.

The use of group work has also been found to promote collective activity and scaffolding (Donato, 1994) in L2 classrooms. Group work provides an avenue for joint problem solving and is beneficial for L2 learning as pupils are more likely to engage in open ended discussions when they are talking with peers outside the visible control of their teachers; this kind of talk helps learners to take a more active and independent ownership of knowledge (Mercer and Littleton, 2007). On how group work is taught to student teachers as an avenue for joint activity in L2 teacher education, it was inferred from the interview with the lecturer that if at all student teachers use group work during L2 lessons; the main concern would be the explication of facts from passages and other texts in line with the secondary school L2 syllabus. Below is an extract giving the lecturer's view on use of group work in L2 lessons.

*"One those passages and literature, prose and other bits that are done, those are the materials we use for that kind of thing (group work). If a passage has been read, then we use what you are talking about (group work). If they have read a book of literature, then you can ask them to be in groups sit in groups and discuss the key points, the key details the syllabus requires the students to have so that that knowledge is brought out or developed."*

With such a limited approach to group work where the main focus is to identify facts as prescribed by the syllabus, L2 learners are starved of opportunities for open ended explorations through which they would modify and develop their L2 knowledge in collaboration with other learners. Also crucial for learners working in groups are L2 tasks, during collaborative problem solving, tasks provide L2 learners with additional opportunities to notice gaps in their own knowledge, notice connections between different linguistic features and find ways of saying

something (Walsh, 2011). However, the practice of using tasks for collaborative problem solving among L2 student teachers themselves is problematic. This is what the lecturer had to say on the challenges of using tasks for collaborative problem solving during their training.

> *"That is the best, I have tried to use it and found it more effective although there isn't time for the same. You can start off a topic explore it a bit, then divide the class into smaller groups, then they in those smaller groups will explore that and report yeah. But again one hour that we are given for each lecture is not enough for a teacher or lecturer to do that. We are working in a very difficult situation, perhaps if we had double say two hours we would manage that… something else, if you give them that kind of work, they want to come out of the lecture hall, go and do it privately, group work away from the classroom, no supervision and in that kind of situation again you will find that some students don't participate, they would walk away and leave the work to the faithful ones and they would be very few people working so it doesn't help much."*

Although the lecturer admits that the use of L2 tasks and group work is effective. He stated that the single hour given for each lecture did not allow for the effective use of such an approach. Additionally, lack of commitment from L2 student teachers was cited as a hindrance to any group work outside lecture hours as few student teachers would participate in unsupervised tasks. The lecturer's position on unsupervised tasks is valid as the value of using tasks and group work for L2 problem solving lies in pre-task introductions, monitoring and support during the task and the provision of post-task follow up. The teacher plays an important role in the processes by leading from behind to support the learning processes across a task context (Samuda, 2001).

Also pertinent for L2 learning through dialogue is the teacher's language behaviour in the classroom. Researchers such as Walsh, (2006), Mercer (2002) and Tsui, (1995) advocated for the development of sensitivity towards language in L2 classrooms. This is because the teacher's language use helps to generate teacher-learner interactions which affect learner participation and opportunities for learning. It also makes learning a cooperative effort between the teacher and the learner. On the issue of how student teachers are sensitized on the use of language in the L2 classroom, the lecturer interview stated that:

> *"No. No and yes. But I want to say no because there is no time again for that considering the number of students we have and the hurry in which they are but I want to say yes, in another department a sister department like that of communication skills*

*where this is stressed, I taught there and found it working very effectively… for example they have to learn how to use indicators that they are now moving from this point to another, they have to learn how to listen to others and how to come in if they want to have a turn."*

It can be concluded that student teachers learn about language in general communication skills but not as a processes for L2 pedagogy and thus, there is need to create language and interaction awareness among student teachers stemming from it central role for mediating learning (Lantolf, 2000) and the reflexive relationship between interaction and pedagogy in L2 classrooms (Seedhouse, 2004).

Another issue investigated was the roles that student teachers are trained to take as facilitators of learning in L2 classrooms. The lecturer stated that,

*"Perhaps I can say again this does not work, it doesn't. We in universities, most public universities where numbers are fairly big what we do is simply to dictate notes, we go to lecture halls with notes and students are tuned to that, that you simply prepare and tell them, you give them the information you have and they copy, so that is not done to a good extent… because you know here we simply give them an overview of the course and when we are at any topic we just give them little about the same topic and you will discover that when you go for teaching practice even after you have given them media practicals and micro teaching skills like how do you ask questions, how do you make use of examples, how do you stimulate the learners, you have already given them those details you go to their schools of teaching practice and you discover they are not using that approach most of them teach the way they were taught."*

The lecturer's remarks above pointed out the main challenges to quality teacher education as; the large numbers of students in University lecture halls and dictation of lecture notes as the dominant method of pedagogy in Universities in Kenya. The large number of students and the practice of dictating notes to them based denies student teachers opportunities for critical engagement and practical application of knowledge. In the current system, it seems that lecturers as well as the primary and secondary school teachers are models of the transmission approach to teaching, the interviewed lecturer mentioned that "you have already given them those details you go to their schools of teaching practice and you discover they are not using that approach most of them teach the way they were taught." The lecturer's remarks on the student teachers tendency to teach how they were taught rather than how they were trained

echoes Sifuna's (1997) and Pontefract and Hardman (2005) sentiments that even though initial training colleges advocate child centred approaches, these are unlikely to be practised or understood and therefore, once in the classroom teachers teach as they were taught themselves, both in schools and in colleges, which perpetuates culturally transmitted and deeply internalized cultural influences. This implies that to bring about changes in the roles of the teacher in the L2 classroom, apart from imparting theoretical insights on teaching, alternative approaches (such as sociocultural perspectives to teaching and learning) need to be adapted to the educational context and practiced at all levels of education in Kenya.

On challenges and factors hindering L2 teacher education on processes of teaching such as classroom interaction, the lecturer pointed out large class sizes, syllabus limitations and student attitudes as the main hindrances to adopting social approaches of teaching and learning in teacher education. The lecturer cited the large number of students in lecture halls as a hindrance to the use of social interaction during the lectures as follows.

> *"One large numbers, the lecturer student ratio is not very good, you will find you are alone, I want to tell you that at one time I had 240 students following this course, methods of teaching English, so that is a problem and you cannot do a good job"*

Secondly, the L2 teacher education syllabus did not provide for teacher education on social processes of teaching such as interaction and scaffolding. The lecturer observed that:

> *"if you look at the syllabus there is nothing in that syllabus that encourages you to do that (interaction) so it is just the teacher own initiative, if the teacher is aware that that is a strategy to use in teaching then he will… that kind of teacher uses the same otherwise if you find someone who has not been given information on interactional skills that will not happen, so I think in most public universities nobody, very few train teachers along those lines"*

And thirdly, it was noted that most student teachers had negative attitudes towards the teaching profession and did not care much about the acquisition of strategies, methods and techniques of L2 pedagogy as indicated in the quote below.

> *"then students are also in a hurry even if you had a good course, they are in a hurry to finish whatever they want to do with you and go out and socialise, and most of them if you look at the history of teacher education most of them you realise are people who came to teaching because there was nothing else for them to do, so they are not eager,*

*they don't care, all they want is a degree then they leave so they can turn to other jobs. Look at the people we have trained at Maseno for English teaching, most of them are not teaching, they are managers, they are tellers in banks they only want a degree since education offers so many courses they are accepted in other sectors, so they only come there to get a degree and therefore they won't work very hard towards the acquisition of strategies, methods, techniques."*

The three constraints cited by the lecturer together with others such as lack of resources, facilities and the poor physical conditions of lecture rooms genuinely hinder teacher development in processes of teaching based on interaction in joint activity. Asked to recommend ways of improving L2 teacher education, the lecturer proposed that selecting a small group of students who genuinely wanted teach and employing serious lecturers to work with them would help. He also suggested that the current syllabus be reviewed in order to add the techniques of classroom interaction.

*"Perhaps if we got a good group, a group of those who sincerely wanted to become teachers, and working in a small group under very serious lecturers then it would work and I would recommend that if that is realised then perhaps what should happen is, the syllabus should be reviewed and a good percentage of this technique (interaction) loaded."*

***Summary***

The lecturer's interview corroborated the findings from the teacher education documents by shedding light on the narrow conceptualisation and application of interaction and expert assistance as mediation in L2 pedagogy. Social processes of assistance were lacking in L2 teacher education syllabus along with the use of strategies that promote learning in social settings such as tasks and group work. Additionally, the implementation of processes of scaffolded assistance is further hindered by factors such as large class sizes in the University, the culture of teaching and learning where notes are dictated to student teachers and perceived negative attitudes towards teaching by student teachers. The findings point to the absence of a sociocultural theory driven approach to L2 teacher education at Maseno University and contextual peculiarities (discussed next) which combine to influence the practices of scaffolded assistance observed in secondary school L2 classrooms.

## 5.2 Seating Arrangements and the Physical Conditions in Classrooms

Researchers such as Delamont, (1983) and Brown and Atkins (1988) reported on factors known to influence social processes such as classroom interaction. They observed that the physical classroom conditions and seating arrangements do affect interaction patterns as some sitting arrangements foster tutor dominated interactions, while others promote interactions amongst learners as well as between the tutor and the learners with implications for L2 learning (McCorskey and McVetta, 1978).

According to Brown and Atkins (1988), seating arrangements produce different patterns of interaction as shown in figure 5.4 below. Classrooms with arrangement 'A' are likely to be teacher dominated and have the teacher-learner and learner-teacher type of interaction. 'B' increases the probability of subgroups interacting with each other and the teacher but not necessarily with other groups and 'C' Increases the probability of learners talking to each other as well as the teacher.

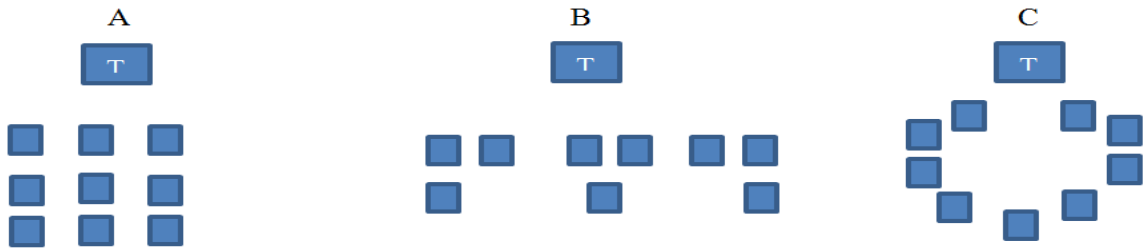



**Figure 5.4 Seating and interaction (Source: Brown and Atkins, 1988)**

Furthermore, the distance between teachers and learners and the types of furniture in use can also influence interaction because interaction can increase further if the teacher varies the seating pattern each session. Delamont (1983) argued that the pupil's position in the class affects whether the teacher interacts with them or not as teachers interacted more with children in a V-shaped wedge down the middle of the room – so that those pupils at the back or at the sides of the room got less contact and thus differential learner participation was found to correlate with seating position.

These views suggest that the traditional seating arrangements where pupils seat in rows as show in 'A' above may limit the type and amount of classroom interaction and learner participation during lessons. In all the 17 classrooms observed for this study, it was found the traditional seating arrangement in which learners sit in rows was in use. No other seating patterns such as those depicted by 'B' and 'C' in figure 5.4 above were observed. McCorskey and McVetta

(1978) pointed out that, if the purpose of the class is primarily one of information dissemination, then the traditional arrangement is probably the best because it minimizes learner-student interaction and places the primary interaction focus in the classroom on the teacher. The prevalent use of the traditional seating arrangement in secondary schools and even universities in Kenya therefore limits interaction among learners in favour of whole-class interaction and knowledge transmission by teachers and lecturers. Figure 5.5 and 5.6 below, show the traditional seating arrangement in use in Kenyan secondary schools with the student teachers in the knowledge giving position at the front.

**Figure 5.5 A student teacher explaining how to write a business letter**

**Figure 5.6 A student teacher dictating notes in a grammar lesson**

The same traditional seating arrangements are used at the University. Whether in small groups (microteaching practice) of about 20 students, medium sized groups (subject specialisation courses) of about 100 students or large groups (common courses) of over 800 students, student teachers sit in rows facing lecturers who dictate lecture notes to them as they listen and write in silence. The pictures below show the sitting arrangements in large and small lecture halls at Maseno University.

**Figure 5.7 A lecturer shows a larger group of student teachers a 3D model in a lecture on preparing learning resources**

**Figure 5.8 A lecturer gives a demonstration on teaching skills to student teachers in microteaching session**

Aspects of the physical setting of classrooms such as their layout and decor have also been found to have important consequences for the nature of classroom interaction. 'Setting' as defined by Goffman (1971) in Delamont (1983:35-6),

> "involves furniture, decor, physical layout and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it. A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin to act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it."

The extent to which the teacher and the class can influence the arrangement of furniture and fittings, materials on the notice boards and even the decoration varies from school to school and in some situations teachers may have to teach in highly inappropriate settings. In settings with no books, maps, tapes or other resources, everything the teacher needs has to be taken into class at the outset giving the teacher less flexibility than in an established settings with props around.

In the Kenyan secondary school classrooms observed, all classrooms were basic structures, with learner desks and chairs or benches arranged in straight rows to make use of the natural light coming in from side windows. In extreme cases, learners were housed in temporary iron structures and exposed to elements such as heat, rain, wind and noise from nearby roads. In figure 5.9 below, the student teacher and her pupils work in a temporary classroom. Learners use the benches provided as work space and storage for the bags, which hardly offer the flexibility required for working in small groups. A tiny portable chalkboard is all the student teacher has for note making and chart display.

**Figure 5.9 Limited resources and poor learning conditions**

A table or stand for the teacher's items and resources such as books and charts may or may not be available in some schools. The classrooms shown in figures 5.9 and 5.10 and many others observed did not have provisions for the teachers' items and teachers have to place their teaching resources on learner desks or benches.

**Figure 5.10 A student teacher shares a desk with pupils in a small class with 54 pupils**

Some of the classrooms observed were dark (see figure 5.5 and 5.6) and small (see fig. 5.10) for the large number of pupils present. The lack of equipment and space for movement, coupled with the large class sizes especially in public schools (see appendix F), limits the possible learning activities and interaction for problem solving to the bear minimum given the contextual challenges.

For teachers, the equipment available in the classrooms was: chalk, a chalkboard eraser and a chalkboard either portable or painted on the front wall of the classroom. Items such as chalkboard rulers, charts, and some books had to be brought in at the start of the lesson. In the picture below, the student teacher brought in a chart for the lesson.

**Figure 5.11 A pupil helps the student teacher to display a chart**

The walls in most classrooms are usually whitewashed pale cream and lack any noticeboards for displaying charts; teachers improvise for this by sticking or pinning charts over the chalkboard and on the ceiling joists as seen in the pictures above. The charts provide a summary

of main ideas and serve as material around which teachers make concluding remarks on the content covered in the lesson. During discussions, learners took notes from the charts in their exercise books as student teachers had to take the charts with them after each lesson. Taking notes from the charts within a limited duration was often challenging for many learners especially those sitting at the back as the writings on them were small and faint.

Like in primary and secondary schools across the country, teaching and learning resources (physical artefacts such as computers, textbooks and print material) are scarce in Kenyan universities. In teacher education courses, lecturers use models to demonstrate concepts in a one way transmission mode (see figure 5.7 and 5.12), to large numbers of students who are rarely given opportunities to collaborate in knowledge building. Such practices fail to model dialogic teaching techniques and perpetuate the teacher dominated culture of teaching and learning in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries as was observed by Hardman et al. (2012).

**Figure 5.12 A lecturer uses a model in a skill demonstration lecture on using 3D resources**

**Figure 5.13 Student teachers practice teaching skills in a microteaching session**

Based on the aforementioned, it was observed that seating arrangements and the physical classroom environments at Maseno University and in secondary schools studied influence the teacher dominated nature of classroom interaction and L2 pedagogy. Learners sit in rows facing the teacher who directs learning activities according to the pedagogic goals. The large number of pupils, the room sizes and the kind of furniture in use in schools do not support interactive groupings during lessons. The only physical resource available for teaching and learning include: *chalkboards* or whiteboards, handmade *charts* and *models* and some *textbooks* most of which were brought in for the lesson by teachers and taken away after. Hence in sociocultural terms, the mediation afforded by such restrictions is likely to be whole-class and teacher-led as teachers have less flexibility in terms of possible interactive activities in comparison to those working in established western settings where teachers can draw on readily available materials stored around them, even if they had not planned to do so (Delamont, 1983). The next section presents a discussion on L2 tasks and how they are used in collective activity.

## 5.3 Use of Tasks in L2 Lessons

Classroom tasks and practice exercises influence social processes of L2 learning by providing learning opportunities for negotiation of meaning in collaborative problems solving activities. Tasks actualise the curriculum, enrich the syllabus and provide additional learning

opportunities they are seen as tools to be exploited by the teachers and learners in the service of particular language aims and objectives, with the teacher providing support through briefing and selective feedback Samuda and Bygate (2008). According to Nunan (1995; 2001), they are an important element of second language pedagogy as they are seen as essential in engaging key processes of language learning such as acquisition, transformation and evaluation. In order for tasks to provide for valuable interaction and learning, Samuda and Bygate (2008:75), raised the following questions on the use of tasks in the mediation of L2 learning:

1. Is the goal of the task clear and do the students know the kinds of learning they are supposed to be aiming for?
2. Is planning (preparatory reflections) presented as strategically valuable, and if so what is it focused on?
3. Is formative feedback provided?
4. If feedback is not provided, are dyads formed so that one of the pair is already an expert in the target domain, and if so, is the expert briefed to allow the novice to participate actively?
5. Is the desired type of group or pair interaction supported or prompted and are the guidelines contextualised within particular tasks

These questions are premised on the view that tasks are activities in and around which the processes of acquisition, transformation and evaluation occur in the context of holistic language use in collaboration with others. Although the five questions on the use of tasks are based on activities in task-based learning contexts, in which a pedagogic task is defined as, "a holistic activity which engages language use in order to achieve some non-linguistic outcome while meeting a linguistic challenge, with the overall aim of promoting learning, through process, product or both" (Samuda and Bygate, 2008:75). The framework is adopted for studying the L2 exercises used in the Kenyan L2 classrooms as it informed by sociocultural perspectives on L2 learning in collaboration with others from whom learners receive support. Furthermore, sociocultural researchers such as Langer and Applebee (1986) had suggested that language tasks need to be appropriate and presented in a structure that allows for extending learner knowledge in context of supportive dialogue. Additionally, Ellis and Siegler's (1994) observed that self-regulation during problem solving is achieved by the processes of planning, private speech and dialogue. From such an understanding, the five elements in the framework in table 5.4 are deemed applicable to language learning situations where activities (including textbook exercises) are used to engage learners in language use in order to solve linguistic problems in

collaboration with others. The elements in the five questions above were used to examine the activities used by student teachers for L2 pedagogy in the episodes presented in chapter four. Given that no pair or group-work was observed in the lessons observed, whole-class discussions were used to gauge the fifth element which is the support provided in group or pair work. The results are summarised in table 5.5 below.

**Table 5.5 Use of tasks for interaction and mediation of L2 learning**

| | **Clear goal of task** | **Strategic Planning required** | **Formative feedback** | **Groups and dyads formed** | **Support in group or pair work (whole-class)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Episode 1** When to use the superlative degree | ✓ | × | × | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 2** Simple past tense | × | × | ✓ | × | × |
| **Episode 3** Whole-class Exercise on Adverbs | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 4** Individual exercise on non-gradable adjectives | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | × |
| **Episode 5** using 'for' and 'to' in a sentence having an 'indirect object' | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 6** Examples of non-gradable adjectives | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | × |
| **Episode 7** Hyena's character trait | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 8** Features of oral poetry | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | × |
| **Episode 9** Reading a story about 'Hare and Hyena' | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 10** Using pictures to state the three degrees of adjective comparison | × | × | ✓ | × | ✓ |
| **Episode 11** Examples of adjectives expressing a complete idea | ✓ | × | ✓ | × | × |

**Legend** ✓ Implies presence
× Implies absence

From the results in table 5.2 it is evident that processes such as planning, which stimulates sensitivity to the nature of a task and its demands for effective problem solving and peer collaboration in pair or group work for knowledge co-construction are completely missing in the present practice of using tasks in L2 pedagogy in secondary schools. Planning prior to problem solving needs to be encouraged as it provides for preparatory reflections which influence behaviour during the learning activities. Moreover, the structure of a problem/task facilitates learning in that understanding the goals to be met by the strategies employed is critical for avoiding random trial and error behaviour. Collaborative dialogue on tasks, feedback and other mechanisms of assistance during problem solving are desirable as they provide contexts in which target language features are used across a series of practice problems leading to appropriation of correct L2 features. Noteworthy, Ellis and Siegler (1994) emphasise that tasks may not necessarily lead to learning if learners are not provided with feedback when working with another novice or while working individually was the case in episode 4 (section 4.3.2). This because L2 learning is enhanced by productive interactions with an expert who uses supportive mechanisms such as modelling, structuring or prompting and other mechanism of assistance such as those identified in section 2.3.2 , to support the novice's actions.

In considering how tasks relate to learning, Samuda and Bygate (2008) provide the view that tasks engage learners in contexts where learners interact with the task, get assistance from more capable peers, get assistance from the teacher before, during and after the task, interaction with equal peers, interaction with less capable peers, use inner resources and other resources such as printed and electronic. Similarly, van Lier (1996) stated that tasks are a source of feedback which provides a more powerful effect on learning than interaction on its own. The teacher's role in the process is to present the purpose by engaging learners in an activity so as to raise awareness on the task in relation to the topic under discussion. The teacher also provides assistance pre-task by briefing learners orally on the purpose and helps learners achieve the purpose during the task as need arises. The teacher then engages learners in joint activity utilising skills such as observation, collaboration, interpretation and prediction for L2 learning through acquisition, transformation and evaluation. Lastly, the teacher draws on learners' joint experiences post-task as a basis for targeting expressions of epistemic modality.

In the Kenyan case, student teachers implemented coverage of national L2 syllabus by strictly following the scheme of work given to them by the regular teachers supervising their practice in schools. The national L2 syllabus obtains in prescribed textbooks most of which are written and distributed by the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE), the body in charge of curriculum

development and implementation in Kenya. Although both the L2 syllabus and textbooks suggest activities for group work, in their design, the tasks presented in the textbooks do not detail the goals of performing the tasks nor do they provide for processes of planning, collaboration, feedback and evaluation as important and strategic for L2 learning in social settings. In many cases and as was shown in teacher-led episodes analysed in chapter four, tasks were implemented as language exercises to be completed accurately by individual learners or orally by whole-classes. Classroom tasks were rarely exploited in terms of their capacity to engage language use in order to bring about acquisition, transformation and evaluation of L2 features in collaboration with others. For samples of the tasks used in some of the episodes presented, see (Appendix G).

Moreover, as was inferred from the documents and the interview with a lecturer at Maseno University that the theory (teacher education curriculum) and practice (actual teaching and learning at the university) did not provide for educating student teachers on the use of tasks and group work in the course of their preparation for teaching L2 in secondary schools. This oversight is also seen as influencing the nature of scaffolded assistance offered during collective activity in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms.

Based on the findings on the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in Kenyan L2 classrooms and the factors influencing them, the next section proffers solutions on how processes of scaffolded assistance can be improved in L2 teacher education.

## 5.4 How can the processes used for providing scaffolded assistance be improved at the L2 teacher education level?

In Kenya, public universities are autonomous and thus free to draft, implement and examine their own curriculums. In the area of teacher education, universities train teachers specifically for teaching in secondary schools. As with teacher education programs in other eastern and southern African countries, the Maseno University teacher education curriculum covers students' intended teaching subjects, general and subject specific teaching methods, professional studies in education and teaching practice (O'Sullivan, 2010; Hardman et al., 2012).

The microgenetic analysis in chapter four revealed the existing means of scaffolded assistance used in whole-class activity and the physical artefacts commonly used for L2 pedagogy in Kenyan schools. The content analysis in section 5.1 showed a gap in the theory and practice of the L2 teacher education at Maseno University, which neglects the development of social processes of assistance in their curriculum and practice thus propagating cultural influences in education as student teachers tend to teach the way they were taught. An analysis of secondary and university classroom environments in section 5.2 showed that larger class sizes, traditional seating arrangements in which pupils and students sit in rows facing the teacher/lecturer and scarcity of teaching and learning artefacts have a genuine impact on approaches encouraging learner-centred scaffolding. Further it was shown in section 5.3 that during whole-class activity, processes such as strategic planning and pair or group work which promotes language use and self-regulation during collaborative problem solving by use of tasks were lacking in all the lessons observed.

On the research front, the Western studies on scaffolding reviewed in section 2.3.1 proposed several strategies of providing scaffolded assistance. The proposed strategies assume the ready availability of particular culturally determined tools, artefacts and technologies, learning activities and class sizes often found in western contexts such as North America, Canada, Western Europe and Australia. Many of these assume learning resources, technologies and conditions which lack or are practically impossible in non-Western contexts such as Kenya, given the existing educational culture and contextual limitations. In this regard, an understanding sociocultural practices of assistance in non-Western classrooms are unlikely be advanced by research if current suggestions for utilising scaffolding in pedagogical approaches do not take into account the realities of day to day teaching and learning in less affluent contexts.

Going forward, findings from actual classrooms in this study show that scaffolding is possible in teacher-led whole-class interaction in a non-Western context. This findings provide insights on the operationalisation of the sociocultural theory in a non-Western context as well as on the possibility of improving the quality of L2 pedagogy through social processes of assistance based on dialogues between learners themselves as well as with the teachers in meaningful and productive collective activity. The proffered way forward has to be sensitive to the collective nature of scaffolding and the roles played by student teachers in the process as was discussed in section 4.6, as well other contextual factors such as the prescribed national syllabus and textbooks, large class sizes, traditional seating arrangements and furniture types which are

inflexible to groupings during L2 lessons. With these views in mind, perhaps a useful starting point in the quest of improving L2 learning in secondary schools would be improving theory and practice of L2 teaching at the language teacher education level so as to drive the change in the educational culture of teaching and learning in Kenya. It is recommended that adopting a sociocultural theory driven approach to the policy and practice of language teacher education in which courses in scaffolded assistance, reflective practice, and the use of pair work for L2 pedagogy are taught to student teachers would be beneficial. In the subsections below, the three areas recommended are discussed in detail.

### 5.4.1 Scaffolding: Mechanisms of Assistance for non-Western Classrooms

Stemming from the sociocultural perspectives on expert assistance presented in chapter two, teachers play a key role in instruction by using interaction as a tool for mediating and scaffolding learning in L2 classrooms. In the instructional process, interaction underlies the core mechanisms of scaffolded assistance as it creates opportunities for learning in intermental activity. It is therefore argued that educating student teachers to use mechanisms and strategies of providing scaffolded assistance may transform L2 learning and teaching in Kenya leading to improved outcomes as this study found the specific strategies that work in practice.

With respect to sociocultural principles on scaffolding and the findings in this study which demonstrate the operationalization of scaffolding in the Kenyan context; mechanisms of assistance such as collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing (see section 2.3.2) were found to be central to effective instruction in Kenyan secondary L2 classrooms. These core mechanisms of assistance are manifested through interactional strategies such as: comprehension checks, clarification, calling on others to answer, demonstrations, recasts, assisting questions, wait time, probing questions, explicit feedback, repetition, implicit feedback - reformulation, telling, directing and non-verbal cues such as pauses, hesitation and gestures (see fig. 4.1). These scaffolding strategies help to: create dialogic spaces in whole-class activity, stimulate learner thought and reflection, co-construct knowledge, shape learner responses, extend learner ideas, afford learner opportunities for participation and to avail opportunities for appropriation of concepts by the wider class.

From a classroom perspective, the core mechanisms assistance are essential as they provide teachers with the following skills:

**Collaboration:** Using dialogue to create interactional space in which learners are given space to participate in intermental activity, give contributions and receive feedback on contributions. Collaboration was facilitated by comprehension checks and clarification requests which brought about intersubjectivity during negotiations. Non-verbal cues from learners acted as signals for help and calling on other students to answer pooled ideas from the wider class during collective problem solving.

**Modelling:** Helping learners to articulate meanings through demonstrations and strategies such as recasting.

**Questioning:** Using questions that promote thought and reflection, speaking and learner participation. The types of questions here used include assisting and probing questions. Wait time facilitated assisting and probing questions by giving learners time to think and construct responses.

**Feedback:** Acknowledging and providing information on accuracy of learner contributions as well as extending and elaborating learner ideas. Strategies used include, explicit and implicit correction of errors, repetition to signal a problem in the response and recasting leaner contributions.

**Instructing:** Used to provide support for completing oral or written exercises from textbooks. Practice exercises are commonly used in Kenyan L2 classrooms and techniques such as telling and directing can be beneficial for providing instructions and strategic information necessary for carrying out exercises.

The five core mechanisms described above are highly context specific in a social sense as they informed by the culture of teaching and learning in Kenya as well as contextual factors such as class sizes and available learning resources. However, as they are based on sociocultural principles on scaffolding, they can be promoted in any non-Western setting with similar contextual limitations. By promoting understandings of mechanisms of scaffolded assistance, student teachers develop interactional competencies for assisting performance, enhancing learning opportunity and learning in L2 classrooms. Such understandings can be achieved by drawing on the findings in this study, which reports on scaffolding practices in Kenyan L2 classrooms. By showing student teachers video clips and data extracts on dialogic practices

that enhance learning with assistance and those that don't, student teacher awareness on language use and interaction for L2 pedagogy could be improved. In the Maseno university L2 teacher education curriculum, mechanisms of scaffolded assistance can be taught to student teachers in the 'methods' courses for English and Literature (see section 5.1.1 and 5.1.2), practiced in the microteaching and media practicals course (section 5.1.3b) and assessed during teaching practice under 'communication' as described in section 5.1.4 (c). Adopting a sociocultural perspective for L2 pedagogy is therefore seen as one way of improving the social processes of teaching in the teacher education program at Maseno University.

### 5.4.2 Reflective Practice on Micro-teaching Sessions

The issue of understanding and improving practice is now very pertinent in higher education institutions, hence the need for tools for looking into classroom actions. Reflective practice is one ways of considering professional actions and activities to make them better and is suggested as one of the ways of improving teacher education at Maseno University. The notion of reflection as it relates to teaching was originated by Dewey (1933) in Alger, (2006) who conceptualised reflection as a form of systematic problem solving while open-mindedly considering the underlying beliefs inherent in both the problem and possible solutions. It implies that practitioners need to think about their own conceptualisations and what they bring to any situation. In doing so, self-awareness and understanding can enable them become better practitioners.

Schon (1983), a leading proponent of reflective practice, brought forth a context based model for use by practitioners known as: reflection-in-action. He (*ibid*) proposed that reflecting-in-action involves problem setting, making moves, analysing results of moves and reframing. In this regard, when a practitioner encounters a problematic situation, he or she utilises the process outlined to find solutions. However, Mathew and Jessel (1998) observed that, the process of reflecting-in-action in highly contextualised, because reflection becomes the process by which knowledge is made more explicit, so that it can be applied with a measure of control in the midst of an activity. The process is not straightforward and requires a practitioner's creativity and ingenuity. On one hand, it relies on the existence of a tacit knowledge-base derived from extensive experience. On the other hand, the reflective teaching cycle includes reflection on both received knowledge, such as learning theory and pedagogy in teacher education programs, experiential knowledge and what happens in the context of classrooms (Wallace, 1991). Reflexivity therefore enables practitioners to reach a better understanding of situations and

through better understanding of experiences (beliefs, values, attitudes, assumptions and fears) and the knowledge from pedagogy and learning theories.

In teacher education, researchers such as Nunan (1992) advocated for the use of the student teachers' own practice for a 'stimulated recall' of their intentions during the act of teaching. Such stimulated recall could be brought about using video recordings of own practice during their microteaching sessions while still in training. Seedhouse (2008) also proposed that video recordings of lessons in combination with fine-grained micro analysis of transcripts may create a powerful induction tool for professional discourse for trainees or newly qualified language teacher. Sert (2010) reiterates that teachers who get feedback supported by video recordings are more likely to change their procedures than those who get only verbal feedback. Thus, student teachers analysing and reflecting on their own performance and collaboration with other trainees in peer evaluation is encouraged as a way of learning from practice.

In line with Wallace's (1991) view on the place of teacher education learning theory and pedagogy in reflective practice, sociocultural theory is a valuable perspective for maximising learning affordances in the Kenyan classroom context. It is recommended that knowledge on sociocultural principles and its guiding principles on pedagogy be taught to student teachers along with actual classroom practices such us such those captured in this study, for use as tools for operationalising sociocultural concepts and principles in terms of specific discourse moves and their role in scaffolding. For implementation at Maseno University, it is envisioned that reflective practice could be introduced in the microteaching course described in section 5.1.3. In their third year, student teachers take micro teaching sessions for a full semester in order to practice and demonstrate the teaching skills taught to them. The micro-teaching sessions are carried out in groups of fifteen to twenty student teachers assigned to one lecturer who assesses performance during the sessions. The sessions are video recorded and availed to students to review and reflect on their performance with a view of improving on it. Currently, there is no set criterion for student teachers to use for reviewing and analysing their performance from the micro-teaching video. Hence there is need for a sociocultural driven approach to pedagogy, informed self-reflection together with peer and tutor feedback for creating awareness on own practice based on teaching theory and observations on practice. Following the same principles of analysis utilised here, data from micro-teaching video recordings along with the data presented in this study could be used in 'methods' courses to create awareness on classroom practices, identify interactional features and how these might facilitate or hinder classroom

communication and learning outcomes (Walsh, 2006), it also be used to illustrate how pedagogic content can be extracted for communicative success (Seedhouse, 2005). In so doing, trainee teachers self-reflect and brainstorm alternative ways of achieving pedagogic goals using language, teaching methods and learning materials. The lecturer in charge of the microteaching group can act as a mentor to the trainees, to discuss and give feedback on the recording and transcripts with the student teachers. From evaluations of own performance, discussions with peers and feedback from the mentor, the student teachers will become aware of language use and in time develop competencies required for using interaction to creating opportunities for learning by providing scaffolded assistance.

### 5.4.3 Use of Pair Work

As earlier reported, no pair or group work was found in any of the 17 lessons observed. Yet pair work provides opportunities for peers to use language during problem solving which increases learning opportunity and learning (Walsh, 2011). It was shown that the use of pair/group work was not taught in the 'methods' and microteaching courses described in sections 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.3, and which was corroborated by the lecturer's interview in section 5.1.5. Ironically, however, the teaching practice criteria requires assessment of skills in the 'use of group work and provision of individual difference', implying a mismatch between the ideal curriculum as expected in the teaching practice assessment and the operational curriculum as practiced in L2 teacher education.

This gap in the practice needs to be addressed as pair/group work has been found to promote exploratory talk known to facilitate L2 learning in joint activity (Mercer, 2002). However, given the inflexible types of furniture used in secondary schools and large numbers of pupils present in the classrooms described in section 5.2, it is proposed that opportunities for learners to talk among themselves can be provided mainly through pair work which offers a more practical way of engaging learners than group work.

A sociocultural perspective helps us to appreciate the reciprocal relationship between individual thinking and collective activity in groups, whereby involvement in joint activities can generate new understandings which are them internalised as individual knowledge and capabilities (Mercer, 1995b; 2000; 2002). van Lier (1996) equally proposed adopting an ecological framework with multiple ZPDs where individuals meaningfully and productively co-construct their social learning environment using a variety of discourse.

The main concern here is to help children learn to use language effectively as tool of thinking collectively and alone for their intellectual development. As well as learning from the teacher's assistance, children also learn the skills of thinking collectively by acting and talking with each other and as Mercer, (2002) put it, classrooms should afford them opportunities to use language more effectively as a means for learning, pursuing interests, developing shared understanding and crucially, for reasoning and solving problems together. In teacher-led whole-class activity Mercer et al. (1999) designed 'talk lessons' to raise children's awareness of how they talk together and how language can be used in joint activity for reasoning and problem-solving. These teacher-led activities were coupled with group-based tasks, in which children had the opportunity to practise ways of talking and collaborating, and which fed into other whole-class sessions, in which teachers and children reflected together on what had been learned. The results showed that children who took part in the talk lessons discussed issues in more depth and for longer, participated more equally and fully, and provided more reasons to support their views. Moreover, the target children became significantly better at doing problems individually, when compared with the children in the control group. The implication was that, the children who had experienced the 'Talk Lessons' appeared to have improved their reasoning capabilities by taking part in the group experience of explicit, rational, and collaborative problem-solving. According to Mercer (2002:16) these improved capabilities can be related to the concept of 'exploratory talk', which refers to, "that in which partners engage critically but constructively with each other's ideas. Relevant information is offered for joint consideration. Proposals may be challenged and counter-challenged but, if so, reasons are given and alternatives are offered. Agreement is sought as a basis for joint progress. Knowledge is made publicly accountable and reasoning is visible in the talk."

In line with Mercer's (1999, 2002) views, it is proposed that including the use of pair work in the teacher education curriculum could improve the processes of L2 pedagogy. Pair work could be taught and assessed as a skill in the 'methods', microteaching and teaching practice courses. Tasks for pair work could be taken from the national secondary school language syllabus which suggests the language skills to be taught and the resources to be used (see appendix G). Teacher-led activities coupled with pair work could afford learners opportunities to practice L2 and engage in exploratory talk, which in turn feeds into whole-class sessions in which student teachers and learners reflect together on what was discussed in pairs. For a balance between teacher-led, pair work and whole-class activity, student teachers could be equipped

with skills in organising and leading activities, providing supportive information and providing expert guidance by consolidating what has been learnt in collective whole-class activity.

In summary this section, proposed three ways of improving the quality of teaching processes in the L2 teacher education curriculum. From a sociocultural perspective it is acknowledged that both expert assistance and pair work where learners work together with the teacher's help in the co-construct knowledge. With crucial understandings from the educational culture and physical classroom settings in which learning takes place, it is proposed that L2 teacher education could benefit from adopting and practicing sociocultural perspectives on scaffolded assistance, reflective practice, and the use of pair work in classroom activities in order to enhance the quality of L2 pedagogy in Kenyan secondary schools.

## 5.5 Chapter Summary

This section highlights the key findings from classrooms, documents and interview presented in relation to the second research question. It also proffered possible ways of improving social process of L2 pedagogy in the teacher education curriculum.

It was shown that in L2 teacher education, processes of scaffolded assistance were developed in a very limited way given the lack of a sociocultural theory to drive such an approach to teaching and learning. The mechanisms of assistance known to promote learning through dialogue in collective activity were largely missing from the courses analysed, thus shedding light on the gap in the current theory and practice of L2 teacher education at Maseno University. An examination of classroom settings found that traditional seating arrangements with learners sitting in rows facing the teacher were commonplace in secondary schools and also at Maseno University. These seating arrangements coupled with the types of furniture used, the learning resources available and large numbers of pupils in the classrooms were found to limit flexibility during lessons as well as the types of L2 activities possible with regards to interaction and scaffolding. An analysis on the use of tasks in L2 activity found that processes such as planning prior to problem solving and collaborative pair/group work for problem solving were completely missing from the current practice of L2 pedagogy in secondary schools.

With these findings in mind, section 5.4 proposed possible solutions to improving teacher education while staying sensitive to the prevailing contextual conditions. On the whole, the findings in this study suggest that: the theory of teaching and learning, the existing educational culture and contextual conditions (class size, furniture, physical artefacts) matter in the

operationalization of the sociocultural notion of scaffolding within the ZPD in L2 classrooms. The next chapter discusses how these findings fit within the wider context of sociocultural research on scaffolded assistance and concludes the study.

# CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed at investigating the strategies used by student teachers for scaffolded assistance in L2 classrooms and some of the factors influencing the strategies used. In this chapter, key findings emerging from data in chapters four and five are summarised, and important theoretical and pedagogical implications are established. This chapter is brief as most of the discussions were carried out in the analysis process, it contains seven sections. Section 6.0 presents the summary of research aims, followed by the answer to first research question on the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in the L2 classrooms studied. Section 6.2 answers the second research question by summarising the factors influencing the scaffolding strategies found. In section 6.3, the theoretical implications and the study's contributions are given, while section 6.4 states the study's pedagogical implications, section 6.5 presents the study's limitations. Lastly, suggestions for further research are given in section 6.6 and the thesis concludes with final remarks.

## 6.0 Summary of Aims

The role of an expert's assistance in the course of learning in L2 classrooms is indisputable. The sociocultural perspective to L2 learning emphasises the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge and the expert's role in the process. Studies on scaffolding in whole-class discourse in L2 classrooms such as those by, (Anton, 1999; Gibbons, 2003; Hakamaki, 2005; McNeil, 2012) have shown that learners benefit from teacher assistance for knowledge co-construction. However, these published studies have always been carried out in western countries and there has been none conducted in developing countries such as Kenya.

Given the benefits of scaffolding on pupils learning and development, the specific social practices of L2 teaching and learning in the Kenyan context needed to be identified and explored further. With these in mind, the present study hinged on Vygotsky's ZPD notion and its related scaffolding metaphor to investigate the strategies used by student teachers for assisting performance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms. The study's aim was to contribute to knowledge on scaffolding in a non-western context by exploring L2 interactions among learners and pre-service teachers teaching in naturalistic classroom settings so as to recommend ways of improving scaffolding processes in the teacher education curriculum. The episodes chosen for study were drawn from various whole-class activity areas such as oral

practice exercises, L2 examples and question and answer sessions because these represented the main instructional techniques used in teacher-led whole-class interaction in all the 17 lessons observed in Kenyan secondary school classrooms.

Additionally, an analysis of classroom context factors such as the tasks used in classroom activity, the L2 teacher education courses and physical classroom conditions nuanced understandings of the observed social practices of teaching and learning in Kenyan classrooms. Previous studies on interaction in Kenya conducted among in-service teachers and mainly in primary schools had shown that teachers largely employ a combination of explanations relating to factual information and factual recall questions resulting in the promotion of rote learning (Ackers and Hardman, 2001; Hardman et al., 2009; Pontefract and Hardman, 2005; Hardman et al., 2012). Therefore this study provides knowledge on the scaffolding practices used by pre-service teachers to engage secondary school pupils in L2 problem solving which had not been done before in Kenya. Existing frameworks conceptualising scaffolding by neo-Vygotsky researchers such as Wood et al.'s (1976), Anton (1999), McNeil (2012), Tharp and Gallimore (1988), Palincsar and Brown (1984), Applebee and Langer (1983), Langer and Applebee (1986), Rogoff (1990; 1995) and Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994) were used to locate and elaborate on the actual mechanisms and strategies of scaffolded assistance in teacher-led whole-class activity. With these premises in mind, this case study investigated the following research questions. 1) The strategies used by student teachers to provide scaffolded assistance in secondary school L2 classrooms, 2) The factors influencing the strategies of scaffolded assistance in these classrooms and 3) How processes of scaffolded assistance can be improved at the language teacher education level.

Question one was answered by examining the microgenetic moment-to-moment changes in participants' language behaviour, while question two was answered by analysing the course contents of teacher education program, an interview with a lecturer, learning tasks, and physical classroom environments. Interpretations of the findings from questions one and two led to proposing possible solutions in response to question three (which is answered in section 5.4 of the previous chapter). The sections below discuss the study's main findings and their theoretical and pedagogical implications.

## 6.1 The strategies used by student teachers for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms

The analysis relied on social interactions of teaching and learning to reveal the mechanisms and strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms. Swain (2005) stressed the dialogic nature of language learning, arguing that an understanding of learning processes can be enhanced by using dialogues as the unit of analysis of language learning. In this respect, a micro analysis of lesson transcripts was used to reveal the processes of L2 learning and how assisted performance works in naturalistic Kenya secondary school L2 classrooms.

It was found that learning and L2 knowledge construction was a collective whole-class activity. Through the use of thought provoking questions, oral whole-class practice exercises and examples, student teachers-led discussions which created dialogic spaces in which learners participated and shared responsibilities for problem solving. In the course of scaffolded whole-class activity, student teachers played key roles, by: i) Initiating activities which attracted learner attention and engaged them in the designated areas of L2 learning. ii) Assessing and guiding learner attention to linguistic form and meaning and scaffolding the pedagogic focus and iii) Giving feedback to promote correction or shape responses for L2 acquisition. The three roles played by student teachers are supported by the sociocultural theory's perspective that teacher plays an important role as 'experts' in the pedagogic process, who provide linguistic support to learners until they internalize L2 knowledge and can perform independently.

To further elaborate on the raised points above, it was found that when the student teachers played a vital role in the support process by initiating challenge through thought provoking whole-class activities, dialogic spaces opened up for to extending learners' L2 knowledge. Conversely, dialogic spaces were closed where student teachers elicited simple facts was shown by the teacher-led episodes. This finding confirms the sociocultural view that challenge impacts on knowledge co-construction in joint activity. In sociocultural terms, the linguistic support given to learners is dependent on the teacher challenging the learners, which is seen as essential for maintaining involvement and interest in L2 tasks (Bruner, 1990). It was confirmed that in the Kenyan context, mechanisms such as collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing promote dialogue during intermental activity by creating

communicative spaces in which meanings are negotiated, concepts are explained, and opinion exchanged thus providing opportunities for L2 learning.

The student teachers acted as evaluators as they assessed learner needs, identified learner ZPDs and determine the nature and amount of assistance required for progression towards self-regulation in the L2. Skilful student teachers deployed assistance contingently based on the moment-by-moment development exhibited by pupils during interaction resulting in collaborative problem solving. Scaffolded assistance was only possible where learner ZPDs emerged during thought provoking activity, this finding is in line with the sociocultural view that scaffolding mediates learning within the ZPD.

Student teacher also played the role of providing feedback or correction as a means of assisting performance through the ZPD (Anton, 1999; Walsh, 2006). The study provides evidence in support of previous research on the role feedback in interaction. Smith and Higgins (2006) argued that in the IFR exchange, the quality of the feedback move facilitates interactive learning. They (*ibid*) maintained that more equal dialogue between teachers and learners did develop if in the follow-up move the teacher avoids evaluation and instead requests justifications, connections or counter arguments. Therefore, the feedback move facilitates pupil talk for thinking and learning if responses are opened up and learners probed.

In the present study, the teacher-led episodes were typical of the recitation script in which the teachers' feedback is evaluative which promotes IRF sequences. The analysis revealed that pseudo-authentic and closed questions requiring factual answers and pupil display of knowledge were rarely used to assist learners to develop more complete elaborate ideas. Questions answered by simple recall of answers which were short, cued, right or wrong facilitated rote learning as the student teachers involved lectured and explained concepts to passive pupils thus smothering their efforts to effective intuitive thinkers (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988). Learner-centred episodes on the other hand showed that the quality of feedback from student teachers resulted in enhanced learner participation in terms of knowledge co-construction, extended responses and use of learner ideas to build knowledge. Additionally, in some learner-centred episodes, student teachers invited pupils to give feedback by reviewing each other's contributions. In some cases this resulted in chains of peer feedback which displayed individual learner understandings and facilitated the development of shared knowledge as the student teachers ratified important elements in the responses. Feedback also

enhanced further identifications of ZPDs and knowledge evaluations which when shared publicly learner mistakes acted as starting points for developing shared knowledge as teacher discourse moves elaborated and ratified important aspects of learner contributions thereby marking them as part of target L2 knowledge for appropriation by learners.

In this study, dialogic spaces were used by student teachers to promote strategic thinking among learners as well to guide and shape learner responses for L2 problem solving and were facilitated by mechanisms of assistance such as: collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing. The specific discoursal strategies used for scaffolding were: repetition and assisting questions (Anton, 1999), extended wait time, offering model answers and calling on other students to answer McNeil (2012), reformulation (Walsh, 2006), comprehension checks, explicit feedback, probing questions and recasts. Assisting questions and probing questions resulted in longer learner turns in co-construction of meaning, which in turn, appeared to be received as an open opportunity for the wider participation of other learners. The use of extended wait time, clarification, reformulation, repetition, feedback, recasts and modelling, meant that student teachers could shape learner responses in a processes of co-construction so that appropriate L2 knowledge was available for appropriation by the wider class.

By comparing the scaffolding strategies found in Kenyan non-Western context to those identified by the Western studies reviewed in section 2.3.1, it is concluded that mechanism and strategies of assistance may vary between the Western and non-Western contexts owing to the educational culture and learning resources used. Whereas Langer and Applebee (1986) listed collaborative strategies as*: telling, modelling, questioning, extending, praising* and *correcting* in whole-class interaction, the present study adopted Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) view which situates collaboration as a dialogic activity between an expert and the novice aimed at providing support within the ZPD using graduated and contingent interventions. As a result, it was found that collaboration in the Kenyan L2 whole-class context is facilitated by strategies such as: *non-verbal cues* (from the learners), *comprehension checks, clarification requests* and *calling on other pupils to help in answering questions*. The difference in the scaffolding strategies found can be attributed to the types of tasks used and the class level of the learners. Langer and Applebee's (1986:189) study was carried out in an early childhood language acquisition context where collaborative strategies were employed in the service of tasks such as book reading, peekaboo and puzzle building. On the other hand, the present study conducted

in secondary school L2 classrooms featured knowledge building discussions in whole-class activity suggesting that that the educational context, tasks used and the level of the learners determines the scaffolding strategies possible. This finding confirms Langer and Applebee's (1986:171) view that, "the skills that individuals learn are constrained (or fostered) by the particular cultural and educational contexts within which the individuals grow up"; hence the need for context driven approaches to the adoption and use of universally relevant theories of learning such as sociocultural theory.

Variation in scaffolding strategies was also observed under modelling as a mechanism of assistance. While v*erbal demonstrations* and *recasts* performed modelling functions in the Kenyan whole-class L2 context, the same was achieved by strategies such as *summarising, predicting, clarifying, rephrasing, elaboration* and *asking questions* in Palincsar and Brown's (1984) study, which features scaffolding in a one-to-one reading context, in which a teacher models strategies to an individual learner. The class level of the learners and the instructional contexts are found be significant here. Palincsar and Brown's study was conducted among seventh grade poor comprehenders who needed individual guidance in reading activities in which they were allowed to participate at any level they could. The Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms featured whole-class activities, in large classes, with mixed ability learners and in which multiple ZPDs arise during joint during problem solving. However, in the L2 Kenyan context, scaffolding developed shared knowledge which was subsequently available for all including those whose voices were not heard.

Under questioning as a core mechanism of assistance, the study confirmed that *assisting questions* as proposed by Tharp and Gallimore (1988) and Anton (1999) and *wait time* as was found by McNeil (2012) did provide scaffolding functions. In addition to these, *probing questions* (Cazden, 1983) also provided scaffolded assistance in the Kenyan L2 context. Corrective feedback in the Kenyan non-western context was facilitated by both *explicit* and *implicit feedback* strategies as suggested by western researchers (Aljaafreh and Lantolf 1994; Lyster and Ranta 1997). However, while *comprehension checks* and *clarification requests* performed error correction in Schachter's (1974) explicit-to-implicit feedback continuum, in the Kenyan context comprehension checks and clarification requests appear to be collaborative techniques and were used for checking understanding of concepts or negotiating intersubjectivity respectively in joint activity. *Repetition* and *recasts* were used in corrective feedback as proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) however, recasts were also found to perform

a demonstration function in the Kenyan whole-class activity. Finally, *instructing* (Tharp and Gallimore, 1988) as a core mechanism of assistance was found in whole-class exercises (episode 3 and 4). In the recruitment phase, student teachers assigned learners tasks to complete and started them off by offering guidance on how to complete the task given. Guidance was offered through strategies such as *telling* or *directing* as suggested by Langer and Applebee (1986) and Anton (1999). Since questions and practice exercises are commonly used for L2 pedagogy in Kenyan secondary school classrooms, these findings are useful as they confirm that commonly used discourse strategies do provide scaffolding functions in the Kenyan context and can therefore be used to increase learning opportunities and the quality of L2 learning.

The collective nature of the L2 knowledge developed and the shared or 'distributed' problem solving among the L2 learners with the guidance of student teachers was a common feature in the learner-centred episodes and relates to what Donato (1994) described as the construction of co-knowledge, which results in linguistic change among and within individuals during joint activity. Moreover, the construction of co-knowledge is a collaborative responsibility for the all participants, the learners in this case. The collective nature of scaffolding in whole-class activity is significant as no group or pair work was observed in any of the 17 lessons observed. This is due to the opportunities presented by the intermental social plane which enable L2 learners get help from the expert and others allowing them to progress through their ZPD and to hear or use the language that they will later internalize for independent use (Ellis, 2008; Ohta, 2000; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; Kowal and Swain, 1997; Swain, 2005).

These findings imply that innovations aimed at improving learner-centred scaffolding and processes of L2 pedagogy in Kenya should be sensitive to contextual peculiarities which provide for collective activity and distributed problem solving, both of which are supported by the sociocultural perspective on accessing knowledge with the help of an expert and others.

## 6.2 The factors influencing the strategies used to provide scaffolded assistance in these classrooms?

The analysis of factors influencing the processes of assisting performance revealed that L2 teacher education at Maseno University maintains a traditional approach to L2 pedagogy as social processes used in scaffolded assistance are scarcely developed by the current teacher education curriculum. From the lecturer's interview and the analysis of course documents, it

was revealed that the subject methods courses for English and Literature presented student teachers with an overview of language and literary skills and how these may be taught in the Kenyan L2 context. The microteaching, media and teaching practice courses on the other hand espoused expository methods such as lecture, questions, examples and reinforcement as described in sections 5.1.3; 5.1.4 and propagated the use of teacher controlled artefacts and resources such as chalkboard, charts (2D), 3D material (models), slides, audio and audio-visual material (slide projector and PowerPoint). The findings suggest that the imparted teaching techniques and the resources in use could be responsible for the widespread knowledge transmission approach observed in schools and reported by researchers such as Pontefract and Hardman (2005), Hardman et al. (2009), Hardman et al. (2011).

It was also found that student teachers were not exposed to using tasks and joint activity in groups during their training as the lecture method was dominantly used for pedagogy at the university, which echoes sentiments expressed by Hardman et al.'s (2012) from a study on teacher education in Tanzania – a context similar to Kenya, that trainees are presented with a transmission-based model which stresses hierarchical learning of knowledge and conventional teacher-fronted classroom organisation, failing to provide suitable models upon which novice teachers can base their practice. It can therefore be concluded that the teacher educational curriculum and teaching and learning culture both in the secondary schools and at the university have an impact on the pedagogic practices of assistance used in secondary school L2 classrooms.

The findings on physical classroom conditions revealed that the traditional seating arrangement where learners sit in rows facing the front was in use in all the classrooms observed. Of the 17 schools visited, 14 were public schools with large numbers of pupils ranging from 40-68 pupils per class cramped in small rooms. The 3 private schools in the study had a range of 32-35 pupils per class. Learning resources in both private and public schools were limited to textbooks shared between two or three pupils, the chalkboard and in some cases handmade 2D charts brought in by student teachers. Lastly, from the analysis on use of L2 tasks in classroom activity, no evidence of planning for problem solving or collaborative pair or group work was seen in any of the 17 lessons observed, validating the evidence from the lecturer's interview and course documents which had revealed that the use of group work was not catered for by the teacher education curriculum. This finding suggests that in addition to the teaching and

learning (educational) culture, contextual limitations influence the social processes of assistance possible within the context.

Although the physical conditions in the secondary school classrooms were found to genuinely limit the effective use of classroom interaction and joint activity, the findings reveal a major gap in the L2 teacher education curriculum with regards to the theory and practice information the pedagogic processes used. To a large extent, these shortcoming at the L2 teacher education level accounts for the "narrow repertoire of dialogic practices" seen in Kenyan classrooms as observed by Hardman et al. (2012:827) who argued that "educational quality is obtained through pedagogical processes in the classroom", which is a valid proposal given the interdependence of social and individual processes in the co-construction of knowledge.

Tharp and Gallimore (1988:270) pointed out that in the American context twenty five years ago, teaching practices remained unchanged for a century because, "means of assistance are not used during pre-service and in-service teacher training." They (*ibid*) went on to explain that supplanting the ubiquitous recitation would only be possible through the creation of opportunities for assisted performance during teacher education and training, and that new ways would work better through "discourse in joint activity… assisted performance must occur in the context of productive tasks and the conversation that accompanies them." Consequently, the general implications from the findings in this study point to a move towards harnessing the potential of classroom discourse in transforming the theory and practice of teacher education for L2 pedagogy in Kenya and adopting a sociocultural perspective to guide the process seems apt. However, given the prevailing culture of teaching and learning and the contextual challenges with regards to large class sizes limited resources for L2 learning, the study's findings imply a relationship between the educational culture and language as mediation through scaffolded assistance. There is need for a context driven approach to the adoption and use of sociocultural theory's principles on expert assistance in different cultural contexts as discussed in the next section.

## 6.3 Theoretical Implications

According to Seedhouse (2004:265) a persistent criticism of SLA research has been that classroom practice has not generated theory as it is top-down, and is driven by theories and concepts which may have little relevance to classroom practice, as little attention has been shown in what language teachers actually do. Seedhouse (*ibid*) recommended that pedagogical

theory should be generated inductively from interactional data so as to enable a two-way traffic between theory and practice. Thus the present study attempted to contribute to sociocultural theory by inductively investigating scaffolded assistance in teacher fronted whole-class interaction in the Kenyan non-Western context. An empirical investigating into classroom practice against the sociocultural principle of teaching as assisted performance 'scaffolding' was found to be useful and applicable in the Kenyan context. Wood et al.'s (1976) features of scaffolding were applicable to the traditional teacher fronted Kenyan L2 context and were useful for identifying successful student teachers' scaffolding strategies.

As the study's contextual limitations and the prevailing educational culture provide only for collective scaffolding in whole-class activity. The study furthers understandings on the influence of an educational culture and context on mediated learning. Whereas the sociocultural theory articulates ways by which L2 development occurs in social settings, empirical studies from diverse cultural contexts such as the present one illustrate the quality and character of existing mediational means thus providing the much needed evidence on scaffolded assistance in a non-Western context. According to Johnson and Golombek (2011), such evidence supports L2 practice and teacher education within the broader theoretical guidelines and the specifics of culture, institutional context and historical situations. In relation to this view, the present study found some successful scaffolding strategies which inform the theory and practice of L2 learning and teaching in Kenya as they can be taught to student teachers.

Although no new scaffolding functions were found, the present study revealed the interactional organisation of Kenyan secondary school L2 lessons and showed valuable interactional information on instructed learning processes across phases of a typical lesson. The results from the learner-centred episodes show the specific strategies employed by skilful student teachers to maximise opportunities for learning in collective activity, which demonstrates a sociocultural premise on learning with expert assistance in the Kenyan non-Western context. Furthermore, the roles of student teachers in whole-class interaction suggest that it is possible to address needs of individual learners and extend their knowledge in intermental activity for individual and shared understandings as the whole class shares responsibility for problem solving and benefits from mediatory resources.

As discussed in chapter two, a sociocultural theory of mind is founded on Vygotsky's view that human cognition emerges out of participation in social activities. The theory claims that human

cognition is mediated in a cultural environment by tools and signs, notably language, which is acquired and ultimately becomes the medium of thought. In line with the Vygotskian perspective on human cognition, Johnson and Golombek (2011) defined cognitive development as an interactive process mediated by culture, context, language and social interaction. With this stance in mind, the present study presents mechanism and strategies useful for scaffolding in a context which echoes of its colonial past subsumed within the educational systems and curricula and in the status of English as an official language. Together with classroom factors such as large class sizes and limited resources for teaching and learning, the study provides insights into suitable instructional practices and the core mechanisms which create opportunities for cognition and L2 development in context. The core mechanisms are: collaboration, modelling, questioning, feedback and instructing. The specific discoursal strategies used for scaffolding are summarised in Fig. 4.1, while the functions served by each core mechanism are provided in section 5.4.1. The present study's findings may prove fruitful for teachers and teacher educators in similar educational contexts in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Benbow et al., 2007). The next section provides the study's pedagogic implications.

## 6.4 Pedagogical Implications

There are a number of implications for L2 pedagogy and teacher education in Kenya and similar contexts as the study showed the means of providing scaffolded assistance in such classrooms. The research triangulated data from real L2 lesson transcripts, teacher education course documents, L2 text books and an interview from lecturer at the university in order to provide a comprehensive view of L2 learning with assistance in teacher-learner interactions. It is also a unique study as the case of pre-service student teachers is used to shed light on their teaching practices in the course of their training. Thus, the knowledge obtained from the study provides a basis for understanding the roles commonly taken by student teachers in the knowledge construction process as well as the opportunities created for learning in L2 classrooms, and can be used as a basis for innovations in language teacher education and further research in the same context.

From a practical point of view, the study informs the policy and practice of teacher education in Kenya which has hitherto focused on the subject content, methods of teaching and traditional approached to L2 pedagogy in which teachers play a dominant role in classroom interaction for knowledge transmission. It demonstrates the potential of interaction and assisting performance on language, thinking and L2 learning and the need to promote talk among pupils

themselves as well as with their teachers as a way of using language to describe, consolidate and appropriate shared experience. The results point to the following recommendations:

1. Adopting the social view of learning to inform L2 teaching approaches and methods. The sociocultural principles of mediation through language, interaction and assistance by capable others holds the promise for improving the quality of language education in Kenya.
2. Create awareness on the teacher's language behaviour on interaction and learning and how their actions shape or hinder learning opportunity. This can be done by including content on language, interaction and learning in the methods and microteaching courses. It can also be achieved by training students to transcribe and analyse micro-lessons in order to reveal the features of interaction, both facilitative of and obstructive of pupil learning.
3. Using microteaching videos for reflective practice. Giving student teachers opportunities to reflect on their actions during micro-teaching along with feedback from their lecturers can help the student teachers to brainstorm alternative ways of achieving pedagogic goals using language, teaching methods and learning materials.
4. Promote the use of tasks and group activities during teacher training to give student teachers opportunities engage in knowledge co-construction as it would afford them chances to learn from practice and gain confidence on doing the same as professional teachers. In the methods courses and microteaching practicals, group activities can provide opportunities for exploring L2 teaching approaches and their possible applications in real L2 classrooms.

## 6.5 Limitations

The present study is a case study of Maseno university student teachers of L2, and its aim was to investigate the strategies used by this specific group for providing scaffolded assistance in Kenyan secondary schools classrooms. In order to achieve the research aims, various sources of data were used to inform the issues under investigation. It is therefore important to be aware of the study's limitations as the findings are to be read with caution as they can only generalizable to interactions among pre-service teachers of L2 in similar contexts.

The data collected from L2 classrooms intended to capture interactions in their naturalistic settings. However, the presence of the researcher and a video cameraman recording classrooms events is likely to have affected the student teachers' and the learners' behaviour. For example,

one student teacher asked her pupils if they are silent because of the video camera. Although the presence of an observer in a student teacher's classroom is common during teaching practice, the effect of the visible video camera cannot be ascertained. It is believed that the briefings given to the participants before the recordings helped them to relax and video camera was soon forgotten. The interaction between student teachers and their pupils seemed normal when compared to other unrecorded teaching practice assessments observed by the researcher in the same period.

The video recordings were of good quality and the help of an external transcriber was enlisted for transcribing eleven of the seventeen lessons. The transcripts partially represented speech as not all special elements such as tone and facial expressions were captured. However, tonal features are included in sections where their use complemented verbal messages. To ensure uniformity, the same transcription system was used by both the researcher and external transcriber, furthermore the researcher listened to the recordings over and over again and while going through externally transcribed transcripts in order improve them for transcription fidelity.

It was not possible to hold stimulated recall interviews with student teachers to explore the intentions behind their actions, particularly those which could not be discovered from the classroom observations and video recordings. This was because of teaching practice assessment, even though observations for this research where unrelated to the main teaching practice exercise, student teachers were concerned that giving information on their actions might affect their teaching practice score. Nevertheless, the findings are valid and representative as measures were taken to triangulate the interaction with documents such as the lesson plans and textbooks used.

## 6.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The present study provided information on scaffolding strategies used by Maseno university student teachers during whole-class activity. It also shed some light on some of the factors limiting the effective use of social processes of teaching in Kenyan secondary school L2 classrooms. As the investigations into scaffolding practices cannot be generalised to all L2 interactions in Kenyan classrooms, in future similar studies could investigate the scaffolding strategies employed at all levels of schooling by both in-service teachers and student teachers

from other universities and teacher training institutions in order to find out the kinds of scaffolding strategies used by Kenyan L2 teachers in general.

Further research is also needed to experiment on the effect of learning tasks and group work on scaffolding in the Kenyan context. Therefore, it would be interesting design or adopt and adapt interactive tasks for or from the Kenyan secondary school syllabus, train student teachers to use them in collaborative pair or group work and test their effect on scaffolding for L2 learning.

## Final Remarks

This study presents the reality of using learner-centred scaffolding in Kenyan secondary school classrooms and its effect on productive L2 problem solving and hence L2 language learning. The study provides teachers, lecturers, researchers and policy makers in the area of L2 pedagogy and teacher education with better understandings on social processes of teaching such as interaction and scaffolding in Kenyan L2 classrooms. The multiple sources of evidence employed in this study illustrate the different factors at work in current L2 pedagogy in Kenya and importantly, it proffers a sociocultural perspective on expert assistance and the mechanisms of assistance to be used in the complex tasks of transforming the quality of L2 pedagogy and teacher education in Kenya and less affluent contexts.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Transcription Conventions

(Adapted from Atkinson and Heritage, 1984)

| | |
|---|---|
| ST | Student Teacher |
| L | Learner (unidentified) |
| L1, L2 etc. | Identified Learner |
| LL | Several Learners at once |
| [[ ]] | Simultaneous utterances – (beginning [[ ) and (end ]] ) |
| [ ] | Overlapping utterances – (beginning [ ) and (end ] ) |
| = | Contiguous utterances (Latching intra/inter turn) |
| (0.4) | Represents the tenths of a second between utterances |
| (.) | Represents a micro-pause (1 tenth of a second or less) |
| : | Sound extension of a word (more colons demonstrate longer stretches) |
| . | Fall in tone |
| , | Continuing intonation (not necessarily between clauses) |
| - | An abrupt stop in articulation |
| ? | Rising inflection (not necessarily a question) |
| LOUD | Capitals indicate increased volume |
| __ | Underline words indicate emphasis |
| ↑ ↓ | Rising or falling intonation (before part of word) |
| ° ° | Surrounds talk that is quieter |
| hhh | Audible aspirations (out breath) |
| .hhh | Inhalations (in breath) |
| .hh. | Laughter within a word |
| > < | Surrounds talk that is faster |
| < > | Surrounds talk that is slower |
| (what) | Transcriber unsure |
| (( )) | Analyst's notes |

## Appendix B: ED1 Course Outline

**ED1: METHODS OF TEACHING ENGLISH**
**Course Outline - Lecture Schedule 45 Hours**

**SECTION 1: BACKGROUND TO LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

| | |
|---|---|
| Various purposes for which English is used | - 1 hr |
| Aims and purposes of teaching a second language | - 1 hr |
| Problems of teaching English as a second language in Kenya | - 2 hrs |

**SECTION 2: THE TEACHING OF LANGUAGE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i) | A study of teaching materials for English. | |
| a) | The English Language Syllabus | - 2 hrs |
| b) | The course books | - 2 hrs |
| c) | Resources for Language teaching. | - 2 hrs |
| ii) | Methods of teaching English as a second language | - 3 hrs |
| iii) | Schemes of work for English Language | - 2 hrs |
| iv) | Lesson plans for English Language. | - 2 hrs |
| v) | Records of work | - 2 hrs |
| vi) | Developing the listening skills and the associated sub skills | - 2 hrs |
| vii) | Developing the speaking skill and the sub skills | - 2 hrs |
| viii) | Integration of the four major language skills | - 2 hrs |
| ix) | Integration of English Language and Literature | - 2 hrs |

**SECTION 3: ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| i) | Tests in English Language | - 1 hr |
| ii) | Assessment in English Language | - 1 hr |
| iii) | Evaluation in English Language | - 1 hr |
| iv) | Construction of Objective questions | - 1 hr |
| v) | Construction of Essay questions | - 1 hr |
| vi) | Marking schemes | - 1 hr |
| vii) | Marking of Examinations | - 2 hrs |
| viii) | Reports on learner performance | - 2 hrs |
| | EXAMINATIONS & PRACTICALS | - 12 hours |

## Appendix C: ED2 Course Outline

**ED2 METHODS OF TEACHING LITERATURE**

**Course Outline and Schedule: 45 Hours**

1. Aims and objectives of teaching literature in the secondary school curriculum
2. Current issues in the teaching of literature
3. The Kenya secondary school syllabus of English literature
4. Kinds of teachers and characteristics of a good teacher
5. The teaching of literature, important sub-skills to be acquired
    - Teaching oral literature
    - Genres of literature - Methodology
    - Teaching of the novel
6. Problems of teaching literature
    - Identifying problems experienced in schools
7. Integrated approach of teaching English and literature
8. Learning resources
9. Schemes of work and lesson plan

## Appendix D: ED3 Course Outline

### ED 3: MICROTEACHING AND MEDIA PRACTICALS

1. **Introduction:** Educational Technology is a course that is designed to enable students to practice the concepts taught in general methods of teaching and special methods of teaching. The course equips students with practical skills needed in the classroom to enhance the learning experience.
2. **Course objectives**: By the end of this course the student should be able to:
   a) Design, produce and utilize a wide range of audio-visual materials for use in the classroom.
   b) Use various techniques and strategies related to the learning process to enhance student acquisition and retention of knowledge and skills.
   c) Evaluate audio-visual materials and teaching strategies for effectiveness in a variety of classroom settings.
3. **Course content and time frame:**

| Schedule | Topic Content | Topic Objective(s) The learner should be able to: | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lecture 1 | **Part I: Media Practicals**<br>Introduction to educational technology<br>Use of chalkboard/lettering | Explain the role of educational technology in the training of a professional teacher<br>Describe the forms of educational media used in the classroom<br>Demonstrate proper use of the chalkboard and lettering in the classroom | 7mks |
| Lecture 2 | Two dimensional materials | Describe at least three forms of two dimensional materials used in the classroom<br>Discuss the strengths and limitations in using two dimensional materials in the learning process<br>Create at least one two dimensional material and write a lesson plan to incorporate its use. | 7mks |
| Lecture 3 | Three dimensional materials | Differentiate between two and three dimensional materials in relation to their strengths and weaknesses.<br>Plan a suitable lesson incorporating the use of at least one type of three dimensional material<br>Prepare and display the three dimensional teaching material according to the guidelines given | 8mks |
| Lecture 4 | Audio-visual materials | Describe audio, visual and audio-visual materials used in the learning process<br>Justify the increasing use of computer applications in the classroom<br>Prepare a presentation using either visual or audio visual media. | 8mks |
| Lecture 5 | Script writing (group work) | Justify the use of radio broadcasts in the classroom<br>Plan and record a radio program. | 15mks |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Prepare a lesson plan that incorporates the radio program | |
| Lecture 6 | **Part II: Microteaching**<br>Set induction and closure | Discuss the role of motivation and sustaining of attention in ensuring skill and knowledge retention<br>Use the knowledge and skills learnt to prepare 5 minute set induction and closure lesson<br>Teach the lesson prepared | 10mks |
| Lecture 7 | Verbal exposition | Justify the use of verbal exposition in teaching<br>Use the knowledge and skills learnt to prepare 5 minute verbal exposition lesson<br>Teach the lesson prepared | 10mks |
| Lecture 8 | Use of examples | Differentiate between inductive and deductive reasoning<br>Describe at least three categories of examples used in the classroom<br>Use the knowledge and skills learnt to prepare 5 minute lesson<br>Teach the lesson prepared | 10mks |
| Lecture 9 | Questioning and reinforcement | Suggest reasons why questioning and reinforcement are critical to retention of knowledge<br>Discuss the role of open and close ended questions<br>Use the knowledge and skills learnt to prepare 5 minute lesson<br>Teach the lesson prepared | 10mks |
| Lecture 10 | Integrated skills | Use the knowledge and skills learnt through the course to prepare a 10 minute lesson<br>Teach the lesson prepared | 15mks |

**6. Assessment 100% Marks**

Assessment will be conducted on a weekly basis. Each skill carries marks as indicated in the topic outline. Marks are ONLY awarded for work handed in on time.

## Appendix E: Teaching Practice Assessment Criteria

### ED4: TEACHING PRACTICE OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

# MASENO UNIVERSITY

## TEACHING PRACTICE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

NAME: _____ REG. NO: _____ ZONE _____

SCHOOL: _____ FORM: _____

SUBJECT: _____ DATE: _____

TOPIC: _____ TIME: _____

| CRITERION | PERFORMANCE MARK DISTRIBUTION | | | REMARKS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B/AV | AV | AB/AV | REMARKS |
| **1. PREPARATION (T/Marks 12)**<br>**a) Scheme of Work (From Syllabus) T/Mark 2)**<br>Availability, self evaluation (M/Limit - 2) | 0 | 1 | 2 | |
| **b) Lesson Plan (T/Marks 10)**<br>i). Objectives: audience, behaviour, standard and condition. (M/Limit -4)<br>ii). Learning activities: varied, challenging, learner-centered (M/Limit -2)<br>iii).Sequential arrangement of content and concurrence with Scheme (M/Limit -4) | 0-4 | 5-6 | 7-10 | |
| **2. PRESENTATION (T/Marks -80)**<br>**a) Introduction (T/Mark 5)**<br>Use of learners' experience and link with current lesson (set induction skills) (M/Limit -5) | 0-2 | 3 | 4-5 | |
| **b) Lesson development (T/Marks 30)**<br>i). Logical presentation of content (M/Limit -5)<br>ii). Relevance of content to class level (M/Limit -5)<br>iii). Adequacy of content to lesson time (M/Limit -5)<br>iv). Strategies and methods appropriate to content (M/Limit -5)<br>v). Use of teaching skills: motivation, reinforcement, questioning, stimulus variation, verbal exposition (M/Limit -5)<br>vi). Mastery of content (M/Limit -5) | 0-12 | 13-18 | 19-30 | |
| **c) Communication (T/Marks 5)**<br>i). Verbal (fluency, voice pitch, audibility and use of appropriate language)<br>ii). Non verbal (appropriate use of gestures, eye-contact, body movements, demeanor etc.) (M/Limit -5) | 0-2 | 3 | 4-5 | |
| **d) Use of Resource Materials (T/Marks 15)**<br>i). Chalkboard layout and use (M/Limit -3)<br>ii). Timing and attractiveness (M/Limit -3)<br>iii). Appropriateness (M/Limit -4)<br>iv). Innovativeness, originality and creativity (M/Limit -5) | 0-6 | 7-8 | 9-15 | |
| **e) Classroom Organization & Management (T/Marks 20)**<br>i ). Control and knowledge of learners by name (M/Limit -5)<br>ii). Learner participation (M/Limit -5)<br>iii). Use of groupwork/provision for individual differences (M/Limit -5)<br>iv). Teacher / Learner rapport (M/Limit -5) | 0-8 | 9-10 | 11-20 | |
| **f) Conclusion (T/Marks -5)**<br>Closure skills: review, questions (M/Limit -2)<br>Concluding activities, evaluation and M/Limit -2)<br>Assignment (M/Limit -1) | 0-2 | 3 | 4-5 | |
| **3. Teacher Personality &Organization (T/Marks -5)**<br>Confidence, dressing, mannerisms, maintenance of records, handling of challenges. (M/Limit -5) | 0-2 | 3 | 4-5 | |
| **4. Use of previous comments and self appraisal on the lesson. (M/Limit 3)** | 0-1 | 2 | 3 | |
| | | | | |
| | | **Total Marks** | | |

Supervisor's Name..... Signature: .....: Date: .....

## Appendix F: Secondary School Class Sizes

**Number of pupils in each of the 17 classrooms observed**

| School Type, Class and Lesson | Number in Class |
|---|---|
| CAT 1 Boys, Form 1 (Adjectives) | 54 |
| *CAT 2 Boys, Form 1a (Adverbs) | 54 |
| *CAT 2 Boys, Form 1b (Adverbs) | 44 |
| CAT 2 Girls, Form 1 (Simple Past) | 45 |
| CAT 2 Girls, Form 1 (Informal Letters) | 48 |
| CAT 2 Girls, Form 1 (Adjectives) | 48 |
| CAT 3 Mixed, Form 2 (Active, Passive Voice) | 44 |
| **CAT 3 Mixed, Form 2 (Business Letters) | 55 |
| CAT 3 Mixed, Form 2 (Business Letters) | 42 |
| CAT 3 Mixed, Form 1 (Adjectives) | 45 |
| PRIVATE Mixed, Form 2 (Formal Letters) | 32 |
| PRIVATE Mixed, Form 2 (Songs) | 35 |
| PRIVATE Mixed, Form 2 (Trickster Narratives) | 33 |
| CAT 1 Girls, Form 1 (Oral Poetry) | 68 |
| CAT 2 Girls, Form 2 (Riddles) | 40 |
| CAT 2 Girls, Form 2 (Features of Style) | 44 |
| **CAT 3 Mixed, Form 2 (Fieldwork) | 55 |

*same school (different teachers, different class)

**same class (same school, same class, different lessons)

## Appendix G: Tasks

Episode 3 – Exercise 5 p.103

Mwangi, P., Kisiriko, F., Gichema, W. and Nyaa, T. (2003) Excelling in English book 1. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

*Exercise 5*

**Choose the suitable adverbs from the list provided in the box to complete the following sentences.**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| daily | politely | hungrily | quietly |
| slowly | yesterday | patiently | sometimes |

1. Olouch takes tea _____
2. Jacob ate _____
3. Kimani visited his grandmother _____
4. A cat walks _____
5. He waited for us _____
6. We did not milk the cows _____
7. Jack was reprimanded by his mother for eating _____

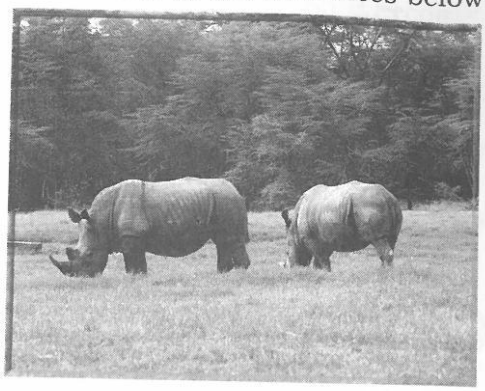
1) Episode 4 – Exercise 3 p.123

Bukenya, A., Njeng'ere, D., Kioko, A. and Mutei, V. (2003) Head Start Secondary English, Form 1. Nairobi: Oxford

**Exercise 3**

Pick out the non-gradable adjectives from those in italics in the sentences below and make your own sentences.

1. Have you ever seen a *live* snake?
2. She told the stranger a *complete* lie.
3. This is a *comfortable* room.
4. Jane has a *woollen* jacket.
5. Musa was a *faithful* servant.
6. My brother is doing a *secretarial* course
7. A *white* rhino is not *actually white.*
8. Many people love *Kenyan* coffee.
9. It is hard to talk to a *tired* person.
10. A *female* sheep is called an ewe.



*A white rhino is not actually white*

**My text: Informal letters 2**

2) Episode 7 – Group work (p.43)

Akivaga, K. and Bole, O. (1982) Oral Literature: A School Certificate Course. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

## GROUP WORK

**1.** Make a list of some of the trickster stories you can remember.
**2.** Tell several stories in your groups.
**3'** For each of the examples of trickster stories told, discuss the following:

(a) Who are the key characters in the story? How do they behave?
(b) What is the theme of the story?
(c) Is each story unique in the theme it handles?

## Appendix H: Consent Forms

1)

**School Participation Consent Form**

**Study title**:

**Researcher**:

**Institutions**:

**Email**:

**Study Aim**:

**School**: _____

**Address:** _____

I give consent for Form ___ to participate in this study. I have fully been informed of what participation will involve and understand that a pupil can withdraw from this study at any time without giving reason and without penalty.

I also give consent for recordings to be made of the classroom events.

I give consent for classroom data to be used by the researcher in the following ways. *(Please tick all that apply)*

PhD Thesis ☐ Publications ☐ Teaching ☐

**Date**: _____ **Signed**_____

Head teacher

2)

**Student Teachers' Participation Consent Form**

**Study title**:

**Researcher**:

**Institution**:

**Email**:

**Study Aim**:

**Student Teacher**: _____

**School**: _____

**Address**: _____

I give my consent to participate in this study. I have fully been informed of what participation will involve and understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving reason and without penalty.

I also give consent for recordings to be made relating to my participation.

I give consent for classroom data to be used by the researcher in the following ways. *(Please tick all that apply)*

PhD Thesis ☐ Publications ☐ Teaching ☐

**Date**: _____ **Signed**_____

Student Teacher

3)

**ELTE Lecturers Participation Consent Form**

**Study title**:

**Researcher**:

**Institution**:

**Email**:

**Study Aim**:

**Lecturer**: _____

**Department**: _____

**Course title**: _____

I give my consent to participate in this study. I have fully been informed of what participation will involve and understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without giving reason and without penalty.

I also give consent for recordings to be made relating to my participation.

I give consent for classroom data to be used by the researcher in the following ways. *(Please tick all that apply)*

PhD Thesis ☐ Publications ☐ Teaching ☐

**Date**: _____ **Signed**_____

Lecturer

4)

**Classroom Observation data collection sheet**

**Section I: General information**

Date of observation: _____

Zone: _____

Name of School: _____

Type of school: _____

Class: _____

Number in class: _____

Age range: _____

Subject: _____

Topic: _____

Period: _____

Time: _____

Student teacher: _____

## Appendix I: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

HARAMBEE

**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telegrams: "SCIENCETECH", Nairobi
Telephone: 254-020-241349, 2213102
254-020-310571, 2213123.
Fax: 254-020-2213215, 318245, 318249
When replying please quote

P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RRI/12/1/SS-011/491/5**

Date: **26th April, 2011**

Dorine June Munaba Lugendo
New Castle University
UNITED KINGDOM

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on **"Investigating classroom interacting in the training of English language teachers at Maseno University, Kenya"** I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research **in selected district in Rift Valley, Western, Central, Nyanza and Nairobi Provinces** for a period ending ***31st August, 2012.***

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioners and the District Education Officers in the selected Districts in Rift Valley, Western, Central, Nyanza and Nairobi Districts** before embarking on the research project.

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

**P. N. NYAKUNDI**
**FOR: SECRETARY/CEO**

Copy to:

The District Commissioners
Selected Districts in Rift Valley, Western
Central, Nyanza & Nairobi Provinces

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