

**A DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE ENGLISH OF
KENYAN UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THEIR
PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Institute of Postgraduate Studies of Kabarak University in
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy in
Linguistics.**

KABARAK UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER, 2025

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to those with a passion to enrich the teaching of second languages in order to realize proficiency.

ABSTRACT

Language curricula often cite communicative competence as the goal for teaching language. This study describes communicative competence and proficiency in the English of Kenyan university freshmen. The study also establishes how communicative competence influences students' proficiency in English. The focus on the communicative competence of university students was prompted by the global debate on university students' apparent inability to competently communicate in English. Consequently, they may be unable to meet language demands in the workplace. This work was aimed at measuring how far Kenyan university freshmen had acquired communicative competence, and how this influenced their proficiency in English. The study was guided by four objectives: to describe communicative competence in the English of Kenyan university freshmen; to describe their proficiency in English; to establish how far their communicative competence impacted their proficiency in English; and finally, to compare their levels of communicative competence in written English with those in their spoken English. To describe communicative competence, this research used Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence, which identifies grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse components of communicative competence. To describe levels of proficiency, the common European framework of reference for languages was used. The study is a descriptive/diagnostic research with a sample of 405 Kenyan university freshmen drawn from 15 public and private universities in Kenya in 2021. Random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select study subjects, while written and spoken tests were used to collect data. In-depth content analysis of the data was done to establish the students' levels of communicative competence and proficiency in English. A t-test was carried out to determine the impact of communicative competence on proficiency. Another t-test was used to compare the students' oral communicative competence with their competence in written English. Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the study sample's average score for communicative competence was found to be 2.612 for written texts and 3.1525 for spoken texts. The proficiency level for both the spoken and the written English was found to be B1 (threshold). The study also found that for grammatical, discourse and sociolinguistic competence, the level of proficiency increases with increasing communicative competence. Additionally, the level of communicative competence for the spoken study data was found to be higher than that of the written texts. Findings of the current study are of benefit to educational policy makers and teachers of English since it exposes areas that need improvement in order to realize the goal of communicative competence in the teaching of English in Kenya. The study also adds to the existing body of knowledge in second language acquisition, particularly the acquisition of English by Kenyan second language learners of the language. This work analyzed productive language skills: written and spoken language. Future researchers can analyse communicative competence and proficiency in the receptive skills: listening and reading.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACTFL	:	American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages
CEFR	:	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
CLT	:	Communicative language Teaching
CUE	:	Commission for University Education
K.I.E.	:	Kenya Institute of Education (Currently KICD) - Kenya Institute of curriculum Development
KUCCPS	:	Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service
L1	:	First language
L2	:	Second language
T-test	:	A test that compares two groups to establish the significance of their relationship.
MOE	:	Ministry of Education

CONCEPTUAL AND OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accuracy: Accuracy is normally defined as the quality or state of being correct or precise. In this study, it means the ability to select correct utterances to pass the intended meaning (Baily, 2005).

Acquisition: In a general sense, acquisition is the obtaining of assets or objects. In this study, acquisition will be used to indicate the unconscious development of a target language that has been acquired as a consequence of real communication (Krashen, 1987).

Competence: This term is generally taken to mean the ability to do something successfully or efficiently. In this study it refers to the shared intuitive knowledge of the rules of a language by a native speaker - listener set in a speech community whose speech contains little variation. This speaker-listener is unaffected by non-linguistic factors such as memory lapses, fatigue and slips of the tongue (Chomsky, 1965, p.3).

Communicative competence: It refers to the conscious and unconscious knowledge of an individual about a language and language use. In this study, communicative competence is viewed as having four components which are linguistic/grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Discourse competence: This term refers to the logical connections between sentences in a text that aid in making a text meaningful. It is viewed as including knowledge of cohesion and coherence that is crucial in interpreting utterances (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Fluency: In a general sense, fluency refers to the property of a person as being able to deliver information quickly and with expertise. In this study, it is considered to be the ability to fill time with talk, ability to talk in coherent, reasoned and semantically dense sentences, ability to say appropriate things in a wide range of contexts and finally the ability to create and imagine in language use (Fillmore, 1979).

Freshman/Freshmen: A university student in their first year in university, college or school. In this study, this term is used interchangeably with, and to refer to a university first year student.

Learning: In a general sense, learning refers to the process of acquiring new information. In this study, it refers to the conscious representation of rules of a language that are a product of instruction (Krashen, 1987).

Linguistic/Grammatical competence: In this study, grammatical or linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of phonological, syntactic, morphological, lexical and semantic rules of a language that enable speakers to produce correct structures (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Performance: Generally, performance refers to the accomplishing of a task or function. In this study, it refers to the actual production of language (Chomsky, 1965, p.3).

Proficiency: In a general sense, proficiency refers to a high degree of skill or expertise. In this study, proficiency refers to the knowledge and skill that a speaker has in using language in real-life contexts.

Register: Among other meanings, register is a term used to refer to the level of formality of a text. In this study, register refers to specific ways of using language that are associated with particular professions or social groups. (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021)

Sheng: In this study, Sheng is taken to mean an argot spoken in Kenya and East Africa, mostly among the youth which is a mix of English, Kiswahili and mother tongue

Sociolinguistic competence: The social contexts that exist in the use of language which include topic, participants, their relationships, social status, sex, age, and many others (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Strategic competence: The verbal and non-verbal strategies that compensate for breakdowns and at the same time enhance effectiveness of communication (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Style: Generally, style refers to a distinctive manner of behaving or conducting oneself. In this study, style refers to a set of linguistic variants at the disposal of a language user. (Saville-Troike, 2003)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Language learning, teaching and testing have for a long time concentrated on grammatical rules and structures. However, this approach has resulted in learners who have mastered the rules of the language in question, yet they cannot effectively communicate in a variety of social and cultural real-life contexts, meaning that they lack proficiency. This has necessitated a shift in approach to embrace an approach that does not simply focus on linguistic competence, but pays attention to other components of communication. Such an approach is communicative competence, which, in addition to looking at linguistic competence, also pays attention to other competencies such as strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, and discourse competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983).

The term “competence” has been central in the study of language and has been defined variously by different linguists. Chomsky (1965) draws a distinction between “competence” and “performance” (p. 3). He defines “performance” as the actual use of language in real situations while “competence” is defined as the mental knowledge of the rules of a language by an ideal speaker/listener set in a completely homogeneous speech community. This speaker-listener is said to be one who is unaffected by non linguistic factors such as memory lapses, fatigue, and slips of the tongue. Chomsky is of the view that studies of language should focus on competence as opposed to performance since competence is unaffected by non-linguistic factors.

The term “Communicative Competence” was coined by Hymes (1972) in reaction to what he believed was the inadequacy of Noam Chomsky’s definition of competence. Hymes holds the view that speakers of a language require much more than linguistic competence, as defined by Chomsky, to communicate effectively in a language. In Hymes’ view, for a speaker to produce and understand utterances, they not only need linguistic competence, but they also require contextual/sociolinguistic competence, which covers cultural values, norms and conventions. Hymes’ view is supported by other linguists such as Widdowson (1983), Savignon (1972) and Bachman (1990). Their consensus is that one requires more than knowledge of grammatical rules in a language in order to communicate effectively in the language. They believe that an effective communicator knows what to say, when to say it, how to say it and when to keep silent. Competence in all these areas makes a speaker communicatively competent.

Several theories explaining communicative competence have been advanced by a number of scholars; among them is one by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). They observe that communicative competence comprises four competencies: sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic and grammatical/linguistic competence. In this view, sociolinguistic competence refers to all the social contexts that exist in the use of language which include topic, participants, their relationships, social status, sex, age, and many others. It is argued that these factors influence linguistic choices, style and register.

Another component of communicative competence in this view is discourse competence. It is viewed as including knowledge of cohesion and coherence that is crucial in interpreting utterances particularly when literal meaning is at variance with speaker’s intention. For instance, in a text that talks about corruption by parliamentarians, a sentence like “The parliament has become a den of thieves” will be meaningful despite the fact that the

writer's intention is not the literal meaning. Certain lexical and grammatical features will enable the reader to interpret the sentence in light of the preceding text so they opt for the figurative meanings of "den" and "thieves".

A third component of communicative competence according to Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) is strategic competence. This is defined as the verbal and non-verbal strategies that compensate for breakdowns and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of communication. They include strategies such as paraphrasing, for example, "sitting space" for "lounge", circumlocution, for instance "the thing used to open bottles" for "corkscrew" and avoidance of words or phrases that have not been mastered well.

Finally, grammatical competence refers to the knowledge of rules observed in the use of vocabulary, rules used in sentence formation, pronunciation, spelling and semantics. This last component of communicative competence coincides with what Chomsky refers to as competence.

These views of communicative competence are corroborated by Yano's assertion that "The competence ... native speakers ... possess ... include their ability to handle linguistic variation and the various uses of language in context." (Yano, 2003 p. 2). This means that possessing rules of a language in the mind of the speaker alone is insufficient if the speaker is to function in different situations effectively. The implication here is that second language (L2) learners have more to learn/be taught than just rules of a language (grammar) for them to be proficient in the second language.

There has been a general debate decrying the lack of proficiency in English in high school and university students in countries that speak English as a second language. For instance, Lasala (2013) observes in her study that the communicative competence of senior

school students in the Philippines was wanting: the levels of communicative competence of the students in both speaking and writing skills scored an average rate of 3.15 and 2.84, respectively, measured on a scale of 1 to 5. Anyadiegwu (2012) also notes that more than half of her study sample of university freshmen in Nigeria had levels of communicative competence that were less than average: a total of one hundred and forty-seven (147) students representing 61.2 percent of the study's population scored below the pass mark, while a total of ninety-three (93) students representing 38.8 percent of the population scored pass marks. Similarly, Boadi (1991), as cited in Aliyu (1995, p. 4), observes that students entering Nigerian universities have challenges comprehending and using English and thus negotiation of meaning in English, which is the medium of instruction, is difficult for them. The Kenyan situation is not any different. Due to a lack of sufficient communicative competence, students often code switch to Kiswahili, or "sheng", in conversations or group discussions in class (Abenga, 2005). Similarly, Gudu (2015) observes that a majority of Form four school leavers in Kenya cannot sustain a conversation in English without occasionally code switching to "Sheng" or Kiswahili to express meanings that they have problems expressing in English. Furthermore, M'mbone et al. (2015) observe that even after completion of High School and attaining good grades in English as a subject, Kenyan students are still unable to competently express themselves orally. This lack of proficiency portends a lot of problems for such students in a country where English is the official language, the language of instruction and a language that educational stakeholders regard as a tool for social and economic upward mobility.

Communicative competence and proficiency are concepts that are closely related. Spolsky (1989) draws a distinction between proficiency and communicative competence. In his view, proficiency refers to knowledge and skill that a speaker has in using a language in

real-life contexts, while communicative competence is a theory of the nature of such knowledge. The implication of this definition is that communicative competence is the abstract knowledge that one possesses on how to use language in different real-life situations, while proficiency is the actual demonstration of that knowledge and ability in the production of language. This seems to be in agreement with Council of Europe (2001, pp. 8-9), which observes that proficiency demonstrates what a language user is able to do, while communicative competences are knowledge skills which empower a person to act using linguistic means. It is further noted that components of communicative competence characterize types of competencies internalized by a speaker. This also agrees with Hymes (1972), who defined communicative competence as the conscious and unconscious knowledge of an individual about a language and language use.

It seems that the levels of the components of communicative competence achieved by a speaker determine their proficiency. According to Council of Europe (2020), among the methods of measuring proficiency is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which recognises six levels of proficiency: the breakthrough level, which is the lowest stage of generative language use, allows the language user to interact simply, asking and answering basic questions instead of relying on finite, rehearsed, situation-specific phrases. The second level of proficiency in this method is called waystage, representing a speaker who can fulfil social functions, such as using polite forms of address or greeting, asking and answering questions about work or their free time, and doing simple transactions like banking, travelling, or using public transport. The third level of proficiency is called threshold; at this stage, a speaker shows some language flexibility to express much of what they want to say, although they may pause for grammatical and lexical planning, and repair is quite evident. The fourth level of proficiency is called vantage, where

the speaker can advance arguments, persuade others, and demonstrates discourse competence through the use of cohesive devices and connectors to organize text. The fifth level is known as Effective Operational Proficiency, which describes a speaker who commands a broad range of language, using it fluently and spontaneously. They possess a wide lexical repertoire and can easily overcome gaps with circumlocution, showing little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance. The sixth and highest level of proficiency in this framework is termed mastery; this level corresponds to a language user who, while not at the level of a native speaker or near-native competence, can understand almost everything heard or read with ease, is fluent, and can recognize and convey nuances of meaning as well as effectively utilize a broad range of modifications. They command a wide array of idiomatic expressions and can backtrack and reformulate in ways that are not noticeable. This sixth level is also the level that a student joining university ought to have in the language of instruction at university (Council of Europe, 2001). In Kenya, proficiency is measured only through the national exams that award grades from A to E, and it would be interesting to find out the level of proficiency in English among Kenyan first-year university students using an international scale like the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The central role of the English language in Kenya is entrenched in the country's constitution: Chapter two, article seven of The Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides that the official languages of the Republic are Kiswahili and English. These two languages are also official languages in parliament. This implies that English in Kenya is used in transacting government business, in diplomacy, international business, the legal system, as a medium of instruction in education just to mention but a few of the functions of this important language in Kenya. Lack of communicative competence for a student in Kenya would therefore mean

failure, not just in education, but inefficiency at the work place and inability to participate effectively in major facets of life which require communicative competence in English.

Studies in communicative competence have mainly focused on pedagogy: Ong'ondo (2003) investigates the impact of drama on secondary schools' Student performance in languages; Khaemba (2014) looks at the role of drama in the development of communicative competence among primary school pupils in Nakuru municipality, Kenya and Onchera and Manyasi (2013) investigate the role of functional writing in developing effective communication. This study shifts this focus from pedagogy to a description of the levels of the four components of communicative competence in the English of Kenyan university freshmen, and this study goes beyond describing to investigate how these levels impact the study subjects' proficiency in English.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is a matter of grave concern that students entering university and thus constituting some of the most academically endowed in the country have challenges as far as communicating in English is concerned. It is particularly intriguing that despite having attained passing grades in English at O-level, they are not able to write or speak in grammatical sentences and they are ill at ease when they are in a situation that requires them to communicate exclusively in the language. It is also intriguing that students who can orally communicate well may sometimes have challenges in writing. This study uses a standard measure of proficiency to describe the levels of proficiency that the English of first year students at university has attained. While some students face communication challenges, there are those who seem to experience no hurdles manipulating the English language to serve all their communicative needs. These disparities are a curious phenomenon, particularly considering that they have all equally received formal instructions under the same curriculum for the same period of time.

This study unpacks and describes the components of communicative competence in their written and spoken English with a view to establishing how these components impact on proficiency both in their written and spoken English. The study also compares the levels of communicative competence in the study subjects' spoken language with those in their written language. Scholars in the area of second language learning have concentrated on how to achieve communicative competence. This study shifts this focus to measuring communicative competence and proficiency of learners, and goes further to investigate how competence in various communicative components affects proficiency in a second language.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This section puts the study into perspective by giving the general and the specific focus of this work.

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

The general aim of the current study is to describe the components of communicative competence in the English of first year University students in Kenya and their implications on proficiency in English.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on the following specific objectives:

- i. To describe levels of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya.
- ii. To describe the proficiency in English of first year university students in Kenya.
- iii. To find out the impact of the levels of the components of communicative competence observed in the English of first year Kenyan university students on their levels of proficiency.

- iv. To compare the levels of communicative competence in the written English with those in the spoken English of first year university students in Kenya.

1.4 Hypotheses

This study is based on the following hypotheses:

- i. That the English used by Kenyan first year university students has attained some levels of competence in all the four components of communicative competence.
- ii. That the English used by Kenyan first year university students has attained some level of proficiency.
- iii. That the levels of the components of communicative competence observed in the English of Kenyan first year university students determine the levels of proficiency they demonstrate.
- iv. That the levels of the components of communicative competence observed in the spoken English of first year Kenyan university students are higher than those observed in their written English.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Brown (1994) argues that in language teaching, attention should be on language use rather than usage, on fluency as opposed to accuracy, on realistic language and contexts, and on how students can apply learning in real-life situations. Such an approach, whose focus is on language use rather than the acquisition of structures, is one that takes a communicative competence approach. The current study establishes how far first year university students in Kenya have acquired communicative competence in English. It is therefore, in line with this view, thus making it a worthwhile venture that would reap benefits in the area of language teaching.

Moreover, by describing the levels of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya, this study illuminates the gains made in the process of acquiring the language, as well as shedding light on areas that need improvement in this process of acquiring a language that has become vital in an individual's success in the present day world. Indeed, English has occupied a central place as an international language indispensable in international business negotiations, arbitration between parties and nations, collaborative researches as well as in persuading, influencing public opinion, informing and sharing information. Crystal (1997) observes that nearly a quarter of the world's population is fluent in English. Therefore, it is needful that youths entering the world of work should acquire skills that would enable them to compete favourably in today's international space where English is central.

Another reason a study of this nature would be justified is that there is a need to improve the English competence of university students. This need has been documented in various studies, such as Lasala (2013), who assesses the communicative competence of senior school students in the Philippines and establishes that there is a need to introduce a communicative learning approach to enhance their competence. Similarly, Anyadiegwu (2012) decries the deficiency in the use of English by students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. On the same note, Boadi (1991), as cited in Aliyu (1995 p. 4), contends that school syllabuses in Nigeria do not meet all the requirements of university work, thus generating students with difficulties in comprehending and using English. In Kenya, students who have completed O-level have been found to struggle to sustain a conversation in English, often code-switching to Kiswahili due to a lack of fluency in English (Abenga, 2005; Gudu, 2015 & Mwamba, 2005). For these reasons, a study such as the current one, which evaluates how

far communicative competence is achieved by first-year Kenyan university students, is warranted.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The current study is an investigation into the levels of the components of communicative competence achieved by Kenyan first year university students and how these levels impact on proficiency. University students represent the best of young intellectuals, thus their ability to communicate is vital. This study establishes their current communicative ability in both oral and written communication describes their ability in different components of communicative competence and establishes the impact of this ability on the proficiency they demonstrate. It is; therefore, a significant endeavour since communication for these future Kenyan and global leaders is important.

In addition, studies on communicative competence in Kenya have largely focused on pedagogy. For instance, Onchera and Manyasi (2013) have looked at the teaching of functional writing skills in the Kenyan classroom and its implications for communicative competence. M'mbone et al. (2015) have examined how the use of interactive teaching methods affects the development of oral communicative competence. Khaemba (2014) has investigated the role of drama in developing communicative competence among pupils in Nakuru district, Kenya. The current study shifts this focus and adopts a linguistic perspective, where the components of communicative competence are unpacked and each is measured to establish the extent of acquisition or learning, and how each impacts proficiency.

Finally, the findings of the current study shed light on the communicative competence levels in the English of Kenyan first-year university students, thus informing university curricular developers to tailor the teaching content to meet the communicative

needs of their students. Furthermore, since the subjects of this study have gone through the O-level English curriculum, the findings provide insights to policymakers in the education sector regarding the effectiveness of school English curricular content and teaching methods. The study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the area of second language acquisition.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The current study establishes the levels of communicative competence components in the English of first year Kenyan university students and the impact that has on their proficiency. It specifically evaluates these students' productive skills, which comprise writing and speaking skills. Receptive skills, which entail reading and listening skills, are not studied because it is assumed that speakers produce what they can comprehend; thus, productive skills embody, albeit in part, receptive skills. Indeed, Siskova (2016) observes that receptive knowledge precedes productive knowledge because learners generally need to have substantial knowledge about a word in order to use it productively. The study specifically describes the extent to which first-year university students in Kenya demonstrate sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, and grammatical competence in their writing and speaking. These are domains of communicative competence as outlined in Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Other proposed domains of communicative competence not captured by those outlined in Canale and Swain's model are not addressed in this study. This is because most components proposed by other scholars, such as Savignon (2002), Bachman (1990), and Littlewood (2013), are broadly covered by the components in Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). Moreover, Bachman (1990) and Littlewood (2011) tend to combine competence and performance, while the position held here is that components of communicative competence contribute to one's proficiency in a

language. This view is expressed in Taron (1983) in his observation that a student who has failed to develop competence in any of the communicative competence components cannot truly be said to be proficient in the language in question. Canale and Swain's model is considered comprehensive enough for the purposes of this study, as it has also been deemed sufficient in similar research, such as Anyadiegwu (2012), who evaluated the communicative competence of second-year university students to assess the effectiveness of General Studies in English in Nigerian universities. The study uses the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages to measure proficiency.

The study also describes the levels of proficiency acquired by first year Kenyan university students. Thirdly, the study establishes how the observed levels of the components of communicative competence impact on proficiency. Finally, the study compares the students' levels of the components of communicative competence in spoken English to those observed in their written English.

The study sample comprises 405 first year students from 15 public and private universities across Kenya that admit students through the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS). This sample size is considered sufficient, as other studies on levels of communicative competence have successfully used similar sample sizes. For example, Anyadiegwu (2012) uses a sample of 300 university students to successfully measure the level of their communicative competence.

The study investigates the English proficiency of first year university students only. This focus stems from the aim of determining how far our Kenyan school system succeeds in its quest for communicative competence in English, as stated in the secondary school objectives (Kenya Institute of Education 2002, p. 33). First-year university students

are considered ideal for this study because they have successfully completed the Kenyan English syllabus; thus, the competence they demonstrate reflects what the school system has achieved in terms of instilling communicative competence.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

In a study such as the present one that describes communicative competence in the English of first year university students, the ideal situation would be to evaluate the components of communicative competence of students in all the 67 private and public universities in Kenya that were admitted through KUCCPS in 2021. It is believed, however, that this would unnecessarily increase data handling problems, raising costs both financially and in terms of time. The study is thus limited to only 15 universities and 405 randomly selected subjects, who are considered representative of the study population.

This study measures and describes the components of communicative competence and proficiency in the productive language skills: spoken and written English of first year university students in Kenya. Their communicative competence and proficiency in the receptive skills of listening and reading are not evaluated. This is despite the fact that all the four skills, i.e. speaking, writing, listening and reading comprise the basic language skills. Focusing on all four language skills would be expensive in terms of cost and time.

Finally, this study's findings are based on learners' competence under test conditions, which may raise anxiety. Other participant effects, such as the use of non-spontaneous language and reluctance to participate, may be present during data collection.

1.9 Research Assumptions

The study is conducted under the following assumptions:

- i. The subjects use language naturally as they would in spontaneous language use.
- ii. The subjects present a speech and complete the writing test without copying or reading from another source.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of two primary sections: a literature review and a theoretical framework presentation. Within the literature review, an examination of studies pertaining to the current research is undertaken. It commences with an exploration of literature on communicative competence, followed by an overview of literature on language proficiency, then delving into the impact of communicative competence on language proficiency, and concluding with a review of literature on communicative competence as manifested in written and spoken texts. The subsequent section in this chapter delineates the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

1.1 Literature Review

This section focuses on reviewing empirical studies and other works related to the current study's objectives. These works are summarized and connected to the current study by highlighting their relevance to theory, scope, and methodology. The review also sheds light on existing research gaps.

2.1.1 Literature on Communicative Competence

The term "communicative competence" features the noun "competence" as its core element, with "communicative" serving as an adjective that specifies the type of competence being referenced. The concept of "competence" was initially introduced into language studies by Chomsky, who drew a distinction between competence and performance (the actual use of language). According to Chomsky, competence refers to the knowledge possessed by an ideal speaker-listener in a homogeneous speech community, one who possesses flawless language skills and is unaffected by extraneous factors such as memory constraints, distractions, shifts

in focus, or lack of interest, all of which could lead to errors in language production. This definition idealizes language rule knowledge and disregards the broader understanding that language users possess beyond mere grammar rules, enabling them to effectively utilize the language. Recognizing this, Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence, which is the central focus of the current investigation.

Hymes (1972) critiques Chomsky's theory for failing to consider sociocultural aspects of communication and the varying competencies within a diverse speech community. He argues that truly homogeneous speech communities are non-existent, as every language encompasses diverse variations stemming from factors such as stylistic preferences, social standing, and linguistic registers, among others. Hymes contends that linguistic competence varies depending on the speaker, and he defines communicative competence as the understanding of rules governing both the linguistic and social meanings of language. He highlights that certain grammar rules only make sense when coupled with principles of language application. Hymes' perspective aligns with the notion that while linguistic knowledge is crucial, it alone is insufficient for effective communication. For instance, the sentence "Eat some food." adheres to English grammar rules, yet conveying it to a child at home versus persuasively to a respected authority figure necessitates more than grammatical accuracy. It requires an understanding of appropriate registers for different audiences and knowledge of socially acceptable methods for influencing decisions, especially those of individuals in higher positions. Crafting a statement like "I am deeply honoured to have this esteemed opportunity to present you with a meal." may be fitting for a distinguished guest but entirely inappropriate when addressing a child.

Widowson (1983), as cited in Fujita (2024, p. 89), observes that knowing a language involves much more than being able to understand, speak, write and read sentences, and

encompasses the ability to use those sentences appropriately in order to achieve a communicative purpose. He argues that communicative abilities need to be taught alongside linguistic skills in a second language classroom. He goes ahead to draw a distinction between “use” and “usage”. He defines “usage” as a user’s demonstration of their knowledge of linguistic rules, while “use” is a user’s demonstration of their abilities to use their knowledge of linguistic rules to communicate. This gives further insight into the nature of the knowledge required for communication. Widdowson (ibid) further points out that sentences can have two aspects of meaning: significance and value. He defines significance as the meaning a sentence has in isolation, while value is meaning sentences take on when they are used in communication.

Widdowson (ibid) goes on to observe that a learner needs to be exposed to sentences in communication as opposed to sentences that have been abstracted from use if they are to learn how to use a language effectively. This coincides with what Brown (1994) refers to as the use of authentic materials in the teaching of a second language, which model for the learner what correct use of structures they have learnt is. These views provide insight as to how communicative competence can be instilled as opposed to methods of teaching language that lead to acquisition of structures, but do not translate into effective communication. This understanding illuminates constructs relevant to the description of communicative competence.

Another definition of communicative competence is by Savignon (1972) who views it as the ability to function dynamically in a truly communicative setting adapting to all elements in the context, be they linguistic or non-verbal. She considers communicative competence to be the equivalent of language proficiency, which in turn is comprised of accuracy and fluency. Baily (2005) views accuracy as the ability to select correct utterances

to pass the intended meaning: this implies that context considerations are central to accuracy. Fluency, on the other hand, is defined as the ability to fill time with talk, ability to talk in coherent, reasoned and semantically dense sentences, ability to say appropriate things in a wide range of contexts and finally the ability to create and imagine in language use (Fillmore, 1979). These definitions shed light on the skills that a producer of language would have to possess for them to pass as being communicatively competent.

Canale and Swain (1980) view communicative competence as the synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. They argue that linguistic rules and rules of language use are equally important and speakers of a language have to acquire them both. They give the example of a speaker with sociolinguistic competence and grammatical competence in Canadian English, but lacking in grammatical competence in Canadian French. Though the sociolinguistic competence in Canadian English would apply to Canadian French, this speaker would not be able to converse in French due to their lack of grammatical competence in the same. Their view is that when one knows a language, they have conscious or unconscious awareness of three types of knowledge: grammatical competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence (Koran, 2015).

According to Canale and Swain (1980), grammatical competence is equivalent to Chomsky's linguistic competence. Strategic competence entails devices that a speaker utilizes to cover up for weaknesses in grammatical competence and they include strategies such as metaphor, paraphrase and circumlocution, for instance, 'a piece of land surrounded by water' when a speaker does not know the word "island". Sociolinguistic competence is made up of sociolinguistic rules of use, and rules of discourse. Canale and Swain view sociolinguistic competence as comprised of factors that influence style and register. They are

topic, participants, social status, age, sex, setting and relationships among the people who are communicating. Discourse competence, on the other hand, entails cohesion and coherence. These components of communicative competence as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) comprise the theoretical framework within which the current study is carried out.

Other linguists who have shown interest in defining the components of communicative competence are Canale and Swain (1980). They too maintained Hymes' components: linguistic competence and sociolinguistic competence, and they went further to introduce a new component, which they called strategic competence. They defined strategic competence as the ability to compensate for problems or deficits in communication by a speaker who can do so through miming, guessing meaning from context when they cannot understand, circumlocution, and avoidance of unfamiliar topics and words. They also redefined sociolinguistic competence to include knowledge of cohesion and coherence. The sociolinguistic component was revised by Canale (1983), who divided it into sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence. In this new view, sociolinguistic competence was viewed as comprising the knowledge of the socio-cultural rules of language use, such as politeness and appropriateness. The discourse component comprised knowledge of cohesion and coherence. The current study utilizes Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) model of communicative competence to measure levels of communicative competence in the study data.

Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) proposed another component of communicative competence which they referred to as actional competence which they described as the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts. They also maintained Canale and Swain's components of sociolinguistics, linguistic, strategic and discourse components. Celce-Murcia (2007) revised this theory and proposed one with six components as follows,

sociolinguistic competence, linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence, formulaic competence and interactional competence. Formulaic competence is defined as knowledge of fixed chunks of language frequently used by speakers, which include phrasal verbs, idioms, lexical frames and collocations. Interactional competence, on the other hand, covers actional competence, which is knowledge of speech acts such as complaining, regretting, blaming, and apologizing, among others. The interactional component also covers conversational competence, which includes knowledge of taking turns, opening and closing conversations, changing topics, interrupting or collaborating/back channelling. A last type of knowledge under interactional competence is non-verbal/paralinguistic knowledge, which covers kinesics or body language, such as eye contact or gestures, proxemics or use of space, haptic behaviour or touching, as well as pauses or silences. These components give information about the type of knowledge one possesses when they know a language, which is what one acquires when learning a second or subsequent language.

Bachman (1990) proposed the concept of Communicative Language Ability (CLA) to replace the term communicative competence and to cover both language proficiency and communicative competence. CLA has three components which are language competence, strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms (Bachman 1990, p. 87-108). This model was later revised by Bachman and Palmer (1996) who replaced the term “competence” with the term “knowledge” and identified three areas of knowledge: language knowledge, pragmatic knowledge, and strategic knowledge. These components, to a large extent, coincide with Canale and Swain’s components which form the theoretical framework for this study.

Gao (2013) is of the view that one cannot use language appropriately without some knowledge of the culture of the language in question. This implies that culture is a component of communicative competence. He defines culture as the total way of life of a people including the patterns of belief, customs, objects, institutions, techniques and language. Language is said to reflect culture and is also a carrier of culture. It is, therefore, difficult to divorce culture from language or vice versa. As a result, a learner of a language must also learn the culture of the target language to enable them to use the language effectively and in acceptable ways (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022). This implies that a curriculum that will result in learners' communicative competence must incorporate features of the target language's culture relevant to the use of the language.

Derado (2015) defines cross-cultural communicative competence as the ability to understand individuals from diverse cultures and effectively engage in communication with them. Alfred and Byram (2002, p. 351) emphasize that any society aiming to prepare its education system for an internationalized culture and a globalized economy must cultivate cross-cultural competence in individuals. Saville-Troike and Barto (2016) suggest that cross-cultural competence enables learners to recognize appropriate communication styles tailored to different demographics, such as men, women, children, adults, educated, and uneducated individuals. Gao (2013, p. 3) illustrates this with the example of the Chinese, who exhibit modesty by deflecting compliments—behavior that may be misinterpreted by individuals from other cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, they discuss how an L2 English speaker's response when introduced to a child as "pleased to meet you" may not always be appropriate. These insights reinforce the notion that proficient L2 communicators need to grasp more than just the grammatical rules of a language, a view supported by the current study.

Khimicheva (2015) asserts that in the contemporary landscape, university graduates are destined to operate within diverse cultural milieus and must cultivate communication skills that facilitate effective interaction with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. Khimicheva advocates for three primary methods to instill cross-cultural communicative proficiency: direct exposure to individuals from the target culture, the incorporation of foreign educators, and active involvement in international conferences, forums, and projects. Conversely, Derado (2015) posits that the most effective approach to nurturing cross-cultural communicative competence lies in literary works, which afford learners the opportunity to introspectively assess their culturally influenced perspectives and juxtapose them with those delineated in the texts. This perspective is further reinforced by Lina and Arshad (2024), who scrutinize the role of literature in heightening language aptitude and cultural sensitivity. Their research underscores that engagement with literary works cultivates cultural comprehension, empathy, and an appreciation for cultural diversity. These perspectives collectively illuminate avenues for fostering the cross-cultural facet of communicative competence.

Among the scholarly inquiries into students' communicative competence is the investigation conducted by Samaranos and Biol (2024), which scrutinized the grammatical, sociolinguistic, and discourse components of communicative competence of junior high school students in the Philippines. The findings unveiled that a significant portion of the participants failed to meet the anticipated standards across the assessed competencies, prompting the proposal of an intervention programme to assist educators in guiding students towards attaining communicative competence. Samaranos and Biol (2024) adopt the Canale and Swain's model of communicative competence to gauge the levels of communicative competence in students' language, a model that aligns with the methodology employed in the

current study. Nonetheless, the present study transcends mere measurement of communicative competence levels by investigating how these levels impact proficiency.

Some scholars have investigated technology mediated methods of boosting communicative competence. For instance, Aldahhan and Razak (2024) explore the impact of digital platforms on the communicative competence in the English Iraqi second year undergraduate students of English as a foreign language. Their study finds that digital platforms enhance students' communicative competence in terms of grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence and spelling. Their findings are corroborated by Ningtyas and Amirudin (2025) who investigated the relationship between the use of digital media by Indonesian university students and their communicative competence. They found that the digital media has potential as a tool to improve communicative competence since it provides abundant exposure to authentic language use. They also observe that software such language labs enable learners to practice communication skills outside the classrooms. These studies illuminate ways technology can be harnessed to build communicative competence.

2.1.2 Literature on Language Proficiency

Cloud et al. (2000) observe that language proficiency encompasses the capacity to utilize language accurately and appropriately in both its oral and written manifestations across diverse contexts. Bachman and Palmer (2010) elucidate that a proficient language user possesses the capability to communicate effectively across the four fundamental domains of language: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. These definitions align with the Council of Europe (2020), which views proficiency as a language user's aptitude to comprehend, communicate, and interact within a language, encompassing the four language skills. These

definitions characterize proficiency as the practical application of language in authentic, real-world contexts, which is the perspective adopted in this study.

Language proficiency is necessary not only for facilitating effective real-life communication but also for cultivating confidence among proficient communicators. Darasawang and Reinders (2021) established that a weak to moderate correlation exists between the willingness to communicate and language proficiency. Their study posited that enhanced proficiency fosters confidence, which subsequently contributes to an increased willingness to engage in communication. Similarly, Yu et al. (2025) determined that international students in U.S. universities possessing high language proficiency experienced greater social engagement and enhanced well-being. This led these scholars to conclude that language proficiency serves as a predictor of the psycho-social well-being of international students in the United States. Furthermore, Saptiany and Putriningsih (2023), who investigated the role of English proficiency in promoting tourism in Indonesia, found that mastery of the English language significantly influenced communication, thereby enhancing tourist satisfaction and yielding greater economic profitability within the tourism sector. These perspectives illuminate the benefits of English proficiency, which is the subject of the current study.

One of the pivotal functions of proficiency resides in the realm of education. Leung (2022) notes that language proficiency serves as the foundation for a myriad of language curriculum designs and pedagogical approaches. This perspective is further substantiated by Zhu et al. (2023), who observe that proficiency scales are employed by policymakers as a guiding framework in language education, by educators to delineate the linguistic profiles of students, by learners for the purpose of goal-setting and navigating their language acquisition journey, by curriculum designers to craft, align, or refine educational curricula, and by

researchers to formulate rubrics, frameworks, and assessment models. The present study utilizes a proficiency scale—the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages—as a theoretical framework through which the proficiency levels of the study subjects are evaluated.

Harsch and Malone (2020) contend that as students acquire a second language, they traverse a continuum of discernible stages. Consequently, it becomes feasible to ascertain a student's level of linguistic proficiency. Among the standardized frameworks employed to gauge proficiency are the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), and the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR). These three frameworks assess an individual's capacity to communicate effectively across all four language skills. CEFR was initially conceived in Europe in 2001 with the primary objective of establishing a robust foundation for the mutual acknowledgement of language qualifications, thereby facilitating enhanced social mobility throughout Europe and supporting teacher education and curriculum development (Council of Europe, 2020). Its impact has since transcended European borders and has been integrated into the educational systems of Taiwan, Japan, China, New Zealand, and Australia (Nagai & O'Dwyer, 2011). Nonetheless, Nagai and O'Dwyer (2011) also emphasize the necessity of adapting CEFR to accurately reflect the social and educational contexts pertinent to specific nations. CEFR categorizes language proficiency into six levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2 (Council of Europe, 2024). ACTFL, on the other hand, has five levels of proficiency: novice, intermediate, advanced, superior, and distinguished levels (ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, 2024). The ILR scale is divided into five main levels: level one to level five. These are, in turn, divided into sub-levels. (<https://www.govtilr.org/>). Views

on how to measure proficiency provide a broad understanding of ways of evaluating proficiency.

2.1.3 Literature on the Impact of Communicative Competence on Proficiency

Hymes (1972) observes that the goal of language teaching is communicative competence. There is consensus that merely learning structures does not lead to the ability to use a language (East & Wang, 2024; Lhoussine, 2023; and Santos, 2020). Similarly, Gumperz (2001) questions any approach that uses grammaticality as the basis for syntactic analysis, arguing that whether a sentence is grammatical cannot be determined when it is removed from its context of use. The argument is that a sentence may be correct in a certain style, but the same sentence may be considered incorrect in a different style. Since linguistic competence alone does not allow for stylistic variation, sociolinguistic competence is necessary to enable language users to apply correct structures in the appropriate style and register while adhering to cultural norms. Lack of competence in any of the components of communicative competence hampers the ability to communicate. These views align with the researcher's belief that linguistic competence needs to be complemented by other components of communicative competence for one to be a proficient communicator.

To emphasize the central role of acquiring communicative competence in English language in Kenya, the Ministry of Education (2010), in the English secondary School Syllabus observes that it has been established that teaching language structures in isolation is boring and it additionally produces learners who lack communicative competence. Mastering grammar is considered important, but learning how these rules operate in real-life situations is useful too. This implies that acquisition of the components of communicative competence such as sociolinguistic competence leads to proficiency in a language. M'mbone et al. (2015) recommend that trainers of teachers of English in Kenya should strengthen emphasis on

interactive teaching methodologies to improve competence in the language by learners. Scholars in Kenya have also decried low levels of communicative competence of high school graduates. Onchera and Manyasi (2013) observe that at the completion of O-level studies, learners are not able to use language accurately in real-life situations. This need for communicative competence in the English of Kenyan students is further noted by the Ministry of Education (MOE) (2012) who observe that the spoken English by many secondary school students and graduates in Kenya is wanting. All these views express the need to focus on all components of communicative competence in the teaching of English in order to realize higher proficiency levels.

Kajgo (2025) elucidates the profound influence of communicative competence on language proficiency, noting that a learner with robust grammatical skills may nonetheless encounter difficulties in engaging in spontaneous dialogue if they have not cultivated discourse competence. Likewise, in the absence of strategic competence, learners may find themselves at an impasse upon forgetting a word, rather than resorting to paraphrasing or employing a general term. Consequently, communicative competence empowers learners to navigate conversations fluidly, minimizing pauses and hesitations. Thus, an understanding of communication strategies enhances language proficiency—particularly in the context of real-life situations. These perspectives illuminate the intricate relationship between communicative competence and proficiency, which is fundamental to this study.

Studies reviewed by the researcher predominantly focus on either communicative competence or proficiency. For instance, Duisembekova (2021) and Nguyen (2024) examine intercultural competence, while Byram (2020) studies cross-cultural communicative competence in the context of teaching English as a foreign language in China. Bituin (2024) evaluates the communicative competence of senior high school students in the Philippines.

Conversely, studies related to proficiency include the work of Darasawang and Reinders (2021), who explore the correlation between language proficiency and willingness to communicate, and Luque and Morgan-Short (2021), who investigate the relationship between cognitive control and L2 proficiency. Notably, no study known to the researcher concurrently assesses both communicative competence and proficiency within the same cohort to establish how communicative competence influences proficiency, as is the focus of the current investigation.

2.1.4 Literature on Communicative Competence in Written and Spoken Texts

Sonseca et al. (2015) evaluate the oral and written communicative competence of technical bachelor's and master's students at universities in Valencia, Spain. The primary objective of their assessment is to establish a rubric for the evaluation of oral and written communicative competence. The oral communicative competence scale they devised comprises descriptors such as effective introduction, articulation of the objective or main idea, sound reasoning, and succinct conclusions. Conversely, the Scale for measuring written communicative competence encompasses descriptors such as adherence to appropriate style and format, grammatical accuracy, utilization of suitable technical language, and integration of graphics to enhance the textual narrative. This study offers valuable insights into the essential elements that constitute communicative competence in both spoken and written contexts.

Sparks et al. (2014) conducted a comprehensive review of frameworks for evaluating written communication within higher education, aiming to propose a next-generation assessment model. They concluded that these innovative assessments of written communication must strike a balance between authenticity—characterized by realistic writing tasks—and psychometric quality, which encompasses measurement of desirable properties, to

yield actionable data. Their insights underscore the critical elements that warrant consideration in the evaluation of both spoken and written communicative competence.

Bagaric and Djigunovic (2007) conduct a comparative analysis of the communicative competence levels exhibited by English and German learners in both spoken and written texts among primary and secondary school students in Croatia. The findings indicate that at the beginner level, Croatian learners of German and English demonstrate a comparable mastery of the components of communicative competence in both writing and speaking. Nevertheless, at the secondary level, the proficiency in spoken and written communicative competence in English surpasses that of German. The current study shifts its focus from the comparative evaluation of communicative competence across two distinct languages to an examination of the written and spoken communicative competence within the same cohort and in the same language.

Mayo and Barrioluengo (2017) assessed oral communicative competence among primary school learners of English in Spain. Their research revealed that competence was above the intermediate level, with girls outperforming boys. Furthermore, they discerned no correlation between communicative proficiency in writing and that in speech. This indicates that a single learner may excel in oral communication, yet this does not necessarily predict an equivalent level of proficiency in writing, and vice versa. This perspective aligns with the findings of Bergstrom (1987), who examined grammatical accuracy in both written and oral data. The results demonstrated that while a learner may adeptly convey information in writing, this capability may not be mirrored in their spoken communication, and vice versa. These insights illuminate the intricate relationship between levels of communicative competence in written and spoken contexts, which is pertinent to the current study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study uses two theories. This is because the study describes two characteristics of the English produced by the study subjects: its level of communicative competence, and its level of proficiency. Thus, one theory provides a framework within which communicative competence is described, and a second theory measures the levels of proficiency that the English of study subjects has achieved. To describe communicative competence, Canale and Swain's (1980), and Canale (1983) model of communicative competence is used, while to measure proficiency, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages which is authored by European Council (2001) is used. Sections 2.2.1, 2.2.1.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.2.1 below provide a discussion of the two theories.

2.2.1 Theoretical Framework for Communicative Competence

In order to ascertain the levels of the components of communicative competence, the present study employed the models proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). This choice is predicated on the model's comprehensiveness, as it encompasses what could be deemed the fundamental components of communicative competence within a language. These components are frequently identified by various scholars in the field as pivotal (Canale and Swain (1980), and Canale (1983); Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Celce-Murcia et al., 1995; and Celce-Murcia, 2007). They include linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Furthermore, Canale and Swain's theoretical framework has been lauded for its applicability and ease of implementation (Bagaric & Djigunovic, 2007).

2.2.1.1 Canale and Swain's Model of Communicative Competence

Canale and Swain's framework of communicative competence delineates the essential elements that a second language learner must be taught to attain effective communicative

competence. Initially, the model comprised three components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence (Canale and Swain, 1980). In a subsequent iteration, Canale (1983) restructured the framework by reallocating certain aspects of sociolinguistic competence into a newly established fourth component: discourse competence. This evolution resulted in the four components of communicative competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. These components represent critical domains of knowledge that a language speaker must assimilate in order to communicate adeptly in authentic real-world contexts.

According to Canale (1983), strategic competence encompasses both verbal and non-verbal cues utilized to mitigate communication breakdowns arising from deficiencies in one or more components of communicative competence. Within the realm of strategic competence, one may encounter strategies such as paraphrasing, circumlocution, repetition, reticence, avoidance of specific words, structures, or themes, conjecturing, modulation of register and style, message modification, and the use of general modes of address when uncertain of another's social status, among others. Collectively, these strategies enhance the efficacy of communication. In a student's linguistic practice, strategic competence manifests in the fluency (characterized by the presence or absence of hesitations and interruptions) displayed, the quality of delivery (which is rendered smooth through inventive compensations for inadequate linguistic proficiency), as well as monitoring and repair techniques (including backtracking, rephrasing, and false starts), alongside miming, code-switching, and soliciting assistance.

Canale (1983) delineates grammatical competence as the assimilation of phonological, morphological, syntactic, semantic, and lexical rules. This concept aligns closely with Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. A proficient language user

manifests grammatical competence through their capacity to convey clear meaning, precise pronunciation, a diverse and accurate vocabulary, and the ability to construct syntactically correct sentences.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to the understanding and use of the pragmatic aspects of various speech acts, including cultural values, norms, and other socio-cultural conventions within different social contexts (Yano, 2003). This type of competence requires mastery of appropriate registers, the ability to shift between roles, illocutionary competence, familiarity with polite expressions, and an awareness of cross-cultural differences (Canale, 1983). A language user is considered to have sociolinguistic competence when they skillfully choose the right register and structures for various purposes and situations, ensuring that their expressions align with the socially accepted norms of the culture associated with the target language.

Discourse competence pertains to understanding the rules governing cohesion (grammatical and lexical connections) and coherence (the suitable amalgamation of communicative functions) across various discourse types. It necessitates knowledge of employing appropriate pronouns, synonyms, conjunctions, substitutions, repetition, maintaining congruity and continuity, and adhering to topic-comment sequences (Canale, 1983). Discourse competence is characterized by the presence of cohesive devices, textual unity, and a logical progression of ideas within a text.

This study evaluates the communicative competence of the study sample by describing their achievement levels across each dimension of communicative competence as articulated by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). This assessment encompasses both spoken and written texts. The levels of achievement have been quantified into numerical

values to facilitate a comparative analysis among the various components as well as between spoken and written texts.

2.2.2 Theoretical Framework for Language Proficiency

There has been considerable interest in measuring the ability to use language. This is clearly demonstrated by the large number of frameworks developed for this purpose. For instance, the Federal Government of the United States constituted the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) (now the National Foreign Affairs Training Centre – NFATC). This body addresses the language needs of government employees, such as diplomats, foreign affairs, and overseas workers. In addition to providing language training services to its clients, this institute established a speaking and reading language proficiency rating scale that recognizes five levels of proficiency: elementary proficiency, limited working proficiency, minimum professional proficiency, full professional proficiency, and native or bilingual proficiency (Foreign Service Institute, 2017). The United States Federal Government also developed the Inter-agency Language Roundtable (ILR) Scale, which measures language proficiency. It includes descriptors that rank language proficiency on a scale from zero to five and allows for the assessment of various language skills such as speaking, listening, writing, translation, interpretation, and intercultural communication (Interagency Language Roundtable Scale, 2018).

Moreover, there is a Canadian standardized test referred to as the Language Proficiency Index. This is a two and a half hours long test evaluating grammar, reading, and various writing skills. Another language proficiency framework is the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) which tests speaking, writing, listening, and reading skills and identifies five major levels of proficiency: distinguished, superior,

advanced, intermediate, and novice. These can in turn be subdivided into high, mid, and low sub-levels (ACTFL, 2012).

The Council of Europe has also developed the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Initially created for use in European countries, it has been adopted as an international standard for describing language ability (Council of Europe, 2001). It describes language ability on a six-point scale: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, with C2 being the highest level. The framework enables teachers, learners, employers, and educational institutions to evaluate language achievement effectively. Since the CEFR is an international standard for measuring language ability, it is considered the most appropriate for this study. This is primarily because university students today are being prepared to become fully functional global citizens. Consequently, their language proficiency should be measured against a recognized language proficiency framework like the CEFR.

2.2.2.1 The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages is a set of descriptors that calibrate language proficiency by assigning six broad levels of achievement in a language. These six levels are broadly summarized into three: A - basic user, which is divided into two levels: A1 (breakthrough level) and A2 (Way-stage level); B – independent user, divided into B1 (threshold level) and B2 (vantage level); C – proficient user, divided into C1 (effective operational proficiency level) and C2 (mastery level) (Ayatollahi, 2012).

Level A1 (Breakthrough) is considered the lowest level of generative language use. It is the point at which the learner can interact in a simple way, ask and answer simple questions about themselves, where they live, people they know, and things they have. At this level of proficiency, the language user is able to initiate and respond to simple statements in

areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics, without relying on a finite set of rehearsed phrases (North, 2007).

Level A2 (Way-stage) is characterized by a reasonable ability to use a language in socially acceptable ways. This includes simple everyday polite forms of greeting, appropriate use of courtesy titles, suitable responses to various news, inviting and replying to invitations, and making and responding to offers. A language user at this level should be able to participate in conversations and understand enough to respond, with the other person providing assistance where needed. While the message may be compromised, there is an evident search for words (Council of Europe, 2001).

Level B1 (Threshold) is characterized by the ability to interact in various contexts, understand clearly articulated language, and use a wide range of simple language flexibly. It may sometimes be difficult to follow, and users often pause for grammatical and lexical planning as well as repair. The language user at this level can initiate a new subject, communicate inquiries, explain problems, and provide the concrete information required in an interview or consultation, though with limited precision. They can summarize and give their opinion about a short story, article, talk, discussion, interview, or documentary, and answer further detailed questions. Additionally, they can exchange accumulated factual information on familiar routine and non-routine matters with some confidence (Council of Europe, 2001).

Level B2 (Vantage) describes the ability to argue effectively at the lower end of the band: the language user can develop ideas using relevant explanations, arguments, and comments. They can also explicate a topic of interest by outlining its merits and demerits, construct a chain of reasoned argument, and present an argument that provides reasons for or

against a particular viewpoint. They explain problems clearly, participate in informal discussions expressing their ideas well, and make sound judgments about available alternatives. Additionally, they can hold their own in social discourse, conversing naturally, fluently, and effectively; understanding what is said in standard spoken language in detail, initiating discussions, taking turns appropriately, and ending conversations when needed, all with a reasonable degree of success. Language users at this level can also correct their own mistakes. They utilise cohesive devices to link sentences smoothly into clear, connected discourse, relate ideas, and develop concepts systematically with relevant supporting details. Lastly, they employ persuasive language and utilise compensation strategies (Council of Europe, 2001).

Level C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency) is characterized by good access to a broad range of language, such that there is effortless fluency and spontaneity. There is also a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions. Language users rarely avoid structures or topics due to incompetence, and neither do they stop often to figure words out; only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language. There is production of clear, smoothly flowing, and well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices (Council of Europe, 2001).

Level C2 (Mastery), though termed ‘Mastery’, is not intended to imply native-speaker or near native-speaker competence. What is intended is to characterize the degree of precision, appropriateness and ease with the language which typifies the speech of those who have been highly successful learners. Descriptors calibrated here include: ability to express a range of nuances with precision by using descriptive terms, figurative language and casual expressions, as well as ability to recognize meanings words acquire through associations;

backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it (European Council, 2001).

In addition to calibrating the six proficiency levels described above, the CEFRL provides descriptors for assessing the four language skills: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. This makes it possible for an assessor of proficiency to evaluate one language skill without necessarily measuring the overall proficiency of a language user. This provision allows the current study to focus solely on the productive language skills: speaking and writing. The framework also presents scales for various purposes of language production. For instance, a scale is provided for overall oral skills, one for monologues, another for debates, and yet another for public speaking. Similarly, the scales to measure writing skills include one for overall written production, another for creative writing, one for reports, and yet another for essays.

In this study, the scales for overall speaking and writing have been used to assess proficiency in the two skills respectively. Other supporting scales for the different aspects of the four components of communicative competence, as outlined in the CEFR, were also utilised (see section 3.10.2 for the supporting scales). Below are the scales for measuring speaking and writing language skills as provided by the CEFR.

Table 1*Overall Oral Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can describe clearly and in detail, explicate sophisticated topics recognizing main and supporting ideas and wrapping up with a logical overview.
B2	Can describe systematically and explain a topic by identifying the main points and supporting details. Can describe with details and explain topics they are familiar with developing them with supporting details.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can describe simply and give simple explanations of people, routines, likes/dislikes, using a short series of simple phrases and sentences.
A1	Can produce simple, mainly isolated phrases and sentences about people.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P58) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 2*Overall Written Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can write clearly using logical connectors and employ style correctly such that readers can recognize salient points.
C1	Can write clearly developing ideas logically, even on sophisticated topics, developing main points with detail and wrapping up appropriately.
B2	Can write clearly, exhaustively on familiar topics and marry ideas from different sources.
B1	Can write simple pieces on familiar topics, by joining simple elements into a linear sequence.
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
A1	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences mainly about people and places.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P61) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe

These tables shed light on how proficiency in a language can be measured and they are therefore useful since the present study measures the proficiency in English of first year Kenyan University students.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter delineates the methodologies employed in the present study, commencing with an exposition of the underlying research philosophy. This is succeeded by a description of the research design, the geographical context of the study, the target population, sample size, sampling procedures, the piloting of instruments, data collection methodologies, and data collection tools. Furthermore, it encompasses data analysis, the validity and reliability of the instruments, and ends with ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This study is situated within the positivist research paradigm. According to Park et al. (2020), positivism is characterized by a deductive approach, wherein a researcher conducts a literature review that culminates in the formulation of hypotheses, which are subsequently tested through objective, empirical, and replicable methodologies to ascertain a definitive reality or contribute to the development of new knowledge or theories. Park (Ibid) further observes that positivism accommodates both quantitative and qualitative research modalities.

This inquiry aligns with this research philosophy as it adopts a deductive framework, commencing with hypotheses that it systematically tests. The study is grounded in the premise that the language of the sample population has attained specific levels of communicative competence and proficiency, representing the fixed reality that this investigation seeks to establish. Moreover, it employs statistical analyses to ensure the absence of bias, and the objective methodologies utilized facilitate replication.

3.3 Research Design

The current study used the descriptive/diagnostic research design. According to Kothari (2004, p. 50), studies that describe the characteristics of an individual or a group fall under descriptive research, while studies that determine whether certain variables are associated fall under diagnostic research. Since the current study describes the levels of the components of communicative competence and levels of proficiency existing in the English of first year university students, it is descriptive research. The study also determines how the components of communicative competence impact on proficiency. This is a test of how these two variables (communicative competence and proficiency) are related; thus, it is diagnostic. Kothari (2004, p. 50) further observes that descriptive and diagnostic research have a lot in common; thus, the two are grouped together as descriptive/diagnostic research.

3.4 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in universities in Kenya that are recognized by the Commission for University Education. These are 67 public and private universities that admitted students through KUCCPS in 2021. These comprise urban and rural universities whose population reflects the whole range of university students in Kenya since placement is done by a central body regardless of whether they are private, public, urban, or rural. The geographical coordinates of the universities that constitute the sample for this study are attached as appendix II.

3.5 Population of the Study

The target population of the current study was all the 90,744 first year university students in Kenya who attained an average grade of c+ and above, and were admitted through Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) in 2021 (KUCCPS, 2021).

The accessible population was the first year students admitted by KUCCPS in 2021 in 15 universities that were studied in this work.

3.6 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

This section outlines methods used to determine the size of the study sample, and the methods used to select the study sample.

3.6.1 Sample Size Determination

The sample for this study comprised 405 first-year university students. This is based on Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of sample sizes, which assigns a sample size of 384 and above for a population of more than 10,000. These subjects were sampled from 15 Kenyan universities. From each of the 405 students sampled in this study, four texts—two written and two spoken—were collected. In total, 1,620 texts were analyzed. The study selected a sample of universities, a sample of programmes from these universities, and, finally, participants from the selected programmes.

3.6.2 Sampling Techniques

A purposive sample of 15 universities was selected from the 67 universities which include the public and private universities in Kenya that admit students through KUCCPS. Students admitted through KUCCPS, it is believed, ensured a more diverse regional representation among the students in the study sample because this placement body admits students from across the country to universities and colleges. Thus, 15 universities, which represent 22 percent of all the universities in Kenya, were considered sufficient. Six of these 15 universities were private while nine were public and only the main campuses constituted the sample for this study since these offer a greater variety of programmes. A purposive sample of the universities was opted for because the programmes from which study subjects were

selected were drawn from the three pathways followed by students at the tertiary level which comprise STEM (sciences, technical subjects, Engineering and mathematics); social sciences pathway which encompasses languages, literature, humanities and business studies; and the last pathway is sports and arts which covers performing arts, visual arts and sports. A purposive sample ensured that the selected universities had government sponsored students enrolled in programmes that fall into all these three pathways.

To select study programmes, a stratified sample of three programmes from each of the 15 universities was selected. For each selected university, one programme was chosen from the STEM career pathway, another from the social sciences, and a third from arts and sports. These diverse programmes were believed to have students whose abilities in English spanned the entire performance spectrum of the language.

To select study subjects, the researcher randomly selected nine students from each of the three selected programmes in the three pathways in the 15 universities: nine from the STEM career pathway, nine from the social sciences pathway, and nine from the arts and sports pathway. This means that a sample of 27 students was selected from each of the 15 universities. The selection was careful to ensure that those selected were above 18 years of age. The subjects were drawn from students in their first year of study at the university because they had gone through the Kenyan O-level curriculum and thus they represented the product of the school English curriculum. They also had little university exposure thus their competence in the language was unlikely to have been significantly influenced by exposure to English at the university level. This enabled the researcher to measure the competence achieved at the completion of the school English curriculum for the students who secured admission to universities in Kenya.

The study sample is as summarized in Table 3:

Table 3

A Summary of the Study Sample

University	Career Pathways			Total No. of students
	STEM No. of Students	Social sciences No. of students	Arts/Sports No. of students	
University of Nairobi	9	9	9	27
Kenyatta University	9	9	9	27
Moi University	9	9	9	27
Egerton University	9	9	9	27
University of Embu	9	9	9	27
Masinde Muliro Uni.	9	9	9	27
Uni. of Kabianga	9	9	9	27
Laikipia University	9	9	9	27
Mount Kenya Uni.	9	9	9	27
Kenya Methodist Uni.	9	9	9	27
United States International Uni.	9	9	9	27
Uni. of East Africa Baraton	9	9	9	27
Daystar University	9	9	9	27
Catholic University Of East Africa	9	9	9	27
Karatina university	9	9	9	27
Grand Total	135	135	135	405

3.7 Instrumentation

The current study uses tests to collect data. Two tests are administered: a written test and a spoken test. For each, two questions are given. One that would elicit informal data and another that would elicit formal data. Tests are considered adequate instruments for data collection in this study because the answers they would elicit would constitute authentic spontaneous formal and informal language necessary for measuring the study subjects' level of proficiency as well as their level of communicative competence.

3.7.1 Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out at Kabarak University, a university that is convenient for the researcher, and one that has programmes spanning across the three pathways: STEM, social sciences, arts and sports. The purpose of the pilot was to test the research instruments, to establish timing, suitability, validity and reliability of research instruments and generally to test the proposed methods (analysis of piloting data in section 3.7.3).

3.7.2 Validity of the Instrument

Validity refers to the degree to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure. To ensure the validity of the speaking and writing tests, the researcher consulted two professors specialized in English at Laikipia University, Kenya. The discussions concentrated on ensuring the instruments had both face validity and content validity. Additionally, the researcher conducted a pilot study at Kabarak University.

3.7.3 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability is the ability of an instrument to measure consistently (Tavakol et al, 2011). To test for the reliability of the research tools, the researcher used the test-retest technique whereby the tools were administered, results obtained, and after two weeks, the same tools

were re-administered. Analysis was done using Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability coefficient. Cronbach's alpha is touted as the most widely used objective measure of reliability (Tavakol et al, 2011). The instruments used to measure both communicative competence and proficiency were tested for reliability.

3.7.3.1 Reliability Analysis for the Instrument Used to Collect Data for Measuring Communicative Competence

In determining the reliability of the test tool used to measure communicative competence, a test-retest study was conducted as a pilot study. It involved testing the reliability of the data collected using the tool, such that an analysis of the study's variables was done using the Cronbach alpha. From the results, the Cronbach Alpha value was 0.838, which is positive and is in agreement with reliability assumptions (standard Cronbach alpha). This indicates that the data obtained for the study using the tool was reliable to meet the study's objectives.

Table 4

Reliability Statistics for the Tool Used to Measure Communicative Competence

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.838	.809	16

Table 5 Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for Communicative Competence Data

	Intraclass Correlation ^b	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
		Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Value	df1	df2	Sig
Single Measures	.244 ^a	.168	.352	6.171	49	735	.000
Average Measures	.838 ^c	.764	.897	6.171	49	735	.000

From interclass correlation, it can be observed that F-value= 6.171 with p-value=0.000< 0.05 significant level. This implies that there is consistency between the pre-test and the post-test which means that the instrument gives consistent results.

3.7.3.2 Reliability Analysis for the Instrument Used to Collect Data for Measuring Proficiency

To establish the reliability of the test tool used to measure proficiency, a test-retest study was conducted as a pilot study. A reliability analysis of the study’s variables was done using the Cronbach alpha. The results gave rise to a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.720 which is positive and is in agreement with reliability assumptions (standard Cronbach alpha). This indicates that the data obtained for the study using the tool is reliable enough to meet the study’s objectives.

Table 6

Reliability Statistics for the Tool Used to Measure Proficiency

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.720	.650	16

Table 7 Intraclass Correlation Coefficient for Proficiency Data

	Intraclass Correlation ^b	95% Confidence Interval		F Test with True Value 0			
Single Measures	.138 ^a	.083	.223	3.569	49	735	.000
Average Measures	.720 ^c	.592	.821	3.569	49	735	.000

From interclass correlation, it can be observed that $F\text{-value}=3.569$ with $p\text{-value}=0.000 < 0.05$ significant level. This implies that there is consistency between the pre-test and post-test groups. This implies that the data will give consistent result

3.8 Data Collection procedures

This study measured levels of the components of communicative competence in the productive skills of language which are speaking and writing skills. The study; therefore, used one instrument to collect oral data, and another instrument to collect written data. In addition, the study measured the levels of proficiency demonstrated in written and spoken texts collected.

To measure communicative competence in writing, the researcher gave each of the subjects in the selected programmes in the 15 sampled universities two writing assignments: one on a formal topic in which they were required to write a 500 word text on the effects of cheating in exams, and another text of the same length on an informal topic which required them to write a letter to a friend in which they narrated a humorous incident that happened during a lecture. The test was administered by lecturers who taught the students in question to ensure that the situation in which the language was produced resembled normal circumstances as much as possible. Since the tests were administered in exam atmosphere, the confidentiality of the participants was ensured since each participant individually responded to the questions in an exam setting. The principle researcher supervised the data collection to ensure the research assistants followed the research protocol.

To measure communicative competence in speaking, the researcher gave each of the subjects in the selected programmes in the 15 sampled universities two speaking tests: a formal one that required them to give a 500 word speech on cheating in exams that they

would give to high school students, and an informal one of the same length that required them to present a speech to their classmates in which they narrated a humorous incident that happened during a lecture. These tests were administered by the lecturers who teach the students in question to ensure that the situation in which the language was produced resembled normal circumstances as much as possible. Each respondent's responses were recorded. To ensure confidentiality and privacy of participants, each participant recorded themselves in a secluded place, but within the vicinity of both the research assistant and the principal researcher. The audio recordings were forwarded to the principle researcher. This way, the principal researcher ensured that all research protocols were observed.

3.8.1 Data coding

This section sheds light on how the data for this study was coded to ensure the institutions and participants remain anonymous.

3.8.1.1 Coding of Universities

Each university that had been selected for this study was randomly assigned a letter of the alphabet from 'A' to 'O' (15 letters of the alphabet for the 15 universities selected for the study).

3.8.1.2 Coding of Participants

Each participant was, in turn, assigned the letter representing their university, and a randomly assigned numeral from numeral 1 to 27 for the 27 participants drawn from each selected university. For example, for the university assigned letter B, the participants were randomly coded as B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6 B7, B8, B9, B10, B11, B12, B13, B14, B15, B16, B17, B18, B19, B20, B21, B22, B23, B24, B25, B26, and B27.

3.8.1.3 Coding of Data as Spoken/Written, Formal/Informal

The coding was stretched further to indicate whether the data was spoken or written, formal or informal. The study coded the spoken data using letter 'S' and the written data using letter 'W'. Further, the lower case letter 'f' coded data as formal, while the lower case 'i' coded data as informal.

Thus data coded as A1Wf refers to formal written data collected from the university coded as A, for the student coded as 1. Similarly, data coded as O23Si represents informal spoken data collected from the student coded as 23 from the university coded as O.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

This section explains how analysis of spoken and written data for the components of communicative competence as well proficiency was done.

3.9.1 Analysis of Spoken Data

The researcher rated the subjects' responses following a rating scale such as the one below where each quality is rated on a scale of 1 -5.

Table 8

An Analysis of Speaking Communicative Competence

Type of question:

	Formal question (scores on a scale of 1 – 5)	Informal question (scores on a scale of 1 -5)
<hr/>		
Component of Communicative Competence:		
Grammatical competence (25 marks)		
Ability to create clear meaning		
Sentence structure		
Accuracy of pronunciation		
Diction and level of vocabulary		
Accuracy of constructions (syntax, tense, aspect, concord)		
Discourse competence (25 marks)		
Unity of text		
Cohesion		
Coherence		
organization of text		
Verbal aspects of delivery		
Sociolinguistic competence (25 marks)		
Appropriate style and register		
Appropriate idiom and expressions		
Appropriate illocutionary acts		
Tone and intonation		
Adaptation to audience		
Strategic competence (25 marks)		
Appeal for help and repair		
Superordinate term		
fluency		
Replacement: Circumlocution, Analogy, Metaphor/coinage		
Borrowing		
<hr/>		
GRAND TOTAL	100	100
<hr/>		

3.9.2 Analysis of Written Data

The researcher rated the subjects' responses and recorded on a rating sheets such as the one below:

Table 9*An Analysis of Written Communicative Competence*

	Type of question:	
	Formal topic (on a scale of 1 - 5)	Informal topic (on a scale of 1 - 5)
Component of Communicative Competence:		
Grammatical competence (25 marks)		
Ability to create clear meaning (5 marks)		
Sentence structure (5 marks)		
Punctuation (5 marks)		
Diction and level of vocabulary (5 marks)		
Accuracy of constructions (tense, aspect		
Spelling, concord) (5 marks)		
Discourse competence (25 marks)		
Unity of text (5 marks)		
Cohesion (5 marks)		
Paragraph structure (5 marks)		
Organization of ideas (5 marks)		
Coherence (5 marks)		
Sociolinguistic competence (25 marks)		
Choice of correct format (5 marks)		
Choice of correct register (5 marks)		
Choice of correct illocutionary acts (5 marks)		
Choice of correct tone (5 marks)		
Choice of appropriate idiom/expression (5 marks)		
Strategic competence (25 marks)		
Repetition, and avoidance of words, structures or themes (5 marks)		
Use of circumlocution and periphrasis to negotiate meaning (5 marks)		
Use of analogies (5 marks)		
Use of metaphor (5 marks)		
Use of general terms to capture specific meaning (5 marks)		
GRAND TOTALS	100	100

For both the written and spoken texts, a detailed content analysis of the data ensued describing the observed levels of the components of communicative competence.

Findings were supported by tables which show averages and percentages of scores in different domains of communicative competence as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983).

To describe levels of proficiency in writing, a CEFR overall Written production scale was used together with other supporting scales. Levels of proficiency (C2, C1, B2, B1, A2, A1) were assigned based on how well their language suit the descriptors. The observed levels of proficiency were then assigned a numerical value from 1-6 for the six possible levels. Other supporting scales for the different aspects of the four components of communicative competence, as provided in CEFR, were also used.

To measure proficiency in grammar, supporting scales were used side by side with the scale for overall writing proficiency. These supporting scales are general linguistic range scale, vocabulary range scale, grammatical accuracy scale, vocabulary control scale and orthographic control scale.

To measure proficiency in discourse organization, the following proficiency scales were used: thematic development scale, and the scale for coherence and cohesion. To measure proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of language use, only one scale for sociolinguistic appropriateness is available in CEFR.

To measure proficiency in communication strategies, two proficiency scales were used: compensation proficiency scale and monitoring and repair proficiency scale. Tables 6 shows the scale for overall writing proficiency, Table 7 is for general linguistic range, Table 8 is for vocabulary range, Table 9 is for grammatical accuracy, Table 10 is for vocabulary control, Table 11 is for orthographic control, Table 12 is for thematic development, Table 13

is for coherence and cohesion, Table 14 is for sociolinguistic appropriateness, Table 15 is for compensating scale and Table 16 is for monitoring and repair proficiency scale.

Table 10

Overall Proficiency for writing

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can write clearly using logical connectors and employ style correctly such that readers can recognize salient points.
C1	Can write clearly developing ideas logically, even on sophisticated topics, developing main points with detail and wrapping up appropriately.
B2	Can write clearly, exhaustively on familiar topics and corroborate ideas from different sources.
B1	Can write simple pieces on familiar topics, by joining simple elements into a linear sequence.
A2	Can write a series of simple phrases and sentences linked with simple connectors like 'and', 'but' and 'because'.
A1	Can write simple isolated phrases and sentences.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 61) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 11*General Linguistic Range Proficiency Scale.*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can exploit a comprehensive and reliable mastery of a very wide range of language to formulate thoughts precisely, give emphasis, differentiate and eliminate ambiguity. No signs of having to restrict what he/she wants to say
C1	Can select an appropriate formulation from a broad range of language to express him/herself clearly, without having to restrict what he/she wants to say. Can express him/herself clearly and without much sign of having to restrict what he/she wants to say.
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints and develop arguments without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.
B1	Has a sufficient range of language to describe unpredictable situations, explain the main points in an idea or problem with reasonable precision and express thoughts on abstract or cultural topics such as music and films. Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circumlocutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events, but lexical limitations cause repetition and even difficulty with formulation at times.
A2	Has a repertoire of basic language which enables him/her to deal with everyday situations with predictable content, though he/she will generally have to compromise the message and search for words. Can produce brief everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of a concrete type: personal details, daily routines, wants and needs, requests for information. Can use basic sentence patterns and communicate with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae about themselves and other people, what they do, places, possessions etc. Has a limited repertoire of short memorised phrases covering predictable survival situations; frequent breakdowns and misunderstandings occur in non-routine situations.
A1	Has a very basic range of simple expressions about personal details and needs of a concrete type.

Note: Adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (P 110) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 12

Vocabulary Range Proficiency Scale

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Has a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms; shows awareness of connotative levels of meaning.
C1	Has a good command of a broad lexical repertoire allowing gaps to be readily overcome with circumlocutions; little obvious searching for expressions or avoidance strategies. Good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms.
B2	Has a good range of vocabulary for matters connected to his/her field and most general topics. Can vary formulation to avoid frequent repetition, but lexical gaps can still cause hesitation and circumlocution.
B1	Has a sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some circumlocutions on most topics pertinent to his/her everyday life such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.
A2	Has sufficient vocabulary to conduct routine, everyday transactions involving familiar situations and topics. Has a sufficient vocabulary for the expression of basic communicative needs. Has a sufficient vocabulary for coping with simple survival needs.
A1	Has a basic vocabulary repertoire of isolated words and phrases related to particular concrete situations.

Note: Adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (P 112) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 13*Vocabulary Control Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Consistently correct and appropriate use of vocabulary.
C1	Occasional minor slips, but no significant vocabulary errors.
B2	Lexical accuracy is generally high, though some confusion and incorrect word choice does occur without hindering communication.
B1	Shows good control of elementary vocabulary but major errors still occur when expressing more complex thoughts or handling unfamiliar topics and situations.
A2	Can control a narrow repertoire dealing with concrete everyday needs
A1	No descriptor available

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 112) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe

Table 14*Grammatical Accuracy Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).
C1	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare and difficult to spot.
B2	Good grammatical control; occasional 'slips' or non-systematic errors and minor flaws in sentence structure may still occur, but they are rare and can often be corrected in retrospect. Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make mistakes which lead to misunderstanding.
B1	Communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts; generally good control though with noticeable mother tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what he/she is trying to express. Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used 'routines' and patterns associated with more predictable situations.
A2	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes – for example tends to mix up tenses and forget to mark agreement; nevertheless, it is usually clear what he/she is trying to say.
A1	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a learnt repertoire.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 112) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 15*Orthographic Control Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Writing is orthographically free of error.
C1	Layout, paragraphing and punctuation are consistent and helpful. Spelling is accurate, apart from occasional slips of the pen.
B2	Can produce clearly intelligible continuous writing which follows standard layout and paragraphing conventions. Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate but may show signs of mother tongue influence.
B1	Can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time.
A2	Can copy short sentences on everyday subjects – e.g. directions how to get somewhere. Can write with reasonable phonetic accuracy (but not necessarily fully standard spelling) short words that are in his/her oral vocabulary.
A1	Can copy familiar words and short phrases e.g. simple signs or instructions, names of everyday objects, names of shops and set phrases used regularly. Can spell his/her address, nationality and other personal details.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 118) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 16*Thematic Development Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	As C1
C1	Can give elaborate descriptions and narratives, integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.
B2	Can develop a clear description or narrative, expanding and supporting his/her main points with relevant supporting detail and examples
B1	Can reasonably fluently relate a straightforward narrative or description as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can tell a story or describe something in a simple list of points.
A1	No descriptor available

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 125) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 17*Coherence and Cohesion Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can create coherent and cohesive text making full and appropriate use of a variety of organizational patterns and a wide range of cohesive devices.
C1	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organizational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2	Can use a variety of linking words efficiently to mark clearly the relationships between ideas. Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some ‘jumpiness’ in a long contribution.
B1	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2	Can use the most frequently occurring connectors to link simple sentences in order to tell a story or describe something as a simple list of points. Can link groups of words with simple connectors like ‘and’, ‘but’ and ‘because’.
A1	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like ‘and’ or ‘then’.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 125) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 18*Sociolinguistic Appropriateness Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	<p>Has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms with awareness of connotative levels of meaning.</p> <p>Appreciates fully the sociolinguistic and sociocultural implications of language used by native speakers and can react accordingly.</p> <p>Can mediate effectively between speakers of the target language and that of his/her community of origin taking account of sociocultural and sociolinguistic differences.</p>
C1	<p>Can recognise a wide range of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, appreciating register shifts; may, however, need to confirm occasional details, especially if the accent is unfamiliar.</p> <p>Can follow films employing a considerable degree of slang and idiomatic usage.</p> <p>Can use language flexibly and effectively for social purposes, including emotional, allusive and joking usage.</p>
B2	<p>Can express him or herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.</p>
B1	<p>Can perform and respond to a wide range of language functions, using their most common exponents in a neutral register.</p> <p>Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.</p> <p>Is aware of, and looks out for signs of, the most significant differences between the customs, usages, attitudes, values and beliefs prevalent in the community concerned and those of his or her own.</p>
A2	<p>Can perform and respond to basic language functions, such as information exchange and requests and express opinions and attitudes in a simple way.</p> <p>Can socialise simply but effectively using the simplest common expressions and following basic routines.</p> <p>Can handle very short social exchanges, using everyday polite forms of greeting and address. Can make and respond to invitations, suggestions, apologies, etc.</p>
A1	<p>Can establish basic social contact by using the simplest everyday polite forms of: greetings and farewells; introductions; saying please, thank you, sorry, etc.</p>

Note: Adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (P 129) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 19

Compensating Proficiency Scale

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can substitute an equivalent term for a word he/she can't recall so smoothly that it is scarcely noticeable.
C1	As B2+
B2	Can use circumlocution and paraphrase to cover gaps in vocabulary and structure.
B1	Can define the features of something concrete for which he/she can't remember the word. Can convey meaning by qualifying a word meaning something similar (e.g. a truck for people = bus). Can use a simple word meaning something similar to the concept he/she wants to convey and invites 'correction'. Can foreignise a mother tongue word and ask for confirmation.
A2	Can use an inadequate word from his/her repertoire and use gesture to clarify what he/she wants to say. Can identify what he/she means by pointing to it (e.g. 'I'd like this, please').
A1	No descriptor available

Note: Adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment (P 64) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe

Table 20*Monitoring and Repair Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can backtrack and restructure around a difficulty so smoothly the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.
C1	Can backtrack when he/she encounters a difficulty and reformulate what he/she wants to say without fully interrupting the flow of speech.
B2	Can correct slips and errors if he/she becomes conscious of them or if they have led to misunderstandings. Can make a note of 'favourite mistakes' and consciously monitor speech for it/them.
B1	Can correct mix-ups with tenses or expressions that lead to misunderstandings provided the interlocutor indicates there is a problem. Can ask for confirmation that a form used is correct. Can start again using a different tactic when communication breaks down.
A2	No descriptor available
A1	No descriptor available

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P 65) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

A table that combines the analysis of all aspects of writing proficiency has been designed as shown below:

Table 21

Levels of Proficiency for Written Texts

Type of text:	Formal topic	Informal topic
	level of proficiency (on a scale of 1 - 6)	level of proficiency (on a scale of 1 - 6)
<hr/>		
Proficiency in Grammar		
General linguistic range		
Vocabulary range		
Grammatical accuracy		
Vocabulary control		
Orthographic control		
<hr/>		
Average Score		
<hr/>		
Proficiency in Discourse organization		
Thematic development		
Coherence & Cohesion		
<hr/>		
Average Score		
<hr/>		
Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects		
Sociolinguistic appropriateness		
<hr/>		
Average Score		
<hr/>		
Proficiency in Communication Strategies		
Compensating		
Monitoring and Repair		
Fluency		
<hr/>		
Average score		
<hr/>		
OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE		
<hr/>		

The CEFR overall oral production scale, such as the one below, was used to describe proficiency in spoken English. Proficiency levels (C2, C1, B2, B1, A2, A1) were assigned based on how well the language fits the descriptors. Supporting language proficiency scales provided by the CEFR were used to measure proficiency in the four areas of communicative competence. These scales include linguistic range, vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, phonological control, sociolinguistic appropriateness, compensation, monitoring and repair, fluency, thematic development, and coherence and cohesion.

The scales for linguistic range, vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, sociolinguistic appropriateness, compensation, monitoring and repair, thematic development, coherence and cohesion are identical to those used to measure proficiency in written texts, as mentioned earlier in this section.

Table 18 below presents the overall oral proficiency scale, Table 19 presents the phonological control proficiency scale, and Table 20 details the fluency proficiency scale.

Table 22*Overall Oral Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
C1	Can describe clearly and in detail, explicate sophisticated topics recognizing main and supporting ideas and wrapping up with a logical overview. Can describe systematically and explain a topic by identifying the main points and supporting details.
B2	Can describe with details and explain topics they are familiar with developing them with supporting details.
B1	Can reasonably and fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can describe simply and give simple explanations of people, routines, likes/dislikes, using a short series of simple phrases and sentences.
A1	Can produce simple mainly isolated phrases about people and places.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P58) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe

Table 23*Phonological Control Proficiency Scale*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	As C1
C1	Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.
B2	Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation. Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional
B1	mispronunciations occur. Can reasonably and fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.
A1	No descriptors available

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P117) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe.

Table 24*Proficiency Scale for Fluency*

Level of Proficiency	Descriptors
C2	Can express him/herself at length with a natural, effortless, unhesitating flow. Pauses only to reflect on precisely the right words to express his/her thoughts or to find an appropriate example or explanation.
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.
B2	Can communicate spontaneously, often showing remarkable fluency and ease of expression in even longer complex stretches of speech. Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without imposing strain on either party
B1	Can express him/herself with relative ease. Despite some problems with formulation resulting in pauses and 'cul-de-sacs', he/she is able to keep going effectively without help
A2	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production Can make him/herself understood in short contributions, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident. Can construct phrases on familiar topics with sufficient ease to handle short exchanges, despite very noticeable hesitation and false starts.
A1	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.

Note: Adapted from *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment* (P120) by Council of Europe, 2001, CUP. Copyright 2001 by Council of Europe

Table 25 below combines the aspects of spoken proficiency.

Table 25

Levels of Proficiency in Spoken Texts

Type of text:	Formal topic Level of Proficiency (on a scale of 1 - 6)	Informal topic Level of Proficiency (on a scale of 1 - 6)
Proficiency in Grammar		
General linguistic range		
Vocabulary range		
Grammatical accuracy		
Vocabulary control		
Phonological control		
Average score		
Proficiency in Discourse organization		
Thematic development		
Coherence & Cohesion		
Average score		
Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects		
Sociolinguistic appropriateness		
Average score for proficiency		
Proficiency in Communication Strategies		
Compensating		
Monitoring and repair		
Fluency		
Average score		
OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE		

To determine the impact of the levels of the components of communicative competence on proficiency, a t-test was done and to establish how the components of communicative competence in spoken English compare with the levels of communicative competence in written English, another t-test was carried out. To enable comparison, the proficiency score was converted so that it was out of 25 just like the score for communicative competence. This analysis is followed by a detailed interpretation and discussion of results.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained a permit from NACOSTI (National Commission of Science and Technology Institute) prior to collection of data (See appendix V). In addition, all respondents in this study were assured of confidentiality and they were guaranteed anonymity. This was achieved through the coding of data to ensure the institutions and participants were not identifiable. They were also assured that their work would strictly be used for academic purposes, and that only the researcher would have access to the information they provided. Their responses would be destroyed after 12 months as spelled out in the informed consent form. Respondents were informed, in writing, what the research procedures were, and their consent was sought by being required to sign a form. (see appendix III for purpose and nature of study and appendix IV for the informed consent form).

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of this study. It is structured into seven distinct sections. The initial two sections delineate the elements of communicative competence in the English of first-year university students in Kenya, addressing both written and spoken forms, respectively. The third and fourth sections describe the levels of proficiency in English among these students, in both written and spoken modalities, respectively. The fifth and sixth sections examine the impact of the levels of communicative competence on proficiency in English, in both written and spoken contexts, respectively. The seventh section engages in a comparative analysis of the levels of communicative competence as evidenced in the written data vis-à-vis the spoken data.

4.1 Components of Communicative Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Canale and Swain (1980) identify four essential components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. An analysis of the written data from first-year university students examined in this study revealed the presence of all four components as articulated by Canale and Swain (Ibid). This is illustrated in Table 26.

Table 26

A Table of the Average Levels of the Components of Communicative Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Type of text:		Formal text (on a scale of 1 - 5)	Informal text (on a scale of 1 - 5)
Communicative component:			
Grammatical competence	(25 marks)		
Ability to create clear meaning	(5 marks)	3.9	3.8
Sentence structure	(5 marks)	3.3	3.2
Punctuation	(5 marks)	3.0	3.1
Diction and level of vocabulary	(5 marks)	3.3	3.1
Accuracy of constructions (tense, aspect Spelling, concord)	(5 marks)	3.2	3.2
Sub-total (25 Marks)		16.7 (32.4)	16.4 (31)
Discourse competence	(25 marks)		
Unity of text	(5 marks)	3.3	3.5
Cohesion	(5 marks)	3.5	3.7
Paragraph structure	(5 marks)	3.2	3.3
Organization of ideas	(5 marks)	3.3	3.4
Coherence	(5 marks)	3.5	3.5
Sub-total (25 Marks)		16.8 (32.6)	17.4 (32.9)
Sociolinguistic competence	(25 marks)		
Choice of correct format	(5 marks)	3.3	3.2
Choice of correct register	(5 marks)	3.3	3.7
Choice of correct illocutionary acts	(5 marks)	4.5	4.5
Choice of correct tone	(5 marks)	3.5	3.9
Choice of appropriate idiom/expression	(5 marks)	3.4	3.7
Sub-total (25 Marks)		18.0(34.9)	19 (36)
Strategic competence	(25 marks)		
Repetition and borrowing	(5 marks)	0.00	0.00
Use of circumlocution and periphrasis	(5 marks)	0.05	0.03
Use of analogies	(5 marks)	0.00	0.00
Use of metaphor	(5 marks)	0.00	0.00
Use of general terms	(5 marks)	0.00	0.00
Sub-total (25 Marks)		0.05(0.1)	0.03 (0.1)
GRAND TOTAL		51.55 (100)	52.93 (100)

The findings in Table 26 above make it evident that first year university students in Kenya, who constituted the study sample for this research, have achieved average scores slightly exceeding fifty percent: the mean level of communicative competence for formal texts was 51.55 percent, while for informal texts, the average was 52.93 percent.

However, it is noteworthy that three out of the four components of communicative competence, as identified by Canale and Swain (1980), have been attained by the study sample with considerable success. This is evidenced by the fact that, within these three components, the average score ranges from 16 to 19 out of 25, corresponding to a performance level of 60 percent and above. The components that have been successfully acquired are grammatical competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Conversely, strategic competence exhibits a markedly low average score of 0.05 out of 25 for formal text and 0.03 out of 25 for informal text. Below is a table summarizing the overall average levels of the four components of communicative competence as outlined by Canale and Swain (Ibid).

Table 27

A Table of the Overall Average Levels of Communicative Competence in the Study Sample

Type of text:	Formal text	Informal text
Communicative Component:		
Grammatical competence (25marks)	16.7(32.4)	16.4(31)
Discourse competence (25marks)	16.8(32.6)	17.4(32.9)
Sociolinguistic competence (25 marks)	18.0(34.9)	19.0(36)
Strategic Competence (25 marks)	0.05(0.1)	0.03(0.1)
Total	51.55 (100)	52.93(100)

The data presented in Table 27 reveals that the component of communicative competence that achieved the highest average score in the study is sociolinguistic competence, with a score of 18.0 out of 25 for formal text, accounting for 34.9 percent of the overall average score, and 19.0 out of 25 for informal text, representing 36 percent of the overall average score.

The component of communicative competence with the second highest average score is discourse competence, which garnered a score of 16.8 out of 25, corresponding to 32.6 percent of the overall average score for formal text, and a score of 17.4 out of 25, or 32.9 percent of the overall average score for informal text.

The component ranking third in average score is grammatical competence, with a score of 16.7 out of 25, reflecting 32.4 percent of the overall average score for formal text, and 16.4 out of 25, which translates to 31 percent of the overall average score for informal text.

The component of communicative competence with the lowest average score is strategic competence, which recorded a score of 0.05 out of 25, representing a mere 0.1 percent of the overall average score for formal text, and a score of 0.03 out of 25, also amounting to 0.1 percent of the overall average score for informal text.

There appears to be no significant disparity in the levels of communicative competence between formal and informal texts. The overall average score for the formal text is 51.55 out of 100, whereas the informal text achieves a higher average of 52.93. The difference between the two is a score of 1.38, with the informal text exhibiting the superior level of competence. This may be attributed to the marginally elevated scores attained in

sociolinguistic and discourse competence within the informal text, while these same dimensions received slightly lower evaluations in the formal text.

A comprehensive analysis of the levels of communicative competence across the four components is presented below. The discussion commences with an examination of grammatical competence as reflected in the written study data, followed by an exploration of discourse competence, then sociolinguistic competence, and finally there is a discussion of the levels of strategic competence within the study data.

4.1.1 Levels of Grammatical Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Canale and Swain (1980) describe grammatical competence as the comprehensive understanding of phonological, syntactic, morphological, lexical, and semantic principles of a language that empowers speakers to generate accurate structures. They assert that grammatical competence is synonymous with what Chomsky termed linguistic competence. This investigation assessed the level of grammatical competence by identifying pertinent indicators within the study data.

The selected indicators were those that facilitate clear communication within a text, as well as those that ensure grammatical accuracy. These include the capacity to convey clear meaning, sentence structure, punctuation, diction or level of vocabulary, and the fidelity of constructions: tense, aspect, concord, and spelling. Below is a table that summarizes the level of grammatical competence evidenced in the written study data.

Table 28

A Table of the Average Level of Grammatical Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Grammatical competence: (25 marks)	Formal text (on a scale of 1 - 5)	Informal text (on a scale of 1 - 5)
Ability to communicate clear meaning (5 marks)	3.9	3.8
Sentence structure (5 marks)	3.3	3.2
Punctuation (5 marks)	3.0	3.1
Diction and level of vocabulary (5 marks)	3.3	3.1
Accuracy of construction: Syntax, capitalisation, tense, aspect, concord (5 marks) and spelling	3.2	3.2
Total:	16.7(32.4)	16.4(31)

4.1.1.1 Ability to Communicate a Clear Meaning

Regarding the capacity to convey clear meaning, the study's data yielded an average score of 3.9 out of 5 for formal text and an average score of 3.8 out of 5 for informal text. This translates to percentage scores of 78 and 76 respectively. This finding indicates that first-year university students in Kenya, who comprise the study sample, predominantly possess the ability to construct clear expressions in English. However, this relatively high score in crafting meaningful texts does not imply that the texts are devoid of errors. Burt and Kiparsky (1974) categorize errors into two distinct types: global errors and local errors. Local errors are characterized as those that do not impede communication or comprehension of a text. Conversely, global errors are more consequential, as they disrupt communication and obscure the intended meaning of a text.

In the written data analyzed for this study, numerous instances of local errors that do not compromise meaning are present. An example can be found in data coded as K9Wi,

where a portion of the introduction of the informal letter inquires about the weather, as exemplified below:

Example 1:

How the climate at your place fairing on?

The reader can derive meaning from the above sentence: it asks about the weather conditions. However, it contains a number of errors: to begin with, it has no verb after the interrogative pronoun ‘*how*’. Secondly, the correct word to use in this context is ‘*weather*’ not ‘*climate*’. Lastly, the phrasal verb, ‘*fairing on*’ cannot be used with either ‘*climate*’ or ‘*weather*’. It is mostly used with people as in the sentence, ‘*how are you fairing on in a foreign country?*’ The correct version of the sentence should be ‘*how is the weather at your place?*’ Despite these errors, the text was judged as having attained some level of clarity.

Instances of local errors were numerous. Another example is data coded as M3Wf where an effect of cheating in exams is expressed thus,

Example 2:

After all the flimsy reasons so that the exams can be postponed they find not agreeing with the lecturer and they now try to engage in the academic dishonesty.

Yet another example of local errors is data coded as E9Wi which had the following constructions:

Example 3:

As she was continuing with the lesson in our class, a duster felt down ... the teacher bended to collect the duster ... when she bended down her skirt bursted at the back and of course boys are boys the could laught so loudly ...

Despite the presence of several grammatical errors in examples 2 and 3 above, they nonetheless communicate the intended meaning with some degree of success. Consequently, the texts in which these sentences appear scored some marks for their ability to articulate meaning, albeit not very clearly.

In the data for this study, there were many instances of global errors that obstruct meaning. An example is from the data coded as E22Wf below:

Example 4:

The math teacher was very angry with the mad person and some students due to disruption of the mad person in his class.

The sentence in example 4 presents an awkward, convoluted, and ambiguous construction. It remains unclear whether the teacher harboured anger towards both the students and the mad individual or if the students and the mathematics teacher were collectively displeased with the mad person for disrupting the class. An alternative interpretation suggests that the modifier "due to the disruption of the mad person" is misplaced. By repositioning it after the adjective "angry," which it qualifies, clarity can be reinstated. Consider the revised version of that sentence:

The math teacher and some students were very angry due to the disruption of the class by a mad person.

It is; therefore, possible to conclude that the sentence in example 4 is not able to communicate a clear meaning because of ambiguity and a misplaced modifier.

Other causes of lack of clarity in the study data are interlingual errors which Touchie (1986) calls transfer errors. They are as a result of L1 influence. In the case of the study data, these interlingual errors are as a result of the influence of Kiswahili or L1 since the Kenyan first year university students who comprise the study subjects also speak Kiswahili in addition to their L1. An example of this kind of error that interferes with clarity of meaning is in the data coded as H11Wf in the example below:

Example 5:

This may be brought about by lecturers standing for exams and request the sending away of of the student.

The verb phrase ‘standing for exams’ is a literal translation from Kiswahili. The intended meaning of the writer is ‘invigilating exams,’ which in Kiswahili is articulated as ‘*kusimamia mtihani*,’ directly translating to ‘standing for exams.’ A reader unfamiliar with Kiswahili or other Bantu languages exhibiting similar linguistic characteristics may encounter challenges in comprehending the intended meaning of the sentence presented in example 5. Consequently, this instance of linguistic transfer may impede clarity and understanding.

A similar example where transfer hinders clarity of communication is from the data coded H23Wf as in the following example:

Example 6:

Because you did cheat in your secondary examination, then you may not get that chance to do so in the university then you decide to leave going to the university again.

The verb phrase ‘*to leave going to university again*’ is intended to convey the notion of ‘withdrawing from the university’. This expression, once more, is a direct translation from Kiswahili or a comparable Bantu language. In Kiswahili, for instance, the term ‘*acha*’ serves to express both ‘leave’ and ‘drop out of’. A reader unfamiliar with Kiswahili or related languages may encounter difficulties in interpreting the meaning of this sentence.

The preceding discourse reveals that the Kenyan university freshmen’s ability to communicate a clear meaning is decidedly above average. Nevertheless, certain expressions, while conveying a modicum of clarity, are marred by a plethora of grammatical inaccuracies.

4.1.1.2 Sentence Structure

Nelson and Greenbaum (2002) proffer three definitions of a sentence: a collection of words that convey a complete thought, a series of words that encompass a subject and a predicate, and a sequence of words that commences with a capital letter and concludes with a full stop. They further note that a sentence possesses structure, governed by rules that dictate the units that may co-occur within the sentence and the sequence in which they may appear. Within the study data, certain sentences adhere to the definition of a sentence and the structural conventions of a grammatically correct sentence in English, while others deviate from these standards.

Sentence structure, as a marker of grammatical competence, receives a score of 3.3 out of 5 for formal texts and 3.2 for informal texts, translating to percentages of 66 and 64,

respectively. This indicates that first-year university students in Kenya, who constitute the study population, demonstrate a commendable ability to compose grammatically accurate sentences. The data revealed that some subjects exhibited a notable adeptness in manipulating diverse sentence structures to convey various meanings and elicit distinct effects. Consider the following example, extracted from the data coded P4Wf.

Example 7:

In addition to the above, cheating in exams in most cases later affects the society at large. Why? This is because as students successfully cheat without being caught, they obviously graduate and later get employed in their fields of study. Here is where real drama begins since what such students offer to the society is really disappointing.

The paragraph above begins with a correctly structured simple sentence, followed by a one-word interrogative sentence that draws attention to the explanation that follows it. The last two sentences in the paragraph are complex sentences, correctly structured and astutely developing the idea introduced in the topic sentence.

On the other hand, the study's data contains numerous poorly constructed sentences. The errors related to sentence structure arise from the prevalence of sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, and deficiencies in both subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement. Additionally, the use of resumptive pronouns, dangling modifiers, and misplaced modifiers further exacerbates these issues. Such errors not only render the sentences incorrect but also obscure clarity and create confusion.

An example of a sentence fragment (words that are less than a sentence, but punctuated as such) in the written study data is from data coded as O10Wf:

Example 8:

The fear of failure from pressure of excellence by colleagues, relatives and parents.

In example 8 above, what is punctuated as a sentence does not qualify to be a sentence, given that it is not comprised of a subject and a predicate. Actually, it is just a subject; therefore, the predicate is missing. This makes it ungrammatical and unclear in terms of negotiating meaning.

An example of a run-on sentence (more than one sentence punctuated as one) in the study data is drawn from the data coded as I11Wj:

Example 9:

Cheating in exams leads to discontinuation of Education once a student has been caught cheating in exams he/she is suspended from school for a long time and finds difficult to go back to school to continue with studies.

Two sentences in example 9 have been punctuated as one sentence. The two sentences are,

Cheating in exams leads to discontinuation of education.

And,

Once a student has been caught cheating in exams he/she is suspended from school for a long time and finds it difficult to go back to school to continue with studies.

In the study data, an example of a comma splice (two or more sentences joined together using a comma rather than a conjunction) is drawn from data coded as A11Wi:

Example 10:

The fact is that I was quite fortunate to join xxxxxx university in the month of May, I managed to enroll myself in the school of pharmacy.

In example 10 above, two sentences are erroneously separated by a comma. They should be divided by a period or connected with a conjunction. For instance, the two sentences could be rephrased as follows:

The fact is that I was quite fortunate to join xxxxxx university in the month of May, and I managed to enroll myself in the school of pharmacy.

Another factor affecting sentence structure is subject-verb agreement. According to Sioco and Vera (2018, p.1), subject - verb agreement is at the core of every sentence: it guarantees that the sentence means something. “Without it, the sentence fragments and loses its power to speak”. A sentence must; therefore, have subject - verb agreement for it to communicate a clear meaning. Consider the example 11 from the data coded as H4Wf:

Example 11:

They may feel like that is their end because some of them wants to impress their parents.

In the aforementioned example 11, the verb “wants” is employed with the subject “they.” This subject is in the third person plural, which would conventionally align with the verb form “want.” The verb form “wants” is appropriate only with a third person singular subject, such as “he,” as in “he wants.” The absence of subject-verb agreement renders the sentence ungrammatical and undermines the integrity of the sentence structure.

Lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement has also contributed to poor sentence structures in the study data. An example from the study data is drawn from data coded as G13Wi as below:

Example 12:

There was this lecturer, who I won't mention his name.

The antecedent for the pronoun “*who*” in example 12 above is the noun phrase “*this lecturer*”. Since the pronoun is referring to the lecturer’s name, it should be in the possessive case, “*whose*” and not in the subjective case “*who*”. Therefore, the sentence should read:

There was this lecturer, whose name I won’t mention.

Example 12 above also contains a resumptive pronoun. According to McKee and Dana (2001), a resumptive pronoun is a personal pronoun appearing in a relative clause, which restates the antecedent after a pause or an interruption. This is the case in example 12:

There was this lecturer, who I won’t mention his name.

The personal pronoun “*his*” is a resumptive pronoun because it restates what has already been referred to by the relative pronoun “*who*”. Resumptive pronouns are redundant, thus unnecessary.

Another common error in the study data that concerns pronoun reference involves indefinite pronouns that require a plural referent, but were often used with a singular one. An example is from data coded as C19Wf:

Example 13:

Most university have policies...

A similar example is from data coded as E12Wf:

...back in high school, one of the student was found ...

In these sentences, the indefinite pronouns “*most*” and “*one*” require plural referents and thus the sentences should read,

Most universities have policies...

And,

...back in high school, one of the students was found ...

Another error that contributed to a low score in sentence structure for some students is the use of dangling modifiers. According to Callaway and Smith (2014), a dangling modifier is a phrase or a clause that is not clearly or logically related to the words it is placed next to. An example of this is from the data coded G10Wf:

Example 14:

This results to wastage of resources example fees and time since the student is out of school and does not continue with classes hence of no benefit.

Example 14 above contains the dangling modifier “*of no benefit.*” It is a dangling modifier because the element modified by this prepositional phrase is implied but not explicitly mentioned in the sentence. From the context of this sentence, it is clear that it discusses cheating as being of no benefit, but rather wastage of time and resources. Therefore, the sentence can be revised by introducing the gerund “cheating” before the modifier “of no benefit,” as shown below:

This results to wastage of resources example fees and time since the student is out of school and does not continue with classes hence cheating is of no benefit.

In this way, “*of no benefit*” becomes the subject attribute of the subject “*cheating*”; thus, it is no longer a dangling modifier.

Example 14 also contains errors in diction and punctuation. For instance, instead of the word “example,” the student should have used “such as,” and there should be a comma

before the coordinating conjunction "and." A further revision of the sentence would therefore read:

This results in the waste of resources such as fees and time since the student is out of school and does not continue with classes; hence, cheating is of no benefit.

Despite the errors highlighted in the foregone discussion, majority of the study sample are able to construct correct sentences. This is what accounts for the high score in this aspect of grammatical competence.

4.1.1.3 Punctuation

Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1610) observe that punctuation marks serve two principal functions: marking separations between units and indicating specifications. Furthermore, it is noted that in fulfilling these dual roles, punctuation marks facilitate clear communication within a text, enhancing comprehensibility. This implies that for effective communication, a text must be meticulously punctuated. In the analyzed data, out of a potential maximum score of 5, the average punctuation score is 3.0 for formal texts and 3.1 for informal texts. These scores are commendably above average, with some students demonstrating not only the ability to use punctuation marks correctly but also the skill to employ them for stylistic enhancements. For instance, certain individuals skilfully used rhetorical questions to provoke the reader's contemplation regarding the pertinent issue. Consider example 15, extracted from the data coded H2Wi:

Example 15:

Man, do you think that class went on?

This rhetorical question emerges following a depiction of a humorous incident that transpired during a lecture. The question invites the reader to envision the scenario and deduce for themselves that it is highly probable that no learning occurred in the aftermath of the incident.

Other notable examples of effective punctuation usage include using a semicolon to replace a simple conjunction in compound sentences, employing ellipses to convey a dramatic pause, and utilising dashes or commas to introduce parenthetical information. These are illustrated in the examples below, drawn from the data coded as C22Wf, H4Wf, A2Wf, and M2Wf respectively.

Example 16:

Students cheat mostly because they are scared to fail; all they want in school is to get good grades and thus see cheating as an option.

In this example, the semi-colon can be interpreted as replacing the simple conjunction “and” such that the sentence could possibly read:

Students cheat mostly because they are scared to fail and all they want in school is to get good grades and thus see cheating as an option.

Example 17:

Cheating in an exam is an ever-present struggle in high school and also colleges ... students are given information on the penalties and regulations on how they will be affected when they cheat.

In this example, the student has used ellipsis (elliptical dots) to create a dramatic pause, allowing the reader time to reflect on what has been previously stated: that cheating in exams is widespread in schools and colleges.

Example 18:

If they decide to authenticate your academic credentials and find out that you have records of questionable character- exam cheating in this case- they will have reservations about you.

Example 19:

Most often, if a student cheats and never gets caught, he is likely to cheat all his life.

In both examples 18 and 19 above, the underlined is parenthetical information which is optional, and has been set apart by use of dashes in example 18 and by use of commas in example 19.

In the study data, there were also numerous punctuation errors that lowered the score for punctuation as an indicator of grammatical competence. These include a lack of punctuation in an entire text, errors involving the use of the colon to introduce lists that are, in fact, part of the sentence, and the failure to use a comma or a full stop where necessary, among others. The examples below drawn from the study data illustrate these errors.

Example 20 is drawn from the data coded as H19Wf. This data has no punctuation and it is written in point form despite the question requiring that an essay on effects of cheating in exams be written.

Example 20:

effects of cheating in exams

- i) Cheating is the same as lying and stealing*
- ii) Cheating causes stress and tension*
- iii) Cheating is disrespectful to your teachers*
- iv) Cheating kills trust*
- v) Cheating hampers progress*
- vi) Cheating can lead to punishment*
- vii) Cheating can lead to suspension*
- viii) Cheating is unfair to the faithful students*
- ix) Cheating is unfair to you*

Examples 21 and 22 below are from the data coded as C15Wf. In the examples, the colon has been used to introduce lists inappropriately:

Example 21:

In the education fraternity cheating entails: copying from someone, plagiarising of academic work and paying someone to do your homework.

Example 22:

This may include: suspension, dismissal and cancellation of marks.

According to Suffern (2017), verbs such as “include,” “entail,” and various forms of the verb “to be” should not be followed by a colon when they introduce a list. This is due to their function of integrating the list, thereby rendering it an intrinsic component of the clause in which it resides; consequently, no punctuation is necessary to precede the list. This

principle explains the inaccuracies in examples 21 and 22. These two sentences may be refined as follows:

In the education fraternity, cheating entails copying from someone, plagiarising academic work and paying someone to do your homework.

This may include suspension, dismissal and cancellation of marks.

The study data contains numerous examples of punctuation errors that are as a result of failure to use the comma or the full stop where they are required. Consider the following examples that are from A3Wi, and A4Wi respectively.

Example 23:

It was so funny Jowee.

In this example, the Proper noun, “Jowee” is a vocative. According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1973, p. 12), a vocative is an optional element, usually a noun phrase denoting the person(s) being directly addressed. It is further noted that vocatives are set off from the rest of the sentence using commas. It follows, therefore, that the vocative “Jowee” should be preceded by a comma. The sentence should, therefore be as below:

It was so funny, Jowee.

Example 24:

He wasn't hurt that's all I know but he was embarrassed and he felt ashamed.

This example contains several punctuation errors. To begin with, it is a run-on sentence that contains two sentences punctuated as one. It can, thus, be revised into two sentences as follows:

He wasn't hurt. That's all I know but he was embarrassed and he felt ashamed.

The other punctuation error is the failure to place a comma before coordinating conjunctions that join clauses. In this sentence, the coordinators “but” and “and” should be preceded by commas. Therefore, the revised sentence should be as below:

He wasn't hurt. That's all I know, but he was embarrassed, and he felt ashamed.

This discourse on punctuation as a hallmark of grammatical competence reveals that certain participants in the study have acquired the requisite knowledge to enable them to punctuate with precision. These individuals contribute significantly to the high punctuation scores. Nevertheless, a pervasive lack of punctuation knowledge, as demonstrated above, is also evident within the study data.

4.1.1.4 Diction and Level of vocabulary

Diction refers to the selection of words and plays a pivotal role in articulating messages within both written and spoken discourse. The fundamental prerequisite for effective communication is that chosen words convey meaning clearly and precisely. Consequently, the ability to select appropriate and exact terminology serves as a testament to one's grammatical competence, empowering individuals to navigate and express their intended meanings with finesse.

The level of vocabulary in this study refers to the complexity and sophistication of words used by the study sample. It is expected that, as first-year university students, the study

sample should have a wide repertoire of words that communicate different shades of meaning and nuances. This knowledge would provide resources for communicative ability; thus, it is considered an important indicator of grammatical competence.

In the study data, evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5, the sophistication of diction and vocabulary level received scores of 3.3 for the formal text and 3.1 for the informal text. These correspond to percentage scores of 66 and 62 percent, respectively. Such scores indicate above-average competence, suggesting that the study sample possesses a good command of vocabulary and can employ it with a reasonable degree of efficacy.

The study data reveals instances of several students exhibiting notably advanced vocabulary levels. These are exemplified in the following examples drawn from the study data coded I16Wf, M1Wf, and C4Wf, respectively.

Example 25:

...put their results into jeopardy

Example 26:

To get a good grade as a result of cheating is a misrepresentation of facts.

It is important to note that choices have consequences and the repercussions of cheating in exams are dire.

Example 27:

In addition, the habit of cheating becomes addictive and therefore it is likely to replicate in all aspects of one's life both socially and economically.

The words “jeopardy,” “misrepresentation,” “repercussions,” “dire,” and “replicate” in the examples above represent more sophisticated vocabulary correctly used in the study data.

The study data, conversely, reveals instances of inappropriate choices and improper vocabulary usage. These errors related to vocabulary misuse include incorrect application of word forms, transfer or direct translation, erroneous preposition selection, easily confused terms, and unsuitable word choices. The following examples extracted from the study data illustrate the use of incorrect word forms. The code corresponding to the data from which each example originates is indicated after each illustration.

Example 28:

The lecturer smiled brightfully. (C19Wi)

The correct form of the adverb in example 28 above should be *brightly* and not *brightfully*.

Example 29:

The boy decided to run from class at a higher speed almost above 100km/hr and went like 100m away from class is when he came back to his normal mind. (G11Wi)

Example 29 above is a run-on sentence; it is punctuated as one sentence, but it can be divided into two sentences with some modifications.

The boy decided to run from class at a higher speed of almost above 100 km/hr, and went about 100 m away from class. That is when he came back to his mind.

The adjective "higher" is in the comparative form, which is inappropriate for this sentence because it merely modifies the noun "speed." The comparative form is used when

comparing two things or two people. For instance, if the boy's speed was being compared to his brother's speed, then the comparative form of the adjective would be appropriate, as in the following sentence:

The boy decided to run from class at a higher speed than his brother's.

Below is a continuation of examples of the use of the wrong word form.

Example 30:

We were prepared for class and all over suddenly a guy in black suit came to class and went to the lecturer's desk. (K20Wi)

Example 31:

The class bursted into laughter that was uncontrollable.(M2Wi)

Example 32:

Cheating is the act of going against school or exam rules to acquire or help acquire unhonest results. (C1Wf)

In example 30, *all over sudden* is the wrong. The correct expression is *all of a sudden*.

In example 31, *burst*ed is not the simple past tense form of the verb *burst*. *Burst* is an irregular verb which does not take the regular past tense morpheme *-ed/-d*. It remains as *burst* in the simple past tense form. Thus the sentence can be revised into,

The class burst into laughter that was uncontrollable.

In example 32, the antonym of the adjective honest is erroneously written as *unhonest* while the correct form should be *dishonest*.

Here are more examples from the study data that illustrate transfer or direct translation, incorrect preposition usage, commonly confused words, and inappropriate word choices. The code for the data from which the examples are derived is indicated after each sentence.

Example 33:

Our class teacher was a very good teacher and said to us that she was going to take a transfer and go to another school. (E24Wi)

Take a transfer is a direct translation from L1 or Kiswahili. Its English equivalent is *ask/apply for a transfer*.

Example 34:

The whole class was laughing at me as the lecturer was getting angry on me. (F14Wi)

The correct preposition to go with *angry* is *with*, so it should be *angry with me* not *angry on me*.

The following are examples of errors that involved easily confused words in the study data.

Example 36:

The management of the school, that is the principle and other senior officials may be subjected to fear of job loss for entertaining cheating. (G3Wf)

Example 37:

It causes shame to those who are involved since they loose dignity and are seen as those who are academically poor. (G12Wf)

Example 38:

Lecturer was very happy and appreciate those who did there explanations well. (A18Wi)

Examples 36, 37 and 38 demonstrate errors that the study sample made with regard to words that have been documented as easily confused words (Fitikides (2002). Thus *principle* has been used instead of *principal* in example 36, *loose* has been used instead of *lose* in example 37, and *there* has been used instead of *their* in example 38.

The examples that follow are illustrations of wrong choice of words in the study data.

Example 39:

We all flammed into laughter. (H13Wi)

Example 40:

We were all laughing at the stun that the fourth year had done. (I11Wi)

Example 41:

All classmates blast into laughter. (L6Wi)

Example 42:

Then the whole class follows soot. (L18Wi)

Example 43:

Cheating in exams is a vice and therefore we should deter from cheating in exams and do honest work. (C4Wf)

Example 44:

He started laughing at her again until the lecturer became coward. (H24Wi)

Examples 39, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 44 demonstrate how students in the study sample made erroneous choice of words, causing difficulties in comprehension of the texts. In example 39, *flammed into laughter* is used instead of *burst into laughter*, in example 40 *laughing at the stun* is used instead of *laughing at the stunt*, in example 41 *the classmates blast into laughter* is used instead of *the classmates burst into laughter*, in example 42 *the whole class follows soot* is used instead of *the whole class follows suit*, in example 43 *we should deter from cheating* is used instead of *we should desist from cheating* and in example 44, *until the lecturer became coward* is used instead of *until the lecturer became scared*.

The foregone discussion reveals that though the average score for diction and level of vocabulary is above average, some study data demonstrate inadequate knowledge of vocabulary.

4.1.1.5 Accuracy of Construction: Syntax, Tense, Aspect, Concord, Spelling and Capitalisation

The final indicator of grammatical competence in this study is the accuracy of construction. This includes the grammar of a sentence by focusing on the arrangement of elements (syntax), tense, aspect, grammatical concord, and mechanics such as spelling and punctuation. In the study data, this indicator of grammatical competence scored 3.2 for both

the formal and informal texts. This score is marked out of 5 and translates to a 64 percent score. This implies that the average score for the accuracy of constructions for the students included in the study data is above average.

Indeed, several students in the study sample demonstrated the ability to form grammatically accurate constructions. An example is the study data coded as K7Wf. A paragraph from this data is provided below to illustrate its accuracy of construction.

Example 45:

The ability of a nation to compete effectively on the international front hinges on the quality of its education. Cheating in exams undermines the standard of education in a country and consequently hinders its ability to compete at the world stage. Indeed students who cheat in exams become poor decision makers in their careers. Academic dishonesty has risen to higher levels due to competition in the job market, therefore students have resorted to cheating in order to qualify.

Some errors made by the study sample concerning accuracy in construction fall under syntax, tense and aspect, concord, spelling, and punctuation. These issues have contributed to lowering the score for this indicator of grammatical competence. Below are some examples of these errors, with the code of the data from which the examples are drawn indicated after each example.

Example 46:

Examble of the consequences are...(C5Wf)

Example 47:

Our lecturer early in the morning came to class. He wrapped the board rapidly. (L22Wi)

In examples 46 and 47 above, the underlined words have been misspelt. These misspellings result from transfer from the writers' L1. In these examples, the phoneme /b/ has been replaced by the phoneme /p/. This may occur because the phoneme /b/ does not exist in the writers' L1 sound system, and thus the closest available phoneme (both /p/ and /b/ are bilabial voiceless stops) is used in its place. Consequently, the students have written "*examble*" instead of "example" and "*wrapped*" instead of "rubbed."

Other words that have been misspelt in the data include *humerous* instead of *humorous* (C5Wi); *definate* instead of *definite* (I16Wf); *agravation* instead of *aggravation* (P13Wf) and *semister* instead of *semester* (H20Wi).

There is also the tendency for some students in the study sample to put together words that should be written as separate words. These include *infront* instead of *in front* (C6Wi), *inorder* instead of *in order* (A17Wf) and *alot* instead of *a lot* (A19Wf).

A few students in the study data have used American spellings. Since the standard variety of English taught in Kenyan schools is British English, Kenyan students are expected to use British spellings. Examples of American spellings in the study data include *fulfill* instead of *fulfil* (G7Wf) and *practice* (used as a verb) instead of *practise* (G10Wf).

Other errors in the study data that may have lowered the score for accuracy of construction as an indicator of grammatical competence include those related to tense and aspect. The examples below illustrate data that contained such errors.

Example 48:

The duster felt down

The teacher bended

Her skirt bursted

The class laught so loudly. (E19Wi)

All the sentences in example 48 above are from a single student who appears to have difficulty forming the simple past tense in English. The correct tense should have been written as follows:

The duster fell down

The teacher bent

Her skirt burst

The class laughed so loudly.

Other examples of errors in tense are listed below:

Example 49:

When a lecturer caughts his/her student cheating, this breaks the relationship bond since it demeans the lecturer's ability in teaching. (H22Wf)

Example 50:

During lecture he felt asleep (I14Wi)

These can be corrected thus,

When a lecturer catches his/her student cheating, this breaks the relationship bond since it demeans the lecturer's ability in teaching.

During lecture he fell asleep

The study data also showed evidence of errors involving both the progressive and the perfective aspects. These are demonstrated in the examples drawn from the study data as exemplified below:

Example 51:

After he/she has being expelled... (H6Wf)

It appears that the writer of the example above meant to write the verb phrase in the present perfective aspect. However, the writer fails to put the main verb that follows *has* in the past participle form which would have been correct. A revision to correct the sentence would read:

After he/she has been expelled

Other errors pertaining to aspect had to do with students using stative verbs with the progressive aspect. Quirk et al (1985, p. 202) observes that stative verbs do not agree with progression, and when they are used progressively, their interpretation changes. Examples of such errors in the data are given below:

Example 52:

After all the flimsy reasons so that the exam can be postponed they find not agreeing with the lecturer and they try to engage in academic dishonesty.(L2Wf)

Example 53:

I have been knowing you (A21Wi)

Example 54:

He asked our lecturer if he was understanding the topic he was teaching. (G8Wi)

The verbs *agree*, *know* and *understand* in examples 52, 53 and 54 above are stative verbs and therefore cannot be used in the progressive aspect. A revision of the sentences would, therefore be,

After all the flimsy reasons so that the exam can be postponed they find that they do not agree with the lecturer and they try to engage in academic dishonesty.

I know you

He asked our lecturer if he understood the topic he was teaching.

Another category of errors that undermined accuracy of construction in the study data was in the area of syntax (the arrangement of words to form grammatical phrases, clauses and sentences). A few examples drawn from the data demonstrate these errors.

Example 55:

He moved slowly to where the lecturer's bag was and kept inside a dead lizard. (H11Wi)

In this example, the object "*dead lizard*" should come after the verb. The incorrect verb "*kept*" has been used. The appropriate verb should be "*put*." If the sentence is rearranged so that the object follows the verb, the correct version would be:

He moved slowly to where the lecturer's bag was and put a dead lizard inside.

Errors in syntax can also be demonstrated by the example that follows.

Example 56:

They will be not attending (A19Wf)

The error in this example is that the negative statement has the negative particle "*not*" placed after the second auxiliary verb in the verb phrase. The correct arrangement is to place the negative particle immediately after the first auxiliary in the verb phrase. Therefore, the correct version of the statement would be:

They will not be attending

Yet another example of poorly arranged words is in example 57 below:

Example 57:

So that we can celebrate together the Christmas day (A21Wi)

In this example, just like is the case for example 55, the object should come immediately after the verb. It can be corrected thus,

So that we can celebrate the Christmas day together

Syntax errors in the study data also included errors involving the formation of reported speech. Some of these errors are demonstrated below:

Example 58:

Once our numeracy lecturer asked us or we use phones in class and we told him yes...(E24Wi)

This can be revised thus,

Once our numeracy lecturer suggested that we use phones in class and we agreed

Example 59 is a further demonstration of errors involving reported speech that is incorrectly structured.

Example 59:

Until he asked the lecturer which lesson was this (A18Wi)

This can be rewritten as,

Until he asked the lecturer which lesson it was

Another indicator of accuracy of construction in this study is capitalization. Errors in capitalization in the study data include sentences that do not begin with a capital letter, cases of the first person pronoun *I* written in the lower case, and failure to capitalize the first letter in days of the week. These have been demonstrated below drawing examples from the study data.

Example 60:

Stacy (attention seeker) came to class an hour late. that was not the issue the issue was she was wearing a mini dress, heels and holding a can of yorgut on her hand since she was seeking attention she went to sit at the sit on the furthest corner so that we can see her cat walking. by good or bad lack she slidded and fell. the yorgut splashed her face... (H19Wi)

In addition to many other errors in example 60, the sentences do not begin with capital letters even after full stops.

Example 61:

It (online class) is a good experience because i don't wake up...(A7Wi)

The error in this example is that the first-person pronoun "I" is written in lowercase while it should always be capitalized, even in sentence-medial positions like in the sentence above.

The revised sentence should therefore be,

It (online class) is a good experience because I don't wake up...

Example 62 below demonstrates a day of the week that is erroneously written starting with a lowercase letter.

Example 62:

It was on a thursday morning and we were waiting for our lecturer of communication to arrive. (A18Wi)

Since *Thursday* is a day of the week, it should always begin with a capital letter.

The last indicator of accuracy of construction in this study is grammatical concord. The errors in this area concern subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement. These are exemplified below:

Example 63:

They may feel like that is their end because some of them wants to impress their parents...

(H4Wf)

In this example, it is clear that there is no agreement between the subject and the verb in terms of number: the subject is plural, 'they', while the verb, 'wants', should agree with a third person singular subject. The revised sentence should read,

They may feel like that is their end because some of them want to impress their parents...

An additional example of errors related to grammatical agreement is provided in the following illustration.

Example 64:

There was this lecturer, who I won't mention his name. (G13Wi)

Aside from the issue of a resumptive pronoun in this example (see section 4.1.1.2), there is also a lack of pronoun-antecedent agreement in this sentence: the pronoun who, which is in the subjective case, does not agree with its antecedent, *this lecturer*, which is an object in the sentence. The latter part of the sentence discusses the name of the lecturer in question, indicating that the pronoun should be in the possessive case. The revised sentence should therefore read,

There was this lecturer, whose name I won't mention

The foregone discussion reveals that while some study subjects can accurately construct sentences, others demonstrate inadequate knowledge of this important indicator of grammatical competence.

4.1.2 Discourse Competence

According to Canale and Swain (1980), discourse competence refers to the ability to understand and create linguistic forms that are longer than sentences (stories, speeches, letters, etc.) with appropriate cohesion, coherence, and rhetorical organization to combine ideas into logical texts. In this study, the indicators of discourse competence that the researcher examined in the study data include paragraph unity, cohesion, paragraph structure, text organization, and coherence. A table summarising the analysis of discourse competence in the study data is provided below:

Table 29

A Table of the Average Level of Discourse Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Discourse competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Paragraph Unity	3.3	3.5
Cohesion	3.5	3.7
Paragraph structure	3.2	3.3
organization of text	3.3	3.4
Coherence	3.5	3.5
Total:	16.8	17.4

The study data shows that discourse competence, marked out of 25, had an average score of 16.8 for the formal text and 17.4 for the informal text. This translates to percentage scores of 67.2 for the formal text and 69.6 for the informal text. Below is a discussion of the indicators of discourse competence observed in the study data.

4.1.2.1 Paragraph Unity

According to Halliday and Hassan (2014, p. 293), unity in writing is the connection of all ideas in a paragraph to a single topic. Therefore, in a paragraph that has unity, all ideas must relate to the topic sentence of that paragraph.

In the study data, paragraph unity as an indicator of discourse competence has a score of 3.3 out of 5 in formal texts and 3.5 out of 5 in informal texts. This translates to percentage scores of 66 and 70 for formal and informal texts, respectively. This indicates that the study sample's performance in this aspect is well above average. This is not surprising, given that many students, even those who faced challenges in expressing themselves in grammatical sentences, were able to maintain focus on a single topic within a paragraph.

The following two paragraphs drawn from the study data, despite containing grammatical errors, address a single topic; thus, they exhibit unity.

Example 65:

Cheating in exams in a long run makes the student to suffer from low self esteem and it also makes the student to just feel guilty which may cause them to loose self respect and even makes them dought their ability in doing well in their exams.

Cheating in exams makes and form an habit of a student. this will make a student feel like when he or she want to do an axam she have just cheat she will be like she can not do without cheating. (L20Wf)

Both paragraphs have numerous errors in grammar, mechanics, and style. However, they both have paragraph unity: the first paragraph talks about cheating lowering a student's

self-esteem, while the second one is about cheating in exams having the tendency to become addictive. Both paragraphs stick to their respective topics without digressing.

On the other hand, the study data also contains paragraphs that lack unity. Consider example 66 drawn from the data coded as C21Wf.

Example 66:

Cheating also leads to lack of self confidence. Students involved in cheating and who may have successfully completed their course are of false character. The documents and certificates given to them by the institution are not their real capabilities and thus their incorrect real character. Though the documents show they are fit for the work positions, they have no or little knowledge in that field.

Example 66 above, in addition to other errors, lacks unity. The first sentence in the paragraph suggests that it will address the issue of lack of confidence in students who cheat. However, the second sentence digresses by introducing a new topic regarding the lack of skills among students who cheat. Therefore, the paragraph discusses two ideas, resulting in a lack of unity.

4.1.2.2 Cohesion

Halliday and Hassan (2014, p. 2) define cohesion as the characteristic of a text that causes it to hang together as a single unit as a result of grammatical and lexical means of linking the various parts of the text. They identify five cohesive devices: reference, conjunction, ellipsis, substitution, and lexical cohesion.

In the study data, on a scale from 0 to 5, cohesion received a score of 3.5 for the formal text and 3.7 for the informal text. These correspond to percentage scores of 70 and 74

respectively. Therefore, it is evident that most students in the study sample are able to write cohesive texts. Data from this study indicates that even texts lacking grammatical accuracy can still be cohesive. The following example drawn from the study data illustrates a paragraph that is cohesive, despite grammatical inaccuracies.

Example 67:

Loss of self-respect, this is a situation which is most likely to happen to the culprits of this behaviour especially when they are caught cheating in exams. For instance, a student in xxxxx university who was caught with a written piece of paper during examination time, he was told to move out of the exam room while everyone was sitting for the paper watched as he was embarrassed, he was suspended from the university for two semesters making him lose respect from the other students. (C18Wf)

The underlined words and phrases have helped to form cohesive links between sentences, thus making the paragraph to hang together: *For instance* is a conjunctive element joining the first sentence to the second one. The words *university* in sentence 2 and *exams* in sentence 1 collocate thus forming a lexical cohesive tie. *Exam* in sentence 1 and *examination* in sentence 2 are same word repetition, which is another lexical cohesive tie. The word *university* has also been repeated severally joining the concerned parts of the text cohesively. The word *university* also collocates with *students*, *semister (sic)* and *exam room*.

Demonstration of poor cohesive links in the texts from the study data was noted in the texts that were written in point form. These texts, however, were not entirely without cohesive ties, but they were scarce, and sentences appeared to be autonomous with no deliberate effort to connect them. Consider example 68 below, drawn from the study data coded B14Wf.

Example 68:

EFFECTS OF CHEATING IN EXAMS

1. *Your examination being cancelled.*
2. *Getting false results. Thus making you feel bad about yourself.*
3. *It completely ruins one's reputation thereby hindering chances joining college or getting a new job.*
4. *It also leads to suspensions and/or expulsion from school.*
5. *It lowers self-esteem and feelings of guilt.*
6. *Cheating hampers progress.*
7. *Class failure. Most schools impose, at minimum academic penalties on students who cheat.*
8. *Legal consequences.*
9. *Loss of academic reputation.*

As observed earlier, each sentence seems to stand on its own; therefore, there are few links between sentences. For instance, there is nothing that connects point number 8 to either the sentences that precede it or those that follow it. It is merely the phrase, *legal (sic) consequences*, which does not relate to the remainder of the text. However, although the text is presented in point form, some elements link certain points to others. For example, the word *examination* in point number 1 collocates with *college* in point number 3, *suspension* in point number 4, *schools* in point number 7, and *academic* in point number 9. It is, therefore,

possible to conclude that even though example 68 is written in point form, a measure of cohesion has been achieved.

In addition to cohesion between sentences, the study data demonstrated that some students in the sample possessed the competence to create links between paragraphs using logical connectors. They achieved this with varying degrees of success. Consider the example below, drawn from the study data coded A17Wf.

Example 69:

One of the effects of cheating is that it kills trust. When a student engages himself/herself in the act of cheating and probably caught, this may ruin trust. Even if the student never cheats again, those in authority will always have a hard time trusting the student and will likely be suspicious of his work. When others also hear about the student cheating, their opinion of the student will be compromised.

Another effect is that it becomes a habit and like addiction, you will do it again and again. It becomes a habit that follows people throughout college and into their careers. After graduating, one will not be able to practice the skills learnt since he was involved in cheating all the time in order to pass exams. One did not think of working, but chose a short-cut which may cost him/her throughout their life.

Cheating in exams also causes stress. When one cheats, he worry about getting caught. The stress of getting caught increases when you consider the possible consequences of your action such as receiving disciplinary actions from the school. It can be very stressful if you get caught or if you think someone knows about your cheating and might tell someone else.

In conclusion, cheating in exams is a bad habit and should be discouraged in any institution. Schools and parents must both discourage cheating if we have any hope of stopping this epidemic. Students should work relatively hard and avoid short cuts in succeeding in their exams and their future careers.

Example 69 above shows an essay that, despite minor errors, has paragraphs that are linked cohesively using the underlined connectors, thus there is logical flow of ideas through out the text.

4.1.2.3 Paragraph Structure

According to Schlesinger (2019), a paragraph should focus on a single idea, giving it unity. Schlesinger (Ibid) further observes that a paragraph should include a topic sentence that states the idea it addresses, while the other sentences in the paragraph should develop this idea by providing specific details. A writer, then, has the option to include a clincher sentence or not. The function of a clincher sentence is to provide a sense of finality to the development of the idea or to serve as a transition to the next paragraph (Schlesinger, 2019). This structure is particularly applicable to academic writing, although it can also apply to paragraphs written for other purposes.

In the study data, paragraph structure is the component of discourse competence that has the lowest score. As an indicator of discourse competence, paragraph structure marked out of 5, has a score of 3.2 for the formal text and 3.3 for the informal text. This translates to percentage scores of 64 and 66 respectively.

Example 69 above illustrates study data that has well-written paragraphs. The first paragraph of this example is copied below:

One of the effects of cheating is that it kills trust. When a student engages himself/herself in the act of cheating and probably caught, this may ruin trust. Even if the student never cheats again, those in authority will always have a hard time trusting the student and will likely be suspicious of his work. When others also hear about the student cheating, their opinion of the student will be compromised.

This paragraph, for instance, starts with a topic sentence that indicates that the idea to be treated in the paragraph is that cheating in exams destroys trust. The other sentences in the paragraph develop this topic sentence by giving details of how cheating can lead to loss of trust. This is, therefore, a well-structured paragraph.

The major errors made in the study data concerning paragraph structure are the failure to write in paragraph form and the use of single-sentence paragraphs. Example 68 above illustrates texts that were written in point form, meaning that no paragraphs were utilized at all. Example 70 below, drawn from the study data coded as A13Wf, illustrates an essay that was composed of single sentence paragraphs.

Example 70:

Cheating in examinations shows that one has lost the sense of responsibility as they depend on others for their academic/educational success reducing their chances of gaining new knowledge.

It also shows that one does not value accountability and ethics because it is unethical to submit work not done by an individual in honesty.

The lack of independence and responsibility can be carried on to the work places in future where one/individual becomes inefficient and highly non resourceful reducing the possibilities of securing and retaining a good job.

This almost word-perfect essay communicates effectively, but the paragraph structure is lacking because the ideas introduced are not sufficiently developed with specific details in supporting sentences. Several essays in the study data are written this way, indicating a need for these students to improve their competence in structuring paragraphs correctly.

Some students in the study data wrote entire essays as one long paragraph, even though different ideas are presented throughout. An example is the data coded as M12Wi below:

Example 71:

Humour During A Lecture

During one of the lectures, the lecturer was out of time and had not finished what he intended to teach. He decided to extend the class for a few minutes. This did not amuse most of the students. Rumours could be heard at first moments then silence followed and students were completely into the lecture while others were just there waiting for the lecturer to end the lecture. All of a sudden a guy riding on a bicycle entered the class riding his bike around the lecture room while ringing the bicycle bell and shouting TIME! TIME! TIME! The whole class busted into laughter. The lecturer stood silently looking at the class. This caught the attention of the class and knowing that the lecturer was peased they decided to keep quiet. The lecturer continued to stare for a while then bursted into laughter himself and then ended the class.

Since a paragraph focuses on only one idea, the essay above can logically be divided into three paragraphs: the first starting from the beginning until the point where *the guy on a bicycle* appears. The second paragraph should begin at this point and continue until the lecturer's reaction is described, while the third paragraph extends to the end of the essay. Thus, the revised essay can be divided into paragraphs as follows:

Humour During A Lecture

During one of the lectures, the lecturer was out of time and had not finished what he intended to teach. He decided to extend the class for a few minutes. This did not amuse most of the students. Rumours could be heard at first moments then silence followed and students were completely into the lecture while others were just there waiting for the lecturer to end the lecture.

All of a sudden a guy riding on a bicycle entered the class riding his bike around the lecture room while ringing the bicycle bell and shouting TIME! TIME! TIME! The whole class busted into laughter.

The lecturer stood silently looking at the class. This caught the attention of the class and knowing that the lecturer was peased they decided to keep quiet. The lecturer continued to stare for a while then bursted into laughter himself and then ended the class.

4.1.2.4 Organization of Text

According to McWhorter and Kathleen (2005), patterns of organization in texts are ways of structuring material to present ideas clearly, making them easily accessible to the reader. There are many patterns that a writer can use to organize their text. These include addition, generalization and example, cause and effect, summary, statement and clarification, listing,

comparison and contrast, spatial order, order of importance, process, chronological order, classification, and definition. One text can utilize several of these patterns. For example, a text can present events in chronological order, introduce a list at some point, and provide examples for clarification at another. The organization of text is an important indicator of discourse competence because it contributes to the logical flow of the material.

In the study data, organization of text as marked out of 5 has a score of 3.3 for the formal text and 3.4 for the informal text. This represents percentage scores of 66 and 68 respectively. One contributing factor to these above average scores is the fact that the two writing assignments given to the study subjects tend to lend themselves to particular patterns of organization. The formal text that requires the study subjects to write an essay on the effects of cheating in exams lends itself to the cause and effect pattern of organization which many students utilized. The informal text that requires the study subjects to give details of a humorous incident that happened during a lecture lends itself to the chronological order, and most students used this pattern of organization.

Example 69 above demonstrates the cause and effect order. It has been copied below for ease of reference.

One of the effects of cheating is that it kills trust. When a student engages himself/herself in the act of cheating and probably caught, this may ruin trust. Even if the student never cheats again, those in authority will always have a hard time trusting the student and will likely be suspicious of his work. When others also hear about the student cheating, their opinion of the student will be compromised.

Another effect is that it becomes a habit and like addiction, you will do it again and again. It becomes a habit that follows people throughout college and into their careers. After

graduating, one will not be able to practice the skills learnt since he was involved in cheating all the time in order to pass exams. One did not think of working, but chose a short-cut which may cost him/her throughout their life.

Cheating in exams also causes stress. When one cheats, he worry about getting caught. The stress of getting caught increases when you consider the possible consequences of your action such as receiving disciplinary actions from the school. It can be very stressful if you get caught or if you think someone knows about your cheating and might tell someone else.

In conclusion, cheating in exams is a bad habit and should be discouraged in any institution. schools and parents must both discourage cheating if we have any hope of stopping this epidemic. Students should work relatively hard and avoid short cuts in succeeding in their exams and their future careers.

In each paragraph, an effect of cheating on exams is presented and developed. In the first paragraph, the effect of cheating on exams is a loss of trust; in the second paragraph, the effect is an addiction to cheating; and in the third paragraph, the effect of cheating is that it causes stress. It is thus clear that this text effectively utilizes the cause-and-effect pattern of organization.

It is worth noting that while the overall pattern of organization used for the formal text is cause and effect, other patterns have been employed at different points to help develop and summarize the text. For instance, the last paragraph of example 69 above utilizes a summary pattern of organization to conclude that both schools and parents must unite to fight cheating in exams for concrete results to be realized. Similarly, the generalization and example pattern of organization is employed to illustrate a general idea that has been mentioned. This can be demonstrated using the study data coded C5Wf below:

Example 72:

Exams are formal test of personal knowledge and cheating in exams has many consequences in the student or any person taking the exam example of the consequences are...

Despite the grammatical errors in example 72, it demonstrates a generalization and an example pattern of organizing text. The generalization is that cheating in exams has many consequences, and examples have been introduced and provided. Example 71 also begins with a definition of the term "exams." Definitions are another pattern of organization. By combining different patterns of organization, the study subjects can present various kinds of information necessary to manage the specific task at hand.

Example 71 is a specimen of a text that employs a chronological pattern of organization. It is copied below for ease of reference, and the markers of chronological order have been underlined.

Humour During A Lecture

During one of the lectures, the lecturer was out of time and had not finished what he intended to teach. He decided to extend the class for a few minutes. This did not amuse most of the students. Rumours could be heard at first moments then silence followed and students were completely into the lecture while others were just there waiting for the lecturer to end the lecture.

*All of a sudden a guy riding on a bicycle entered the class riding his bike around the lecture room while ringing the bicycle bell and shouting **TIME! TIME! TIME!** The whole class busted into laughter.*

The lecturer stood silently looking at the class. This caught the attention of the class and knowing that the lecturer was peased they decided to keep quiet. The lecturer continued to stare for a while then bursted into laughter himself and then ended the class.

The underlined temporal conjunctions in example 71 above organize the text chronologically, making it easy to understand.

On the other hand, the study data contains texts that lack proper organization. These texts are written in point form and show complete disregard for order and logical flow. Below is an example drawn from the study data coded as B14Wi.

Example 73:

FUNNIEST INCIDENT DURING A LECTURE

- 1. Students sleeping during lecture.*
- 2. Students passing notes to each other during lectures.*
- 3. During a test, one student received the test paper and shouted out loud and stormed out of the lecture room.*
- 4. During my first online lecture with the students, some did not mute their audios and distructed the class the whole lecture with funny background noises.*
- 5. My first freshman class, when I entered the class they all stood up.*

This text does not seem to have any form of organization. Instead, it appears to be a collection of various humorous incidents.

4.1.2.5 Coherence

According to Halliday and Hassan (2014, p. 2), coherence is the property of a text that enables it to make sense as a unified whole. The major contributors to coherence in a text are cohesion and grammatical correctness, including mechanics. This means that a text will make sense (be coherent) if it is grammatically correct and has cohesive ties that cause it to hang together as one unified whole.

In the study data, out of 5, coherence has a score of 3.5 for both the formal and the informal texts. This translates to a percentage score of 70. This high score could be due to the fact that most texts in the study data possess a level of cohesion, even those that are not grammatically accurate. This presence of cohesion allows the texts to make sense to a certain extent, as what grammatical errors may obstruct can be inferred from the context.

An example from the study data that illustrates this is drawn from the data coded as E10Wi below:

Example 74:

This was back in high school where were studying and there was a beautiful teacher who used to teach as history. I was in a mixed school. And the teacher had worn a redish skirt which was so cute. And she looked more beautiful.

As she was continuing with the lesson in our class, a duster felt down and no student went to pick it and give it to her. Since the teacher was in a hurry or sort and the teacher bended to collect the duster. Without knowing that this can cause laughter since when she bended down her skirt bursted at the back.

And ofcourse boys are boys. The could laught so loundly that the teacher even could not belive and she ran directly to the staffroom and this made us to laugh and laugh.

Despite the numerous errors in grammar, the context helps the reader infer the intended meaning. For example, the clause '*a duster felt down,*' though grammatically incorrect, can still make sense because later in the text, there is the observation that nobody went to pick it up. '*Pick*' collocates with '*fall,*' and therefore one can infer that the intended form is '*the duster fell*' and not '*the duster felt down.*'

Also in the sentences,

And of course boys are boys. The could laught so loundly.

The reader can infer that the first word in the second sentence should be "*They*" and not "*The.*" This is because this word is a pronoun referring back to the noun "*boys,*" which appears in the previous sentence. The pronoun "*they*" and the presupposed noun "*boys*" together form a single cohesive tie. Similarly, "*laugh*" collocates with "*loudly,*" thus the reader can infer that what was intended is "*loudly*" not "*loundly.*"

The study data contains many examples of coherent texts. Consider example 75 below, drawn from the study data coded as O10Wf.

Example 75:

Cheating is an attempt to get academic credit or excellence in a way that is dishonest, disrespectful, irresponsible, unfair, and untrustworthy. Exam cheating depends on your school's policies and guidelines. Cheaters may have to appear before an

academic/correction committee upon which their cases are heard and measures as well as punishment are decided.

Example 75 above is coherent. The two sentences are connected using cohesive ties, such as the repetition of different forms of the word "*cheat*": *cheating*, *cheat*, and *cheaters*. Additionally, the two sentences are grammatically sound, making the text understandable as a united whole.

4.1.3 Sociolinguistic Competence

Canale and Swain (1980) define sociolinguistic competence as all social contexts involved in language use, which include topic, participants, their relationships, social status, sex, age, and many others. A person can be described as having sociolinguistic competence if they can use language according to the social norms determined by the relationship between participants, their relative social statuses, the topic in question, and other social contexts.

To analyse the study data for sociolinguistic competence, this study looked at appropriate format, appropriate style and register, appropriate illocutionary acts, appropriate tone and appropriate idiom and expressions. Sociolinguistic competence, marked out of 25 scored 18.0 for the formal text and 19.0 for the informal text. This translates to percentage scores of 72 and 76 respectively. The table below shows the scores for the different indicators of sociolinguistic competence in the study data.

Table 30

A Table of the Average Level of Sociolinguistic Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Sociolinguistic competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Appropriate format	3.3	3.2
Appropriate register	3.3	3.7
Appropriate illocutionary act	4.5	4.5
Appropriate tone	3.5	3.9
Appropriate expression and idiom	3.4	3.7
Total:	18.0	19.0

Each of the indicators of sociolinguistic competence is discussed in the sections that follow.

4.1.3.1 Appropriate Format

Saville-Troike (2003) lists the factors that influence sociolinguistic competence as follows: settings, participants, goals and outcomes, forms and contents, manners and spirits, norms of interaction, interpretations, and lastly, genre. For written forms, format is an important aspect of a genre. For example, a letter, as one of the genres of written texts, must follow the correct format. Therefore, format is a crucial element of sociolinguistic competence in written texts.

The study data includes a formal text and an informal text. For the formal text, study subjects were required to compose an essay on the effects of cheating in exams. For the informal text, study subjects needed to write a letter to their friend abroad, detailing a humorous incident that occurred during a lecture. Thus, the formal text is expected to follow the structure of an essay, while the informal text is intended to take the form of an informal letter.

Sexton and Soles (2019) observe that an essay develops and defends its thesis in a series of paragraphs, each of which typically illustrates one way in which the thesis statement can be supported. Since the formal text is an essay, the implication is that it should be written in well developed paragraphs. It; therefore, means that those formal texts in the study data that were not written in well developed paragraphs which have unity scored low for format. Those that were written in well-developed paragraphs that have unity, on the other hand, scored highly for format.

In the study data, the formal text scored 3.3 out of 5, while the informal text scored 3.2 out of 5. This translates to percentage values of 66 and 64, respectively. The lower score for the informal text is due to the fact that some study subjects did not use the correct format (layout) for an informal letter, as they left out the address and the date, starting instead with the salutation. Additionally, some subjects did not include a complimentary close, as demonstrated in example 76 below:

Example 76:

To Lita Wanjala.

Hae lita, hope this will find you well at Qatar. Im also doing good here. I would like to share with you one of my humorous incidents happened during a lecture.

So it was a Monday at 3pm na lecturer wa maths alikuwa akifunza na nilikuwa nimesinzia kidogo kwa usingizi and I was not following the lectures. Ilifika point lecturer akandika hesabu moja kwa board and he wanted someone a frontier to calculate it. Actualy ilikuwa so complex in that hakuna msee alitaka kuifanya

Know there is this friend of mine and a great joker alikuwa amekaa next to me. Aliniamsha na akaniambia lecturer amesema niende nikavute board ndo usingizi ipungue. Nikaona enyewe it's a good idea and I stood up walked fowered nikachukua duster nikavuta kilakitu kilichokuwa kimeandikwa apo na nikarudi kukaa.

The whole class was laughing at me as the lecturer was getting angry on me. I was so ashamed as I was busy asking what is the problem. The lecturer walked out while clicking as the was laughing to the top of their lungs. (F13Wi)

Example 76 has poor punctuation, poor diction, poor grammar and spelling, code-switching, and lacks a complimentary close. Additionally, the paragraphs are underdeveloped, resulting in a low score for format.

Some informal texts had the correct format, while some missed certain details of the format, for example the study data coded as G3Wi used *Yours faithfully* as a complimentary close for this informal letter.

4.1.3.2 Appropriate Style and Register

Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021, p. 72) observe that the terms style and register have been used differently by various scholars, suggesting there may be an overlap between them. These authors also note that style refers to differences in formality, while register pertains to specific ways of using language associated with particular professions or social groups. This perspective is further supported by Holmes and Wilson (2022, p. 283), who observe that style is analyzed along a scale of formality, while register is linked to specific groups of people or situational contexts. This view is the one adopted in this study.

Style (scale of formality) is determined by factors such as circumstances, the relationship between participants, age, sex, the importance of the matter, and many others. Register, on the other hand, can refer to the language of economists, legalese, journalese, the language of politicians, or even that of criminals.

Part of the study data was formal while the other was informal. This ensured that the study measured the study subjects' competence in both styles. The study subjects, for the most part, demonstrated an awareness of the need for different styles for the two assignments. The average score for style and register as an indicator of sociolinguistic competence in the study data was 3.3 out of 5 for the formal data and 3.7 out of 5 for the informal text.

The relatively lower score for style and register in the formal text arises from the use of informal language features by some students. These informal elements include contractions, shortened forms, informal constructions and words, as well as code switching. Consider the examples below:

Example 77:

En if you want to avoid all that you will have to start all over. (J27Wf)

The shortened form *en* has been used to represent *and*. This is quite informal and is not suitable for a formal text of this nature.

Example 78:

You may end up paying a fine which is atimes so painful... (O20Wf)

Atimes, used here to represent *at times*, is a casual expression that reflects speech, and is therefore not suitable for the formal text.

Example 79:

Students' results are likely to be cancelled since they are not legit. (H26Wf)

The word *legit* is a short form for *legitimate* and it is used in casual expressions. It is, therefore, not in the correct style for a formal text.

As for the informal text, the score was high: 3.7 out of 5, which translates to a score of 74 percent. This is mainly because many students in the study data recognized the need to use the informal style in the friendly letter. This can be demonstrated in example 80 below that is drawn from the study data coded L2Wi which begins thus,

Example 80:

Hopes you are doing well...

In fact, some people have taken a step further in terms of the informal style by using pictographs (emoticons/emoji). Consider example 81 below drawn from the study data coded as I18Wi.

Example 80:

It's been a long time since we talked. So, something happened. And you won't believe it.

During one of our lectures, our lec wanted to project something n we were so anxious.

I obviously was the one connecting the projector and I did my job empicably, I left the laptop there at her desk so that she could screen whatever she wanted to. The lesson started off quite well until it came to our lecturer screening her work.

Apparently our lecturer did not close all her tabs well, I don't want to say the specific tab that was still on, coz I know you know 🤔 😏 we were shocked...

In example 81 above, a few shortened forms have been used as indicators of informal style. They include *lec*, *n* (to stand for 'and') and *coz*. The two pictographs used mean *crying out loud* and *squint laughing*.

In the study data coded as H1Wi, there is the use of colloquial language that is extremely informal and could possibly be categorized as street language. In this register, the writer makes use of "curse" words such as *fucking* and derogatory terms such as *nigga*. An extract from this data is given in example 82 below:

Example 82:

All things are fucking well and life in general is almost bearable. Nigga you left Kenya so indefinitely that I could not give you my letter to my soulmate Grace what in the same school as you are. You owe me one man.

Both *fucking* and *nigga* could be classified as features of a vernacular (very relaxed language) spoken in the streets and that mark one as subscribing to "gangster" lifestyle (mostly young people who form groups "gangs", speak street language as a marker of solidarity with the group, and sometimes may also engage in crime).

The study data also contains incidences of code-switching. According to Zakaria et al. (2010), code-switching occurs more frequently in informal conversations with friends, neighbours, or even spouses. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) also note that code-switching is a common feature in multilingual contexts and observe that speakers need to have knowledge of the domains in the speech community that allow code-switching.

Extensive code switching is used in example 76 above. The example is copied below for ease of reference.

To Lita Wanjala.

Hae lita, hope this will find you well at Qatar. Im also doing good here. I would like to share with you one of my humorous incidents happened during a lecture.

So it was a Monday at 3pm na lecturer wa maths alikuwa akifunza na nilikuwa nimesinzia kidogo kwa usingizi and I was not following the lectures. Ilifika point lecturer akandika hesabu moja kwa board and he wanted someone a frontier to calculate it. Actualy ilikuwa so complex in that hakuna msee alitaka kuifanya

Know there is this friend of mine and a great joker alikuwa amekaa next to me. Aliniamsha na akaniambia lecturer amesema niende nikavute board ndo usingizi ipungue. Nikaona enyewe it's a good idea and I stood up walked fowered nikachukua duster nikavuta kilakitu kilichowa kimeandikwa apo na nikarudi kukaa.

The whole class was laughing at me as the lecturer was getting angry on me. I was so ashamed as I was busy asking what is the problem. The lecturer walked out while clicking as the was laughing to the top of their lungs. (F13Wi)

Al Heeti and Al Abdely (2016) in their study of code-switching among doctors in Iraq observe that one of the reasons for code-switching is that some bilinguals are able to communicate in L2 for certain purposes and in certain situations, yet they cannot use it for comprehensive and efficient daily life communication. The data in example 76 above may represent such a case where the study subject can use English for, say, academic purposes,

but cannot effectively use the L2 in casual, intimate situations. It may also be an attempt to be casual, as the letter was meant for a close friend.

4.1.3.3 Appropriate Illocutionary Acts

According to Oishi (2006), an illocutionary act is a linguistic act performed by a speaker when they produce an utterance that suggests, warns, promises, or requests. Subandowo et al. (2022) call these communicative functions and note that part of a speaker's sociolinguistic competence is to determine which communicative function is appropriate for a given context.

The use of the appropriate illocutionary acts as an indicator of sociolinguistic competence in the study data had an average score of 4.5 out of 5 for both the formal text and the informal text. The formal text in this study is expected to be informative, or what Oishi (2006) classifies as representatives based on Searl's categories of illocutionary acts. This is because it explains the effects of cheating in exams. Nearly all study subjects were able to write formal texts that were informative, except for a few who wrote very short texts that had little in way of information. An example is the data coded as N24Wf in example 83 below:

Example 83:

Students who cheat at first get away with it many in the long run feel guilty and suffer from low self-esteem. This loss of self-esteem can lead to a lot of other problems including difficulties with careers, families and other aspects of life. Although some students may think cheating is harmless and that its potential penalties would impact only themselves. It is crucial that they understand the far reaching consequences of academic dishonesty and the serious societal and personal ramifications it can have.

This one paragraph is the entire essay that this student wrote. It seems to convey only two pieces of information: namely that cheating lowers self-esteem and that the consequences of cheating may affect other people as well as the person cheating. It, therefore, scored low in its ability to convey information.

The informal text, on the other hand, was expected to narrate or provide a personal account. Indeed, most letters presented personal accounts, except for a few that were too brief to be considered well-written accounts. Consider example 84, which is part of the study data coded as E6Wi.

Example 84:

Hello friend! To day as I was doing my exam of repair and maintenance I had a 'mwakenya' which I had written for copying when I started the exam the lecture got me with a mwakenya and funny enough the mwakenya was of the wrong unit. I had carried Networking and the exam was for Repair. The student laughed for me and also the lecture.

Above is the entire letter that this student wrote. It very briefly recounts a personal experience and, therefore, scored low in its ability to perform the expected illocutionary act of narrating or giving a personal account.

4.1.3.4 Appropriate Tone

Subandowo et al. (2022), in their overview of sociolinguistic competence and its pedagogical implications, observe that the manner and spirit of a text are areas in which language users should demonstrate proficiency. This refers to the ability to adjust the quality of voice appropriately for various speech situations. Tone can be formal, informal, intimate,

conciliatory, solemn, or even humorous. The average score for the appropriate use of tone in the study data is 3.5 out of 5 for formal texts and 3.9 out of 5 for informal texts.

In the study data, a formal tone is expected to be used in the text. This is because it is a formal essay addressing the serious issue of cheating in exams. Other tones that would be appropriate include a stringent tone or even a harsh tone when discussing the consequences of cheating, as well as a serious tone. However, the most prevalent tone is a matter-of-fact tone, as it states what is considered factual. An example of this from the study data is given below:

Example 85:

Cheating in exams is defined as fraud, deceit or dishonesty in an academic assignment.(H16Wf)

Here, a matter of fact tone describes what cheating in academics is.

Other kinds of tone that have been appropriately used in the formal text are a stern/strict tone, a desperate tone, and an ironic tone. These are exemplified below:

Example 85:

... at the university level once one is discontinued from university A, under no circumstance is university B or C allowed to accept or even readmit such a culprit.(H1Wf)

The writer here uses a firm, stringent tone to communicate the dire consequences of cheating in exams.

Example 86:

Fines amounting up to 5 or 3 million can compel one's family to sell anything available to take a bond for their child.(H1Wf)

The writer is communicating the desperation that the family would be in as they try to rectify a bad situation caused by cheating.

Example 87:

Cheating in exams leads to failed performance at the work place. Where one has very high qualification in papers but on the ground things are different.(H1Wf)

The writer of this sentence is communicating the irony of excelling in papers, but being incompetent on the job which is as a result of cheating in exams.

All the above tones have been used in a manner that is fitting. However, the formal data also had texts that were, in some sections, written in a casual tone that is not fitting for a formal text. Consider the example below:

Example 88:

...he or she is instructed to go home for like three years.

The underlined expression is casual. It can be revised to make it formal thus,

...he or she is instructed to go home for three years.

The informal text, on the other hand, is expected to have a casual, familiar, intimate, humorous or light-hearted, and even conciliatory tone. This is because the writer is

addressing a friend. It could also be enthusiastic and nostalgic, as the writer is excited about being able to communicate with a friend abroad whom they have probably not seen in a while. The following examples from the informal texts use tone appropriately.

Example 89:

... one boy decided to touch the teacher's hair by which it was a wig and he didn't know.

He pulled it out and the teacher was left bare she had nothing but a bald. And of course student bursted into laughter. (D1Wi)

The part where the teacher's head is left bare is humorous, and this being a text recounting a humorous event, this tone is appropriate.

Example 90:

Finally, I look on to meet you this coming festive season. (N7Wi)

The writer intends to say that they look forward to meeting their friend in the festive season. This longing tone is suited for a letter to a friend who is abroad.

Errors in tone in the informal text are as a result of use of a matter of fact tone in the letter which should be enthusiastic and humorous. Consider the example below:

Example 91:

There is this friend of mine called Antonio, during an examination, he carried flash cards containing information about the unit where the examination was coming from. The teacher started checking if the students have foreign materials in the room. He got caught and the teacher took the flash cards well known as 'mwakenya'. he was allowed to do the exam

though he was to be punished after it. Since he had not prepared adequately for the exam he has his phone with the unit pdf already unlocked. Whatever the teacher tested was not covered in the notes he had. When the time came to surrender the answer sheets, though he had signed, he did not surrender his. The teacher noticed and he was called out to surrender and his paper was cancelled showing he did not do the exam at all.

The tone in example 90 above is neither enthusiastic nor humorous as the question required. This; thus, is inappropriate use of tone.

4.1.3.5 Appropriate Idiom and Expressions

Khonbi and Sadeghi (2017) observe that idioms have meanings that are largely rooted in a nation's deep culture. Therefore, part of the sociolinguistic competence that a speaker of a language requires is some knowledge of how fixed expressions are used in terms of their meaning and the situations in which they can be appropriately used.

In the study data, use of appropriate idiom and expression had an average score of 3.4 out of 5 for the formal text and 3.7 for the informal text. The study data seems to suggest that the students are more at home with casual expressions than formal ones. Below are examples drawn from the study data that demonstrate good use of idioms and expressions.

Example 92:

Students ... walk away scotfree (H1Wf)

No shortcut is any place worth going. (H1Wf)

Example 93:

I decided to take a bullet for my friends (M18Wi)

Some idioms and expressions in the study data have errors in syntax. Some examples of such are given below:

Example 94:

All over suddenly (K20Wi)

This should have been written as *All of a sudden*

Example 95:

Her reputation is dealt in a huge blow (M18Wf)

This could be revised into, *Her reputation was dealt a big blow*

Example 96:

Am yearning of meeting you soon. (M22Wi)

This could be revised into, *Am yearning to meet you*

4.1.4. Strategic Competence

Tarone (1983) defines strategic competence as the ability of a speaker to utilise communication strategies when problems arise in the process of conveying information. Communication strategies, on the other hand, are plans designed to address issues in achieving a specific communicative goal. The communication strategies considered indicators of strategic competence in the study data include borrowing, circumlocution (periphrasis), analogies, metaphor/word coinage, and superordinate terms.

The study data indicated evidence of only one of these communication strategies, which is circumlocution. All other communication strategies were not utilised by the study sample. Consequently, the average score for strategic competence out of 5 was very low, at 0.05 for the formal data and 0.03 for the informal data. A tabulated summary of the analysis of strategic competence in the study data is presented in Table 31 below:

Table 31

A Table of the Average Level of Strategic Competence in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Strategic competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Borrowing	0.00	0.00
Circumlocution/periphrasis	0.05	0.03
Use of analogies	0.00	0.00
Use of metaphor/coinage	0.00	0.00
Use of a superordinate term	0.00	0.00
Total:	0.05	0.03

The reason for the extremely low score in strategic competence could be due to lack of instruction on the same in Kenyan schools. Indeed, scholars such as Tarone (1983) have recommended that communication strategies be taught in schools. The importance of knowledge of communication strategies is that they make it possible for one to negotiate a meaning for which they lack the right vocabulary, or have momentarily forgotten. This goes a long way in improving fluency.

Tarone and Yule (1983) observe that strategic competence is often called upon in L1. For example, when one cannot recall the name of an object or person, they may say,

“the metal thing used for draining water from rice”

This is a wordy or a periphrastic way of referring to a strainer, and it communicates as well as improves fluency.

Instances of circumlocution in the study data are given below:

Example 98:

... lecturers request the sending away of the student. (H11Wf)

This is a periphrastic (long) way of saying that the lecturers recommended expulsion.

Example 99:

Another effect is actually going to affect your upper class studies. (L13Wf)

This is an attempt to use circumlocution, but the phrase *upper class* may have connotations of social class that are not intended here in a sentence that is talking about *tertiary* studies.

Example 100:

After all the flimsy reasons so that the exams can be postponed the find not agreeing with the lecturer... (M3Wf)

The underlined words can be replaced by the single word *differed*. The intended clause would then be, *they differed with the lecturer*

Example 101:

On my part I am doing well just struggling and placing everything on its place. (M4Wi)

The underlined words can be replaced with the phrase *trying to figure things out*. It is; therefore, an example of circumlocution.

Example 102:

He was very low-level English student. (M6Wi)

The underlined words are periphrastic. The intended message is that *the student had poor English*.

The communicative strategies that were not utilized by the study sample include borrowing, analogy, metaphor/coinage, and the use of superordinate terms. Borrowing involves a literal translation from L1 to the target language. Consider example 103 below:

Example103:

I touch the ground

Example 102 is from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. It illustrates how the ancestral spirits greeted. This is a direct translation from the Igbo language, likely because the author found no precise English equivalents for the Igbo greeting, and he wanted to preserve the original meaning instead of translating it to a greeting in English like "How are you?" Therefore, he employed the communication strategy of borrowing. Borrowing may also involve using a native term without translating it. While it might not be acceptable in formal contexts, it can help negotiate meaning and enhance fluency when one lacks vocabulary. Consider the example below:

Example104:

The tirtil turns into a butterfly

In example 104 above, the Turkish word *tirtil* meaning caterpillar is used in an English sentence and despite it, the meaning is communicated.

Analogy is when a comparison is drawn between the desired meaning and what the writer/speaker is familiar with. Consider the example below:

Example105:

The fish with many hands like those of an octopus.

In example 105 above, the writer wants to refer to *cuttlefish*, but they do not have the necessary vocabulary. Therefore, they compare it with an *octopus* which they are familiar with. They may also not have the vocabulary for *tentacles*, and thus they refer to them as *hands* which is an example of metaphor. In this way, the speaker/writer is able to communicate despite their lack of vocabulary. Metaphor, also called coinage involves making up a new word or phrase to describe something for which the right vocabulary is not known. Consider the example below:

Example106:

For Christmas, we decorated with tinsel and airballs.

The word *airballs* in the example above is new in the sense that it did not exist before the speaker of the sentence made it up. The speaker; therefore, coined it since they did not

have the word for *balloon* which is what they intended to say. Coining this new word enables the speaker to communicate a meaning they would otherwise not have been able to.

The superordinate term as a communication strategy involves using a general term to refer to something more specific. For instance, if someone does not know the word "*goat*" but needs to discuss one, they can use the superordinate term "*animal*" and still convey the meaning with some degree of success. All these communication strategies are important because they enable individuals to express ideas even when faced with gaps in their knowledge of the target language (Littlemore et al, 2006).

4.2 Analysis of the Components of Communicative Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Spoken data in the current study was recorded then transcribed before analysis. It was then analyzed for the four components of communicative competence according to Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). These components are grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence.

The spoken data showed evidence of all these four components of communicative competence. Marked out of 25, grammatical competence had an average score of 19.4 for the formal data and 18.5 for the informal data. Discourse competence had an average score of 21 for the formal data and 20.6 for the informal data. Sociolinguistic competence had an average score of 16.8 for the formal data and 22 for the informal data. Finally, strategic competence had an average score of 3.8 for the formal data and 4.0 for the informal data. The overall average scores for the various components of communicative competence in the spoken data are summarized in Table 32:

Table 32

A Table of the Overall Average Level of communicative Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Type of text:	Formal text	Informal text
Communicative Component:		
Grammatical competence (25marks)	19.4(31.8)	18.5(28.4)
Discourse competence (25marks)	21(34.4)	20.6(31.6)
Sociolinguistic competence (25 marks)	16.8(27.5)	22(33.8)
Strategic Competence (25 marks)	3.8(6.2)	4(6.1)
Total	61 (100)	65.1 (100)

From Table 32 above, one can deduce that the study sample demonstrates greater communicative competence in the spoken data than in written data. This is because the overall average score for communicative competence in the written data for the formal text was 51.55 percent, and 52.93 percent for the informal text. For the spoken data, the overall average score for communicative competence is 61 percent for the formal data, and 65.1 percent for the informal data. The reason could be that unlike written language, in spoken language spelling, punctuation and capitalization are not necessarily evident and thus they cannot be penalized. Table 33 below presents the average level of the components of communicative competence in the spoken data.

Table 33

A Table of the Average levels of the Components of Communicative Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Type of question:	Formal question	Informal question
	(scores on a scale of 1 – 5)	(scores on a scale of 1 -5)
Communicative component:		
Grammatical competence (25 marks)		
Ability to create clear meaning	4.8 (96)	4.8 (96)
Sentence structure	3.4 (68)	3.3 (66)
Accuracy of pronunciation	3.8 (76)	3.7 (74)
Diction and level of vocabulary	3.8 (76)	3.5 (70)
Accuracy of constructions (syntax, tense, aspect, concord)	3.6 (72)	3.2 (70)
TOTAL	19.4 (78)	18.5 (74)
Discourse competence (25 marks)		
Unity of text	4.8 (96)	4.8 (96)
Cohesion	4.4 (88)	4.2 (84)
Coherence	4.5 (90)	4.2 (84)
organization of text	4.2 (84)	4.1.(82)
Verbal aspects of delivery (voice projection, pause and pace)	3.1 (62)	3.3 (66)
TOTAL	21 (84)	20.6 (82)
Sociolinguistic competence (25 marks)		
Appropriate style and register	3.3 (66)	3.7 (74)
Appropriate idiom and expressions	4.1 (82)	4.4 (88)
Appropriate illocutionary acts	4.1 (82)	4.3 (86)
Tone and intonation	4.6 (92)	4.8 (96)
Adaptation to audience	4.7 (96)	4.8 (96)
TOTAL	16.8 (67)	22 (88)
Strategic competence (25 marks)		
Appeal for help/Repair	0.7 (14)	0.7 (14)
Superordinate term	-	-
Fluency	3.5 (70)	3.2 (64)
Replacement (circumlocution, analogy, metaphor/coinage)	0.3 (6)	0.1 (2)
Borrowing	-	-
TOTAL	3.8 (15.2)	4.0 (16)
GRAND TOTAL	61/100	65.1/100

There is little difference between the formal and informal texts regarding the levels of the components of communicative competence observed: the formal text has an average percentage score of 61, while the informal text has an average percentage score of 65.1. This indicates that first-year university students in Kenya are above average in their acquisition of components of communicative competence in spoken English.

A detailed analysis of the four components of communicative competence in the spoken English of first year university students follows:

4.2.1 Grammatical Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Mclaren (2010) defines grammatical competence as the ability to recognize lexical, morphological, syntactic and phonological features of a language and use these features effectively to interpret, encode, and decode words and sentences. This agrees with Canale and Swain (1980) who view grammatical competence as the knowledge of vocabulary as well as knowledge of morphological, syntactic semantic and phonetic rules of a language.

The elements considered indicators of grammatical competence in the spoken study data are the ability to create clear meaning, the ability to construct correct sentence structures, accuracy of pronunciation, diction, and vocabulary level, as well as construction accuracy. The average score of grammatical competence in the spoken data is above average at 19.4 out of 25 for the formal data and 18.5 for the informal data. Table 34 below presents the average scores of the indicators of grammatical competence in the spoken study data.

Table 34

A Table of the Average Level of Grammatical Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Grammatical competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Ability to create clear meaning	4.8	4.8
Sentence structure	3.4	3.3
Accuracy of pronunciation	3.8	3.7
Diction and level of vocabulary	3.8	3.5
Accuracy of construction: Aspect, tense, concord, syntax	3.6	3.2
TOTAL:	19.4	18.5

In the following sections, each of the indicators of grammatical competence in the spoken study data is discussed in details.

4.2.1.1 Ability to Create Clear Meaning in the Spoken Data

The indicator of grammatical competence that had the highest score in the spoken study data was the ability to create clear meaning, with a score of 4.8 out of 5 for both the formal and informal texts. This translates to a percentage score of 96, indicating that most study subjects were able to produce spoken texts that were meaningful. Indeed, all the spoken texts in the study data were meaningful, while those that scored low in the ability to create clear meaning lacked cohesion and sounded more like a list; thus, the ideas did not flow smoothly. This caused some difficulty in understanding the relationships between the sentences. An example from the study data coded E5Sf is provided below:

Example 107:

Effects of Cheating in exams

Lowering one's self respect and confidence.

Risk of being discontinued.

In the institution, one can receive penalties and suspensions.

There is risk in the future, thus it affects one's reputation as one will be considered untrustworthy.

Example 107 above is a transcription of the entire spoken text coded as E5Sf. The sentences in this text are autonomous, and the listener may find it challenging to interpret it as a single unit. Therefore, it scored low in its ability to communicate a clear meaning as a unified text.

Most spoken texts in the study data communicate clearly. Although they are not error-free, the errors do not obstruct meaning. Consider the example below drawn from the spoken data coded as A6Sf.

Example 108:

... cheating in exams number one, will make you to be a slow learner in that you will not be concentrating.

Second effect is that it breaks school rules and can lead to suspension. In case you get suspended, you will mess with every dimension of your life so it will be a great loss to you.

Another effect of cheating is that it will make you to be an incompetent employee who has no skills of the profession they trained for. Cheating is therefore a very bad habit.

The last effect or disadvantage of cheating in exams is that it is unethical and once you practise cheating in the examination, you'll be a person who cannot be trusted so you will not be a person of integrity. So students, let us refrain from cheating because it affects our lives, it is bad and cannot be encouraged. Let us remain to be people of integrity, and be blessed.

Example 108 above is not grammatically accurate, but it communicates a clear meaning. For example, the first sentence, ... *cheating in exams number one, will make you to be a slow learner in that you will not be concentrating*, can be revised as *To begin with, cheating in exams will make you to be a slow learner in that you will not be concentrating*. In this revision, the logical connector number one is replaced with a more formal logical connector *To begin with*. This not only makes the sentence grammatically correct, but it also makes it more formal which is suitable for the formal text it is in.

4.2.1.2 Sentence Structure in the Spoken Data

As an indicator of grammatical competence, the ability to speak using correct sentence structures had an average score of 3.4 out of 5 for the formal data and 3.3 for the informal data. This translates to percentage scores of 68 and 66, respectively. This means that the study sample's ability to construct grammatical sentence structures was above average. The errors that lowered the score for speaking in correct sentence structures include omission of words, incorrect usage of words, hesitations and false starts, as well as semantic redundancies. All these are exemplified below using examples drawn from the study data. The code of the data from which the examples are drawn is provided after each example.

Example 109:

Some of students ran away without knowing it was a CAT...(A1Si)

The definite article has been left out after the preposition *of*. In addition, the verb *know* is a stative verb and; therefore, it does not take progression. So the revised sentence could read,

Some of the students ran away for they did not know it was a CAT (continuous Assessment Test- an abbreviation commonly used in Kenyan universities)

Example 110:

This effect may hinder your ability to land a good job or join a graduate school, whereby you'll just be...you'll just be... desperate. (N4Sf)

The logical connector "*whereby*" has been wrongly used in a slot where an adverb of result, such as "*therefore*," would be more appropriate.

Example 111:

One should do important ... one should do important ... one should prepare earlier before the examination.

The elliptical dots in example 111 above mark the speaker's hesitations. The speaker hesitates twice with the same sentence and then decides to restructure the sentence so that the initial one is considered a false start. This was a frequent feature in the spoken data.

Example 112:

Me I decide that after one, I'll go to town...

Schmied (2006) observes that semantic redundancy is a common feature in East African English. Example 112 above is an example of semantic redundancy that involves the repetition of the singular first person pronoun, first in the objective case, *me* then in the subjective case *I*. Since the slot the two occupy is the subject position, then the pronoun in the subjective case is the correct one thus *me* should be left out.

4.2.1.3 Accuracy of Pronunciation in the Spoken Data

As observed by Canale and Swain (1980), knowledge of the phonology of a language is part of the grammatical competence that a speaker of a language has. In spoken data, this ability is reflected in the manner in which sounds are pronounced. In the study data, accuracy of pronunciation as an indicator of grammatical competence had an average score of 3.8 out of 5 for the formal data and 3.7 for the informal data. This is a score that is above average. Mispronunciations in the data were mainly as a result of transfer from L1, features of connected speech and accents. These have been exemplified below and the code of the study data from which the examples are drawn is given at the end of each example.

Example 113:

...he decided to write the name of a friend who didn't have a glue on what was happening
(J14Si)

This effect may hinter your ability to lant a good job (N4Sf)

Your actions devine who you are ... (G11Sf)

All the underlined words in example 113 above are mispronunciations occasioned by transfer from L1. They may be as a result of the fact that the speakers' first languages do not have the English sounds the speakers are required to articulate in these contexts. The

speakers; therefore, replace those sounds with the closest sounds in their L1. Thus in the first sentence in this example, the speaker replaces the sound /k/ with /g/ and so articulates *clue* as *glue*; in the second sentence, the speaker replaces the sound /d/ with /t/ thus articulating the words *hinder* and *land* as *hinter* and *lant* respectively. In the third sentence, the speaker replaces the sound /f/ with /v/ thus articulates *define* as *devine*.

Example 114:

And ther-a-fore ...

This is an example of epenthesis, a feature of connected speech whereby speakers insert a sound within a word. In example 114 above, a shwa /ə/ is inserted within the word *therefore*. The reason for insertion is to hasten the speed of speech or for ease of articulation, or even laziness.

Example 115:

Another effect of cheating (cheating articulated as /tʃɪŋɪŋ/ instead of as /tʃɪtiŋ/). (H9Sf)

In example 115 above, the phoneme /t/ is articulated as /ɾ/ (a flap), which is a feature of American English. Some Kenyan youths assume an American accent and this may be the reason for this feature in the spoken English of Kenyan first year university students.

4.2.1.4 Diction and level of vocabulary in the Spoken Data

Canale and Swain (1980) identify vocabulary as part of a speaker's grammatical competence. In the study data, diction and level of vocabulary had an average score of 3.8 out of 5 for the formal data and 3.5 for the informal text. The study sample shows evidence of the ability to use a wide range of vocabulary correctly. For example, the words *prohibited*, *refrain*,

commotion, condoned and revoked amongst others are used correctly as in the sentences below drawn from the study data.

Example 116:

... copying from a source that is prohibited... (A1Sf)

In order to ... to ... to refrain from cheating ... (O4Sf)

Cheating as you all know is an evil that isn't condoned in most of our schools. (K7Sf)

The student left the lecture hall and this caused commotion. (M19Si)

Cheating can lead to scholarships being revoked. (C13Sf)

Errors in diction in the study data are due to the choice of the wrong words. Consider the example below:

Example 117:

When you steal KCSE examinations... (J25Sf)

The underlined word is an example of wrong choice of a word. The correct word in this context would be *Cheat* so that the sentence would be *When you cheat in KCSE examinations.*

Example 118:

... that day we had cultural week so it was like you are in class and then you have that another mind, 'oh how is cultural going?' (B2Si)

The underlined phrase can be revised to *other thought*, so that the sentence can be revised as,

... that day we had cultural week so it was like you are in class and then you have that other thought, 'oh how is cultural going?'

Example 119:

First of all we know that this is a problem that has been there in schools and many students have been fault of the same... (B23Sf)

The underlined word is a wrong choice. The correct word is *guilty*. The sentence can be revised to,

First of all we know that this is a problem that has been there in schools and many students have been guilty of the same...

4.2.1.5 Accuracy of Constructions: Syntax, Tense, Aspect and Concord in the Spoken Data

Accuracy of constructions as an indicator of grammatical competence in the study data had an average score of 3.6 out of 5 in the formal text and 3.2 in the informal text. Some data had accurate construction, or had few errors. An example of such is an extract from the data coded O22Sf given below:

Example 120:

Cheating in exams is using other means to pass exams instead of relying on what you were taught and the skills you learnt in class. Cheating is a wrong act which has certain effects which include overdependency on cheating instead of studying for exams.

Another effect is that cheating tends to lower the self esteem of the learner. A learner who relies on cheating is not able to believe in themselves and they don't believe they can pass

without cheating. They compare themselves with those who pass without cheating and they feel lesser compared to them.

Furthermore, cheating leads to lack of confidence. A student who cheats fails to get the knowledge needed and when they finish their studies and go out there, they are not able to accurately and ... you know, do their tasks well in their field.

Lastly, cheating has dire consequences when one is caught because some institutions suspend or expel

Example 120 above uses grammatically accurate constructions. However, there were spoken texts in the study data that had errors in constructions. The errors observed included the use of stative verbs in the progressive aspect, resumptive pronouns, incorrect direct speech, lack of grammatical agreement (concord), wrong use of prepositions as well as wrong use of tense and aspect. These are exemplified in the examples below drawn from the study data.

Example 121:

When the lecturer came, he was a bit confused. He was somehow not understanding himself ... (B8Si)

The stative verb understand has been used in the progressive aspect which is wrong.

Example 122:

One of our members in our group after we had completed writing the names he decided to write the name of a friend ... (J14Si)

The underlined pronoun he above points back to the noun phrase one of our members in our group. Since a pronoun (one) has already been used in this sentence to refer to the person in question, using another pronoun (he) in the same sentence can be seen as a resumptive pronoun which is redundant and an error.

Example 123:

So the main effects of cheating in exams is that...(A3Sf)

The singular verb is above does not agree in number with the plural subject the main effects.

Example 124:

He asked who was she and we said what had happened. (J2Si)

The underlined reported speech above is incorrect. It should read, He asked who she was. The subject - auxiliary inversion should not be there since it is a reported question.

Example 125:

Everybody bursted into laughter. (A3Si)

The sentence above is in the simple past tense. The simple past tense form of the underlined irregular verb is burst not bursted.

Example 126:

One might have to redo the school year, whereby here in Kenya, it takes a duration of three years after one is being caught. (C4Sf)

The underlined verb phrase should be in the perfective aspect because the action it refers to has already been completed at the moment of speaking. It should therefore be, after one has been caught.

Example 127:

I am ready to share to you (M19Si)

The correct preposition for the sentence above is with, so the sentence should read, *I am ready to share with you ...*

All these examples demonstrate areas that reflect insufficient grammatical competence in the spoken study data.

4.2.2 Discourse Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Canale and Swain (1980) define discourse competence as the mastery of how to combine grammatical forms and meanings to achieve a unified spoken or written text. Spoken texts in the study data scored highly for discourse competence at an average of 21 out of 25 for the formal text, and 20.6 for the informal text. The elements of discourse competence that were used as indicators of the same in the study data were unity of text, cohesion, coherence, organization of text and verbal aspects of delivery. Table 35 below presents the average levels of the different elements of discourse competence in the study data.

Table 35

A Table of the Average Level of Discourse Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Discourse competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Unity of text	4.8	4.8
Cohesion	4.4	4.2
Coherence	4.5	4.2
organization of text	4.2	4.1
Verbal Aspects of delivery (voice projection, pause, pace)	3.1	3.3
TOTAL:	21	20.6

From Table 35 above, it can be observed that the element of discourse competence with the highest average score is unity of text, followed by coherence then cohesion, organization of text, and verbal aspects of delivery have the lowest average score. A more detailed discussion of each of these elements of discourse competence is provided in the sections that follow.

4.2.2.1 Unity of Text in the Spoken Data

Unity of a text refers to the quality of a text that causes it to have all units (words, phrases, clauses, sentences and paragraphs) that make up the text to directly contribute to the thesis/topic in the text without digressing (Halliday & Hassan, 2014, p. 293). Most spoken texts in the study data showed evidence of unity, where one topic was developed throughout the texts. Thus, the average score for unity of text was 4.8 out of 5 for both the formal and the informal text. For instance, example 120 above demonstrates unity. It is copied below for ease of reference.

Example 120:

Cheating in exams is using other means to pass exams instead of relying on what you were taught and the skills you learnt in class. Cheating is a wrong act which has certain effects which include overdependency on cheating instead of studying for exams.

Another effect is that cheating tends to lower the self esteem of the learner. A learner who relies on cheating is not able to believe in themselves and they don't believe they can pass without cheating. They compare themselves with those who pass without cheating and they feel lesser compared to them.

Furthermore, cheating leads to lack of confidence. A student who cheats fails to get the knowledge needed and when they finish their studies and go out there, they are not able to accurately and ... you know, do their tasks well in their field.

Lastly, cheating has dire consequences when one is caught because some institutions suspend or expel

It is clear that all the units of this text: the words, sentences, and paragraphs are focused on the effects of cheating in exams. Thus the text scored highly for unity.

Texts that scored low in unity of text were those spoken in point form such that each unit was autonomous without links logically connecting the units in the text. For instance, example 107 above was disjointed. It is copied below for ease of reference.

Effects of Cheating in exams

Lowering one's self respect and confidence.

Risk of being discontinued.

In the institution, one can receive penalties and suspensions.

There is risk in the future, thus it affects one's reputation as one will be considered untrustworthy.

The first two points in this example are not sentences: the first is a verb phrase while the second is an adjective phrase. There are no formal links connecting the units in this text, and only the context - the title, *Effects of Cheating*, helps one to make sense of the different units.

4.2.2.2 Cohesion in the Spoken Data

Halliday and Hassan (2014, p. 4) observe that cohesion occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the text presupposes other elements in the text, such that they cannot be decoded without recourse to those elements they presuppose. The presupposed element and the element that presupposes it both form a cohesive tie. Cohesion in the spoken study data has an average score of 4.4 out of 5 for the formal text and 4.2 for the informal text.

Most students demonstrate ability to create texts that are logically connected through the use of formal links that are both grammatical and lexical. Consider example 120 copied below for ease of reference.

Example 120:

Cheating in exams is using other means to pass exams instead of relying on what you were taught and the skills you learnt in class. Cheating is a wrong act which has certain effects which include overdependency on cheating instead of studying for exams.

Another effect is that cheating tends to lower the self esteem of the learner. A learner who relies on cheating is not able to believe in themselves and they don't believe they can pass without cheating. They compare themselves with those who pass without cheating and they feel lesser compared to them.

Furthermore, cheating leads to lack of confidence. A student who cheats fails to get the knowledge needed and when they finish their studies and go out there, they are not able to accurately and ... you know, do their tasks well in their field.

Lastly, cheating has dire consequences when one is caught because some institutions suspend or expel

This text is cohesive. The logical connectors in bold-type: **another**, **furthermore** and **lastly**, create smooth flow between the different units of the text. The word *cheating* occurs in the first sentence and is repeated in the second sentence thus linking these two sentences cohesively. There are other words that have created cohesion through repetition. Also among other cohesive devices in example 120 is collocation where the words *cheating*, *student*, *studies* and others tend to occur in the same environment and thus are interpreted as belonging together thus creating cohesion in this text.

Texts such as example 107 above that were written in point form scored little for cohesion. This is because each unit in the text seems to stand independently without being logically linked to create smooth flow throughout the text.

4.2.2.3 Coherence in the Spoken Data

According to de Beaugrande and Dressler (1981, p. 109), coherence is the “outcome of actualising meanings in order to make sense of a text”. This means that it is the quality of a

text that enables it to make sense. Coherence has also been explained as clarity of expression created when correct vocabulary and grammar are used. (Enago Academy, 2021). This implies that the indicators of coherence in a text are cohesion and grammar.

In the spoken study data, coherence scored an average of 4.5 out of 5 for the formal text and 4.2 for the informal data. This means that most of the texts communicated clearly and flowed logically. Demonstration of coherence in the text can be seen in example 120 above which hangs together cohesively as has been demonstrated in section 4.2.1.3 above, and it is also spoken in correct grammar thus meaning is not obstructed.

The study data also had demonstration of texts that scored low on coherence due to lack of cohesion as demonstrated in example 107 above. Other texts were incorrect grammatically and this led to vagueness in their communication. Consider the examples below drawn from the spoken study data.

Example 128:

We hire doctors from Cuba which makes it so expensive for a common civilian to be attended to. We use many resources to hire those doctors who doesn't enjoy their services. (K7Sf)

There is vagueness in example 128 above as one is not sure of the antecedent of the relative pronoun *who*. It could be referring to the noun phrase *those doctors* or to citizens.

Example 129:

The lecturer came back wearing his shirt now in the correct posture. (H3Si)

The use of the word *posture* in example 129 above causes vagueness in that one could interpret *posture* to be referring to *the lecturer* or *his shirt*. These vague expressions compromise coherence in the concerned texts.

4.2.2.4 Organization of Text in the Spoken Data

According to McWharther and Kathleen (2005), text organization refers to the planning of a text to help the readers follow and understand the information presented. The tools that are used in organizing texts include reference to other parts of a text, using logical connectors to show how different parts of a text are related, and using relevant patterns of organization such as the chronological pattern, cause and effect pattern, spatial pattern among others. In the study data, organization of text had a score of 4.2 out of 5 for the formal text and 4.1 for the informal text.

Texts in the spoken sample made use of tools for organizing texts such as reference, logical connectors and organizational patterns. Consider example 130 below that is an extract from the study data coded (K7Sf).

Example 130:

*First of all, exam cheating as you know is an evil that is not to be condoned in most of our schools. But you find it that **it** has been one of the biggest problems in most of our Kenyan schools in recent times.*

As we know, the effects of exam cheating is as follows:

*Number one, the effects of **exam cheating lead to poor performance** of most of our students. You find that some students cheat exams and this.... when they are caught this leads to the*

cancellation of marks which they ought to be awarded . This thus makes them to have poor results in their exams.

*Secondly, **exam cheating leads to incompetency in the work that one qualifies for since exam cheating makes someone to qualify for a work or to engage in an employment or a field which she or he didn't qualified for thus leading to poor competency in such field of work thus examination cheating isn't tolerated or isn't uh... uh... sorry, exam cheating isn't allowed or should not be tolerated in our Kenyan schools.***

*Finally, but not least, **exam cheating also leads to poor economic growth....***

In example 130 above, there is pronoun reference in the first paragraph where the pronoun *it* in the first sentence refers to *examination cheating* in the second sentence. There are also logical connectors *first of all*, *number one*, *secondly* and *finally*. These too give the text organization. The text has also assumed the cause and effect pattern of organization as the words *exam cheating leads to ...* is repeated every time a new effect is introduced. This shows that effects are being enumerated and developed. Texts such as example 107 that list effects of cheating lack proper organization as there are no logical connections between ideas and no definite pattern of organization is utilized.

4.2.2.5 Verbal Aspects of Delivery in the Spoken Data

Mapes (2019) identifies verbal aspects of delivery as including voice projection, verbal enunciation, verbal punctuation, and vocal rate. In this study, these aspects are regarded as important indicators of discourse competence because they influence the accessibility of spoken text to the hearer, enabling the hearer not only to understand the text but also to follow it. Indeed, Mapes (2019) points out that these verbal aspects of delivery can determine whether the listener follows a text to the end or loses interest and gives up at some point.

The elements of the verbal aspects of delivery that were considered indicators of discourse competence in the study data include voice projection, pauses, and pace of delivery. Good voice projection ensures that the spoken text is audible and, therefore, accessible to the audience. Pauses provide what Mapes (2021) refers to as vocal punctuation because they tell the listener when a sentence ends, where it pauses to catch breathe, or where the pause is meant for dramatic effect. Such effects, like suspense or a profound statement, allow the pause to give the listener time to ponder. Proper pace or rate of speech ensures that the speaker is not too slow so that the audience processes the speech faster than the information is given. If this happens, it can cause boredom in the audience and make them give up following the speech. A rate that is too fast, on the other hand, will overtax the audience as they struggle to keep up, and this too may cause them to give up.

In the study data, verbal aspects of delivery received a score of 3.1 out of 5 for the formal text and 3.3 for the informal text. The study data demonstrates the use of pauses to mark full stops and commas. This has allowed the transcription of the spoken data to include commas and to separate text into sentences. There is also evidence of voice projection, as most audio recordings were loud enough, while a few were too soft, requiring the researcher to turn up the volume and still straining to hear. An example of this is data coded F21Si. Finally, some texts in the study data were spoken at a very fast pace. Dhamani (2020) recommends that the ideal speech rate should be between 140 - 160 words per minute. Some texts, such as B1Sf, had a high speech rate of 180 words per minute. This made it difficult for the researcher to follow, necessitating constant pauses and even rewinding the recording to comprehend the text.

4.2.3 Sociolinguistic Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

According to Holmes (2022), sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of how to speak in different circumstances, such as addressing participants of varying status, speaking for different purposes, and observing norms and conventions of interaction. This agrees with Canale and Swain's view that sociolinguistic competence considers the social contexts that exist in the use of language, which include topic, participants, their relationships, social status, sex, and age (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Indicators of sociolinguistic competence in the spoken texts that this study focuses on include style and register, idioms and expressions, illocutionary acts, tone and intonation, along with adaptation to the audience. The score for sociolinguistic competence in the spoken data was 16.8 out of 25 for the formal data and 22 for the informal data. Table 36 below presents the average levels of the various indicators of sociolinguistic competence in the spoken data.

Table 36

A Table of the Average Level of Sociolinguistic Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Sociolinguistic competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Appropriate style and register	3.3	3.7
Appropriate idiom and expression	4.1	4.4
Appropriate illocutionary acts	4.1	4.3
Tone of voice and intonation	4.6	4.8
Adaptation to Audience	4.8	4.8
TOTAL:	16.8	22

From table 36, it is evident that the indicator of sociolinguistic competence with the highest score in the study data is adaptation to audience. The second highest is tone and intonation, followed by appropriate idioms and expressions, and then appropriate illocutionary acts. The indicator of sociolinguistic competence with the lowest score is style and register. A detailed discussion of these indicators of sociolinguistic competence follows in the sections that follow.

4.2.3.1 Appropriate Style and Register

Style refers to the level of formality, while register is determined by the situation and the people involved. It is therefore possible to talk about registers such as legal language, banking language, or even the language of criminals (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2021). Style, on the other hand, can be formal or informal. In the study data, style and register had an average score of 3.3 out of 5 for the formal data, and 3.7 for the informal data. The reason for the relatively low score for the formal data is the tendency for study subjects to use features of informal language in the formal text.

The study data showed evidence of those who demonstrated awareness of the need to use different style and register such that the formal style was evident in the formal text and the informal text utilized familiar, casual language. Consider the examples below drawn from the study data.

Example 131:

The Principal, the Deputy Principal, teachers and students, goodmorning. My name is xxxx and I will give you a speech on the effects of cheating in examinations. First of all..... (E11Sf)

Example 132:

(short laughter) well, Ruth, Emily, Jesse, I have something to share with you today. Today's lecture was so, so, funny, you see Mr Edward. You know him, right? He teaches us xxx 100. So he came into the classroom and everyone was seated so quietly.... (E11Si)

Examples 131 and 132 are from the same student. It is clear that this student adjusted their language for the two assignments because they realized that one situation was formal since they were required to give a speech to students, and the other was informal because they were supposed to narrate a humorous incident to friends. The student, therefore, adjusted to an extremely formal style of language in example 131, where they begin by observing protocol. In example 132, this student changes the style and starts with laughter and even the tone is a light-hearted one. Some features of the casual register are *so, so, funny* which in a formal register would be *very funny*. There is also the use of discourse markers such as *right* and *you see* which are features of informal language, sometimes used as discourse fillers to fill the space as the speaker thinks about what to say next. This is a demonstration of competence in the use of different registers and styles.

There were also errors in the study data concerning the choice of style and register. These were as a result of the use of features of informal language in the formal data. Some of the formal data also had instances of code-switching. Below are examples of some errors that pertain to style and register in the study data.

Example 133:

Some usually have poor time management. They will end up cheating in exams coz they never managed their time.(B18Sf)

Example 134:

You can also be expelled, like totally, you can be told to get out of the school. (D7Sf)

Example 135:

To get good grades as a result of cheating is a misinterpretation of facts e.g. and it has various consequences... (M10Sf)

Example 136:

When you cheat in exams, you display... (hesitation) you are somebody ... (hesitation) who cannot be trusted. Somebody who is just there ... (hesitation) yaani, you don't have that integrity. (A18Sf)

Examples 133, 134, 135 and 136 above are all from the formal data yet they have features of informal language. In example 133, a short form, *coz* has been used. In example 134, the discourse marker *like totally*, which is very casual has been used in this formal speech. In example 135, the abbreviation *e.g.* has been used to, apparently, introduce an example. In example 136, there is an instance of code-switching. As Wardhaugh and Fuller (2021) point out, in a multilingual context, one should know the domains of language that permit code-switching. Formal settings, that are also academic, are prejudiced against code-switching. It is, therefore, a wrong choice of style when this student injects the Kiswahili word *yaani* (*that is*) in this formal speech.

4.2.3.2 Appropriate Idioms and Expressions

Saric (2022) notes that formulaic expressions such as collocation, idioms and compounds play an important role in second language acquisition and they should be taught to L2

learners of a language. They are important because as observed in Liantas (2024), they enable one to use language accurately in a variety of sociocultural contexts. This knowledge equips one with the ability to use appropriate and accurate idiomatic language in relation to particular communicative goals.

The average score for competence in appropriate idiom and expressions in the study was 4.1 out of 5 for the formal data and 4.4 for the informal data. This is a high score, suggesting that most study subjects showed awareness and correct use of idioms and expressions. There are those subjects of this study who demonstrated the ability to use idioms and expressions accurately. Consider the examples below drawn from the study data.

Example 137:

A wrong will always be a wrong even if everyone is doing it. (A2Sf)

Example 138:

Students look down upon you when you decide to take the easy way while they are struggling
(K17Sf)

Example 139:

John my saviour ran to my rescue. I shall forever be in his debt. (G20Si)

Example 140:

If you cheat, you are not confident enough to know, “Yes! I can ace this test.” (H9Sf)

The underlined expressions in examples 137, 138, 139, and 140 have been correctly used, demonstrating that the study sample shows some competence in using idioms and

expressions. However, there are instances in the study data where idioms and expressions have been used incorrectly. Consider the examples below:

Example 141:

Exam cheating is an evil that must be shun away(A7Sf)

The intended verb is *shunned* or the phrasal verb, *done away with*. The expression, *shun away* that is used by the student is wrong.

Example 142:

The school put out rules that said that all people should dress decently. (M20Si)

Put out is a phrasal verb which means *extinguish*. In the context of this sentence, the correct expression would have been *put in place*.

4.2.3.3 Appropriate Illocutionary Acts

According to the Oxford Learners' Dictionary (2018), an illocution is an act of speaking or writing that effects an intended action such as ordering, warning, or promising. Competence in illocutionary acts; therefore, entails knowledge of how to select language so that a text performs the necessary act. In the tests used as data collection instruments in this study, the first question required the study subjects to give a two-minute speech they would present to high school students on the effects of cheating in exams. The necessary illocutionary act for this question; therefore, is to inform. This is because the question requires the speakers to orally perform the act of informing. The second question required the study subjects to narrate, as they would to friends, a humorous incident that happened during a lecture. The expected illocutionary act in this assignment is to narrate or give an account of the incident.

The average score of competence in selecting the appropriate illocutionary act in the study data was 4.1 out of 5 for the formal text and 4.3 for the informal text. This high score points to the fact that most of the study subjects correctly selected language to perform the necessary acts. This has been demonstrated in example 130, which is copied below for ease of reference.

Example 130:

*First of all, **exam cheating** as you know is an evil that is not be condoned in most of our schools. But you find it that **it** has been one of the biggest problems in most of our Kenyan schools in recent times.*

As we know, the effects of exam cheating is as follows:

*Number one, the effects of **exam cheating lead to** poor performance of most of our students. You find that some students cheat exams and this.... when they are caught this leads to the cancellation of marks which they ought to be awarded . This thus makes them to have poor results in their exams.*

*Secondly, **exam cheating leads** to incompetency in the work that one qualifies for since exam cheating makes someone to qualify for a work or to engage in an employment or a field which she or he didn't qualified for thus leading to poor competency in such field of work thus examination cheating isn't tolerated or isn't uh... uh... sorry, exam cheating isn't allowed or should not be tolerated in our Kenyan schools.*

*Finally, but not least, **exam cheating also leads to** poor economic growth....*

Since example 130 above is a response to the first question, the illocutionary act it is supposed to perform is to inform which it does quite well.

Texts that scored low on this indicator of sociolinguistic competence were those that were too short such that they could not be considered either informative or narrative. Consider example 143 below:

Example 143:

Cheating in an exam can be so addictive as one may continue cheating their entire life so as to get what he wants and to be successful in life. (D25Sf).

Example 143 above is the entire speech that this study subject gives. It contains little in way of information. It therefore does not serve the appropriate illocutionary act of informing.

4.2.3.4 Tone of Voice and Intonation

Tone refers to the attitude of a speaker towards the subject or the audience (McCoy, 2023). Intonation, on the other hand, is a layer of meaning beyond words that helps speakers communicate meaning through the rise and fall of voice (Hewing, 2004). Hewing (Ibid) also observes that intonation can communicate several meanings: grammatical meaning, which helps one distinguish whether an utterance is a statement or a question; the status of information, which enables one to know whether an utterance is complete or not; attitude, which can communicate certainty or doubt; feeling, which can communicate happiness, enthusiasm, or sadness; and relational content, which can help one recognize whether a speaker is hostile, warm, friendly, or approachable. Tone and intonation are, therefore, useful in communicating important information in spoken language.

The ability to use tone and intonation appropriately in the study data has an average score of 4.6 out of 5 for the formal data and 4.8 for the informal data. This indicates that the study subjects are largely able to utilize these two vocal qualities effectively. Consider the following example drawn from the data.

Example 144:

(short laughter) ↑well, Ruth, Emily, Jessee, I have something to share with you today. ↑Today's lecture was so, so, funny, you see Mr Edward. You know him, right? ↑He teaches us xxx xxx. ↑So he came into the classroom and everyone was seated so quietly.... (E11Si)

This speech starts with laughter, which communicates a humorous tone. Every sentence is said with a rising intonation indicating enthusiasm and excitement. In addition, the tone is intimate as suggested by the direct address to the specific people being talked to, and the shared knowledge of *Mr Edward*. This text has utilized tone and intonation to appropriately communicate meanings of familiarity, humour and excitement. This is suitable since it is an informal text. A similar case is example 145 below.

Example 145:

It was this political science lecturer (he is really good). He would not make it at his usual time, so he reschedules it to 3-5 p.m in the afternoon. Umh.. So me I decide after one, I'll go to town for I had an errand, run the errand and come back to class. So I go and as usual in Nairobi there is jam so I delay and I really get late.

Example 145 uses a very casual, familiar tone suitable for a conversation with a friend. The speaker, has even let down their guard and uses redundant structures such as *So me I*, which they are unlikely to use in a formal context. They even switch from the simple

past tense to a historic present: *So I go and as usual in Nairobi there is jam so....* This makes the events being narrated sound immediate and therefore more vivid. This use of a conversational tone is appropriate for an informal speech to friends.

Errors pertaining to tone and intonation involved using an informal tone in a formal text. This is exemplified in section 4.2.3.1, where a student uses informal words in a formal text. The example has been copied here for ease of reference.

Example 127:

Some usually have poor time management . They will end up cheating in exams coz they never managed their time.(B18Sf)

The word *coz* which is informal is inappropriate in this formal text.

4.2.3.5 Adaptation to Audience

Any communication should anticipate the needs and expectations of the audience (Reid et al, 2022). The planning stage of any communication, therefore, should entail an audience analysis. In the audience analysis, factors concerning the audience, such as age, level of education, and attitudes, are considered. These enable one to tailor their message to suit the target audience. As an indicator of sociolinguistic competence, adaptation to audience had an average score of 4.8 out of 5 for both the formal and the informal texts. This indicates that the study subjects largely have the ability to adjust their message to suit an audience. This could be because, as university students, they have been exposed to the English language for at least 12 years during their primary and secondary education. Additionally, it is possible to use the sociolinguistic competence acquired in the first language for the second language.

The formal text was directed to high school students and the study subjects showed sensitivity to this audience by mentioning them in some sections of the speech, using language that is not technical, and by referring to situations and people that students are familiar with such as school, principals, and rules and regulations. Consider the examples below drawn from the study data.

Example 146:

Students look down upon you when you decide to take the easy way while they are struggling
(K17Sf)

The resentment directed to students who cheat is a situation students would identify with, thus the speaker demonstrates that they are sensitive to the audience they are addressing.

Example 147:

*Number one, the effects of **exam cheating** lead to poor performance of most of our students. You find that some students cheat exams and this.... when they are caught this leads to the cancellation of marks which they ought to be awarded . This thus makes them to have poor results in their exams.* (K7Sf)

The consequence of cancellation of marks would be an effective deterrent from cheating in exams for students. The choice of this idea demonstrates awareness of one's audience. A further example of data that demonstrated sensitivity to the audience is given in the following example.

Example 148:

The Principal, the Deputy Principal, teachers and students, goodmorning. My name is xxxx and I will give you a speech on the effects of cheating in examinations. First of all..... (E11Sf)

In example 148, the speaker demonstrates awareness of their audience because they have mentioned them in their observation of protocol. This demonstrates that the speaker is clear on whom they are addressing.

The informal text, on the other hand, is directed at friends. Study subjects have demonstrated that they speak to friends using warm, friendly language, directly addressing specific friends, and adopting a familiar rather than formal tone. Consider the examples below drawn from the study data.

Example 149:

We were all amused when we heard what she was quarreling about. We could hear her say,

“Have you been cheating on me? Have you cheated on me? You dumb wit! Am talking to you, have you cheated on me?” (H9Si)

This example uses direct speech for dramatic effect. This is often done in casual conversations when one narrates an experience. It is therefore an indication that the speaker is aware they are talking to friends and wishes to make their account vivid by using direct speech.

Example 150:

(short laughter) well, Ruth, Emily, Jesse, I have something to share with you today. Today's lecture was so, so, funny, you see Mr Edward. You know him, right? He teaches us xxx 100. So he came into the classroom and everyone was seated so quietly.... (E11Si)

In this example, the speaker demonstrates clearly that they are aware that they are talking to close friends, and that they wish to include them in the communication by addressing them directly. They do this by calling out their names such that none feels left out. This is a demonstration of sensitivity to audience.

A few study subjects seem to have misinterpreted the question and directed their speech to their colleagues at university instead of to high school students. Consider the example below that is drawn from the study data.

Example 151:

Lowering one's self confidence. Risk of being discontinued. (E5Sf)

Given that this speech is directed at high school students, the concept of *discontinuation* feels out of place because the term used in Kenyan high schools is *expulsion*. Therefore, this does not reflect an understanding of the target audience.

4.2.4 Strategic Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

As observed in Tarone (1983), strategic competence is the use of communication strategies to bridge communication gaps caused by deficiencies in any of the other components of communicative competence. In the spoken study data, strategic competence received a low score of 3.8 out of 25 for the formal data and 4.0 for the informal data. This low score results

from the infrequent use of communication strategies in the study data; indeed, only three components of strategic competence were identified. These are repair, circumlocution, and fluency. The other indicators of strategic competence that were examined in this study's data include appeal for help and repair, fluency, superordinate term, replacement (which comprises analogy, circumlocution, and metaphor/coinage), and borrowing. Table 37 below presents the average levels of strategic competence in the spoken study data.

Table 37

A Table of the Average Level of Strategic Competence in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Strategic competence: (25 marks)	Formal text	Informal text
Appeal for help and repair	0.7	0.7
Superordinate term	-	-
Fluency	3.5	3.2
Replacement (analogy, Circumlocution, metaphor/coinage)	0.3	0.1
Borrowing	-	-
TOTAL:	3.8	4.0

According to Weiss (2021) we use repair as a communication strategy to fix a miscommunication, to clarify a word or a phrase, or when the speaker has not been understood. An example of repair in the study data is given below:

Example 152:

One should do important ... (hesitation) one should do important ... (hesitation) one should prepare earlier before the examination. (A4Sf)

In this example, the speaker has a false start but finally repairs the communication and is able to negotiate the intended meaning. The repair rephrases the idea the speaker initially wanted to communicate but run into difficulties. A further example of the same is given below.

Example 153:

You are stealing ... (hesitation) you are cheating, sorry, so you end up being suspended.

(A2Sf)

Repair in this example is done through backtracking whereby, the speaker takes back what they had said and goes ahead to provide the correct version. Initially, the speaker had referred to exam cheating as *stealing*, they then take it back by apologizing and they correct themselves.

The Council of Europe (2001, p. 1) observes that fluency is a key construct in communicative speaking ability that reflects “automaticity” and the speed of the speech production process. They identify indicators of fluency as speech rate, silent pauses, filled pauses, repetition, and repair. Instances of repair in speech improve fluency, although some repairs, such as the ones mentioned above, occur after a hesitation. Additionally, the use of discourse markers, such as “*you see*,” “*you know*,” and “*right*,” helps to fill gaps that would otherwise result in hesitation. Evidence of the use of discourse markers to bridge hesitations is present in the study data. Consider the example below:

Example 154:

Cheating eventually leads to future, you know, by skipping hard work involved in learning, you will never develop the important traits of persistence, dedication, you know diligence and sacrifice (L8Sf)

The discourse marker, *you know* has been used twice in this example to fill a gap thus improving fluency.

However, there were instances of pauses that were not filled and repetition. These compromised fluency. Consider the example below:

Example 155:

Secondly, exam cheating leads to ... (hesitation) exam cheating leads to incompetency

In this example, the clause *exam cheating leads to* is repeated, and there is a pause that has not been filled. Both the repetition and the pause are signs of lack of fluency.

There are many examples of texts that are spoken fluently with neither pauses, nor repetition or repair of any kind or with few hesitations. Example 156 below is such a text.

Example 156:

Cheating in exams is using other means to pass exams instead of relying on what you were taught and the skills you learnt in class. Cheating is a wrong act which has certain effects which include overdependency on cheating instead of studying for exams.

Another effect is that cheating tends to lower the self esteem of the learner. A learner who relies on cheating is not able to believe in themselves and they don't believe they can pass without cheating. They compare themselves with those who pass without cheating and they feel lesser compared to them.

Furthermore, cheating leads to lack of confidence. A student who cheats fails to get the knowledge needed and when they finish their studies and go out there, they are not able to accurately and ... you know, do their tasks well in their field.

Lastly, cheating has dire consequences when one is caught because some institutions suspend or expel

The score for fluency as an indicator of strategic competence in the spoken study data is 3.5 out of 5 for the formal data and 3.2 for the informal data.

Circumlocution is the use of unnecessarily many words where a single word or a phrase would have been more appropriate. However, circumlocution can improve fluency by avoiding pauses and repetition when one does not have the vocabulary they need to communicate. The score for circumlocution as an indicator of strategic competence in the spoken study data was 0.3 out of 5 for the formal data and 0.1 for the informal data. Below is an example of circumlocution in the spoken study data.

Example 157:

When the lecturer came, he was a bit confused, he was somehow not understanding himself...

The underlined part of the sentence could be replaced by the single word "disoriented" or one of its synonyms, such as "*perplexed*." The absence of this vocabulary might contribute to this instance of circumlocution, but the meaning is still communicated with some degree of effectiveness. The few instances of communication strategies in the study data account for the low score in strategic competence.

4.3 Analysis of the Level of Proficiency in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Proficiency has been defined as the ability to use language accurately and appropriately in both oral and written forms across various settings (Cloud et al, 2000). The proficiency level of the English used by first-year university students in Kenya, who made up the study

sample, was assessed using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). This framework serves as an international standard for describing language ability (Council of Europe, 2001). The study measured the sample's proficiency in both spoken and written English. The findings are discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Analysis of the Level of Proficiency of the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

The Common European Framework of Reference for languages has six levels of proficiency: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2. A1 is the lowest level of proficiency followed by A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2 is the highest level of proficiency. According to European Council (2020), C2 is not native speaker or near native speaker competence. However, it is the ability to use accurate language free from errors even when complex structures and topics are involved, ability to use the language for different purposes such as argue, and persuade, and finally, the ability to use and understand a wide range of idiomatic expressions and descriptive words, even the less common ones. Language users at this level of proficiency also have the ability to communicate and understand different shades of meaning. In the analysis, each of these levels of proficiency were assigned numerical values, such that A1 was assigned the value of 1, A2 the value of 2, B1 the value of 3, B2 the value of 4, C1 the value of 5 and C2 the value of 6.

The overall average level of proficiency in the written formal data was 3.4 while the informal data had an average of 3.3. Thus, both formal and informal written language of the study sample were at level B1 referred to as threshold level. This is the level where the user is able to follow a discussion provided the language is clearly articulated in the standard dialect, the user displays sufficient simple language flexibility to express much of what they want to, the user may hesitate for lexical and grammatical planning, thus it is characterized by backtracking and repair (Council of Europe, 2001). Below is Table 38 which summarizes the

average levels of proficiency in the four areas of language competence as proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983). These are grammar, discourse organization, sociolinguistic aspects and communication strategies.

Table 38

Average Levels of Proficiency in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Type of question:	Formal question (Scores on a scale of 1 – 6)	Informal question (Scores on a scale of 1-6)
Proficiency in Grammar		
General linguistic range	B1-3	B1-3
Vocabulary range	B1-3	B1-4
Grammatical accuracy	B1-3	B1-3
Vocabulary control	B1-3	B1-3
Orthographic control	B2-4	B2-4
AVERAGE	B1-3.2	B1-3.4
Proficiency in Discourse organization		
Thematic development	B1-3	B1-3
Coherence and cohesion	B2-4	B1-3
AVERAGE	B1-3.5	B1-3.0
Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects		
Sociolinguistic appropriateness	B2-4	B2-4
AVERAGE	B2-4.0	B2-4.0
Proficiency in Communication Strategies		
Compensating	B1-3	B1-3
AVERAGE	B1-3.0	B1-3.0
OVERALL AVERAGE	B1-3.4	B1-3.3

4.3.1.1 Proficiency in the Grammar of the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

In the CEFR, proficiency in grammar is assessed using the following descriptors: general linguistic range (morpho-syntax), vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, and orthographic control. Each of these descriptors is explained below.

General linguistic range is concerned with the ability to use morphologically and Syntactically correct structures. The highest level of proficiency (level C2) in this aspect requires the flexible and accurate use of sentence structures, word forms, word choice, and affixation. The average level of general linguistic range in the study data is B1 (in this study assigned a value of 3). According to Council of Europe (2001), this is a level of proficiency where the language user has a sufficient range of language to express themselves even on issues they have not planned for prior to the communication. The user at this point is also able to express main ideas with reasonable precision though the development of the ideas may not be sufficient. The user is also able to express abstract and cultural topics. The user may hesitate for lexical and grammatical planning, use circumlocutions and repetitions to make up for limitations in vocabulary, and they may have difficulties with structural formulations at times.

All these features are demonstrated in the study data. Consider the example below:

Example 158:

EFFECTS OF CHEATING IN EXAMS

Cheating in exams or exams malpractice as some will call it, as far as I know only have negative consequences some of which can be very dire. These effects can be long term or even short term. Whether one cheats and walks away scotfree without being pinpointed, or one is caught in the manipulation of exam materials to get better results, both are said to have used a shot cut. And as we all know, no short cut is any place worth going.

Firstly, cheating in exams will ruin one's reputation. When one is paraded or even broadcast in our news that knows how to go viral in a blink of an eye. The reputation of the

culprit is damage over a wider area than he/she could imagine. This may later have repercussions icase one wanted to search for a job. The employees will never fail to bare a benefit of doubt as far as the integrity of their client was concerned.

In addition to that, cheating in exams can lead to discontinuation of one from learning. Worse about this is that at the university level once one is discontinued from University A, under no circumstance is University B or C allowed to accept or even readmit such a culprit. This means that one's education ceases untimely and unfruitfully.

Nevertheless, cheating in exams is against the laws of Kenya's act on examination irregularity. For national examinations one is brought into custody and fined in a court of law very highly. Fines amounting up to 5 or 3 million can compel one's family to sell anything available to take a bond for their child. This can happen parallel to one being arrested and jailed over a number of years thus wasting one's valuable time.

Finally, cheating in exams leads to failed performance at the place of work. Where one has high qualification in papers but on the ground thing are different. This is too sensitive and it endangers life of mankind at large.

In example 158 above, the structures communicate but with some difficulties. There are sentence fragments such as 'Where one has high qualification in papers but on the ground thing are different'. This group of words does not have a subject and a verb, thus it does not qualify to be punctuated as a sentence as is the case in this data. It is therefore a sentence fragment. There is, however, logical flow of ideas marked by logical connectors such as *Firstly....., In addition to, Nevertheless....., and Finally...* at the beginning of each paragraph, but '*Nevertheless*', in paragraph four, is incorrectly used as it signals contrast yet what follows is additional information: that cheating in exams is against the laws of Kenya. A

connector signalling addition, such as moreover, would have been more appropriate. There are fair attempts to develop the topic sentence in each paragraph, and some errors appear to be typological which the writer could have self-corrected. For example, *icase* for *incase* and *damage* instead of *damaged*. There are circumlocutions too, for example, *The reputation of the culprit is damaged over a wider area than he/she could imagine*. The underlined part can be replaced by the word *extensively*, thus it can be considered a circumlocution. This is a typical text in the study data that would have a proficiency level of B1 because it is able to communicate using simple language and with a few difficulties in grammar and constructions.

Example 159 below further illustrates study subjects who could express main ideas well, though they are insufficiently developed.

Example 159

Cheating in exams undermines the standard of education. Students who cheat in exam become poor decision makers in their careers students have resorted to cheating in order to qualify for there exams and the discussed below are the effects.

Cheating can lead to class failure as different colleges have different ways of imposing academic penalties on the students who cheat in exams or their assignments.

Cheating causes embarrassment as the way people around you treat and view you once you are caught cheating causes stress they disregard you and loose trust in you. (K17Wf)

In example 159, the effects of cheating in exams such as class failure and embarrassment have been communicated. This is despite the presence of errors in the areas of sentence structure, vocabulary and even spelling. For instance, the last paragraph is a sentence run-on

comprised of two sentences that have been punctuated as one sentence. They can be revised thus,

Cheating causes embarrassment as the way people around you treat and view you once you are caught cheating causes stress they disregard you and loose trust in you.

Furthermore, the word *embarrassment* has been misspelt and the word *loose* has been used wrongly in the place of *lose*, a word with which it is commonly confused. It can also be observed that the body paragraphs in this speech are comprised of only one sentence that expresses the main idea, and no attempt has been made to develop these main ideas. All these characteristics place the proficiency in morpho-syntax at level B1.

Another aspect of proficiency in grammar is vocabulary range. According to Council of Europe (2020), vocabulary range concerns the breadth and variety of expressions used. This is gained through reading widely. The highest level of proficiency in this aspect (level C2) requires the language user to have a good command of a very broad lexical repertoire including idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. The user at this level should also show awareness of connotative levels of meaning.

In the study data, the level of proficiency of vocabulary range as a measure of proficiency in grammar is B1 (assigned a value of 3 in this study). This is the level that requires the language user to have a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. The vocabulary is sufficient for one to express themselves with some circumlocutions (Council of Europe, 2020). Example 158 above demonstrates this as the writer has sufficient vocabulary to express themselves simply, and there is use of circumlocutions. For instance, the subject in this example is able to express themselves on the topic of “cheating in exams”. They use vocabulary such as *dire consequences, manipulation*

of exam material, and also uses idioms such as *scotfree* and *pinpointed*. However, the expression *no shortcut is any place worth going* could be erroneous and could be revised to *no shortcut leads to any place worth going*. This, therefore puts the vocabulary range of this text at B1 (threshold), the level where the user has simple vocabulary, simple idiom, uses circumlocution due to insufficient vocabulary and sometimes errors in vocabulary and idiom.

Example 159 above also demonstrates use of simple vocabulary to communicate the familiar topic of cheating in exams. As noted earlier, some vocabulary such as *loose* has been wrongly used, nevertheless meaning is negotiated with some degree of success.

Council of Europe (2001) identifies grammatical accuracy as another indicator of proficiency in grammar. It is described as the aspect concerned with grammatical correctness. It has been observed that inaccuracy increases at level B1 of proficiency (Council of Europe, 2020 p. 132). This is because at Level B1, the learner starts to use language more independently and creatively. The highest level of proficiency in this aspect (level C2) describes a user who maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (Council of Europe, 2020).

In the study data, grammatical accuracy has an average proficiency level of B1 (assigned a value of 3 in this study). This is the level of a language user who communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts. The user generally has good control of grammar, but there is noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur, but it is clear what is intended. In example 158, among other inaccuracies, there is no subject-verb agreement in some sentences. For example, in the sentence, *Cheating in exams or exams malpractice as some will call it, as far as I know only have negative consequences some of which can be very dire*. In this sentence, the subject is *Cheating in exams*. This is a singular subject that should

go with a singular verb, but in this case the verb is plural, *have*. However, this lack of subject-verb agreement does not hinder meaning. Similarly, in example 159, the intended meaning is clear despite errors with regard to sentence structure, spelling and vocabulary.

Council of Europe (2001) identifies vocabulary control as another aspect that can be used to measure proficiency in grammar. It has been described as the aspect concerned with the learner's ability to choose appropriate expressions from their repertoire. Level C2 of proficiency in this aspect requires one to have the ability to consistently and correctly use appropriate, less common vocabulary idiomatically. In the study data, the average proficiency level in vocabulary control is B2 (assigned a value of 4 in this study). This level is characterized by lexical accuracy with few confusions, and few incorrect instances of word choice, and these do not hinder meaning. Consider example 160 below drawn from the study data.

Example 160

We had just entered the class on time and our lecturer arrived very early just right on time to resume the lesson. My friend chose to sit in the middle of the class where it is very warm. He fell asleep and had a short dream in which he shouted, "Mummy, mummy help! help!" We all started laughing because he was literally shouting at the top of his voice that was deep.
(K9Wi)

The word *resume* is incorrectly used since the meaning intended, based on the context (the students had just entered class), is *start*. This wrong choice of vocabulary is not a very common feature in the study data, thus the average level of vocabulary control is B2. Likewise, examples 158 and 159 have largely accurate word choice, albeit mostly simple

common vocabulary. Few errors and confusions with regard to word choice can be observed, for instance the choice of the word *loose* instead of *lose* in example 159.

Orthographic Control is another aspect used to measure proficiency in grammar. It is concerned with the ability to spell and use language, layout, and punctuation (Council of Europe, 2020). Level C2 of proficiency in this aspect is characterized by orthography that is error free. In the study data, the average level of proficiency in this aspect is B1 (assigned a value of 3 in this study). The language user at this level can produce continuous writing which is generally intelligible throughout. Spelling, punctuation and layout are accurate enough to be followed most of the time. Consider example 161 below that is drawn from the study data.

Example 161

Generally and in conclusion, cheating in exams is a very dangerous and stressful practice, when a student ends up finding himself a culprit of exam malpractices, he ruins his reputation and can even lead to him being discontinued. (N5Wf)

Two words: *conclusion* and *stressful* have been misspelt in example 160 above. The whole structure is a sentence run-on because two sentences have been punctuated as one. The revised version would read,

Generally and in conclusion, cheating in exams is a very dangerous and stressful practice. When a student ends up finding himself a culprit of exam malpractices, he ruins his reputation and this can even lead to him being discontinued.

Despite the orthographic errors highlighted above, meaning is not hindered, therefore level B1 in orthographic control is appropriate. Similarly, examples 158, 159 and 160 demonstrate

this same level of orthographic control where despite spelling and punctuation errors, the texts are still meaningful.

4.3.1.2 Level of Proficiency in Discourse Organization in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

In CEFR, proficiency in discourse organization concerns how a text is organized, structured and arranged. For written texts, discourse competence is marked by thematic development as well as coherence and cohesion. Thematic development concerns logical presentation of a text whereby ideas in a text are expanded and developed using supporting details.

In the study data thematic development, on average, is at the proficiency level of B1 (assigned a value of 3 in this study). The language user at this level of proficiency can clearly signal chronological sequence, can develop an argument well enough to be followed without difficulty, the language user also shows awareness of the conventional structure of the text type concerned. The study data demonstrates this level of proficiency because study subjects have mostly displayed awareness of the conventional structure of a speech and an informal letter, which are the texts they were required to write. Consider example 162 below drawn from the study data coded as F3Wi.

Example 162:

*P.O. Box 133,
Xxxx.*

21st NOVEMBER 2022

Dear xxxx,

How are you doing? I am sorry it took me longer than expected to write to you. How have you been doing during this holiday? On my part, I have been travelling and making new friends and good memories.

Oh my goodness I have this story that I have been dying to tell you and I swear it is so funny. This incident happened in my class in the period of practical presentation where we made the class so restless and due to this our lecturer gave lectures like we should behave properly and should know the seriousness of rotting at university.

He was using his project and we were in a class of approximately two hundred students. We would be able to see and follow through. He was busy looking at a folder that has a collection related to the lesson to show us and help us navigate through the commonly challenging unit.

His efforts to locate the drive seemed not to yield fruits . He closed the presentation and opened a different drive and we all saw a folder named “xx had press” everybody was shocked to see such a folder in a professor’s device. An awkward silence followed and then the class started hawling and shouting at the top of their lungs, “open it, open it”. He looked astonished and not ready to open it but he did not close it either. It just kept flushing there for some time until he opened it and the folder was empty. We spent the whole lecture giggling and whispering to one another.

Yours faithful,

Xxxx

Example 162 above has some structural and grammatical errors, but they do not hinder meaning. The conventional structure of an informal letter is followed where the addresses and date are laid out correctly. The complimentary close is far too formal, and incorrect (should be *faithfully not faithful*), but this study subject demonstrates ability to use the correct layout for a friendly letter. The letter also gives a chronological account of an incident that happened in a lecture and uses signals of chronological order such as *an awkward silence followed*. The word *followed* signals that events are flowing chronologically.

Example 159 above also is a demonstration of study subjects who did not demonstrate the ability to develop paragraphs well. Consider the paragraphs below copied from example 159.

Cheating can lead to class failure as different colleges have different ways of imposing academic penalties on the students who cheat in exams or their assignments.

Cheating causes embarrassment as the way people around you treat and view you once you are caught cheating causes stress they disregard you and loose trust in you.

These are one-sentence paragraphs that have introduced ideas but have not continued to sufficiently develop them. They are, therefore, lacking in thematic development.

Coherence and cohesion also help measure proficiency in discourse organization. They refer to how separate elements in a text are linked into a logical whole through the use of lexical and grammatical devices such as reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, synonyms, repetition of the same word, and collocation. In the study data, this aspect of discourse competence has a proficiency level of B2 (assigned a value of 4 in this study). At

this level, the language user can efficiently utilise a variety of linking expressions to clearly indicate the relationships between ideas. There may be some “jumpiness,” but texts are generally well-organised and coherent with logical paragraphs (Council of Europe, 2020).

Example 162 above demonstrates coherence and cohesion in that a number of cohesive devices have been used to cause it to hang together as a whole. For example, pronoun reference has been used several times: the phrase *the lecturer* is used in paragraph 2, and the text that follows this mention uses the pronouns *he* and *his* to refer to the lecturer. Collocation as a cohesive device has also been utilized in example 162. An example is the use of the words *folder*, *drive*, *device* all used in separate sentences in relation to the lecturer’s computer. They, therefore, join the concerned sentences cohesively. Some texts in the study data do not demonstrate appropriate links between sentences or even paragraphs. Example 74 lacks links between sentences. Part of it has been copied here for ease of reference.

Example 74:

FUNNIEST INCIDENT DURING A LECTURE

6. *Students sleeping during lecture.*

7. *Students passing notes to each other during lectures.*

8. *During a test, one student received the test paper and shouted out loud and stormed out of the lecture room.*

9. *During my first online lecture with the students, some did not mute their audios and distracted the class the whole lecture with funny background noises.*

10. *My first freshman class, when I entered the class they all stood up.*

In this example, each sentence stands on its own and there are no connectors to show how the sentences are connected. Such texts have lowered the average proficiency score for cohesion and coherence to level B1.

4.3.1.3 Level of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of language involves the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the social dimensions of language use. It encompasses the use of polite forms, appropriate registers, and proper idioms and expressions. In the study data, sociolinguistic appropriateness has an average proficiency level of B2 (assigned a value of 4 in this study). A language user at this proficiency level can maintain relationships without embarrassment and awkwardness; they can adjust their expressions to distinguish between formal and informal registers, though they do not always do so appropriately. They can also express themselves confidently, clearly, and politely.

In the study data, it is clear that the study subjects are aware of when to use formal and when to use informal language. Consider example 163 below that has excerpts from data coded as L7Wf.

Example 162:

The students after passing exams with false marks may do tough courses in higher education institutions which they drop out in the process. This reduces the number of students graduating from prestigious courses that are meant to bring professionals in the country reducing the number of qualified professionals.

In conclusion the education system has been gravely affected by this behaviour which has made many parents and other professionals not to put their trust in the education system, the hard work put in place by the stakeholders is carried in vain by those who cheat in examination.

Though the text above has many errors, it is clearly written in a formal register. It also demonstrates an awareness of the formal context in which the speech would be delivered. It would, therefore, not be awkward. The excerpt below is from the same study subject, but for the informal text.

Example 164

Dear Mary,

How are you doing? It has been a while since I checked up on you. How are your studies at Stanford University? How are your lecturers teaching there? Are they interactive as ours? I hope you are doing fine and healthy. (L7Wi)

This second excerpt adopts an informal register utilizing casual style such as the phrase *checked up on you*. Sociolinguistic appropriateness is also displayed in the use of polite forms such as greetings, *How are you doing?* At times, errors may occur, for example in example 162 which is an informal letter, yet it ends with a formal complimentary close, *Yours faithful* (should be *Yours faithfully*). The study sample, thus, demonstrated a fair ability to produce texts that are socially appropriate. This could be due to the fact that learners of a second language can utilize sociolinguistic rules of their L1 to other languages they learn.

4.3.1.4 The Level of Proficiency in Communication Strategies in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

In CEFR, producing a text requires three types of communication strategies namely planning strategies, compensating strategies and monitoring and repair strategies (Council of Europe,

2001 p. 63). Skills in these three constitute proficiency in communication strategies. Planning involves mental preparation before producing language. Since the texts analyzed in this study had already been produced, planning strategies were not studied here. Compensating is a strategy language users utilize to maintain communication when one cannot think of the appropriate expression, thus they have to compensate. The compensation can be in terms of use of gestures to support language, or deliberately using the wrong word and qualifying it, for example *the black and white horse that lives in the wild* while referring to a zebra. One deliberately calls it a *horse* though they know it is not, but qualifies the horse to communicate its characteristics that would aid in its identification. One can also compensate by defining the missing concept or by use of paraphrase (circumlocution). The study data has instances of compensation and it is at level B1 (assigned a value of 3 in this study). This is because instances of compensation are few and it is possible that the study subjects avoid what they have problems communicating rather than use compensation. Consider example 165 below drawn from the study data coded as D17Wf.

Example 165:

Learning tends to build on itself, you learn basics first so that you can use those basics in more complicated problems.

The underlined part above is an example of circumlocution. It can be replaced by the word *cumulative*. Thus the sentence would read, *Learning is cumulative*.

Other examples of compensating using circumlocution in the written data are examples 98 and 99 copied here for ease of reference.

Example 98:

... lecturers request the sending away of the student. (H11Wf)

This is a periphrastic (long) way of saying that the lecturers recommended *expulsion*.

Example 99:

Another effect is actually going to affect your upper class studies. (L13Wf)

The phrase upper class as used in this sentence refers to *tertiary* education. It is, therefore, an instance of circumlocution. The sentence can be revised thus,

Another effect is actually going to affect your tertiary studies.

The CEFR scale for compensation categorizes language that uses gestures to make up for insufficient vocabulary at levels A1 and A2. At the upper end of level B1, the language user can use communication strategies such as defining a concept or qualifying words such as *a truck for carrying people* when referring to a bus. This is the kind of compensation that is used in examples 98 and 99 above.

Example 165 above is a smoother way of compensating deficiency in vocabulary that CEFR would place at level B2. However, since instances of compensation are few, and some like examples 98 and 99 do not fit into the texts seamlessly, the ability to use compensation strategies in the study data is placed at level B1.

Monitoring and repair as an aspect of strategic competence is not observed in the written texts. It is; therefore, studied in the spoken texts.

4.3.2 Analysis of the Levels of Proficiency of the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

The average overall proficiency score for spoken data is 3.5. for formal data, and 3.4 for informal data. This means that speaking proficiency of first year university students in Kenya is at the upper part of level B1 of language proficiency. The overall oral proficiency scale describes B1 as a level where the language user can, with reasonable fluency, sustain a straight forward description of one of a variety of subjects within their field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points. Since this score is in between B1 and B2 levels of proficiency, it has features of the lower level of B2. The lower level of B2 requires the language user to be able to give clear and detailed descriptions and presentations of a wide range of subjects related to their field of interest, expanding and supporting ideas with subsidiary points and relevant examples. Below is table 39 depicting the levels of proficiency for the four areas of language proficiency studied here.

From Table 39 below, proficiency in grammar has an average proficiency level of B1 tending towards B2. This is because the proficiency score is 3.4 for the formal text and 3.6 for the informal text. Proficiency in discourse organization, on the other hand, is on the upper part of B1 for the informal text and B2 for the formal data. The scores are 4.0 for the formal data and 3.5 for the informal data. Proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of language is at the proficiency level of B2 as the score is 4.0 for both formal and informal data. Proficiency in communication strategies is at level B1 with a score of 3.0 for both the formal and the informal texts. A comprehensive analysis of the average levels of proficiency follows in the sections below.

Table 39*Levels of Proficiency in Texts Spoken by First Year University students in Kenya.*

Type of text: Level of Proficiency	Formal topic (on a scale of 1 - 6)	Informal topic (on a scale of 1 - 6)
Proficiency in Grammar		
General linguistic range	B1 - 3	B1-3
Vocabulary range	B1 - 3	B1 - 3
Grammatical accuracy	B1 - 3	B1 - 3
Vocabulary control	B2 - 4	B2 - 4
Phonological control	B1 - 3	B1 - 3
Average score	3.2	3.2
Proficiency in Discourse organization		
Thematic development	B2 - 4	B1 - 3
Coherence & Cohesion	B2 - 4	B2 - 4
Average score	4.0	3.5
Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects		
Sociolinguistic appropriateness	B2 - 4	B2 - 4
Average score	4.0	4.0
Proficiency in Communication Strategies		
Compensating	B1 - 3	B1 - 3
Monitoring and repair	B1 - 3	B1 - 3
Fluency	B2 - 4	B2 - 4
Average score	3.0	3.0
OVERALL AVERAGE SCORE	3.5	3.4

4.3.2.1 The Level of Proficiency in the Spoken Grammar of First Year University Students in Kenya

According to CEFR, the descriptors that indicate proficiency in spoken grammar encompass general linguistic range, vocabulary range, grammatical accuracy, vocabulary control, and phonological control. General linguistic range refers to proficiency in using morpho-syntactic elements such as sentence structures, word forms, and affixation. It assesses the extent to which a language user can manipulate these structures and the complexity of the structures that language users can safely manipulate to communicate intended meanings.

In the spoken study data, the general linguistic range was at the average proficiency level of B1. This is the level at which the language user can manipulate simple structures to express ideas sufficiently well. They may hesitate while planning what to say next and may also use circumlocutions to compensate for deficiencies in vocabulary and expressions. They could encounter difficulties with some phrases, meaning that certain constructions may not be grammatically accurate. Consider the example below, drawn from the data coded as A27Si.

Example 166:

Our history lecture class started eight in the morning on Monday. But then, it was not usual for the lecturer to be late. He always ... he was always early in class even before the students. But that day, the lecturer was late. Everyone started murmuring that the class was bounced. Thirty minutes later, the door (/dɔə/) was bang and the lecturer got in. He had dyed his hair maroon and he was carrying a guitar on his hand. His looks looked like a musician. Everyone was shocked and the way our lecturer was serious in many things. He could not entertain non-sense. He would always tell us to stand and be like good teachers. He taught us how to wear like good teachers. He always wore a suit. He did not even greet us. He ordered us to stand and we started dancing. The class turned out to become a disco arena. We had

danced for more than ten minutes and later on immediately, his wife got in. He shout ... she, shouted for help from everyone. And everyone was shocked. We had not even known he was his wife. Later, and behind her she was followed by p ... by people wearing white. Immediately, we could know that those people were the health officers. Our lecture was sick. It beca... our joy turned out to become mournings. We like our lecturer. We loved him and we never wanted him to go. The doctors... the doctor and the other people in white took him away. His wife followed. We were all shattered. We ran down the stairs to see what was happening. Reaching on the ground, we found, we found our lecturer, the one who was claiming to be his wife and all the doctors were talking. Guess what? It was not ... it was not ... it was not that doc... it is not that the lecturer was sick, all he wanted was for us to see how we should be when we are acting. That how humorous (/hiumerias/) it turned out. We never even learnt.

Example 166 above is a typical transcript of a spoken text in the study sample whose level of proficiency is at B1. It communicates, despite the numerous errors. The linguistic range of the text allows the speaker to construct mostly simple sentences and some compound sentences joined using *and* and *but*. For example, *We like our lecturer. We loved him and we never wanted him to go*. The first is a simple sentence, while the second is a compound sentence. Some sentences are ungrammatical such as *Thirty minutes later, the door (/dɔə/) was bang and the lecturer got in*. Clearly, there is no subject-verb agreement in this structure. Despite these errors, among others, meaning is not hindered.

The use of simple structures and difficulties with some expressions can also be observed in the following extract drawn from the data coded as A12Sf.

Example 167

Effects of cheating in an Exam

Cheating in an exam is taken as part of exam irregularity. Severe consequences are taken as we all know every choice has a consequence. Any learning institution set their rules and regulations which should be followed and if not followed, it is an indisciplinatory case. Students who cheat at the first get away with it may in the long run feel guilty and suffer from low self esteem. This loss of self respect can lead to a host of other problems including difficulties with their careers, families and other important aspect of life.

Despite the clear meaning that is communicated by the data above, difficulty with some expressions such as *indisciplinatory case* which should be *discipline case* can be observed. There is also lack of subject - verb agreement in the expression *other important aspect of life* which should be *other important aspects of life*. Characteristics of these nature in the study data place the linguistic range of the spoken study data at level B1 of proficiency.

Vocabulary range as a measure of proficiency in grammar refers to the breadth and variety of words and expressions a language user demonstrates command over. The average proficiency level of vocabulary range in the study data is B1. At this level of proficiency, the language user has a good range of vocabulary related to familiar topics and everyday situations. The vocabulary is sufficient to allow the language user to express themselves with some circumlocution in most topics pertinent to everyday life, work and travel. This vocabulary range is evident in example 166 above. The language user in this example has sufficient vocabulary to express feelings: *shattered, mourning, we loved our lecturer*; the language user is also able to relate an experience, with occasional hesitations for lexical and grammatical planning. For example, *He always ... he was always early in class even before*

the students. The hesitation marked by elliptical dots here was used to buy time to think of the next word(s)/construction(s). The underlined part is an instance of circumlocution since it could be replaced with the word *punctual*.

Example 167 above has similar features where the study subject has sufficient vocabulary to express this familiar topic of cheating in exams. The study subject makes good use of vocabulary and expressions related to academic dishonesty such as *irregularity, severe consequences, punishments, rules and regulations as well as indiscipline*.

Grammatical accuracy as a measure of proficiency in grammar concerns grammatical correctness. In the study data, the average proficiency level for grammatical accuracy is B1. This is the level of proficiency where the language user communicates with reasonable accuracy in familiar contexts, though with noticeable mother-tongue influence. Errors occur but the intended meaning is communicated. Example 166 above demonstrates this level of grammatical accuracy. For example, *Our history lecture class started eight in the morning on Monday*. The preposition *at* has been omitted after the verb *started*. However, this does not obstruct the meaning. Mother-tongue influence is also demonstrated in this sentence. The omission of the preposition *at* could be as a result of influence from L1 or from a Bantu language such as Swahili which has a comparatively small inventory of prepositions (Gibson et al, 2020, p. 1). Example 167 above, similarly uses accurate grammar save for expressions such as *indisciplinary case* for *disciplinary case* and *important aspect of life* for *important aspects of life*.

Vocabulary control as a measure of proficiency in grammar looks at language users' ability to choose appropriate expressions from their repertoire. In the study data, this aspect has an average proficiency level of B2. This level is characterized by high lexical accuracy

though confusions occur and sometimes words may be used wrongly but meaning is not hindered. In example 166 above, a few words are wrongly used. For example, the word *immediately* in *We had danced for more than ten minutes and later on immediately, his wife got in.* The appropriate word in this context is *suddenly*.

Also consider example 168 below, drawn from the data coded as M7Sf, whose choice of vocabulary is largely accurate though not perfect.

Example 168

Those found cheating /fitiŋ/ may have to appear before an academic /əkədəmik/ standard committee which will further exclude /ɛkskrud/ further punishment e.g. expulsion or academic probation may be given.

Other than a few words that have been mispronounced, the word *exclude* /ɛkskrud/ has been wrongly used where the word *prescribe*, for instance, would be more appropriate. There is also the repetition of the word *further* in the same sentence which could point to deficiency in vocabulary. A synonym such as *additional* could have replaced the second occurrence of *further*.

Phonological control as a measure of proficiency in grammar concerns articulation of sounds, placement of stress, tone, intonation and rhythm. In this study, the average proficiency level of phonological control is B1. At this level, pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur. In example 166 above, the word *humorous* (/hiumərəs/) is mispronounced as /hiumerias/. The placement of stress in this word is also wrong as the correct pronunciation places stress on the first syllable, /hiu/ but in this speech, the subject places primary stress on

the second syllable, /mɛ/. This; however, does not hinder meaning. A foreign accent can also be detected in example 168 above where the word *cheating* /tʃiːtɪŋ/ is articulated as /tʃitiŋ/, the word *academic* /əkədəmɪk/ is articulated as /əkədəmɪk/ and the word *exclude*/ɪksklud/ is articulated as /ɪkskrud/.

4.3.2.2 The Level of Proficiency in Discourse Organisation in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

In CEFR, descriptors of proficiency in discourse organization encompass thematic development as well as coherence and cohesion. Thematic development concerns the manner in which a text is organized in such a way that main ideas are expressed and are supported with appropriate level of relevant detail. The average level of proficiency in thematic development in the study data is B2 for the formal text and B1 for the informal data. Consider example 169 below which is taken from the study data coded as O22Sf.

Example 169:

Cheating in examinations causes a big problem to a student. For instance it may lead to expulsion from school or by examination bodies such as Kenya National Examination Council. Being expelled makes a student lose the chance to get a certificate and therefore cannot be able to get any form of employment in future.

Exam cheating also bring family disputes in that a parent who may have paid school fees to enable the child to sit for exams may get angry in the process where a child is being expelled from school. This is not acceptable to the parent. A parent who will regard this as a waste of money may at worst cases exclude the child from family activities and meetings.

Furthermore, cheating in examinations also hinders future career. A student passing with good grades in his secondary school may select a course that is difficult for him or her to pursue. This may affect the student who may deffer or abandon their studies.

Cheating also bring about inaccuracy. This is brought about by panic as the student is cheating in the exam room. A student may misinterpret some points and get confused.

Students are advised to revise well and avoid cheating, for future success.

From example 169 above, the theme of the effects of exam cheating is developed using three main ideas: *expulsion, family disputes, and inaccuracy*. A sense of finality is created at the end, where students are advised to study for future success. The last two body paragraphs are not sufficiently developed, placing this text at level B2 of proficiency in thematic development. The slightly lower level of proficiency for informal texts may be due to study subjects finding it easier to organize the formal text into developed paragraphs; however, they did not use signals of chronology in the informal text where they recounted a humorous incident.

Coherence and cohesion as a descriptor of discourse organization concern how a text flows smoothly as a result of links that cause it to be recognized as one whole text. In example 169 above, the sentences are linked cohesively using devices such as reference, lexical devices or conjunction. For example, the words *cheating, exams* and *students* are repeated severally and they cohesively link together the concerned sentences. The paragraphs too are linked using logical connectors such as *furthermore* and *also*. The average proficiency level of coherence and cohesion in the spoken data is B2 for both the formal and the informal data. In this level, the language user can produce texts that are generally well organized and coherent, using a range of linking expressions and cohesive devices.

4.3.2.3 The Level of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects of the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Sociolinguistics deals with a language user's ability to adjust language so that it conforms to societal expectations. It covers the ability to use polite forms appropriately, the ability to demonstrate folk wisdom as expressed in idioms, proverbs, sayings and other fixed expressions. It also encompasses the ability to select and use various registers correctly. In the study sample, sociolinguistic appropriateness has an average proficiency level of B2 for both the formal and the informal texts. This is the level of proficiency for the language user who can express themselves clearly and politely in both the formal and the informal registers. The user at this level of proficiency may not demonstrate deep knowledge of the less common idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms, but they can use simple expressions correctly. This is demonstrated in both examples 166 and 169. The respective study subjects have appropriately adjusted to the informal and the formal styles respectively. Example 166 also utilizes expressions such as *our joy turned out to become mournings* and *We were all shattered*. These are expressions that the society has given connotative meanings and thus they demonstrate an awareness of societal conventional use of the expressions.

4.3.2.4 The Level of Proficiency in Communication Strategies in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

Communication strategies are devices that a language user can utilize to help them communicate when they do not recall or know the intended word or expression that they need to use to express the intended meaning. Council of Europe (2020) recognizes three strategies namely, planning, compensating as well as monitoring and repair. In spoken texts, evidence of planning influences fluency, thus fluency is considered an aspect of strategic competence in this study.

Compensating involves resorting to other means when one is not able to get the right words. These other means could be the use of metaphor, miming or circumlocution. In the study data, the average level of proficiency in compensating is B1. Though in the study data instances of compensation are few, when they do occur, they demonstrate the ability of study subjects to correctly use paraphrase to make up for words they have either forgotten or the ones they do not know. An example is in example 166 as given below:

But then, it was not usual for the lecturer to be late. He always ... he was always early in class even before the students. But that day, the lecturer was late.

The three sentences above can be replaced by the simple sentence, *He was uncharacteristically late*. The study subject, however, is able to put the same message across using circumlocution.

Monitoring and repair entails the spontaneous realization that one has made a slip or run into a problem, and thus goes back over what has been said checking it for correctness and appropriateness. The average proficiency level of monitoring and repair in the study data is B2. This is because the study subjects have demonstrated the ability to correct slips and errors that they become conscious of. Consider the example below from example 166.

He shout ... she, shouted for help from everyone.

In this sentence, the study subject erroneously refers to the lecturer's wife as *he*, realizes they had erred and corrected themselves. This helps the study subject to continue communicating despite having erred.

According to Council of Europe (2020, p. 142), fluency refers to the ability to construct utterances despite hesitations and pauses, as well as the ability to maintain a lengthy

production or conversation with ease and spontaneity of expression. In the study data, fluency had an average proficiency level of B2. This level of proficiency is one where the language user can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo, although they may hesitate as they search for patterns and expressions, and there are few noticeably long pauses. Example 166 is fairly fluent, as there are no hesitations. Example 165 has a few pauses, but after each pause, the communication continues and remains meaningful. Excerpts from Example 166 are copied below:

But then, it was not usual for the lecturer to be late. He always ... he was always early in class even before the students. But that day, the lecturer was late.

The pause marked by elliptical dots in this excerpt marks hesitation for lexical and grammatical planning where the speaker is figuring out what the appropriate words/ structure would aptly communicates their thoughts.

He shout ... she, shouted for help from everyone.

The elliptical dots in the sentence above mark a pause that points to the fact that the subject had recognized that they had erred, and they stopped to enable them to backtrack and repair.

It beca... our joy turned out to become mournings.

The elliptical dots in the sentence above mark a pause that gives the subject time for lexical and grammatical planning; thus, the hesitation allows them to find the right words. These texts therefore fit the descriptors for level B2 proficiency in fluency, based on the CEFR, which requires a language user to produce stretches of language with a fairly even

tempo, though they may hesitate while searching for patterns and expressions, resulting in few noticeably long pauses.

4.4 Impact of the Levels of Communicative Competence on Proficiency in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya

While proficiency is viewed as the ability to use language accurately and appropriately in both oral and written forms across various settings (Cloud et al., 2000), communicative competence has been defined as the comprehensive knowledge of appropriate application of a language in a specific context (Egbert & Ernst-Slavit, 2010). This knowledge, which constitutes communicative competence, has been categorised into several components. Canale (1983) identifies four components of communicative competence: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Scholars have advocated for the teaching of these components of communicative competence to second language learners to enhance their proficiency in the target language (O'Malley & Chamot, 2012). This suggests that the levels of these components of communicative competence impact proficiency in the language in question. This study compares the means of the levels of communicative competence with the means of proficiency in each area of language knowledge and skill. The findings are presented in two sections: section 4.4.1 compares the average communicative competence scores with the average proficiency scores in the written English of first-year university students in Kenya, and section 4.4.2 compares the average scores for communicative competence with the average scores for proficiency in spoken English among first-year university students in Kenya.

4.4.1 The Impact of the Levels of Communicative Competence on the Proficiency Level in the Written English of First Year University Students in Kenya

This section assesses whether there is a statistically significant difference between the levels of communicative competence and the levels of proficiency in the written English of first

year university students in Kenya. According to Kao and Green (2008), a statistically significant difference in the means of two variables means that it is unlikely that the relationship between them is due to chance. Kao and Green (Ibid) observe that this significant difference suggests that there is a real effect or relationship between the said variables. This section compares the means of the levels of communicative competence with the means of the levels of proficiency with a view to establishing whether the two variables impact each other.

The section begins with a comparison of the mean score in grammatical communicative competence with the mean score in proficiency in grammar in the written texts. Next is a comparison of the average score in discourse competence with the average score in proficiency in discourse organization in the written texts. Thirdly, a comparison of the mean score in sociolinguistic communicative competence with the mean score for proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of the written texts is done. Finally, the mean score for strategic communicative competence is compared with the mean score in proficiency in communication strategies observed in the written texts. These comparisons make it possible to establish whether the levels of communicative competence have an impact on the level of proficiency in the four areas of language competence.

To evaluate the difference between the mean grammatical competence score and the mean score for proficiency in grammar for the formal texts written by Kenyan university freshmen, a t-test was conducted. From the results, the mean grammatical competence score is 16.7086 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in grammar is 13.6074 out of 25. The difference between the mean for grammatical competence and the mean for proficiency in grammar was 3.1012, with a T-value of 13.581 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that there is a significant difference between these two

means, with the level of communicative competence in grammar being higher than the level of proficiency in grammar.

The informal texts had a mean score of 16.4370 out of 25 in the grammatical component of communicative competence and a mean of 14.4025 out of 25 in grammar proficiency. The difference between the mean for grammatical competence and the mean for proficiency in grammar for the informal texts is 2.0345, with a T-value of 8.520 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means there is a significant difference in the means, with the mean for communicative competence being higher than that of proficiency. Tables 40 and 41 below show the computations of the averages.

Table 40

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Grammatical Competence with levels of Proficiency in Grammar in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence (formal texts)	16.7086	405	3.30527	.16424
	Proficiency in Grammar (formal texts)	13.6074	405	3.27931	.16295
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence (informal texts)	16.4370	405	2.83352	.14080
	Proficiency in Grammar (informal texts)	14.4025	405	3.96626	.19708

Table 41

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Grammatical Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Grammar in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviatic	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				(2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in Grammar (formal texts)	3.1012	4.59359	.22826	2.65251	3.54996	13.587	404	.000
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Grammar (informal texts)	2.0345	4.80602	.23881	1.56510	2.50404	8.520	404	.000

To assess the difference between the discourse competence score and the score for proficiency in discourse organization for the formal written texts, a t-test was conducted. The mean for discourse competence in the study data was 16.8346 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in discourse organization was 15.0044 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 1.8306, with a T-value of 7.711 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This shows that there is a significant difference between the levels of discourse competence and proficiency in discourse organization. Therefore, the conclusion is that the study subjects demonstrate greater competence in discourse than the proficiency they exhibit in the formal written texts.

The informal texts had a mean score of 17.4420 out of 25 for discourse competence and a mean score of 12.7130 out of 25 for proficiency in discourse organization. The difference between these two means was 4.729, with a T-value of 17.255 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that the difference between the study subjects' discourse competence and their proficiency in discourse organization is significant, and the level of discourse competence is higher than the level of proficiency in discourse organisation. Tables 42 and 43 below show the computations of the differences in the means of discourse competence and proficiency in discourse organization in formal and informal written texts.

Table 42

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Discourse Competence with levels of Proficiency in Discourse organization in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Discourse Competence (formal texts)	16.8346	405	3.90605	.19409
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (formal texts)	15.0044	405	2.69396	.13386
Pair 2	Discourse Competence (informal texts)	17.4420	405	4.26240	.21180
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (informal texts)	12.7136	405	3.41907	.16989

Table 43

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Discourse Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Discourse organization in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Discourse Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in Discourse organization (formal texts)	1.8306	4.77495	.23727	1.36319	2.29607	7.711	404	.000
Pair 2	Discourse Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Discourse organization (informal texts)	4.729	5.51463	.27402	4.18970	5.26709	17.255	404	.000

A t-test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the sociolinguistic competence score and the sociolinguistic proficiency score for texts written by Kenyan first-year university students. The mean for the sociolinguistic competence score in the formal written texts was 18.0173 out of 25, while the mean for the sociolinguistic proficiency score was 17.000 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 1.0173, with a T-value of 5.215 and a P-value of 0.0000 < 0.05 significance level. This means that this difference is significant, showing that the sociolinguistic competence of the study subjects exceeds their proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of formal English.

The mean for the sociolinguistic competence score in the informal written texts was 19.0938 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of informal language was 16.9580 out of 25. The difference in these two means is 2.13580 with a T-value = 11.554 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference between the two means is significant, therefore, the study subjects have higher sociolinguistic competence than their proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of informal English. Tables 44 and 41 below show the computations of the averages.

Table 44

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Sociolinguistic Competence with levels of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence (formal texts)	18.0173	405	3.07049	.15257
	Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (formal texts)	17.0000	405	2.53295	.12586
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence (informal texts)	19.0938	405	3.09920	.15400
	Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (informal texts)	16.9580	405	1.99025	.09890

Table 45

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Sociolinguistic Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (formal texts)	1.0173	3.92532	.19505	.63384	1.40072	5.215	404	.000
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (informal texts)	2.13580	3.72027	.18486	1.77239	2.49921	11.554	404	.000

A t-test was carried out to evaluate the difference between the Strategic competence score and the score for proficiency in communication strategies. The mean for strategic competence in the formal written texts was 0.0543 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in communication strategies in formal written texts was 14.5012 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -14.4469, with a T-value = -100.604 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference in these two means is significant, thus, the observed level of knowledge in communication strategies in the study subjects is lower than their ability to use communication strategies in formal written texts.

The mean for the strategic competence score in the informal written texts was 0.0321 out of 25, while the mean score for proficiency in communication strategies in the informal

written texts was 14.1728 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -14.1407, with a T-value of -143.493 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in the means; thus, one can conclude that the study subjects have greater proficiency in communication strategies than they have strategic competence in informal written texts. Tables 46 above and 47 below show the computations of the means.

Table 46

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Strategic Competence with levels of Proficiency in Strategic Communication in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Strategic Competence (formal texts)	.0543	405	.32550	.01617
Pair 1	Proficiency in Communication Strategies (formal texts)	14.5012	405	2.86635	.14243
	Strategic Competence (informal texts)	.0321	405	.21447	.01066
Pair 2	Proficiency in Communication Strategies (informal texts)	14.1728	405	1.96750	.09777

Table 47

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Strategic Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Communication Strategies in the Formal and the Informal Written Texts

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
Pair 1	Strategic Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in Communication Strategies (formal texts)	-14.4469	2.88994	.14360	-14.72921	14.16461	100.604	404 .000
Pair 2	Strategic Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Communication Strategies (informal texts)	-14.1407	1.98321	.09855	-14.33447	13.94701	143.493	404 .000

4.4.2. A Comparison of the Levels of Communicative Competence with Proficiency in the Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

A t-test was carried out to evaluate the difference between the mean score for grammatical competence and the mean score for proficiency in grammar for the formal spoken texts. The mean for grammatical competence was 19.4195 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in grammar was 13.4568 out of 25. The difference in the two means is 5.9627, with a T-value = 21.022 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference in the means is significant, thus it may be concluded that the level of grammatical competence was higher than level of proficiency in grammar for the formal spoken texts.

The mean for grammatical competence in the informal spoken texts was 18.5012 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in grammar was 13.7160 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 4.7852, with a T-value of 28.137 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that this difference is significant. Therefore, the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence was higher than the level of proficiency in grammar in the informal spoken data. Tables 48 and 49 below illustrate the computation of the means.

Table 48

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Communicative Competence in Grammar with levels of Proficiency in Grammar in the Formal and

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence (formal texts)	19.4195	405	1.88181	.09351
	Proficiency in grammar (formal texts)	13.4568	405	5.21956	.25936
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence (informal texts)	18.5012	405	2.23011	.11082
	Proficiency in Grammar (informal texts)	13.7160	405	2.51449	.12495

Table 49

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Grammatical Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Grammar in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in Grammar (formal texts)	5.9627	5.70835	.28365	5.40535	6.52058	21.022	404	.000
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Grammar (informal texts)	4.7852	3.42252	.17007	4.45086	5.11951	28.137	404	.000

A t-test was conducted to assess the difference between the discourse competence score and the proficiency in discourse organization score for the spoken texts. The mean discourse competence score for the formal spoken texts was 21.222 out of 25, while the mean proficiency in discourse organization score was 17 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 4.222, with a T-value of 30.051 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This implies that the difference between the two means is significant; leading the study to conclude that the level of discourse competence in the study data is higher than the level of proficiency in discourse organization among the formal spoken texts that compose the study sample for this research.

The mean for discourse competence in the informal spoken texts was 20.6025 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in discourse organization in these texts was 15.0049 out of

25. The difference between these two means is 5.5976, with a T-value of 38.914 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in the means, thereby concluding that the level of discourse competence in the study data surpasses the level of proficiency in discourse organization for the informal spoken data. Tables 50 and 51 below display the calculations of the means.

Table 50

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Discourse Competence with levels of Proficiency in Discourse organization in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Discourse Competence (formal text)	21.2222	405	1.39837	.06949
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (formal texts)	17.0000	405	2.48560	.12351
Pair 2	Discourse Competence (informal texts)	20.6025	405	2.16806	.10773
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (informal texts)	15.0049	405	2.00247	.09950

Table 51

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Discourse Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Discourse organization in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences					t	Df	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				(2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Discourse Competence (formal texts)								
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (formal texts)	4.22222	2.82755	.14050	3.94602	4.49843	30.051	404	.000
Pair 2	Discourse Competence (informal texts)								
	Proficiency in Discourse organization (informal texts)	5.5976	2.89477	.14384	5.31476	5.88030	38.914	404	.000

A t-test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the sociolinguistic competence score and the score for proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of the formal language spoken by first-year university students in Kenya. The mean sociolinguistic competence score in the formal spoken text was 16.8296 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects was 16.68 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 0.1496, with a T-value of 0.868 and a P-value of 0.385 > 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that in the sample,

the level of sociolinguistic competence is higher than the level of proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of formal spoken language.

The mean for sociolinguistic competence in the informal spoken texts was 22.0247 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of informal spoken texts was 17.00 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 5.0247, with a T-value of 9.779 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that this difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that the study subjects have higher sociolinguistic competence than proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of the spoken informal data. Tables 52 and 53 below show the computations of the means.

Table 52

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Sociolinguistic Competence with levels of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence (formal texts)	16.8296	405	1.64049	.08152
	Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (formal texts)	16.68	405	3.55995	.17690
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence (informal texts)	22.0247	405	10.04122	.49895
	Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (informal texts)	17.0000	405	2.42103	.12030

Table 53

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Sociolinguistic Competence and the Mean of Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects in the Formal and Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence (formal texts) Proficiency in sociolinguistic Aspects (formal texts)	0.1496	3.94493	.19603	-.55573	.21499	-869	404	.385
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence (informal texts) Proficiency in Sociolinguistic Aspects (informal texts)	5.0247	10.34046	.51382	4.01459	6.03479	9.779	404	.000

A t-test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the strategic competence score and the score for proficiency communication strategies in the study sample. The mean for strategic competence in the formal spoken text was 3.8247 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in communication strategies in the formal spoken text was 12.8044 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -8.9797, with a T-value = -59.115 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference in these two means is significant; therefore the study concludes that the level of proficiency in communication strategies is higher than the level of strategic competence in formal spoken study data.

The mean for strategic competence in the informal spoken data was 4.0173 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in communication strategies was 12.7012 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -8.6839, with a T-value of -35.796 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means the difference in these two means is significant, leading the study to conclude that the level of proficiency in communication strategies in informal spoken data is higher than the level of strategic competence in such data. Tables 54 and 55 below show the computations of the means.

Table 54

Paired Samples Statistics: A comparison of levels of Strategic Competence with levels of Proficiency in Communication Strategies in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Strategic Competence (formal texts)	3.8247	405	1.15243	.05726
Pair 1	Proficiency in Communication Strategies (formal texts)	12.8044	405	2.82474	.14036
	Strategic Competence (informal texts)	4.0173	405	1.82317	.09059
Pair 2	Proficiency in Communication Strategies (informal texts)	12.7012	405	4.39533	.21841

Table 55

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Strategic Competence and the mean of Proficiency in Communication Strategies in the Formal and Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig.
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference			(2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Strategic Competence (formal texts)							
	Proficiency in communication Strategies (formal texts)	-8.9797	3.05715	.15191	-9.27888		-	.000
					-8.68161	59.115	40	
Pair 2	Strategic Competence (informal texts)						40	
	Proficiency in Communication Strategies (informal texts)	-8.6839	4.88216	.24260	-9.16086		-	.000
					-8.20704	35.796	4	

4.5 A Comparison of the Levels of Communicative Competence in the Written and Spoken English of First Year University Students in Kenya

This section evaluates the difference in means between the written and spoken communicative competence scores. A t-test was conducted to assess the difference between the levels of grammatical competence in written texts and those in spoken texts. The mean for grammatical competence in formal written texts was 16.71 out of 25, while the mean for grammatical competence in formal spoken texts was 19.4198 out of 25. The difference

between these two means is -2.7098, with a T-value of -13.985 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that this difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence in formal spoken texts is higher than that in formal written texts.

The mean for grammatical competence in informal written texts in the study data was 16.4310 out of 25, and the mean for grammatical competence in informal spoken texts was 18.5012 out of 25. The difference in the two means is -2.0702, with a T-value = -11.625 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in these two means, thus the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence in informal spoken texts in the study data is higher than the level of grammatical competence in informal written study data. Tables 56 and 57 below show the computations of the comparison.

Table 56

Paired Samples Statistics: A Table of the Comparison Between Grammatical Competence in Written Formal and Informal Texts and Grammatical Competence in Spoken Formal and Informal Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence in Written Formal Texts	16.71	405	3.305	.164
	Grammatical Competence in Spoken Formal Texts	19.4198	405	1.88181	.09351
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence in Written Informal Texts	16.4310	405	2.83352	.14080
	Grammatical Competence in Spoken Informal Texts	18.5012	405	2.23011	.11082

Table 57

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Grammatical Competence in formal and informal Written Texts and the mean of Grammatical Competence in the Formal and Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Grammatical Competence in Written Formal Texts	-2.7098	3.90138	.19386	-3.09221	-2.33001	-13.985	404	.000
Pair 2	Grammatical Competence in Spoken Formal Texts	-2.0702	3.55798	.17680	-2.41176	-1.71664	-11.675	404	.000

A t-test was conducted to evaluate the difference in mean discourse competence between the written study and spoken study data. The mean for discourse competence in the formal written study data was 16.8346 out of 25, while the mean for discourse competence in the formal spoken study data was 21.2222 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -4.3876, with a T-value of -21.863 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that there is a significant difference between these two means. Therefore, the study concludes that the level of discourse competence in formal spoken texts is higher than in the formal written study data.

The mean of discourse competence in the informal written texts from the study data was 17.4420 out of 25, while the mean for discourse competence in the informal spoken texts in the study data was 20.6025 out of 25. The difference in these two means was -3.1605, with a T-value of -13.218 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level.

This means that there is a significant difference between the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of discourse competence in the informal spoken texts of the study data is higher than in the informal written texts. Tables 58 and 59 below show the computations of the comparison.

Table 58

Paired Samples Statistics: A Table of the Comparison Between Discourse Competence in Written Formal and Informal Texts and Discourse Competence in Spoken Formal and Informal Texts.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Discourse Competence in Formal Written Texts	16.8346	405	3.90605	.19409
	Discourse Competence in Formal Spoken Texts	21.2222	405	1.39837	.06949
Pair 2	Discourse Competence in Informal Written Texts	17.4420	405	4.26240	.21180
	Discourse Competence in Informal Spoken texts	20.6025	405	2.16806	.10773

Table 59

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Discourse Competence in formal and informal Written Texts and the mean of Discourse Competence in the Formal and Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences				T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Discourse Competence in Formal Written Texts								
	Discourse Competence in Formal Spoken Texts	-4.38765	4.03884	.20069	-4.78218	-3.99312	-21.863	404	.000
Pair 2	Discourse Competence in Informal Written Texts								
	Discourse Competence in Informal Spoken Texts	-3.16049	4.81195	.23911	-3.63054	-2.69044	-13.218	404	.000

A t-test was carried out to evaluate the difference between the level of sociolinguistic competence in the written texts in the study data and the level of sociolinguistic competence in the spoken study data. The mean for sociolinguistic competence in the formal written data was 18.0173 out of 25, and the mean for sociolinguistic competence in the formal spoken study data was 16.8296 out of 25. The difference in these two means is 1.1877, with a T-value = 6.950 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in the two means, thus the study concludes that the level of sociolinguistic competence in the formal spoken study data is higher than the level of sociolinguistic competence in the formal written study data.

The mean sociolinguistic competence in the informal written study data was 19.0938 out of 25, while the mean for sociolinguistic competence in the informal spoken study data was 21.5309 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -2.4371, with a T-value of -14.298 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means there is a significant difference between the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of sociolinguistic competence in informal spoken study data was higher than the level in informal written study data. Tables 60 and 61 display the computations of the comparisons.

Table 60

Paired Samples Statistics: A Table of the Comparison Between Sociolinguistic Competence in Written Formal and Informal Texts and Sociolinguistic Competence in Spoken Formal and Informal Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence in Formal Written Texts	18.0173	405	3.07049	.15257
	Sociolinguistic Competence in Formal Spoken Texts	16.8296	405	1.64049	.08152
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence in Informal Written Texts	19.0938	405	3.09920	.15400
	Sociolinguistic Competence in Informal Spoken Texts	21.5309	405	1.26341	.06278

Table 61

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Sociolinguistic Competence in formal and informal Written Texts and the mean of Sociolinguistic Competence in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
	Sociolinguistic Competence in Formal Written Texts								
Pair 1	Sociolinguistic Competence in formal Spoken texts	1.1877	3.43891	.17088	.85173	1.52358	6.950	404	.000
	Sociolinguistic Competence in Informal Written texts								
Pair 2	Sociolinguistic Competence in Informal Spoken Texts	-2.4371	3.43023	.17045	-2.77212	-2.10196	-14.298	404	.000

A t-test was carried out to evaluate the difference between strategic competence in the written study data and strategic competence in the spoken study data. The mean for strategic competence in the formal written study data was 0.543 out of 25, and the mean for strategic competence in the formal spoken study data was 3.8247 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -3.2817, with a T-value of -64.468 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that there is a significant difference in the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of strategic competence in formal spoken study data was higher than that in the formal written study data.

The mean for strategic competence in the informal written study data was 0.0321 out of 25, while the mean for strategic competence in the informal spoken study data was 4.0173 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -3.9852, with a T-value of -43.395 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates a significant difference between the two means, leading the study to conclude that the level of strategic competence in the informal spoken study data was higher than the level of communicative competence in the informal written study data. Tables 62 and 63 below show the computations of the comparison.

Table 62

Paired Samples Statistics: A Table of the Comparison Between Strategic Competence in Written Formal and Informal Texts and Strategic Competence in Spoken Formal and Informal Texts

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Strategic Competence in Formal Written Texts	.0543	405	.32550	.01617
	Strategic Competence in Formal Spoken Texts	3.8247	405	1.15243	.05726
Pair 2	Strategic Competence in Informal Written Texts	.0321	405	.21447	.01066
	Strategic Competence in Informal Spoken Texts	4.0173	405	1.82317	.09059

Table 63

Paired Samples Test: A Table Showing the Differences in the Mean of Strategic Competence in formal and informal Written Texts and the mean of Strategic Competence in the Formal and the Informal Spoken Texts

		Paired Differences				T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	Strategic Competence in Formal Written Texts	-3.2817	1.17697	.05848	-3.88534	-3.65540	-64.468	404	.000
Pair 2	Strategic Competence in Formal Spoken Texts	-3.9852	1.84814	.09183	-4.16572	-3.80465	-43.395	404	.000

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described communicative competence and proficiency in the written and spoken study data. The chapter has proceeded to determine the impact of the levels of communicative competence on proficiency. Finally, the chapter has compared the levels of communicative competence in written texts with those in spoken texts.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings related to each study objective, draws relevant conclusions, and provides recommendations and suggestions for further research. This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To describe levels of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya.
- ii. To describe the proficiency in English of first year university students in Kenya.
- iii. To find out the impact of the levels of the components of communicative competence observed in the English of first year Kenyan university students on their levels of proficiency.
- iv. To compare the levels of communicative competence in the written English with those in the spoken English of first year university students in Kenya.

5.2 Summary of the Major Findings

This section evaluates the extent to which each of the objectives was met. It begins with summary on the description of the components of communicative competence in the study data followed by the summary on the description of the levels of proficiency in the study data. Summary on the evaluation of the impact of the components of communicative competence on the levels of proficiency comes next, and finally there is the summary of the comparison between the levels of communicative competence in the written study data and the levels of communicative competence in the spoken study data.

5.2.1 Summary of the Description of the Levels of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya

The study established that all four components of communicative competence, as propounded by Canale and Swain (1983), have been acquired with varying degrees of success by the study sample. This sample has achieved these components of communicative competence in both spoken and written language, as well as in formal and informal varieties of the English language.

For written language, grammatical competence averaged 16.7 out of 25 for formal texts and 16.4 out of 25 for informal texts. Discourse competence, on the other hand, averaged 16.8 out of 25 in formal texts and 17.4 out of 25 in informal texts. As for sociolinguistic competence, the mean score for formal texts was 18.0 out of 25 and 19.0 for informal texts. Lastly, strategic competence averaged 0.05 for formal texts and 0.03 for informal texts.

From these figures, it emerges that, regarding the written data, the communicative component best acquired by the study sample is sociolinguistic competence, closely followed by discourse competence. Grammatical competence ranks third, while strategic competence has been scarcely acquired by the study sample, with average scores of less than 1 out of 25 in both the formal and informal texts. These components of communicative competence have been acquired more successfully in the formal variety of English than in the informal variety, except for sociolinguistic and discourse competence, whose scores are higher in the informal variety than in the formal variety of English.

The spoken study data demonstrated that the four components of communicative competence as propounded by Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) had been

acquired by the study sample. This acquisition occurred in both the written and spoken data, as well as in the formal and informal varieties of English.

Grammatical competence in the spoken study data averaged 19.4 out of 25 for the formal data and 18.5 for the informal data. Discourse competence had an average score of 21 out of 25 in the formal data and 20.6 in the informal data. Sociolinguistic competence averaged 16.8 out of 25 in the formal study data and 22 out of 25 in the informal data. Lastly, strategic competence scored an average of 3.8 out of 25 in the formal data and 4.0 out of 25 in the informal study data.

From these scores, it emerges that for the spoken data, the component of communicative competence with the highest average score in the study is discourse competence, closely followed by sociolinguistic competence. Grammatical competence ranks next, while strategic competence has the lowest average score. A similar trend is observed in the written study data; however, the average scores for strategic competence are slightly higher in the spoken study data than in the written data. In the spoken texts, grammatical and discourse competences have higher average scores in the formal texts than in the informal ones, whereas sociolinguistic and strategic competences score higher in the informal texts than in the formal ones.

5.2.2 Summary of the Description of the levels of Proficiency in the English of First year University students in Kenya

The spoken and written formal and informal English of first-year university students in Kenya, who constitute the study sample, achieved varying levels of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

For the written study data, the average proficiency level in grammar is 3.2 out of 6 (13.33 out of 25) for formal texts and 3.4 out of 6 (14.16 out of 25) for informal texts. Both averages fall within the B1 proficiency level, also known as the threshold level of proficiency.

Proficiency in discourse organization within the written data received an average score of 3.5 out of 6 (14.58 out of 25) for the formal data and 3.0 out of 6 (12.5 out of 25) for the informal data. These scores place them at the upper and lower ends of level B1, respectively. They are, therefore, at the threshold (B1) level of proficiency.

Proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of written study data averaged a score of 4 out of 6 (16.66 out of 25) for both formal and informal data. These scores are at the lower end of the B2 level, also known as the Vantage level of proficiency.

Lastly, the average proficiency level in communication strategies for the written study data was 3.0 out of 6 (12.5 out of 25) for both the formal and informal study data. This score corresponds to level B1 of proficiency, commonly referred to as the threshold level.

The overall average proficiency score for the written formal study data is 3.4 out of 6 (14.16 out of 25), and 3.3 out of 6 (13.75) for the written informal study data. Therefore, it is evident that the average proficiency level of the study subjects' written English is B1 (threshold level), which the CEFR classifies as an intermediate level. It can also be observed that the study subjects have a higher proficiency level in their formal English than in their informal English.

For the spoken study data, the average level of proficiency in grammar is 3.2 out of 6 (13.33 out of 25) for both formal and informal texts. These averages fall within the B1 proficiency level, also referred to as the threshold level of proficiency.

Proficiency in discourse organization in the spoken data had an average score of 4.0 out of 6 (16.6 out of 25) for the formal data and 3.5 out of 6 (14.5 out of 25) for the informal data. These levels are at the lower end of level B2 and the middle of B1, respectively. Therefore, they are at the vantage and threshold levels of proficiency, respectively.

Proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of spoken study data had an average score of 4 out of 6 (16.66 out of 25) for both formal and informal data. Both scores fall at the lower end of B2, also referred to as the vantage level of proficiency.

Lastly, the average proficiency level in communication strategies from the spoken study data was 3.0 out of 6 (12.5 out of 25) for both the formal and informal study data. This score corresponds to level B1 proficiency, also known as the threshold level.

The overall average proficiency score for the spoken formal study data is 3.5 out of 6 (14.58 out of 25), while the spoken informal study data scores 3.4 out of 6 (14.16). Therefore, it is evident that the average proficiency level of the study subjects' spoken English is B1 (threshold level), which the CEFR classifies as intermediate. It can also be observed that the study subjects' proficiency level is higher in their formal English than in their informal English. Additionally, it emerges that the study subjects' proficiency in spoken English is slightly higher than their proficiency in written English.

5.2.3 Summary of the Levels of the Components of Communicative Competence and their Impact on the Levels of Proficiency in the English of Kenyan University Freshmen

Based on the written study data, the mean grammatical competence score was 16.7086 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in grammar was 13.6074 out of 25. The difference between the mean for grammatical competence and the mean for proficiency in grammar was 3.1012, with a T-value of 13.581 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that there is a significant difference between these two means, with the level of communicative competence in grammar being higher than the level of proficiency in grammar. The informal texts had a mean score of 16.4370 out of 25 in the grammatical component of communicative competence and a mean of 14.4025 out of 25 in grammar proficiency. The difference between the mean for grammatical competence and the mean for proficiency in grammar for the informal texts is 2.0345, with a T-value of 8.520 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means there is a significant difference in the means, with the mean for communicative competence being higher than that of proficiency.

For the formal written data, the mean for discourse competence in the study data was 16.8346 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in discourse organization was 15.0044 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 1.8306, with a T-value of 7.711 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This shows that there is a significant difference between the levels of discourse competence and proficiency in discourse organization. Therefore, the conclusion is that the study subjects demonstrate greater competence in discourse than the proficiency they exhibit in the formal written texts. The informal texts had a mean score of 17.4420 out of 25 for discourse competence and a mean score of 12.7130 out of 25 for proficiency in discourse organization. The difference between

these two means was 4.729, with a T-value of 17.255 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that the difference between the study subjects' discourse competence and their proficiency in discourse organization is significant, and the level of discourse competence is higher than the level of proficiency in discourse organisation.

In the written data, the mean for sociolinguistic competence in the formal texts was 18.0173 out of 25, while the mean for the sociolinguistic proficiency score was 17.000 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 1.0173, with a T-value of 5.215 and a P-value of $0.0000 < 0.05$ significance level. This means that this difference is significant, showing that the sociolinguistic competence of the study subjects exceeds their proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of formal English. The mean for the sociolinguistic competence score in the informal written texts was 19.0938 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of informal language was 16.9580 out of 25. The difference in these two means is 2.13580 with a T-value = 11.554 and a P-value = $0.0000 < 0.05$ significant level. This means that the difference between the two means is significant; therefore, the study subjects have higher sociolinguistic competence than their proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of informal English.

The mean for strategic competence in the formal written texts was 0.0543 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in communication strategies in formal written texts was 14.5012 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -14.4469, with a T-value = -100.604 and a P-value = $0.0000 < 0.05$ significant level. This means that the difference in these two means is significant, thus, the observed level of knowledge in communication strategies in the study subjects is lower than their ability to use communication strategies in formal written texts. The mean for the strategic competence score in the informal written texts was 0.0321 out of 25, while the mean score for proficiency in communication strategies in the informal written

texts was 14.1728 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -14.1407, with a T-value of -143.493 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in the means; thus, one can conclude that the study subjects have greater proficiency in communication strategies than they have strategic competence in informal written texts.

For spoken data, the mean score for grammatical competence was 19.4195 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in grammar was 13.4568 out of 25. The difference in the two means was 5.9627, with a T-value = 21.022 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference in the means is significant, thus it may be concluded that the level of grammatical competence was higher than level of proficiency in grammar for the formal spoken texts. The mean for grammatical competence in the informal spoken texts was 18.5012 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in grammar was 13.7160 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 4.7852, with a T-value of 28.137 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that this difference is significant. Therefore, the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence was higher than the level of proficiency in grammar in the informal spoken data.

The mean discourse competence score for the formal spoken texts was 21.222 out of 25, while the mean proficiency in discourse organization score was 17 out of 25. The difference between the two means is 4.222, with a T-value of 30.051 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This implies that the difference between the two means is significant; leading the study to conclude that the level of discourse competence in the study data is higher than the level of proficiency in discourse organization among the formal spoken texts that composed the study sample for this research. The mean for discourse competence in the informal spoken texts was 20.6025 out of 25, while the mean for

proficiency in discourse organization in these texts was 15.0049 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 5.5976, with a T-value of 38.914 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in the means, thereby concluding that the level of discourse competence in the study data surpasses the level of proficiency in discourse organization for the informal spoken data.

The mean sociolinguistic competence score in the formal spoken text was 16.8296 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects was 16.68 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 0.1496, with a T-value of 0.868 and a P-value of 0.385 > 0.05 significance level. This indicates that the difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that in the sample, the level of sociolinguistic competence is higher than the level of proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of formal spoken language. The mean for sociolinguistic competence in the informal spoken texts was 22.0247 out of 25, while the mean for proficiency in the sociolinguistic aspects of informal spoken texts was 17.00 out of 25. The difference between these two means is 5.0247, with a T-value of 9.779 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that this difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that the study subjects have higher sociolinguistic competence than proficiency in sociolinguistic aspects of the spoken informal data.

The mean for strategic competence in the formal spoken text was 3.8247 out of 25, and the mean for proficiency in communication strategies in the formal spoken text was 12.8044 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -8.9797, with a T-value = -59.115 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that the difference in these two means is significant; therefore the study concludes that the level of proficiency in communication strategies is higher than the level of strategic competence in formal spoken study data. The mean for strategic competence in the informal spoken data was 4.0173 out of

25, while the mean for proficiency in communication strategies was 12.7012 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -8.6839, with a T-value of -35.796 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means the difference in these two means is significant, leading the study to conclude that the level of proficiency in communication strategies in informal spoken data is higher than the level of strategic competence in this data.

From these results, it appears that there is a significant difference between the two variables being compared: proficiency and communicative competence. In three of the four areas of language ability studied here, the level of communicative competence is higher than that of proficiency. Indeed, the level of communicative competence seems to influence proficiency, as a higher level of communicative competence in these three areas corresponds with a higher level of proficiency. These areas include grammar, discourse, and sociolinguistics. However, in the ability to use communication strategies, the level of proficiency surpasses that of communicative competence. This can be attributed to the scale for proficiency in communication strategies, which ranks any text that employs compensation at levels B1 and B2, relegating levels A1 and A2 to texts that utilise gestures to complement words. Since the study data employs compensation strategies, it is categorised at level B1 and above according to CEFR.

5.2.4 Summary of the Comparison of the Levels of Communicative Competence in the written English with the Levels of Communicative Competence in the Spoken English of Kenyan University Freshmen

The mean for grammatical competence in formal written texts was 16.71 out of 25, while the mean for grammatical competence in formal spoken texts was 19.4198 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -2.7098, with a T-value of -13.985 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that this difference is significant; thus, the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence in formal spoken texts is

higher than that in formal written texts. The mean for grammatical competence in informal written texts in the study data was 16.4310 out of 25, and the mean for grammatical competence in informal spoken texts was 18.5012 out of 25. The difference in the two means is -2.0702, with a T-value = -11.625 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in these two means, thus the study concludes that the level of grammatical competence in informal spoken texts in the study data is higher than the level of grammatical competence in informal written study data.

The mean for discourse competence in the formal written study data was 16.8346 out of 25, while the mean for discourse competence in the formal spoken study data was 21.2222 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -4.3876, with a T-value of -21.863 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that there is a significant difference between these two means. Therefore, the study concludes that the level of discourse competence in formal spoken texts is higher than in the formal written study data. The mean of discourse competence in the informal written texts from the study data was 17.4420 out of 25, while the mean for discourse competence in the informal spoken texts in the study data was 20.6025 out of 25. The difference in these two means was -3.1605, with a T-value of -13.218 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means that there is a significant difference between the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of discourse competence in the informal spoken texts of the study data is higher than in the informal written texts.

The mean for sociolinguistic competence in the formal written data was 18.0173 out of 25, and the mean for sociolinguistic competence in the formal spoken study data was 16.8296 out of 25. The difference in these two means is 1.1877, with a T-value = 6.950 and a P-value = 0.0000 < 0.05 significant level. This means that there is a significant difference in

the two means, thus the study concludes that the level of sociolinguistic competence in the formal spoken study data is higher than the level of sociolinguistic competence in the formal written study data. The mean sociolinguistic competence in the informal written study data was 19.0938 out of 25, while the mean for sociolinguistic competence in the informal spoken study data was 21.5309 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -2.4371, with a T-value of -14.298 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This means there is a significant difference between the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of sociolinguistic competence in informal spoken study data was higher than its level in informal written study data.

The mean for strategic competence in the formal written study data was 0.543 out of 25, and the mean for strategic competence in the formal spoken study data was 3.8247 out of 25. The difference in these two means is -3.2817, with a T-value of -64.468 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is significant at the 0.05 level. This means that there is a significant difference in the two means; thus, the study concludes that the level of strategic competence in formal spoken study data was higher than that in the formal written study data. The mean for strategic competence in the informal written study data was 0.0321 out of 25, while the mean for strategic competence in the informal spoken study data was 4.0173 out of 25. The difference between these two means is -3.9852, with a T-value of -43.395 and a P-value of 0.0000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. This indicates a significant difference between the two means, leading the study to conclude that the level of strategic competence in the informal spoken study data was higher than the level of strategic competence in the informal written study data.

The results indicate that the study subjects exhibited higher communicative competence in their spoken English, both formal and informal. However, sociolinguistic

competence in formal texts was found to be greater in the written study data compared to the spoken data.

5.3 Conclusions

This study concludes that the average level of communicative competence attained by Kenyan university freshmen in written English is moderate. On a scale of 1 to 5, they score an average of 2.5775 for the formal variety and an average of 2.6465 for the informal variety of written English.

Another conclusion is that the average level of communicative competence among Kenyan university freshmen in spoken English is slightly above average. On a scale of 1 to 5, they score 3.05 for the formal variety of spoken English and 3.255 for the informal variety of spoken English.

It is; therefore, clear that on average, the communicative competence of Kenyan university freshmen in both written and spoken English is slightly higher in the informal variety of English than in the formal variety of the language.

This study also concludes that the average level of proficiency in written and spoken English among Kenyan university freshmen is level B1 (threshold). Proficiency was measured using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Furthermore, the study concludes that the average level of communicative competence is significantly higher than the level of proficiency. Thus, the study can deduce that the level of proficiency increases with increasing level of communicative competence.

The study also reveals that, on average, Kenyan university freshmen have higher levels of communicative competence in both the formal and the informal varieties of spoken

English than in the formal and the informal varieties of written English. On a scale of 1 to 5, their average communicative competence score in written English is 2.5775 for formal texts and 2.6465 for informal texts, whereas their average score for communicative competence in spoken English is 3.05 out of 5 for formal texts and 3.255 for informal texts. These scores indicate that Kenyan university freshmen have slightly greater communicative competence in the formal and informal spoken language than in formal and informal written language.

5.4 Recommendations

The conclusions of this study lead to the following recommendations:

- i. That all the four components of communicative competence should receive sufficient attention in the Kenyan school English curriculum in order to improve proficiency in English since the study data shows that proficiency increases with an increase in communicative competence.
- ii. That the teaching of communication strategies should be incorporated into the Kenyan English school curriculum since the study data shows that the level of communicative competence as well as proficiency in communication strategies is extremely low.
- iii. That the levels of proficiency in English need to be measured using an internationally recognized method at specific levels of study. This is because the average level of proficiency of Kenyan university freshmen's English is at level B1 (threshold) as measured using CEFR, yet the recommended level of proficiency for students entering university is B2 (International English Test, 2024).
- iv. That in the teaching of English in Kenyan schools, more focus should be on written English as the study data suggests that Kenyan university freshmen are better in spoken English than in written English.

5.4.1 Policy Recommendation

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030 Target 4 focuses on ensuring equality in education (Mika, 2017). Accessibility to the language of instruction is essential to achieving this equality in education. The Kenyan Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2019) observes that English is the language of education, information, trade, diplomacy, and social networking. Being the language of education means that English serves as the medium of instruction in Kenya, as recommended by the Gachathi Commission of 1976 and the Ominde Commission of 1964 (Kitainge, 2004). To achieve equality in education in Kenya, this study recommends that a policy be established to guide the English school curriculum toward meeting specific levels of proficiency at different stages of learning. The school English curriculum can thus be aligned with the descriptors of the relevant levels of proficiency. For instance, the curriculum may require that, by the end of junior secondary school (grade 8), a learner's proficiency be at least at level B1 (threshold), and by the end of senior secondary school (grade 12), the English curriculum may require a learner's proficiency to be at least at level B2 (vantage).

Additionally, it is recommended that a threshold of level B2 (vantage) be necessary for university entry in alignment with international standards (International English Test, 2024). This would enable learners to cope with university language demands internationally. The descriptors for these levels of proficiency should, consequently be incorporated into the curriculum and factored into the teaching and testing of English. This approach would focus the teaching and assessment of English in Kenya on achieving the recommended level of proficiency at the university entry point. This would, in turn, promote equality in education as senior secondary school leavers' proficiency in English would be comparable with the prerequisites for proficiency in English at university entry internationally.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, the levels of strategic competence are comparatively low compared to levels of grammatical, discourse and sociolinguistic components of communicative competence. This is the case for both formal and informal English, and for the written and the spoken English produced by the study subjects. Future researchers can investigate the cause(s) for this low score for strategic competence.

Secondly, the level of communicative competence in the study subjects' English is higher for spoken texts, both formal and informal, than for written texts, except in the case of sociolinguistic competence, which is higher in formal written texts than in informal ones. Future researchers can investigate the reason behind the low sociolinguistic competence in formal spoken English compared to that in formal written English.

In addition, the proficiency level of the current study's subjects is at level B1 (threshold). Future researchers can collect more data to confirm this finding.

Finally, the current study focuses on the productive skills of language: written and spoken language. Future researcher can analyse data on receptive skills: listening and reading, for components of communicative competence and for proficiency.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: TESTS

All test responses should be in English and no reading of speeches. Notes should have one word prompts not sentences.

SPEAKING TEST (FORMAL) – allow 10 minutes for students to prepare

Give a two minutes' speech that you would give to high school students on 'The Effects of Cheating in Exams.'

SPEAKING TEST (INFORMAL) – allow 10 minutes for students to prepare

Present a two minutes' speech on the funniest incident that happened during a lecture as you would narrate it to your friends.

WRITING TEST (FORMAL)

In 40 minutes, write an essay on the effects of cheating in exams.

WRITING TEST (INFORMAL)

In 40 minutes, write a letter to your friend abroad detailing a humorous incident that happened during a lecture.

APPENDIX II: COORDINATES OF THE UNIVERSITIES THAT COMPRISE THE STUDY SAMPLE

1 – University of Nairobi	1.2804° S, 36.8163° E
2 – Moi University	0° 30' 40.187" N 35° 17' 3.718" E
3 – Kenyatta University	1.1767° S, 36.9365° E
4– Karatina Univesity	0.4813° S, 37.1278° E
5– Masinde Muliro University	0.2827° N, 34.7519° E
6 –University of Kabianga	0.4459° S, 35.1381° E
7 – Mount Kenya University.	1.045559 S, 37.081669 E
8 – Kenya Methodist University.	0°03'N37°39'E/0.050°N37.650°E / 0.050
9 - Laikipia University.	0.0294° N, 36.2740° E
10- Baraton University	0.2540N 35.0810E
11 – Daystar University	1.4394° S, 37.0484° E
12 – Catholic University	1.3522° S, 36.7568° E
13 – United States International University of Kenya	1.2136° S, 36.8795° E
14. University of Embu	0.5156° S, 37.4560° E
15. Egerton University	0°22'11.0"S, 35°55'58.0"E

APPENDIX III: THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Nature of the Study

This is a research for a PhD thesis entitled, ‘A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English Kenyan University Freshmen and its Implications on Proficiency in English’. The researcher is pursuing this degree at Kabarak University, Kenya.

The study will require each participant to give two written and two spoken responses to the questions below:

SPEAKING TEST (FORMAL) – allow 10 minutes for students to prepare

Give a two minutes’ speech that you would give to high school students on ‘The Effects of Cheating in Exams.’

SPEAKING TEST (INFORMAL) – allow 10 minutes for students to prepare

Present a two minutes’ speech on the funniest incident that happened during a lecture as you would narrate it to your friends.

WRITING TEST (FORMAL)

In 40 minutes, write an essay on the effects of cheating in exams.

WRITING TEST (INFORMAL)

In 40 minutes, write a letter to your friend abroad detailing a humorous incident that happened during a lecture.

Purpose of the Study

It is intriguing that some students who scored excellent grades in the Kenyan secondary English national examination have problems negotiating meanings in the language. This means they have low proficiency in the language despite having passed their English examination in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination.

This could possibly point to a problem in the content of the curriculum, or a problem in the methods employed in the teaching of English in Kenya. This study's purpose is to establish how far the different components of communication have been achieved by those who have gone through the Kenyan English curriculum (first year university students), and investigate how far the attainment of these components of communication influence proficiency in English.

This, it is hoped, will lay bare how far our curriculum imparts communicative components. It is also hoped that this study will establish how far the levels of communicative components affect proficiency. Finally, it is hoped that the study will give recommendations pertaining to the curriculum and the teaching of English in Kenya.

APPENDIX IV: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE ENGLISH OF FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

COSENT TO TAKE PART IN RESEARCH

- I Voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my test within two weeks after the test, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and the nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves two written responses and two spoken responses to questions.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my spoken responses being audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my tests which may reveal identity or the identity of people I speak about.

- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the researcher's PhD thesis, the researcher's conference presentations and the researcher's published papers.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities- they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a file for the forms, and in a Sony recorder for the recordings, and only the researcher has access to this data until December, 2022.
- I understand that a transcript of my spoken responses in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for six months after December 2022.
- I understand that under freedom of information legalization, I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I am free to contact the researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Researcher: Anne Wachera Somba

Lecturer – English, Kabarak University

MA Linguistics, Kenyatta University

Bed (Arts) - English/literature, Kenyatta University

Supervisors:

Prof. Felicia Arudo Yieke

Department of Literary and communication Studies, Laikipia University

Prof. James Ogola Onyango

Department of Literary and communication Studies, Laikipia University

Signature of Participant

Sign


Date


As the researcher, I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Sign

Date


APPENDIX V: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATIONS: NACOSTI LICENCE AND AUTHORIZATIONS FROM UNIVERSITIES


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **436699** Date of Issue: **06/January/2022**


RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Ms. ANNE Wachera Somba of Kabarak University, has been licensed to conduct research in Bomet, Bungoma, Busia, Embu, Homabay, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kericho, Kiambu, Kirinyaga, Kitui, Laikipia, Machakos, Nairobi, Nakuru, Nyeri on the topic: A DESCRIPTION OF THE COMPONENTS OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN THE ENGLISH OF FIRST YEAR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH FOR the period ending : 06/January/2023.

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**OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE
STUDIES AND RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA, BARATON
P.O. Box 2500, Eldoret, Kenya**

18 May, 2022

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Re: GATHERING OF RESEARCH DATA

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba is a Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics student at Kabarak University and is conducting a study on "*A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of the First-Year University Students in Kenya and Its Implications on Proficiency in English*". She has chosen UEAB as one of the sites of her study.

Our university provides an environment that facilitates research. I am therefore requesting you to please participate in her study by filling in the questionnaire provided.

This letter serves as authorization for her to gather her research data from selected respondents at UEAB. Your participation in this study is highly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Ramesh Francis
DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH



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P.O. Box 1957 – 10101 KARATINA
Website: www.karu.ac.ke

OUR REF: KarU/REG/PA -

DATE: 22nd November, 2022

Anne Wachera Somba,
Kabarak University,
P. O Box 18286-20100
Nakuru.

Ms. Somba,

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

Reference is made to your letter dated 15th October, 2022 requesting permission to collect data for purposes of your PhD studies on the topic '*A Description the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its Implications on Proficiency in English*'

I am pleased to inform you that your request was given due consideration and approval has been granted. Kindly plan to liaise with the University Dean of Students for support system in accessing your target population.

I wish you success in your studies.

Yours sincerely,

DR. HUMPHREY R. OMONDI
REGISTRAR (PLANNING & ADMINISTRATION)



MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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50100

Kenya

Office of the Director Research and Postgraduate Support

MMU/COR: 403067(01)

24th November, 2022

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba

P. O. Box 18286- 20100

Nakuru

Tel: 0723841761

Email: waceracs@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Wachera,

RE: APPROVAL TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

We are in receipt of your document on the above subject.

The purpose of this communication is to inform you that you have been granted permission to collect data as requested.

Our requirements of you are two, that: you give us soft and hard copies of your proposal and completed thesis.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Peter Bukhala

Director, Research and Postgraduate Support



MOI UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, EXTENSION & STUDENT AFFAIRS

Tel: (053) 43355
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Email: dvc_ars@moi.ac.ke or dvcaremoi@gmail.com

P.O. Box 3900
Eldoret-30100
Kenya

REF: MU/DVC/REP/27B

Date: 8th July, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH – ANNE WACHERA SOMBA

The above subject matter refers.

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba who is a Ph.D. student at Kabarak University has applied for authority to collect data both spoken and written at Moi University. We would be grateful if she is permitted to conduct her research on *"A description of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya and its implications on proficiency in English."*

After the completion of the research, a complete report both on hard and soft copy will be handed over to the office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academics, Research, Extension & Student Affairs.

Any assistance accorded to her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. I. N. NJENGEI, Ph.D.
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(ACADEMICS, RESEARCH, EXTENSION & STUDENT AFFAIRS)



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS & RESEARCH

Our Ref: DVC/AA&R/RG/esm/067/2022

9th May 2022

Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University
REF: GDE/M/1132/9/12
Email: waceracs@gmail.com
Mobile: 0723841761

Dear Wachera,

RE: Permission to Conduct Research at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)

Greetings in the Mighty Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

I am glad to inform you that your request to conduct research on the topic: **"A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its Implications on Proficiency in English"**, has been granted. You are therefore authorized to collect data from the targeted participants at The Catholic University of Eastern Africa. You are expected to strictly observe the normal ethical cautions and discretions while conducting the research.

I wish you well with your study and I look forward to you sharing your findings with the Directorate of Research and Innovation of the The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

Sincere regards

Mrs. Prof. Rachel K. Gesami, PhD, MBS
Deputy Vice Chancellor/Academic Affairs & Research



CC *Vice Chancellor*
Directorate of Research and Innovation
Dean of Students



THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA) P.O. BOX 62157 00200 Nairobi – KENYA
Tel: 0709 691000/111 Fax: 8891084, Email: academics@cuea.edu Website: www.cuea.edu
Founded in 1984 by AMECEA (Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa)



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

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Website: www.kemu.ac.ke

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

March 16, 2022

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba
P. O. BOX 18286 - 20100
Nakuru
Tel: 0723841761

Dear Ms. Somba

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT DATA

Greetings from Kenya Methodist University.

Your request to be allowed to collect data from Students for your research titled, "*A description of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year University students in Kenya and its implications on proficiency In English*" at Kenya Methodist University has been approved.

Please note that only approved data forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants with their individual consent. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. Further, any substantial changes in the scope of your research from what is presently provided will require an approval from the University.

If the terms are acceptable to you, please sign a copy of this letter and return it to the Director of Research, Innovation and Extension as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

DR. DR. MARY KINOTI, Ph.D
DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS

I, the undersigned hereby confirm acceptance of this offer and the conditions stated herein.

Signed.....Date.....



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

OUR REF: MKU00/CGSR/VOL1/2022/085

12th July, 2022

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University
Email: waceracs@gmail.com

Dear Anne,

RE: AUTHORIZATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY

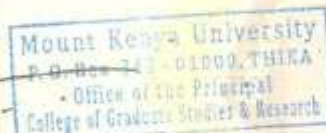
This is to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your emails on the above subject. Following consultation, we are pleased to inform you that you have been granted permission to collect data for your research titled "*A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and Its Implications On Proficiency in English*" at Mount Kenya University.

You are expected to observe research ethics and adhere to Covid-19 health guidelines during the data collection process at Mount Kenya University. We request you to send us a copy of your final report for our records.

We wish you all the best in your study

Thank you.

Yours faithfully



Peter G. Kirira, PhD

PRINCIPAL, COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

cc.

Deputy Vice Chancellor, AFIS
Registrar, Academic Administration
Chief Security Officer

ANNE WACHERA SOMBA

29th November, 2022

Dear Anne,

REF: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT USIU-AFRICA

Following your request to conduct research at USIU-Africa on the topic “A Description the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its Implications on Proficiency in English”, the university’s Research Office has authorized you to collect data from the respondents in the Institution.

However, the university imposes the following conditions:

1. No personal information will be asked of the respondents.
2. You will share the preliminary report findings with us prior to completion.
3. You will provide a copy of the completed research to us.
4. Under no circumstances will the information obtained from USIU-Africa be re-used or disclosed for other purposes.

Your research period expires on 26th November, 2023. Kindly contact the undersigned to confirm your acceptance to the condition stated above.

Sincerely,



Prof. Amos Njuguna,
Dean- School of Graduate Studies, Research and Extension.
Tel: 0730116442
Email: amnjuguna@usiu.ac.ke

LAIKIPIA

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NYAHURURU,
KENYA



UNIVERSITY

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dvcar@laikipia.ac.ke; www.laikipia.ac.ke

**DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS**

LU/ACA/DVC (ARSA)/42/VOL.3/3

12th May 2022

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University
P.O Box 18286
Nakuru

Dear Ms. Somba,

RE: DATA COLLECTION

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter requesting for permission to collect data on your research; *'A description of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya and its implications on proficiency in English'*.

Permission is hereby granted. Please liaise with the office of the Director, Research, Human Rights & Gender for further guidance.

Thank you for choosing Laikipia University and we wish you the best in your studies.

Prof. Felicia Yieke, PhD
**Ag. DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR
(ACADEMIC, RESEARCH AND STUDENT AFFAIRS)**

Cc:

- Director, R, HR & Gender



Vision : A University for Valued Transformation of Society

Mission: To serve students and society through research, education, scholarship, training, innovation, outreach and consultancy

Laikipia University is ISO 9001:2015 and ISO/IEC 27001:2013 Certified





UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
OFFICE OF ASSOCIATE VICE-CHANCELLOR
(Research, Innovation and Enterprise)

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UON/RIE/3/5/Vol.XX

May 12, 2022

Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University
P. O. Box 18286-20100
NAKURU
Email: waceracs@gmail.com
Tel: 0723841761

Dear Anne Somba

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

I refer to your request to conduct research at the University of Nairobi, for your project entitled:
"A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its implications on Proficiency in English."

I write to inform you that your request has been approved.

You are however required to share the findings of your study with the University of Nairobi by depositing a copy of your findings with the Director Library & Information Services on completion of your study.

Yours sincerely,

PROF. M. JESANG HUTCHINSON
ASSOCIATE VICE-CHANCELLOR (AG.)
(RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENTERPRISE)
AND
PROFESSOR OF HORTICULTURE

Copy to: Director, Library and Information Services
Dean of Students

SKB/eg



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU
OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
(ACADEMICS, RESEARCH & EXTENSION)

P.O. Box 6 – 60100
EMBU - KENYA

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Website: www.embuni.ac.ke

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+254 0706528876

+254 0743936436

REF: UoEm/REG(ARE)/DATA/VOL.1/31

DATE: 12th May, 2022

Ms, Anne Wachera Somba,
Kabarak University,
P.O. Box 18286-20100,
NAKURU.

Dear Ms. Wachera,

RE: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Reference is made to your letter on the above subject.

Permission is hereby granted to you to collect data for your research project at the University of Embu on the following conditions;

1. The information gathered should be used strictly for academic purposes.
2. Confidential information that may come your way during the study should not be revealed to a third party.
3. You shall not mention any interviewee by name without a written approval from the University.
4. You will deposit the final copy of your project with the Librarian, University of Embu.
5. You must obtain a personal accident insurance policy while working at the University.
6. You will indemnify the University incase anything happens to you while in the University compound.
7. At all times adhere to the code of conduct as shall be brought to your attention by the undersigned.

Before starting your research, you are advised to visit the undersigned for guidance on the University expectations and assistance on how to make your way around.

If you agree to these conditions, please sign in the space provided below, and return a copy of this letter to the undersigned.

Thank you.

PROF. JACKSON WACHIRA MUTHENGIA
REGISTRAR (ACADEMICS, RESEARCH AND EXTENSION)

JWM/da

I, agree to abide by the above conditions while collecting data for my research project at the University of Embu.

Signature Date

Copies to:

- Vice-Chancellor
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (ARE)
- Head of Admissions

Director Research
Librarian



ISO / IEC 27001 : 2013 Certified

Knowledge Transforms



ISO 9001 : 2016 Certified



UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA
ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFIED
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, LINKAGES & EXTENSION

Tel, No. +254 20 217 2665

P.O. BOX 2030-20200

Email address:- research@kabianga.ac.ke

KERICHO

REF: UoK/DIR/RLE/RNA/10VOL.3/128

DATE: 21ST JUNE, 2022

MS. ANN WACHERA SOMBA,
KABARAK UNIVERSITY,
P.O. BOX 18286-20100,
NAKURU.

Dear Mr. ANN,

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION TO COLLECT DATA AT UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA (UoK)



In reference to the above, your request to collect data at UoK is gladly acknowledged. In addition, your interest to carry out part of your PhD research at the University is very much appreciated.

By this letter, you are granted authorization to collect data at UoK as requested. However, this authorization is only effective on the fulfillment of the following, on your part:

This authorization is only valid after your consultation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Planning, Research and Development) prior to start of data collection and signing a commitment document/ letter for you to submit to UoK a copy of final report/ approved thesis on conclusion of the work. This will ensure that UoK benefits from the findings/ recommendations of your work with regard to research outputs and improvement of service delivery to our customers, in particular the students.

On behalf of UoK Management, I take this opportunity to wish you success in your research work and overall, your future career.

Yours sincerely,



PROF. ISSA MWAMZANDI, PhD.
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH, LINKAGES & EXTENSION

IM/hr



30th November 2022

Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University,
P.O Box 18286-20100
NAKURU.

Dear Anne,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY

Your request for permission to conduct your research entitled: *'A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its Implications on Proficiency in English'*, has been received.

We have examined your research proposal and have satisfactorily established the purpose of your research. We have also looked at your research tools critically and note that you have the relevant approval from your School.

Having done all the above, I wish to confirm that you have been granted permission to carry out the study. The permission granted is for a period of one year from the date of this letter.

We wish you all the best in your data collection and eventual completion of your dissertation.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Faith Nguru
Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic, Research & Student Affairs

"...until the day dawn and the *daystar*
arise in your hearts"
2 Peter 1:19 KJV

EGERTON

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E-mail: dvcrc@egerton.ac.ke
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UNIVERSITY

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OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

EU/DVC/RE/089

21st November, 2022

Anne W. Somba
Kabarak University
P. O. Box 18286-20100
NAKURU

waceracs@gmail.com

Dear Ms. Somba,

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY

Reference is made to your letter dated 15th October, 2022 requesting for authority to collect data for your PhD research project titled: '**A Description of the Components of Communicative Competence in the English of First Year University Students in Kenya and its Implications on Proficiency in English**'. Your request has been approved. It is noted that the data will be collected from first year students at Egerton University.

You will be required to strictly adhere to the regulation by various research regulatory bodies in Kenya for your research and handle the data with the highest level of confidentiality in line with the Data Protection Act, 2019. This is also to request you to deposit a copy of your thesis with Egerton University Repository.

Thank you.

Prof. Nancy W. Mungai, PhD
AG. DIRECTOR (RESEARCH & EXTENSION)



cc: VC
DVC (AA)

NWM/es

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KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH

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Office Cell: +254 772 296748

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P. O. Box 43844-00100

Nairobi, Kenya

Email: dvc-rio@ku.ac.ke

Ref KU/DVCR/RCR/VOL.3/349

Date: 24th October, 2022

Ms. Anne Wachera Somba
Kabarak University
P. O. Box Private Bag - 20157
Kabarak

Dear Ms. Somba,

RE: COLLECTION OF RESEARCH DATA AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

This is in reference to your letter requesting for authorization to collect research data at Kenyatta University on the topic **"A description of the components of communicative competence in the English of first year university students in Kenya and its implications on proficiency in English"** towards a PhD in Linguistics degree of Kabarak University.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to collect data has been approved. It is noted that your data will be collected from first year undergraduate students. It is further noted that the data will solely be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

The University requires that, upon completion of your research you submit a hard copy of your report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Outreach who shall forward it to the University Library. Kindly therefore complete and sign the attached form RIO 3 and return it to my office prior to the commencement of collection of data.

Yours sincerely,

for

Prof. Vincent Onywera Ph.D., ISAK 2

Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Outreach

cc: Vice-Chancellor
DVC, Academic