# An Evaluation of the Treatment of Application Letters and Reports in Core Kenyan form Three English Course Books

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## Abstract

Functional writing is an important skill since it involves writing for real life purposes. It should fit the intended purpose, audience and context. Despite the centrality of this form of writing, it has been performed dismally in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination every year. In a bid to understand the nature of the problem, this paper attempts an evaluation of the general presentation of skills of writing the letter of application and the report in form three and four approved English course books. Qualitative data sets were collected by administering interview schedules to teachers from three best performing public secondary schools in Nairobi County and four editors of English course books in four publishing firms. To complement qualitative data, quantitative data was collected using a checklist. Twelve form three and four English course books approved by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development were selected as a study sample. The form three and form four approved English course books formed the study sample. The texts were closely studied to extract linguistic tokens for analysis. The results revealed that the presentation of guidelines for writing the two functional texts displayed inconsistencies and inadequacies of relevant information. Secondly, editors have diverse opinions concerning the presentation of guidelines in the selected texts. The study recommends that revision of the course books is necessary for the improvement of the general presentation of the guidelines provided in these course books to reflect current practice in the work place.

**Keywords:** Functional writing skills, evaluate, general presentation, approved English course book

## INTRODUCTION

Effective communication in spoken and written modes in local and international domains in trade, publicity, politics, technological programming, international relations, academic study and the social media on Facebook and twitter cannot be overemphasized (Tomlinson, 2012). Gray (2010), points out that English has become the linguistic capital

capable of bringing a profit of distinction to those who can access it. He further argues that, it is an increasingly commoditized dimension of labor power hence the great need for delivery of a standardized product deliverable for teachers and testable by examinations. As such, English as Second Language (ESL) and English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners need to develop communicative competence in written English not only to pass in examinations but also to be able to compete for jobs in a challenging and growing global economy. The learning materials have also to be a high standard. The ones in use in the secondary schools need to be evaluated.

Hutchinson (1987) defines evaluation of textbooks as judging the suitability of a text for a particular learning purpose. Mohammadi and Abdi (2014) note that textbooks provide teachers with guidance in course and activity design; it assures a measure of structure, consistency, and logical progression in a class. Retrospective evaluation was applied in the study reported in this paper to determine whether core English course books are suitable and can be useful on future occasions or not. The study reported in this paper evaluated the presentation of guidelines on functional writing skills namely, the Letter of application, and the Report. According to Smith and Clover (2002), letters of application are normally written for job application. On the other hand, a report is a systematic, well organized document which defines and analyses a subject or problem (McCarthy & Reilly, 2000).

According to Tomlinson (2012) a course book should take care of the syllabus coverage, language suitability, student involvement and emerging issues. The expectation is that the general presentation of guidelines in letters of application, and reports in form three English course books should present clear and adequate instructions, a logical flow of sub topics and call for learner involvement; to interact and work with the functional writing input presented to them to realize the desired outcomes.

The guidelines should address changes that have taken place in the course of time since the commissioning of the current syllabus in 2002. Ayot (1984) as quoted by Ngumo (2007) points out that, Kenyan ESL teachers confessed that they cannot teach without a text book since it forms a base for their approach to teaching. It is therefore, very crucial that the best book is selected for ESL learners and especially for the teaching and learning of functional writing skills. Nthiga (2010) notes that a writing class involves knowledge about a language, about the context, the purpose for the writing and the skills in using language. It is a skill that is not picked but learnt through a process of instructions hence it must be taught. Earlier on, KIE (2002), had noted that the English writing syllabus consists of: building sentence skills, paragraphing, punctuation, social, public, personal, study, creative and institutional writing. Functional writing is the form of writing done for real life experiences.

In the Kenyan secondary English syllabus, Functional writing skills in form three and form four course books include: synopsis, minutes, reports, memoranda, CV, speeches, notes and official letters among others. Our study evaluated the general presentation of guidelines in functional writing skills under the public, institutional and study forms of writing namely, letters of application and reports. It is important that learners are well

grounded in functional writing skills since tertiary colleges and universities in Kenya do not focus on them in their curricula. Graduates from higher education institutions seeking for jobs therefore, rely on knowledge acquired in secondary school to write letters of application and reports

According to Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC, 2012) report, functional writing is tested in English Paper 101/1and carries 20 marks. ESL teachers and learners are faced with tremendous challenges. Inadequate notes and exercises are just some of the challenges that contribute to errors in both spoken and written English which eventually leads to poor performance in English. The mean grade in paper one remains far below average. In 2008 for instance, the mean score for paper 1 was 24.59 in 2009, 30.75 in 2010, 28.12 in 2011, 25.73 in 2012 and 36.12 and 25.63 in 2013. This dismal performance adds up to the overall poor performance in English papers. This prompted the then Cabinet Secretary of Education, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi to commission a task force to establish the cause of the poor performance in English and take corrective measures (KNEC, 2012).

The Presentation Practice Production (P-P-P) approach by Mariani (1983) offers explanations to the functional writing scenario. The theory states that learners acquire language presented to them, followed by controlled practice and then production. The functional writing skill is presented to the students by the teacher as it appears in the course book. According to Hyland, (2003) and Matsuda, (2003), learners see how writers write and they can emulate this to produce successful written pieces of writing. Learners should therefore, be provided with suitable models of functional writing skills to emulate. In support, Ellis (2010) recommends that the design and development of instructional materials must take into consideration the models provided. Moreover, with the emergence of computer technology, ESL teachers should incorporate use of computer technology to support many of the principles of constructivist learning in teaching and learning of functional writing. The learner therefore, is required to be highly equipped with the knowledge and be well grounded in the practice of functional writing so as to produce a meaningful piece of written communication. The P-P-P theory provides the principles for critical analysis and interpretation on the evaluation of the presentation of the content, format and exercises in letters of application and reports to determine their relevance in creating functional communicative competence among learners and in real life situations.

To establish if the recommended text books attain the norms of the English syllabus for secondary schools, this study analyzed the general presentation of guidelines for letters of application, and reports.

## METHOD

## Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive research design which describes the state of affairs as it presently exists (Kothari, 2004). This study sought to investigate representation of the

cover letter and report writing in relation to the expected norms as stipulated in the English Syllabus for secondary schools. The findings were used to determine the suitability of the course books and explain why ESL teachers prefer to use certain texts to others. Quantitative method was used to collect data on the presentation of the guidelines in functional writing skills. These processes follow the descriptive design path as noted in Kothari (2004).

## Study sample

The target sample comprised of six form three English course books. These are: Head Start, New Integrated English, Excelling in English, New Horizons in English, Advancing in English and Explore English. These texts were selected purposively since they are the ones recommended for use in secondary schools by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development. Out of the myriad of functional texts including notices, recipes, menus, personal letters and minutes, this study focused on the letters of application, and reports. As teachers of English for long, we have found these functional texts quite problematic to learners yet they are frequently in use in real life situations.

## Data collection procedure

A checklist adapted from Litz (2000) was used to collect data on the currency, organization and adequacy of content in the selected course books; the presentation of the layout and on the adequacy, quality, clarity and variety of exercises. The following steps were followed to ensure systematic data collection. First, we examined and allocated scores on the presentation of the guidelines under the following categories.

(a) Content - definitions, adequacy of notes, organization, currency of notes and samples and instructions on what a learner should or should not do.
(b) Layout - general readability and ease of reference, print size and style, bolding, capitalization, underlining and use of color for topics and subtopics.
(c) Exercises – number of exercises, description, clarity of instructions and questions and variety of exercises.

The data sets collected were recorded in tables. Interview data was also collected from teachers of functional writing in the selected classes and editors of the selected books to seek a deeper understanding of emerging patterns.

## Data Analysis Procedure

For a systematic data analysis, presentation and discussion, the following procedure was followed: The categories on content, layout and exercises were coded for easier entry. The data collected was tabulated and computed using percentages and following the patterns of presentation of the content, layout and exercises. The results on the content, layout and assessment were analyzed in order to describe how the presentation of guidelines has been done and how it aids teachers and learners in teaching and learning of functional writing skills. Data was presented in bar graphs from which interpretations and conclusions were drawn and discussed.

**FINDINGS**

## Presentation of content in Letters of application

According to Kanuri et al (2013), the presentation of the content in letters of application should include the definition, subject, addresses, salutation, the introduction, body, the conclusion and signing off. It was noted that, sub topics in all the course books have notes which are logically organized from the address to the signing off. However, books like *Explore English Book 3, Advancing in English Book 3* and *New Horizons Book 3* have more details than others. This means that teachers and learners using these texts stand to be better guided because of the extra information. For instance, *New Horizons Book 3 p.141* includes the following details which are lacking in the other course books:

1. The application letter should not include greetings or any other language that shows friendship to the person being addressed.

2. The text also gives a breakdown of what to include in the three different paragraphs of the application letter. For instance, 'The first paragraph is the introduction. Here, you should again specify the job you are applying for, state how you learnt about the vacancy, e.g. Did you find out through the newspaper?'...'the third paragraph is usually the conclusion. Here you indicate whether you have enclosed your curriculum vitae (CV) and copies of your certificates and testimonials.'

On the cover letter, *New Horizons Book 3* therefore stands out as the most reliable text of all the recommended ones.

## Presentation of format in Letters of application

The evaluation of the format included the font size and style, addresses, date, salutation, position of the introduction, body, conclusion and signing off. These features are present in all the books except that the order of presentation varies from book to book as illustrated below:

3. *New Horizon Book. 3 p.142* presents the semi blocked punctuated format but recommends the indent, complete block and the half block formats.

4. *Excelling in English Book. 3 p. 109* does not have a signature in the valediction neither does it separate the salutation from the subject. The text also indicates the applicant should sign their names in full.'

5. *New Integrated English Book. 3 p.318-321* presents four different formats namely: the semi-blocked/punctuated, the semi blocked/unpunctuated, fully blocked/unpunctuated and the indented punctuated or traditional style but warns learners to use only one of the four formats at a time.

6. *Head Start Book. 3 p.90* presents the semi- blocked unpunctuated format.

The P-P-P theory requires that samples should present learners with the ideal layouts of letters of application which they would then practice and reproduce in their own writing. However, it is clear that there is no unanimity in the recommended textbooks on the right format. This calls for more inquiry into the elements and rhetorical organization of letters of application.

The spacing aspect of format were also examined. *New Integrated Book 3* (*p. 318-321)* is the only book that provides specifications on spacing. According to the book, the correct spacing for letters of application is:

7. ' skip two lines between the sender's address and the date and between the date and the recipient's address, skip a line between the recipient's address and the salutation and between the salutation and the RE and also to separate paragraphs. Finally skip a line or two to separate the valediction from the body.'

The spacing element is critical to the cover letter. According to Smith and Clover (2000), it is important for the learners to have knowledge on spacing since it makes the writing neat and presentable.

One notable omission is the sample textbooks was guidelines on length of an application letter yet employers often limit the length of the letter. Further, the terminal national examination is also space bound, pointing to the need for learners to be guided on this requirement in the course books.

## Presentation of exercises in letters of application.

According to Willis (1996), exercises engage learners to personally make use of their own experiences and opinions. Exercises give the learner the opportunity to practice what has been learnt. An analysis of exercises in the selected course books was carried out to determine their clarity and adequacy to give learners enough desired guidance. *Excelling in English Book 3, New Horizons Book 3,* and *Head Start Book 3* present one activity each. For instance, *New Horizons Book 3 p. 142*provides the following exercise:

8. 'Have a look at different advertisements in the daily newspapers. Select one and apply for the advertised position. Remember to show your creativity and imagination when writing the letter, because you do not have most of the qualifications required for such positions*,*

By all accounts, one exercise may not give enough opportunities to practice a skill. The teacher therefore, would have to look for more activities from other course books or from supplementary revision materials.

The study revealed that the textbooks are not equally comprehensive in the coverage of the guidelines yet the P-P-P theory requires that the instructions should be comprehensive enough to provide the learners with the input required in the practice stage for the learner to produce the intended product.

In summary, elements of the content, format and exercises were counted in each of the six course books. Results are presented in Figure 1.
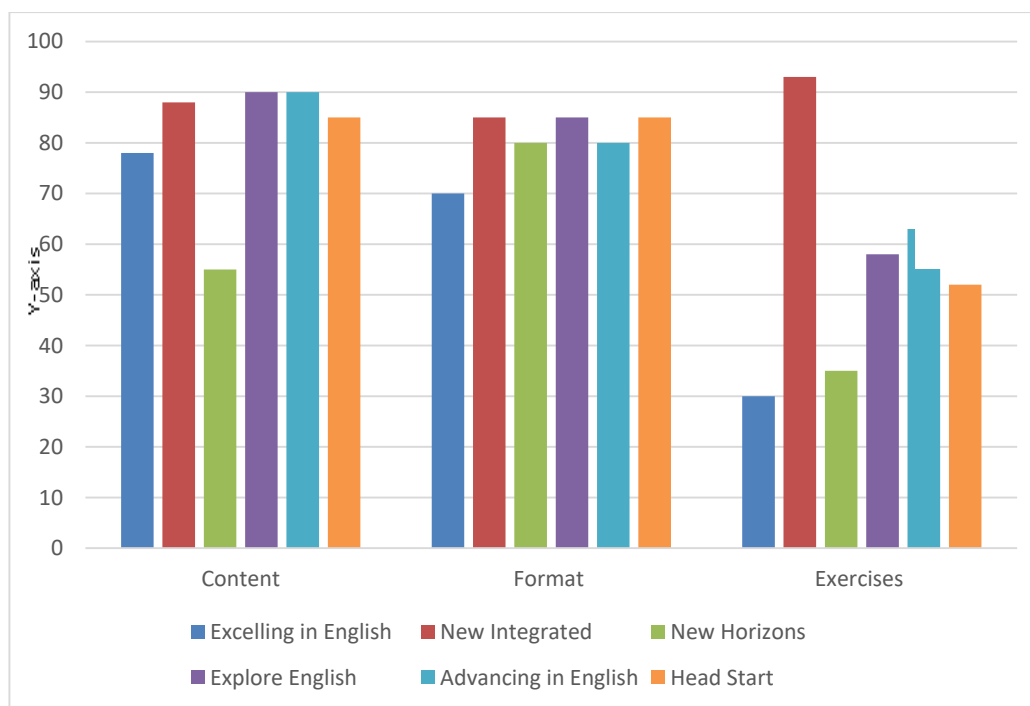


**Figure 1.** The presentation of guidelines in letters of application

Figure 1 reveals that content and format are well represented in the course books while activities for practice are scanty. Given that writing is a practical skill, it is clear that learners will not attain the desired competencies to be able to produce functional texts that fulfil their intended purposes. It can also be concluded that different publishers interpret the English syllabus differently. That explains why *Advancing in English Book 3* is higher than *Integrated English Book 3* in content while on exercises, *New Integrated English Book 3* is higher than *Advancing in English Book 3*. This means that any one course book may not be adequate as a teaching/learning resource yet recommending so many books in one subject will also be a costly affair.

It is also notable that *Excelling in English Book 3* and *New Horizons Book 3* rank lowly in content, format and exercises than all the other texts. This suggests that evaluation of course books for selection need to be more incisive in order to eliminate weaker texts from the language classroom

## Presentation of content in reports

According to Markman (2011), a course book should provide a definition of a skill. The definition provides the teacher with the input to introduce the skill to the learners which is the first stage of presentation of linguistic items as stipulated by the P-P-P theory. Its absence therefore means that there is inadequacy in the presentation stage. It also implies that the learners and teachers will have to refer to other materials for the definition.

In the texts analysed in this study, only *Advancing in English Book 3* and *Head Start Book 3* provide a clear definition of a report as illustrated below.

9.  *Advancing in English Book 3 p167,* defines a report as an account or a description of events, processes and experiences.

10. *Explore English Book 3* provides a vague definition of a report. It states that a report *consists of facts gathered from written sources.*

The remaining four course books have no definition of a report. Without a definition, it will be difficult to visualize what a report is. This omission suggests that either the editing stage of manuscripts is porous or the time allotted for development of materials is not enough to check manuscripts for completeness.

Regarding the key elements of the report, Markman (2011) comments that, the introduction should provide a clear statement of the problem or the topic. Further, it may introduce the background information so that the reader can understand the significance of the problem. Findings should be described one after the other and they should include figures where necessary. The body summarizes what has been done while recommendations give the remedies to the problem. This outline meets the specifications of the P-P-P theory on content organization which calls for a smooth flow of the sub topics. These are essential to training learners to follow the same pattern and focus on the target feature. From the data sets used in this study, only two course books have notes on the introduction, the body and conclusion.

11.  *Advancing in English Book 3* does not present notes on the sub topics but refers the learner to the sample given.

12. *New Horizons Book 3* only gives a list of the key areas of a report while *New Integrated Book 3* has a few details on journalistic reports.

13. *Head Start Book 3*on the other hand, has no notes on the sub topics. The notes are inadequate in content and organization.

14. Although, *Excelling in English Book 3* presents the best organization of notes, it fails to give a sample for the learners to emulate.

From observation 11-14, it can be concluded that the four texts that lack on the presentation of notes fail to provide the required input to the learners on report writing. It is worth noting that the journalistic reports covered in *New Integrated English Book 3* do not expose the learner to formal reports; hence, learners may not be well grounded on writing formal reports. It is also noted that *Advancing in English Book 3* gives information on two types of reports namely ordinary or routine reports and special or general reports. However, the textbook addresses ordinary reports but provides no information about special reports. This gives learners a limited understanding of the nature of the functional text.

*New Horizons Book 3* introduces a sample of a confidential report while *Advancing in English Book 3* gives a sample of a report on yearly activities in a secondary school. One can conclude that there are many types of reports and each could be having unique compositional characteristics. When learners are introduced to some types and not others, they may not acquire the competencies required. It was also noted that there are no instructions on don'ts in all the texts.

According to Tusk et al. (1989), the language of writing reports should be simple, with short and precise sentences. They recommend the use of active voice rather than passive voice since it makes the writing move smoothly and easily. Reports use fewer words and give impact to writing by emphasizing the person or thing responsible for an action. This is unlike what is recommended in two course books as illustrated below:

15. *Explore English Book 3* notes, 'reports should be objective and formal. They are usually written in the passive.'

16. *Advancing in English Book 3 p. 169* states,' passive sentence structures are used such as 'was presented', 'were done' and 'were held',

Another important aspect of report writing is good grammar and punctuation. Indeed the PPP theory emphasizes use of the correct grammatical structures in reports. This language requirement was adhered to in *The New Integrated Book 3, New Horizons Book 3, Advancing in English Book 3* and *Explore English Book 3* present relevant examples on language. For instance, *Advancing in English Book. 3 p. 169* says:

17. The language in a report is formal; do not use slang or colloquial language. The sentences are complete and grammatically correct.

Other aspects of language have been underscored by Markman (2011) who states that a uniform verb tense should be used throughout the report, preferably past tense. He further advises that the imperative mood which gives directions or orders, should not be used since the purpose of a report is to state what was done, not to tell other people what to do. Markman (2011) adds that since reports are formal, the first person (singular "I" or plural "We") should not be used. Sentences should not start with "It" unless the object that "It" refers to is absolutely clear from the context and that overly long sentences should be avoided.

## Presentation of format in reports

Regarding format in reports, Markman (2011) proposes that capitalization helps the learner to pay attention to the subject of the report, advising that the heading should be written in capital letters. Markman (2011), also warns against fancy use of bold, style, underlining, exaggerated fonts and colour unless it truly enhances the clarity of the report. A study of the selected course books revealed that the layouts generally enhance readability and ease of reference. The books were also found to use appropriate font size and style.

In the course books, topics and subtopics are highlighted in bold. Titles are in capital letters in *Advancing in English Book 3, New Horizons Book. 3* and *Explore English Book 3*. It was also noted that colour is used to highlight samples, topics, subtopics and exercises except in *Excelling in English Book 3* and *Head Start Book 3.* Subtopics and pictures are highlighted in colour green in *New Integrated Book 3.* In *Explore English Book 3,* the sample report is highlighted in grey while in *Advancing in English Book 3* it is highlighted in grey. McCall (1999) argues that, colour is used to make the sub topics and samples conspicuous and appealing to the learners.

*Excelling in English Book 3, New Integrated Book 3, Explore English Book 3* and *Advancing in English Book. 3* do not specify the length of a report and the recommended spacing. But, *New Horizons Book 3* states that official reports are generally long, adding that the length is left to the teacher's and the learner's discretion.  Markman (2011) argues that, reports should be as long as they need to be. The length depends on whom you are writing to; short for senior management and long for operational managers but advises that brevity is desirable, provided the necessary information is properly communicated.

On numbering, Markman (2011) guides that any numbering scheme must be maintained consistently. He also recommends that, to improve on style and grammar, one should have others proofread the report. This is also highlighted in the PPP theory which calls for learners' active involvement in using the knowledge at their disposal to achieve fluency.

## Presentation of exercises in reports.

A variety of exercises enable the teacher to determine whether learning has taken place, identify any weaknesses and make the necessary corrections (Tomlinson 2012). According to the PPP theoretical framework, exercises call for learners' involvement and demonstrates their effort. Exercises also increase fluency in effective use of language in and out of school. *Explore English Book 3* appears the best in testing reports. Although *New Integrated English Book 3* has four exercises on reports, they all belong to the journalistic type, denying learners the variety they need to learn scope of the content covered in syllabus. *New Horizons Book 3*, and *Head Start Book 3* do not offer variety either. Regarding length, only *New Horizons Book 3* provides guidelines.

On exercises:

18. *Excelling in English Book 3 p.119* Question one asks the learner to write a report on the advantages and disadvantaged of modern technology to our society while Question two is on the use of drug abuse in secondary schools.

19. *Head Start Book 3 p.107* is limited to the school domain as exemplified in the exercise: 'The electricity bill in your school is very high. Your school principal has appointed you the secretary to a team commissioned to investigate the matter. Write a report of the proceedings, findings, conclusions and recommendations of the team. Remember to follow the guidelines given above.'

20. *New Integrated Book 4 p. 272* requires the learner to interpret graphs and diagrams hence prompting the learner to do an analysis and use the findings to write a report.

Quantitatively, elements of the content, format and exercises were identified and manually counted. The outcome was summarized in Figure 2.
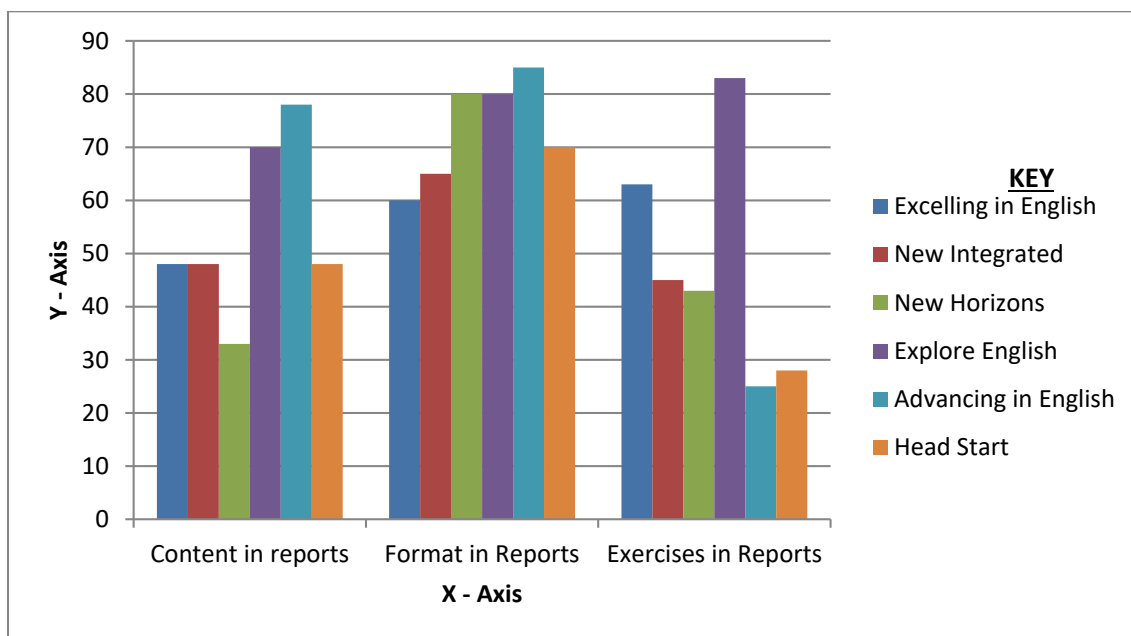


**Figure 2.** Incidence of guidelines on reports

Figure 2 provides a comparative graphic view of the presentation of the guidelines for report writing per text. Patterns in the figure indicate that all the course books were strong in format compared to content and exercises. This is an interesting finding given that students are likely to master the format but face challenges as to what content should feed into the format. The fact that most of the course books were low on exercises is also indicative of fewer opportunities to practice the skill and hence low competence. It can also be noted that *Explore in English Book 3* was strong in content, format and exercises, making it the most suitable book in report writing. In terms of exercises, *Advancing in English Book 3* and *Head Start Book 3* should be avoided since they are low on activities that can perfect the writing skill of reports.

## DISCUSSION

It has emerged that no one recommended course book can be adequate in developing learners' functional skills. This is because there is no equal treatment to the letter of application and report. Similarly, the treatment offered to the categories of analysis namely content, format and exercises varies from course book to course book. This implies a number of things. First, publishers are not developing materials that can yield desired learning outcomes. Secondly, those involved in the evaluation of materials for selection are not doing a good job as some of the materials are rating lowly on all the three categories of analysis. Selection of appropriate materials should be carried out by experts and follow reliable criteria (Kiai & Maroko, 2013). Khodabakhshi (2014) advises

that before selecting any textbook, it should be assessed in different dimensions so that it conforms to the requirements, needs, interests and also cultural characteristics of the intended group of learners.

Thirdly, schools may be forced to procure all the six course books as they display different areas of strength. Using all of them can be complementary. For instance, *Advancing in English Book 3* and *Explore English Book 3* are the most informative and comprehensive in the presentation of the content in letters while *New Horizons Book 3* registers the lowest coverage as most of the details are missing. Similarly, *New Integrated Book 3, Explore English Book 3* and *Head Start Book 3* emerge as the best books in the presentation of the format while *Excelling in English Book 3* records the least coverage. *New Integrated English Book 3* can be the most appropriate book in practical exercises on letters of application than all other recommended texts.

In terms of presentation, the six course books can be rated according to strength. Accordingly, *Explore English Book 3* appears to be balanced in the treatment of the letter of application and the report. Next in line is the *New Integrated English Book 3* followed by *Advancing in English Book 3*, *New Horizons Book 3*, *Head Start Book 3* and *Excelling in English Book 3* in that order. This means that authors need to study and accurately understand the English syllabus before embarking on the development of instructional materials. Editors should also ensure that drafts are moderated using carefully prepared checklists from the English syllabus to enhance the quality of materials produced. As noted by Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2016) the skilled teachers have the opportunity to report and reflect their perceptions on the usefulness and weakness of the textbook they use in a given class. This can form the basis for development of valuable materials for the classroom.

It was also observed that the letter of application is given a better treatment than the report. This would imply that the report is less understood than the letter of application. Another observation is that different books present the same functional text in different formats. For example, the *New Integrated Book 3* presents more than one format of writing the letter of application. Although this approach can provide variety to the learner, it is also a source of confusion. This can be counter-productive in the long run.

It was also observed that exercises covered in the materials were inadequate. Some of the materials were based on the classroom domain with few referring to real life situations which should ideally be the focal point in functional writing. This is inappropriate since functional writing skills are meant for real life situations. In some cases, the tasks were beyond the scope of the learners. For instance, in *New Horizons Book3,* a demand is made that the learner develops a proposal and uses it to write a report yet proposal writing is not included in the syllabus. This means that learning materials should be revised with more emphasis laid on tasks to develop practical skills in the learners. There is need for suitable textbooks which can be beneficial to both the teachers and the students. Such books according to Khodabakhshi (2014) are useful from different perspectives in that they can not only help EFL teachers, to manage their course of teaching in a systematic way but also can benefit learners as a good recourse even outside classrooms.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the English course books examined in this study do not exhaustively present the effective guidelines in terms of the content, format and exercises that can yield effective functional letters of application and reports. This means that acquisition of written communication competence will be hard to achieve and this will lead to poor workplace communication later in life. Secondly, authors of English course books seem not to select and, if necessary, adapt authentic materials for inclusion in the course books they write. Most of the examples in the course books are so classroom centered that they barely paint a picture of real writing in industry. Thirdly, the English syllabus was last reviewed in 2002. Since then, a lot has happened on the political, economic, infrastructural and technological fronts. To address learner needs in the 21$^{st}$ century, learning materials must be of the intended pedagogical value and suitability.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

According to Kiai (2012), a course book can be an agent of change at all times. Therefore, it is important for publishers to periodically revise course books to ensure currency and accommodate new developments as captured in the Kenya Constitution (2010). Materials in use should therefore be studied with a view to reviewing or revising them with the aim of presenting more comprehensive content and making them not only knowledge based but also competence based considering that functional writing is a life time skill.

Since writing is a practical skill, course books should have adequate exercises. The exercises could be preceded by clear instructions which are relevant to the school domain and to real life situations. In addition, teachers of functional writing and their learners are encouraged to use more than one text in order to benefit from the richness of variety. To complement the evaluation work presented in this paper, future research efforts could focus on actual classroom practice. Methods of teaching, collaborative activities and assessment could also be areas of interest for researchers interested in establishing learning needs in this research space.

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