

**THE CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH  
AS A SUBJECT IN LEGEBET SECONDARY  
SCHOOL, SOY DIVISION,  
UASIN-GISHU  
DISTRICT,  
KENYA.**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE  
OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE  
AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR  
OF EDUCATION OF KAMPALA  
INTERNATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY.**

**APRIL 2008**

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## DECLARATION

I Rebecca Jemutai Kiplagat, Admission No. BED/8946/51/DF hereby declare that, this research project is my own original work and not a duplicate of similarly published work of any scholar for academic purpose as partial requirement of any college or otherwise it has therefore not been submitted to another institution of higher learning for Award of certificate, Diploma or degree in Bachelor of Education.

I further declare that, all materials cited in this project which are not my own have been duly acknowledge.

Signature.....*Rebecca*.....

Date.....*15<sup>th</sup> August 2008*.....

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NAME OF SUPERVISOR. MR. C. MATOVU

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **APPROVAL**

I certify that the work submitted by this candidate was under my Supervision. Her work is ready for submission, to be evaluated for the award of a Bachelor of Education at Kampala International University.

Supervisor..... Date:.....

## **DEDICATION**

The researcher dedicates this research project to her beloved husband William Lagat and her Beloved children Jael, Alex Kiprotich, Judith Jeruto and Aron Kipkirui.

I sincerely and faithfully appreciate their patience and tolerance in my absence especially when I attended face to face lectures at Kampala International University in pursuit of body of knowledge in Bachelor of Education Arts.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The research would like to acknowledge the following for their enormous contributions, First and foremost all the Kampala International (KIU) lecturers who have guided me all through from writing of research proposal to the final report, all the writers of K.I.E modules that provide basic and vital guidelines in writing up research proposal and the research reports.

Secondly to all the head teacher and my fellow teachers for being prompt in responding to questionnaires that enabled to embark on analysis and interpretation of data early enough, and finally to the head teacher and staff members of Sirikwa Primary School where the researcher currently teach for their collaborative teaching that saw the researcher cover the syllabus in time to allow her have time to write the report.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

English was a very important subject, as it was an exact Language Study which dealt with the way our communities communicate as well as throughout the country, that was to say, it was a live subject. It is studied in schools as a compulsory subject.

The current education system in Kenya is designed to achieve specific national goals. The recommendations of September 1981 saw the introduction of the 8-4-4 system. Kenya was aiming to fully be Linguistic by the year 2020. If this goal is to be achieved, it means better performance in English, of which English is part and parcel forming the backbone of effective communication in the country.

Since independence in 1963, the government of Kenya has emphasized improving reading instruction and reading ability (Kamau, 2000). Free primary education (Otieno, 2003) and adult literacy campaigns have been aimed at giving every Kenyan the right to read (Akhusama, 1984; Nyongesa, 1990). Kenya's emphasis on reading is needed in part because when books were introduced, they were not promoted as something to derive pleasure from; in fact, people were forced to read (Chakava, 1982).

Education is a fundamental human right as well as a catalyst for economic growth and human development (World Bank, 1993). Academic economists and international development agencies claim that an educated population is essential for economic growth and more generally, for a higher quality of life (Lucas, 1988; Barro, 1991; Mankiw, Romer and Weil, 1992). One of the eight Millennium Development Goals is that by 2015 all children in developing countries should finish primary school. Yet developing country students who finish primary school often perform poorly on academic tests (Glewwe and Kremer, 2005), and the value of a "low quality" education may be low. This raises the question: What can developing countries do to promote learning in their schools?

Investigations of the history of the books in Kenya seek to explain how negative attitudes towards reading developed and continued (Stroud, 2002). One explanation is that Kenya's were made to read mostly religious documents such as the bible or other holy writings (Sifuna, 1980) that did not fit their indigenous ways of living. These reading's directed them away from their rich cultural and religious heritage (Maina, 2003), generally, formal education was viewed as something to be endured and dispensed with as soon as the benefits could be realized. Most Africans do not read much beyond newspapers and religious texts once formal education is completed (Chakara, 1982). Rather, they prefer the pleasures of storytelling, singing, dancing and simply talking rather than the private and individual preoccupation of reading a book (Chakara, 1984; Ng'ang'a, 1993).

Nzomo, Kariuki, and Guantai(2001) have called for a review of the quality of the reading curriculum, teachers and methods because students performance on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) English test has been declining (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] Nairobi/ International Reading Association [IRA],2004). As is the case in most parts of the world Kenyan children begin learning to read in primary school. It is within this historical and contemporary context that a review of teaching methods on English reading with a focus on Kenyan Primary School Education is being under taken.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

English being an international Language that is adopted by most Britain former colonies is also embrace within Kenya's education system and it is also the second formal language, thus it is a force that students need to recon with and highly embrace in order to endure success.

The introduction of the Swahili – English slang commonly known as Sheng is currently taking the country by storm and its quite a threat to English as a language as most youth are confusing pure English to sheng which is a local slang, this is an adverse effect on the use of English especially by pupils when they are answering question in the exams.

The failure to understand the factors leading to poor performance limits the ability of the policy makers and teachers in general to improve on the 8-4-4 system of education and the language subjects in general. Since the factors leading to the problem have not been researched on, corrective measures have not been put in place, therefore teaching of the subject has not been efficient and performance remains poor.

The study therefore, seeks to find out the causes of poor performance in English as a subject, giving recommendations which if adapted could improve the performance of the subject in schools.

### **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- Whether teaching methods had an impact on performance in English?
- Whether teaching methods applied had an impact on student's performance towards the subject?
- What challenges were encountered by teachers in teaching English?

### **1.4 PURPOSE OF STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to identify in details the causes of poor performance in English as a subject and identify how these problems either partially or wholly are instrumental in affecting performance.

This was to prepare learners adequately for academic advancement, with teaching challenges, so that teaching becomes effective and of great importance to learners.

### **1.5 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.4.1 GENERAL**

The study aimed at assessing the cause of poor performance in English as a subject in Legebet Secondary School, Soy division, Uasin-Gishu District, Kenya.

#### **1.4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE**

To find out:-

1. The causes of poor performance in English as a subject.
2. The challenges encountered by teachers in teaching English.
3. The impact of teaching methods on performance in English.

#### **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The researcher carried out a study on the causes of poor performance in English as a subject in an inclusive setting in Soy Division, Uasin-Gishu District, Kenya.

The study is a case finding for only one school i.e. Legebet Secondary School, Soy Division.

This was due to short time within which the study would be conducted. The respondents to the research were students as well as the teachers in the school mentioned above.

#### **1.7 SIGNIFICANTS OF THE STUDY**

This research would be useful in the following ways:

It would provide information to the policy makers in the education ministry, administration of schools; teachers; parents and other stockholders who will enable them make improvements in education service delivery.

It would help students together with their parents to identify the means of improving upon academic performance in the English language. It would also contribute to the existing literature about better education service delivery and promote further research in this field.

It would be a guide to the ministry of education on how to plan and train teachers and develop suitable Curriculum to accommodate learners with difficulties in English subject.

It would act as a base for further research in future if need arise for modifying English teaching methods.

### **1.8 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

During the study there was factors which hinder the research from carrying out the research effectively. These factors included:

#### **Limited time**

Time was inadequate for the research to move around all the schools on Soy Division collecting data for the study. Therefore, I took one school as a case study. This was because the researcher would had a lot of work at school trying to complete the syllabus as a result of the Post - Election violence in Kenya.

#### **Inadequate funds**

This was a self sponsored project and needed funds, purchase of stationary, testing, traveling exercise, all borde hard on the researchers' financial capability.

#### **Language**

This was a delimitation as the research was carried out in English and where necessary the interviewer used Kiswahili to interview some students.

#### **Attitude towards the exercise**

Some respondents were unwilling to freely share the information (especially negative information). This was true at the local level because of fear of not knowing whether the information could go to their superiors with negative repercussions.

#### **Availability of related Literature**

Researcher had a difficult time in gathering materials for related literature because of scarcity of reference books. Researcher traveled to different Schools and libraries in Uasin-Gishu District searching for related literature on the subject of study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.4 INTRIDUCTION**

This chapter gave references to what other scholars had written concerning causes of poor performance in English and its impact on the performance of students.

The literature review helped the researcher with data collection, statistics analysis as well as in understanding the problems, the researcher reviewed literature related to the study from magazines, books, journals, newspapers, research reports, modules and distance learning related websites over the internet.

#### **2.5 OVERVIEW OF EDUCATION IN KENYA**

Improvement of the quality of education in Kenya as been a key feature of reform proposals of the government. These educational reforms largely focus on basic education, which in Kenya covers both primary and secondary education. Attempts towards realizing these proposals are made in many ways.

In Kenya, teacher preparation for primary school teachers includes one course on the four basic language skills: Listening, Speaking, reading and writing. Secondary school teacher training however, does not explicitly emphasize the teaching of reading because it is assumed that students had learned to read and can read to learn when they completed primary school. The Kenya institute of education (KIE) provides instructional materials to primary schools outlining what is supposed to be thought for the four skills.

Curriculum in Kenya could be described as being "narrow in scope and emphasizing the rote of learning for passing national exams to acquire certificates" (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992 page 30).

## 2.6 CAUSES OF POOR PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT

The research reviewed a number of factors that could easily contribute to performance in English. The nature of teaching and learning is confronted with many problems which are experienced by English teachers and students.

The problems that face teachers include; poor facilities, shortage of teaching aids, students with negative attitude towards English, students who are poor in English.

Hence may not understand English concepts due to language barriers. Poor school administrators also contribute to poor performance in English. Most of the principals will only buy books during K.C.S.E examination. When they buy the books they often go for cheap ones which do not even have the required information. The head teachers claim that they cant afford to buy the required books.

Views on the causes enrolment in examination are many and varied. These views range from personal discipline, poor administration etc. writing on ways to help student pass, nyama (1984 page 7) poses the following questions; what makes students pass is it good desks, good building, good diets, good books or good teachers?

Though he gives his own answers to these questions, a thorough, look is needed to find out the effect of each on enrolment this can be discerned from a comment by oyier (1986) where he laments that despite s in Uasin - Gishu District having qualified staff and permanent physical facilities, the K.C.S.E candidates in the district do not enroll equally in all language subject .this comment shows that it is not fair to blame the teachers and facilities for poor performance in English. Time urgency of rectifying this situation calls for a look at the student, the parent and may be the environment to explain deteriorating performance in schools. In this respect oniamo (1992)expressing concern over performance to explain the deteriorating enrolment of English in Uasin Gishu District felt disappointed with present generation in that even Gucha District which has the poorest facilities takes education seriously and not for granted yet Uasin Gishu with the best facilities wires to the contrary.



On inequitable distribution of facilities and personnel among other factors (Gichaga, 1992 page 10) adds,".....if the government could give same treatment priority to both rural and urban schools be supplying equipments on time, rural schools could also complete favorably with urban school".

The negative attitudes of students also contributes to poor performance in English in Eshiwani (1996 page 348) explains why the students develop a negative attitude "The courses are overloaded abstracts and each topic is treated superficially with results that, pupils fore gate what they have learnt" Bell (1990 page 80) felt that what we learn in school and at home are very closely tied.

Another area that as received some attention in the effect of attitude to schooling or attitude to a particular subject on performance if the parent believe in education if the support the school in efforts and their aims are similar to those of the teachers then their children will have an advantage over pupils who come from homes less enthusiastic parents. Kapiia (1980 page 30) concurs in his findings in some Nairobi schools that "children whose parents make request visits to school did better academically than those whose parents did not pay a visit page 6".

## **2.7 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING ENGLISH**

Difficulties arise as well in the teaching of both Kiswahili and English because some teachers have not passed their own school exams in those languages (Ikumi, 1985; Nyongesa, 1990)

Onyamwaro (1990) reported that 86% of teachers in Kisii municipality though teaching, reading in Kiswahili was easier than teaching in English. This stance is because Kiswahili is linguistically related to many other indigenous languages spoken in Kenya. Teaching in mother tongue is not without challenges. Munyeki (1997) in studying 32 school pre-teachers found that they were not motivated to use the students mother tongue yet using the student mother tongue is of at most importance because it facilitates children



development of concepts that enables them to accrued, knowledge in a second or third language and further expose the children to the culture of their community (Schroeder, 005; Sifuna, 1980; UNESCO, 2003; Willis, 1988).

Mother tongue is the language a learner needs to rely on as emergent reader in standard 1 (Schroeder, 001) even though literacy in English is the altimeter objective. Most children think in mother tongue then attempt to translate/ articulate their thoughts In English. Muniyiki claimed that some teachers fail to realize the multiple purposes when the first language of instructions is mother tongue or Kiswahili.

Primary teachers in standards 1 – 8 need to teach reading and writing as well as speaking and listening in this first language of instruction. One reason the use of mother tongue does not necessarily succeed in teaching the curriculum is because teachers may come from their language communities. Furthermore, when future prospect depend on English acquisition and proficiency this reality overshadows any serious emphasis on teaching students to read in their mother tongue (Muthwil, 2002, 2004a)

At the fourth Pan-African reading conference (Schroeder, 2005) gave an update of her work with the Tharaka of central Kenya. She had been investigating for six years how a language adds curriculum using the language of Tharaka affected children cognitive and therefore, academic development (Schroeder, 2001, 2005).

Through collaborations with school district personnel she developed a mother tongue, early-childhood reading curriculum that covered ten areas: letter and sight – word recognition; categorization; picture interpretation and description; story sequencing; listening to sounds (auditory discrimination placement of sound in a word, vowel length); grammar and spelling exercise; creative writing development; vocabulary development as part of the reading lessons; exposure to a wide variety of literature and comprehension exercises. The lessons and text are used to develop new vocabulary and concepts through comparisons and categorizations thus enabling children to assimilate new information into their existing schemes or world views. Oral and written literature in the mother

tongue are used to develop student vocabulary, spelling, grammar and comprehension (Schroeder's, 2001) approach to mother tongue primary school programs (standards 1 - 3) is an exemplar of what is possible when educators and policy makers agree to intervene in sustain mother tongue education.

## **2.8 TEACHING METHODS EMPLOYED BY ENGLISH TEACHERS**

In Kenya there are controversies about the teaching of languages and the primary language of instruction. The language policy specifies the use of mother tongue in primary standards 1-3. This mother tongue could be Kiswahili or another African language of the region. English becomes the language of institution from standard 4 through university. The controversies are many, for example, it has been argued that primary school teachers are not prepared to teach in languages other than kiswahili and English (Kiarie, 2004). The prevailing assumption is that a teacher can transfer methods for teaching English and Kiswahili to teach other languages.

Although many teachers do attempt to take this approach, it may not necessarily be done effectively (Musau, 2003). All languages teachers wether of English or African languages need education in general language teaching methodologies as well a methodologies for teaching specific languages (Kiarie), Further more the researcher need proficiency themselves in several languages, yet researchers have found teachers with insufficient or poor language skills (Owino, 1987). When the teachers are not fluent in English and kiwsahili, they make mistakes in teaching reading.

In upper primary school, teachers are according to policy, supposed to teach in English more often teachers translate content into the region's mother tongue or Kiswahili (Muthwii, 2004; Nzomo et al, 2001). Muthwii found that teaching with translation was the strategy teachers used when there was an important issue to be addressed or to emphasis to those who might not understand what was being said in English. Teachers recognize local African languages or kiswahili as being instructionally important for communication. The practice of teaching in more than one language in school is strategic and pragmatic. Teachers use whatever language is most likely to facilitate understanding.

Infact, speaking in more than one language is a communication strategy used by educated Kenyan's and in some situations it is expected mode of communication (Abdulaziz, 1982; Kembo-Sure, 2003). For example a teacher taking to a clique without switching to kiwahili or some other local language will be uncharacteristic. This multilingual competence is becoming the norm in political speeches in Kenya today. The most politically significant pronouncement will be delivered in Kiswahili while the other part of speech will be delivered in English.

Pohjala, K., 1988 study examined the extend to which language policy and concomitant languages practices encourage or hampered the acquisition of expected learning competencies there by determine potential problems associated by the language policies in Kenya and Uganda. Finding differed depending on whether a school was monolingual, multilingual, rural or urban. Children in rural monolingual and rural multilingual schools reported being most comfortable learning in their mother tongue or Kiswahili. Although in Kenyan's urban schools the children from underprivileged areas referred Kiswahili, those in privileged schools preferred both Kiswahili and English (Awino, 1995) cautioned that if the sociolinguistic backgrounds differ significantly from the official language of instructions, then testing students in that language creates inequities. Awuo compared the effects of early childhood experience on student K.C.P.E and found that students who achieve high scores in English were also likely to perform significantly better in the content areas that are tested in English. The median score on the K.C.P.E WAS 78.41 on English for urban schools, whereas it was only 50.14 for rural students.

Currently, no provision is made for students taking the K.C.P.E examination who have had limited exposure to English, Kiswahili or both. The urban student typically have eight years of instruction in addition to whom experiences where they communicate in both English and Kiswahili. There count parts in the rural areas have only five years of instructions in English. Too, often, the rural school experience is characterized by poor teaching strategies and excessive use of the mother tongue by the teachers. Moreover, their instruction in English typically lacks meaningful interactive use in meaningful

contexts. These disparities are not considered in traditional testing methodologies based on English reading and writing fluency.

There are schools that choose English as the language of instruction from standard one , and this presumably gives their students a testing advantage over those students whose schools begin with mother tongue or Kiswahili (Pohjala, K. 1998). Yet teaching in English can also pose problems when children learn it by rote and there is no enabling environment to practice it, children must hear language used correctly in authentic situations if they are going to learn to speak the language purposefully.

## **2.9 CONCLUSION**

From the reviews, it is evident that many studies have been carried out to find out factors that had led to poor performance among pupils in primary schools. The researcher's aim was to find out if those factors apply to Legebet Secondary School. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data from students and from English teachers. Since most of the problems facing performance in English are common to many schools in Kenya. It was important that the sessions involving students, parents and teachers was held in order to create awareness and decide on solutions which could be implemented to reverse them. Even with this realization, there are yet other causes of English that have remained exclusive. Awino (1986 pp3) cited the case of Lwaki Girls High School which has been the pride of Nyanza province in O and A learning examination but the trend is no longer the same. "What reasons are behind such a rapid decline in performance?" She asks Kizito (1986 page 23) quotes: "research into the study of English and the improvement of teaching methods, has been of interest to researchers, as well as from various journals and books in this subject. The findings of these studies, have centered on such areas as relevance of English auricular, teaching methods facilities for teaching subject and the school environment, on the question of average of English being offered in our schools

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

This section entailed the methods used to collect the data necessary to answer the research. It entailed;

#### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study used Descriptive research design. This enhanced the researcher to obtain a better understanding of causes of poor performance in English. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive intensive data and provided an in-depth study on its impact in the academic performance of students.

#### **3.2 STUDY POPULATION**

The population of study were teachers and students in Legebet Secondary School.

Sampling as follows;

- Students – 30 of the sample suffice.
- Teachers – 10 teachers in the targeted sample size.

#### **3.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

##### **➤ Questionnaires**

Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires and interviews, filled by relevant parties to obtain ideas on what are the causes of poor performance in English. These were designed in both open and close ended form. The method ensure high proportion of responses and high returns rate.

#### ➤ Interview method

This entailed face – to – face interactions with the administration, in each school.

Secondary data was obtained from the ministry of education magazine annual reports records and other researches done to give other information required in the research.

### 3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The researcher had an introductory letter from the university to present to the area authority to obtain permission for study. This gave directive to the local administrators at grass root level for acceptance. On acceptance by the authorities the major task of collecting data begun.

### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The information collected was analyzed and edited to create consistency across the respondents and also to locate omissions. Information obtained from the researcher study was presented and analyzed using bar charts, narratives and statistical figures.

• That is:-

**Descriptive statistics:** This was used to measure central tendency, variability and relationship between variables. It include proportions, mean scores and percentage.

**Summary statistics:** This was used in the presentation of analysis. It included use of mean and percentages, summarized tabulations and frequency distribution.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter an attempt is made to interpret and explain findings. Also key information enables to relate to the specific objectives and give a clear picture of the results

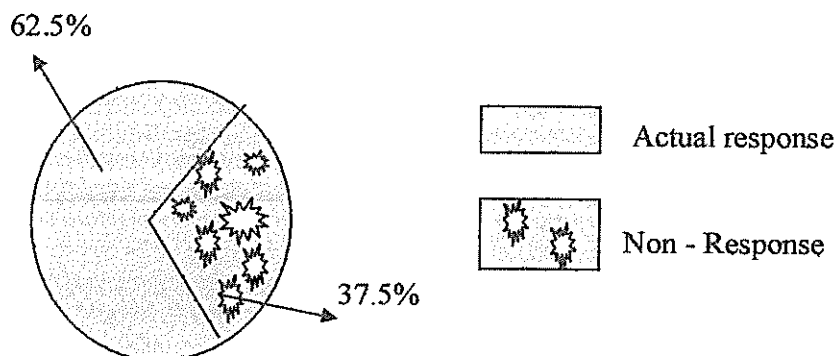
#### 4.2 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROGRESS

**Table 1** on response rate of the targeted sample

Planned no of response	40	100%
Actual response	25	62.5%
Non response	15	37.5%

Source; primary data source (2008)

$$\text{Response Rate} = \frac{\text{Actual response} \times 100}{\text{Planned No of response}}$$
$$25/40 \times 100 = 62.5\%$$



#### COMMENT

The shortfall was due to some problems like unwillingness of some respondents to produce information regarded as confidential in floor of victimization. Another major problem was the displacement of people witnessed after the post – election violence in the country which made it difficult to get the required information from same of the respondents. However 62.5% is an adequate proportion of sample size. A breakdown of the above is shown in the table below:-

**TABLE 2** on non – response

Type of response	Planned Response	Actual Response	Non – Response
Teachers	10	7	3
Students	30	18	12
Total	40	25	15

Source: primary data source, 2008

#### **4.2 BIO – DATA ANALYSIS OF TEACHERS RESPONDENTS**

##### **Age of respondents**

According to study, 14% of the teachers who responded are below 30 years of age. This implies that they form the minority within the teachers staff of the respondents are between 31 – 35 years of age. 29% of the respondents are between 36 – 45 years. 14% also of the respondents are above 46 years. This shows that the respondents cut across all the age groups.

**TABLE 3**

Distribution of staff by age

Categories	Number	Percentage
Below 30 years	1	14%
Between 31 -35 years	3	43%
Between 36 – 45 years	2	29%
Above 46 years	1	14%
TOTAL	7	100%



### **Distribution of staff by gender**

Majority of the respondents represented by the males with 56% this shows more than half of the respondents are men while female respondents were 44%.

**TABLE 4**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF STAFF BY GENDER**

Categories	Number	Percentage
Male	4	56%
Female	3	44%
TOTAL	7	100%

{source: primary data source, 2008}

### **4.3 Staff experience**

From the research findings we can establish the 14% of the teachers have been teachers for less than 2 years, 43% of the teachers have been in the profession for 3 – 5 years, and 29% have worked for 6 – 10 years. 14% have been in the profession for 11 – 15 years.

This shows that most of the teachers in school can boost the morale of the students in English as they are young hence the information obtained was highly credible.

**TABLE 5** Length of staff experience

Categories	Number	Percentage
0-2 years	1	14%
3 – 5 years	3	43%
6 – 10 years	2	29%
11 – 15 years	1	14%
TOTAL	7	100%

{Source: primary data source, 2008}

#### 4.4 BIO – DATA ANALYSIS ON STUDENTS RESPONDENTS

Out of the 30 target students, only 18 responded. The researcher deemed this as adequate and sufficient for the purpose of data analysis since it represented 80%.

**Table 6** on category of students

Category	Frequency	Frequency(%)
Form one	0	0
Form two	5	28%
Form three	7	39%
Form four	6	33%
TOTAL	18	100

{source: primary data source, 2008}

From the table above it can be seen that most of the respondents were from the upper classes.

#### Age of respondents

According to study, 11% of the students who responded are below 15 years of age. 28% of the respondents are between 15 – 16 years of age. 39% of the respondents are between 16 – 17 years. 22% also of the respondents are above 17 years. This shows that age of the respondents is representative of all age groups at secondary school level.

**TABLE 7**

Distribution of students by age

Categories	Number	Percentage
Below 15 years	2	11%
Between 15 – 16 years	5	28%
Between 16 – 17 years	7	39%
Above 17 years	4	22%
TOTAL	18	100%

{Source: primary data source, 2008}

## Gender

Majority of respondents represented female students with 56% this show more than half of the respondents are girl while male students were 44%.

**TABLE 8**

Distribution by gender

Categories	Number	Percentage
Female	10	56%
Male	8	44%
TOTAL	18	100%

{Source; primary data source, 2008}

## 4.5 TEACHERS ANALYSIS

Out of 7 respondents representing 60% said that teaching methods had impact on English performance. While, 40% said that performance was not affected by the teaching methods employed.

**TABLE 9** on response to how teaching methods affect performance in English

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	4	57
No	3	43
Total	7	100

{Source: primary data source, 2008}

## 4.6 Responses on how effective are teaching methods on student's perception of English

Majority of response represented by 86% indicated that effective teaching methodology will encourage students to perceive the subject positively. While 14% of the teachers sampled size indicated that effective teaching methods will not affect student's perception towards English.

**TABLE 10** on responses to whether effective teaching methods affect students' perception of English

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	6	86
Yes	1	14
Total	7	100

{Source: primary data source, 2008}

#### **4.7 Response on what challenges are uncouncted by teachers in teaching English.**

Majority of response represented by 71% indicated that most teachers encountered the same challenges in class which ranged from lack of teaching aids to scarcity of relevant books. While 29% indicated the other challenges included poor understanding of English by students who had no prior exposure to the English language.

**TABLE 11** on responses to what challenges are encountered by teachers in teaching English

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	5	71
No	2	29
Total	7	100

{ Source: Primary data source ,2008}

#### **4.8 STUDENT ANALYSIS**

Responses on whether teaching methods affect student performance in English.

Majority of response represented by 76 percent indicated that most students will perform well in the subject where the teaching methods are effective. While 24 percent indicated that they do not mind the teaching methodology employed

**TABLE 12**

4.9 Responses to whether teaching methods affect student performance in English

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	13	72
YES	5	28
Total	18	100

(source: primary data source, 2008)

#### 4.4.0 Responses on how effective are teaching methods on students perception of English

Out of the 18 respondents 67 percent said that effective teaching methods contributed to their perception towards the subject. While 33 percent said they were not concerned with the teaching methodology used at school.

Most of the responses felt that the teaching methods provided in the curriculum by the Ministry of Education were outdated and had no impact on the ground since the teacher was first supposed to judge the level of understanding of his students as opposed to the standard teaching method provided by the ministry.

**TABLE 13**

Responses to how effective are teaching methods on students perception towards English.

RESPONSE	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	67
No	6	33
Total	18	100

{Source: primary data source, 2008}

#### 4.4.1 Response on what challenges teachers encountered in teaching English.

Majority of response represented by 83% indicated that most students see English as a subsidiary subject and not important in the technological field. This in its part led to the students to concentrate on other subject they deem core; for instance mathematics and sciences.

**TABLE14** on responses on what challenges teachers encounter in teaching English

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
NO	15	83
YES	3	17
TOTAL	18	100

{Source; primary data source, 2008}

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter an attempt is made to discuss the findings and come up with conclusions and the recommendations there to.

#### **5.1 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

One of the main finding of this study is the confirmation that the teaching methods of a teacher play an important role in motivating of learners. This supports the findings of Eshiwani (1996) writing on this, observe that the teacher in the class room should be particularly concerned with personal developments of a child, the stimulation curiosity and a critical outlook. the material should be presented in such a way that interest pupils and encourages them to think for themselves.

That teaching should be in steps, the lesson building up with the student activity involve: Illustrations, examples and demonstration should be give relating to the experiences and environment of the child. The teacher should aim at changing the negative attitude in students and could do this by making the lesson more interesting, practical and real and also let the student known what job to expect in English related fields. In other words the teacher should market the subject.

Some teachers lack interest in teaching the subject. This may be because they are not motivated properly for their tasks. There is no distinction between hardworking teachers and those who do not take then' work seriously, Schroeder (2005, concurs by saying that teachers need to be rewarded for work well done.) Their salary and incentives need to be reviewed from time to time. Otherwise we will be lamenting poor performance of students in English while we have been ignoring the contributory facts. Training teachers and those with teaching experience also contribute to good performance. Sidhuks (1882) notes successful teaching experience is a valuable asset.

It will enable the teacher to accrue certain recommendable characteristics such a promptness, adaptability, efficiency, the ability of arousing and maintaining interests. Adequate command of instructional materials and ability to face the class since you will use appropriate teaching aids, prepare lesson plans, illustrations and exercise and give proper instructions to the students.

One of the findings of the present study relates to the methods of teaching normally employed in the English class room and secondary levels in Kenya. The method was teacher centered and students were passive and receiving end. This phenomenal reflected the lessons described by Nunes and Bryany (1997), and the descriptions of primary classes in Mauritius (Graffiths, 1998,2000,2002).

It seems that insufficient opportunities are provided to be involved in there own learning and emphasizes the procedures used for solving English problems. It seems that the examination driven curriculum leads to a more teacher centered curriculum. Teachers were to be plying a fundamental role in influencing student learning of English as noted by Hanna & Nyho-young (1995). They also helped students to develop a positive attitude towards English and motivate them towards the subject. The respect student's have for their teacher could be noted during the class room observation and interviews. This supports the finding of Aldridge, Fraser and Huang (1999) concerning the respect student's had for their teacher in Taiwan.

It was also found that teachers were seen to be strict and that student's appreciated the strictness, claiming that this helped them to have a discipline class in which to learned English. Evidence of this can be found in transcripts of student interviews.

Teachers were found to be acting as role models, were possessing sound leadership skills and of helpful nature. However their were teachers who had a gender bias in there own perception. As described by Elwood(1999) they tended to describe female student's as



able in English and male student's as being uncertain and not possessing enough faith in their own ability.

These findings were common for average and low performing boys-findings which are in agreement with those of Tiedemann(2000). Cases of negative messages were sent to boys about their performance in English by teacher were noted in the present study also.

Interestingly, parental interest and involvement in their children education is high in Kenya. The contributions of parents towards the children learning in English as discussed. It was found that students are conscious of their parental aspirations and this plays an important role in their motivation towards education. It should also be noted that parents support towards education in Kenya is no longer gender- biased now – as it used to be. Parents believe in the power of education and the success of their children depends to a great extent on their educational success. However, the way of attributing success and failure in English to boys and girls still followed the pattern as described by Raty et al(2002) where the success of girls was attributed to talent, while the success of boys was due to more efforts.

Peers were found to be influential in a child's learning of English and in some cases, in decisions to proceed further with other courses and learning in general. This agrees to the finding of Opdenakker & Van Damme (2001), Sam & Ernest (1999) and Hoxby (2002). Peer influence is not restricted to the class room only or to school mates, but from a much larger group through private tuition. The practice of private tuition allows students of different region, colleges, cultures and social classes to be together and consequently to form a larger peer group. This study was restricted to the peer influence within the class room towards the teaching and learning of English.

Achievements, concerning success or failure in English, it was found that students attributed success primarily to efforts – evidence coming from transcripts of students interviews as discussed. These findings agreed with the findings of Mooney and Thornton (1999) but no apparent gender difference were noted – contrasting the

outcomes reports by Ernest (1994) and Leder, Forgasz and Swolar (1996). It can be deduced that Kenyan boys are different from Australian and English boys in this respect. Prior ability in English was found to play an important role in the English achievements of students as claimed by O' Connor and Miranda ( 2002). This is so because of the hierarchical nature of the subject- English concepts build on prior ones. This finding proved to be important as the way English is being taught at upper and lower secondary levels should be taken into account. There are cases of schools in Kenya where inexperienced teachers are being sent to lower secondary classes and more qualified and experienced ones deal only with upper secondary classes. The English concepts especially literature studies have to be learnt properly right from lower classes to ensure a solid base for the students to assist them in their learning of English at each successive level.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATION**

The most direct impact of the study will hopefully be in the classroom and will help teachers to use the findings, in particular;

Using student centre teaching approaches.

This is whereby the learners are involved in the teaching learning process e.g learners can answer questions individually when asked. They can also work in groups and discuss the work given by the teacher.

Through meaningful activities in the classroom, learners can do various practical activities e.g. in science lesson learners can carry out a practical on the law of floatation and sinking. This activity makes learning real and enhances better understanding of the subject matter.

After analyzing the causes of poor performance in English teacher will emphasize a process rather than product during problem solving sessions. In this way learners are shown the product of the problem.

In addition to this teachers can promote collaborative learning in English classes e.g. in a story telling lesson, learners can be set in groups to retell stories that they know to the group members.

More over, collaborative learning helps students to develop a positive attitude towards English.

Teachers should motivate students in their learning of English by acting as role models encouraging students to read novels story books and reward when they excel in the subject. By so doing it will enhance the English achievement of all students.

Finally teachers should promote equality in education i.e. giving every gender the right to learn or express his/her self

Teachers will have evidence on how different strategies can be incorporated with success into their regular classroom transactions and within their schedule of work. One teacher, who was a respondent of the study, stated that using cooperative learning and pupils-centered methods would be very time consuming and that teachers would face difficulties in completing syllabus.

As argued in the previous chapters, one of the main worries of teachers and parents is that the syllabus should be through completed. All that is required is readjustment.

#### **5.4 SUGGESTION FOR FUTHER RESEARCH**

Due to funding and logistic limitations, this project was conducted as a pilot study that utilized a small sample size, relatively short time duration, and a convenience sampling technique. It is suggested that a follow – up study should be carried out over a longer time span(about 15 weeks of instruction), and that the study should use a much larger sample size, and if possible, adopt randomization procedures in a sample composition. A sufficient large sample would make it possible to include a sizeable number of males and female participants in the study such that more hypotheses could be built into the research

design. For example, it would be interesting to investigate both the possible effects of gender on English performance, and possible interaction effect between treatment (curriculum type) and gender.

Further studies on gender and English at secondary level should be conducted in relation to single sex and co-education schools. An investigation of the attitude towards English and the performance of boys and girls in single sex, as compared to those in co-education schools, could prove to be important.



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## APPENDIX B

### INTRODUCTION

My name is Rebecca Jemutai Kiplagat, a student of Kampala International University (KIU), Institute of open and distance learning.

I am collecting data in relation to causes of poor performance in English as a subject in Kenya, I request for your cooperation and I promise not to take much of your time.

Please note that we do not mention people's names to ensure privacy and confidentiality.

### TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE

#### PART ONE; BIO-DATA FOR RESPONDENTS

##### A. SEX

MALE

☐

FEMALE

☐

##### B. AGE

AGE PRACKET	Tick where appropriate
12 – 16 yrs	
18 -25 yrs	
26 – 30 yrs	
30 – 35 yrs	
36 – 40 yrs	
41 – 45 yrs	
46 yrs and above	

##### C. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Pleas indicate your education level

Educational/Professional	
Primary education	
Secondary education	
College education	
University education	

## PART TWO: TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

You are kindly requested to tick or fill as accurately and appropriately as possible.

The information will only be used for academic purposes and will be kept confidentially by the researcher. No name or any personal particulars are required.

### TICK WHERE APPROPRIATE

1. What is your English teacher experience?

1 yrs	
2 yrs	
3 yrs	
4 yrs or more	

2. How often do you assess your students?

Karely	
Always	
Monthly	
Not at all	

3. Do your students often come for your assistance?

Karely	
Always	
Monthly	
Not at all	

4. Is English teaching interesting at you school?

If Yes or No give reasons

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.....

5. Do you believe that the mode of teaching English affects performance at your school?

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.....  
6. Which English teaching methods do you employ at your school?

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.....  
7. What problems do learners of English encounter from the above mentioned methods?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
8. What in your opinion is the impact of teaching methods on students learning of English?

THANKS

### PART THREE: STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Tick where appropriate

1. What is your attitude towards English Language?

Positive ☐

Negative ☐

Neutral ☐



2. How is your performance in the English language?

Very Good	<input type="text"/>
Good	<input type="text"/>
Fair	<input type="text"/>
Poor	<input type="text"/>

3. How do you rate English as a subject?

Very Hard	<input type="text"/>
Hard	<input type="text"/>
Easy	<input type="text"/>
Very Easy	<input type="text"/>

4. How many students share an English text book?

One	<input type="text"/>
Two	<input type="text"/>
Three	<input type="text"/>

5. Is English interesting at your school? If Yes or No give reasons.

.....

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6. Do you believe that the made of teaching English affects student's performance at your school?

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7. How effective are teaching methods on students' perception towards English?

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8. What challenges are encountered by teachers in teaching English?

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**THANKS**

## **APPENDIX C**

### **TIME SCHEDULE**

The table below shows stipulated time schedule of research work plan.

<b>PROPOSAL W</b>	<b>PERIOD</b>	<b>OUTPUT</b>
Proposal Writing	April	Proposal Submission for approval
Field Customization	May	Initial information collection
Development Instruments	May	Developing of instruments
Data Collection	June	Coding and entering of data
Data Analysis	June	Analyzing and interpretation of date
Writing research report	July	Submission for approval
Final submission	August	Research submission for approval

**THANKS**