

CHALLENGES OF TEACHING / LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

PERFORMANCE ON LEARNERS WITH SPEECH

DIFFICULTIES IN MADIANY ZONE,

RARIEDA DISTRICT, KENYA.

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BY

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DECLARATION

I, John Owino Nyarima, Registration Number **BED/15473/DF** declare that this research paper is my original work.

Signature 

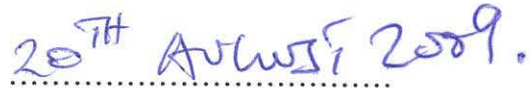
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APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidates
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DEDICATION

To all those good students who have called back to thank me for not only educating them, but also infecting them with the skills to confront the ragged terrains a long life's unpredictable journeys. To my siblings who have always been true companions.

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From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank all students who willingly co-operated with me during the research work. I am indeed grateful to Kampala International University (KIU) Library for availing to me books on communication and speech. The literature that I tapped from those volumes is in this research work. It is human weakness to forget; but sometimes it is inevitable. If I have forgotten anyone who made an input into this work, I once again request to be pardoned.

ABSTRACT

In this research paper, the researcher studied the challenges of teaching and learning of learners with speech difficulties on the performance of English language in Rarieda District, Kenya. The research investigated the various challenges that learner's experienced in speech. The research was carried out in Madiany Zone. The researcher took his sample population from one to form four in the three schools, that is, Chianda High School, St. Sylvester's Secondary and Okela Mixed Secondary School.

The researcher used questionnaires and interview methods. In total, there were 1,450 students, ten teachers and three education officials.

The resultant data were analyzed through bar graphs and pie charts. The findings showed that as the learners moved to the upper classes; their speech improved a little because of the intervention given by the teachers.

The researcher found that speech difficulties in English language had effect in the overall performance of English language. When the speech defects are minimized, learners tend to perform better in English language.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this research paper, the researcher set out to study the challenges of teaching and learning of English language performance on learners with speech difficulties in Madiany Zone, Rarieda District, Kenya. The researcher found out that speech difficulties affect some learners in secondary schools and this has a negative impact in their performance in English language. It was evident that some of the difficulties were brought about by the poor foundation that the students had in primary schools, where speaking of English language was not a priority. Majority of learners with speech difficulties were reluctant to use English language with their fellow students for fear of being mocked by the others. They therefore preferred to remain quiet most of the time and only spoke to their close friends privately in mother tongue.

Students with speech difficulties often encounter the difficulty of responding to questions in English, especially the essay type questions. The researcher therefore found a relationship between learners' difficulties in speech and their performance in English language assignments and examinations. Since English is the medium of communication in schools, poor performance in the subject adversely affects performance in other subjects. As a result, this research paper seeks to highlight the effects of speech difficulties on teaching and learning of English language, on the one hand; and to recommend some intervention measures aimed at alleviating the problems on the other hand.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study was found necessary after the realization that students were not performing to their expectation owing to difficulties in speech. Majority of learners with speech difficulties hardly attained a pass mark of fifty percent in any English exam that they sat for. This problem was particularly evident in English Paper One that consisted of mainly Oral Skills and Pronunciation work. Students with speech difficulties were unable to identify stressed syllables in words.

For example, they would pronounce the word *doughnut* as /daɪfnut/ instead of /dɒːnʌt/. Learners with speech difficulties also encountered difficulties while tackling questions on oral poems. For

tance, they often failed to identify sound patterns like alliteration (repetition of consonant sounds) and assonance (repetition of vowel sounds).

The learners also experienced difficulties tackling questions that tested etiquette and use of polite language. For instance they had difficulty tackling a question based on a telephone conversation which they were supposed to use polite words such as excuse me, pardon, sorry and thank you. These learners always forgot words and expressions as they responded to functional writing questions. This was because learners with speech difficulties avoided conversation with other learners and so did not acquire and internalize those words of etiquette. As a result, the learners performed far below the expectations in English Paper One.

The learners with speech difficulties also encountered obstacles while writing rhyme schemes in a poem. Some of the learners could not identify the words with similar sounds, for example the word one which rhymes with the word won.

Even though it is generally assumed that girls acquire language skills earlier than boys and are more effective communicators, both boys and girls with speech difficulties exhibit almost similar characteristics. The environment played a major part in this problem, since most of the learners were drawn from the local primary schools. For example at Okela Mixed Secondary School, students who were admitted to the school interacted with learners from the same environment and preferred to communicate in a variety of language that is tainted with their first language (their tongue). This behavior was common among students especially in the absence of teachers. In such a learning environment, the learners with speech difficulties become so much motivated as they are unable to use Standard English.

At Chianda High School, the researcher observed that students with speech difficulties shied away from communicating with others within and outside class. Such students preferred to remain quiet most of the time hence could not exercise their speech. Lack of exercise and practice made it difficult for the students to overcome their speech difficulties. The school admits students from urban environment where a variety of English (a combination of English and Swahili) is used. By using the two languages concurrently, the learners were unable to overcome their speech difficulties. Instead, they ended up distorting their speech. The researcher

found that the learners with speech difficulties at Chianda High School had limited vocabulary that was attributed to poor reading habits among the learners. Such learners failed to acquire even some basic words in English and this hampered their communication.

The researcher found out that at St. Sylvester's Secondary School, a girls school, the students who had speech difficulties suffered from low self esteem and were afraid of being mocked or laughed at if they communicated in public. Having minimal expressive language, the students shy away from communicating with their fellow students and the teachers. As a result, they do not improve on their speech. Good speech can only be attained through constant practice. Without adequate practice, students cannot improve on their speech. The researcher found out that inadequate social interaction among learners with speech difficulties lead to lack of progress among the learners in language development. This further had a negative impact on their performance in English as a subject.

Majority of learners in Madiany Zone bring with them speech difficulties from various primary schools where the use of English language is not emphasized and some teachers go to the extent of teaching various subjects in the Luo language (mother tongue). The teachers of English language in secondary schools find challenges when teaching the learners, most of whom are ignorant of basic grammar concepts like subject-verb agreement, and tenses among others.

The researcher interviewed a number of teachers who regretted that owing to limited time and the large syllabus that they were supposed to cover, they did not have time to begin teaching English from the basic grammar concepts again. There is also the problem of inadequate teaching and learning resources to assist learners with speech difficulties. The learners therefore go through the secondary school course without proper mastery of the subject thus leading to poor performance in the final examination, the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

The researcher also found out that speech difficulties were also caused by injuries to the brain suffered by the learners during childhood. As a result, the learners were unable to respond effectively to the examination questions that they were asked. Also affected were the students who suffered from paralysis and loss of the sense of hearing. Some of the impairments inhibit the

learners' ability to speak effectively, hence affecting their ability to engage in effective communication.

The researcher also found out that some of the speech difficulties like stammering and cluttering were hereditary, that is, they could be passed from one person to his/her offspring. Stammering is a speech defect that makes the speaker to have breaks in the course of speaking and this makes it difficult to communicate effectively. Cluttering is a situation where words run together in rapid, jumbled sounds, words and phrases. Some learners were also found to have the problem of disfluency, that is, repetition or prolonging of sounds, words or phrases; hesitations or long pauses. They also exhibited struggle behavior including distortions of lips and mouth, facial grimaces, eye blinks and extraneous body movements.

The problem of stuttering was also evident in a few students. Stuttering implies disruption in the timing of speaking. This causes confusion during speech and renders communication difficult. Another problem that students with speech difficulties experienced was parroting. This was a case whereby the students spoke very fast and ended up being inaudible as whatever they said was basically noise. Various difficulties like stammering, cluttering, chattering and disfluency among others in the long run impact negatively on the students' expressive language. The problems affected the way a student communicated through writing and generally tended to lower the performance of the students in English language. The problem could be explained from the point of view that learners, in most cases, wrote whatever they communicated and as they communicated it.

The students in the selected schools were also found to experience other speech difficulties like voice disorders, articulation disorders, monotone, inflection, breathiness, hoarseness and harshness among others. Students with speech difficulties were found to easily lose concentration during English lessons. Also, they were not willing to participate in question and answer sessions in class for fear of being ridiculed by their fellow students. The students who experienced the problem of nasality had problems responding while responding to questions based on pronunciation.

The researcher found out that most of the teachers of English language did not allocate adequate time to the learners with speech difficulties during English lessons. At times the learners with special difficulties went unnoticed in class, since the teachers tended to focus attention only on the learners who were bright in class. Instead of offering individualized attention to such learners with speech difficulties, the teachers preferred to handle all the learners in the same way. A number of teachers opted to give the learners extra work with a brief that more work done by the students would ultimately improve their performance. However, such an initiative was ill advised as it did not have a positive effect on the learners with speech difficulties.

In response to the questionnaire that was distributed to teachers of English language, almost all teachers agreed that learners with speech difficulties require individualized attention from the teachers for them to improve on their performance in English. However they cited lack of time and low esteem among the learners as the biggest impediment of the program. They also observed that the students with speech difficulties took a long time to overcome some of their imitations. For example the students with substitution problems continued to make the errors long after they had been corrected. Some of them exhibited disorder of phoneme such as saying 'shoup' instead of soup; omission of sound such as 'mik' instead of milk. There was also the problem of additions as in an extra sound inserted within a word- 'warsh' for 'wash'.

Teachers of English language generally observed that such errors took time to correct once they were fixed in the students. The teacher needed a lot of time with the student in order to offer an individualized program. The teachers complained that such a program was stressful and strenuous to the teacher. They also cited lack of educational resources to cater for the teaching and learning needs of learners with speech difficulties as a major factor that hinders teaching and learning of English language among the learners with speech difficulties. Some of the resources were textbooks, reference books, video and audio tapes.

The researcher also noted that there was shortage of teachers of English language in schools, therefore most of the learners with speech difficulties could not be offered individualized education program by the teachers.

Since most of the students with speech difficulties were unwilling to open up and freely discuss their problems, it was difficult for the teacher to strike a rapport with them and assist them to improve their academic work. It was encouraging to find that some teachers were willing to offer their extra time in the support of the students so that they could improve on the students' performance in both the internal and the external examinations.

After careful observation and elaborate interviews with the teachers, the researcher found out that the learners with speech difficulties had exhibited the problems while in primary schools, but were ignored by their teachers. Problems that should have been remedied earlier were left until they became worse. As the learners moved on to the upper classes, they carried with them those difficulties, ending up in secondary schools still affected by the problems. It was evident that in the primary schools that the students attended, teachers lacked the initiative to offer the necessary support to the learners with speech difficulties. Teachers tended to label such learners as uneducable and hence left them to perpetually lag behind in the English language examinations.

As these learners were enrolled in secondary schools, it was clearly evident that their former teachers in primary schools had not done their work effectively. The teachers argued that the affected students were therefore disadvantaged and their fellow learners who were not affected by the speech difficulties were far much above them. The teachers lamented that to assist such learners, they needed to start teaching them basic concepts of speech and guide them to speak articulately, a process that took a long time.

The researcher found out that the retention rate of learners with speech difficulties was low. The learners tended to forget what they had learnt after only a short time. As a result, teachers were disappointed that their effort did not bear fruits as fast as they thought it should. The researcher observed that the teachers needed to be very patient when handling the learners with speech difficulties, and that the results would not be realized immediately. Some of the learners with speech difficulties had speech defects that could not allow them to produce the sounds of the words correctly.

In some instances, it was noted that the learners were not following the instructions that they were given to improve their speech. For instance, the students were not following the instructions on tongue position as instructed by the teacher. They did not also project when told to do so. Furthermore, they could not get the right intonation.

The researcher found out that there was a close relationship between teaching and learning of English language. Both teachers and learners with speech difficulties have to co-operate for them to benefit from one another and improve the standards of English language in Madiany Zone, Rarieda District.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The researcher was supposed to enable teachers of English to understand how speech difficulties among learners influence their performance in English language. The research was found necessary when it was realized that the standards of English language was going down in secondary schools within the district. The researcher sought to find out how speech difficulties hindered improvement in English among the schools singled out.

At the time of carrying out this research, the country was moving towards inclusive education whereby both the learners with specific learning difficulties and ordinary or regular learners were supposed to learn together within the same environment. It was evident that the teachers who had not been given proper training on how to handle learners with serious speech difficulties lacked adequate skills to cater for the learners who experienced severe speech difficulties. As the number of students being admitted to secondary schools increased as a result of free primary and secondary education, so did the number of learners with various speech difficulties increase. The increase in the number of learners with speech difficulties made it difficult for the teacher to take care of all their needs.

The researcher therefore found out that the lack of teachers was a major contributor to the escalation of speech problems among the learners. However, a solution to the problem was necessary since there was pressure on the educators to improve the performance of learners in the subject. The teachers had to dedicate extra time to cater for the learning needs of learners with speech difficulties. The teachers had to first get the knowledge of the learners' areas of

weakness in English language. Thereafter the teacher introduced the most appropriate teaching methods aimed at improving the learners' speech and response to questions based on speech. Since some students did not experience difficulty in speech, the teachers had to divide them into groups and offer individualized attention to those learners who experienced serious difficulties.

One of the problems that adversely affected learners with speech difficulties was a de-motivating environment. The researcher interviewed some learners with speech difficulties and they attributed their problem to stereotypes that other learners showed them. They also cited lack of interest to assist them, especially among the teachers. Furthermore, they mentioned lack of adequate resource materials to assist them. The teachers on their part cited lack of adequate practice among the learners as a hindrance to good performance.

In this paper, the researcher also highlighted some of the causes of speech difficulties among learners at secondary school level that led to poor performance in English. The researcher investigated some of the main causes of speech difficulties like health, history and other mild impairments like hearing impairment, specific learning difficulties, the learning environment within the school and the social environment of the learners.

The researcher found out that there was need for concerted effort from teachers and parents if meaningful progress was to be achieved in assisting the learners with speech difficulties. The teachers had the obligation of keenly following individual learners' progress. There was also the need for parents to develop interest in their children with speech difficulties and find ways of assisting them. The researcher found out that most parents of learners with speech difficulties did not show interest in the academic work of their children and did not bother to assist them. They did not spare time to consult teachers about their children and find out how they could also assist those children at home. Instead, the parents left that duty to the teachers who already had too much work at school. As a result, even speech difficulties that should have received proper intervention in good time became major problems affecting the learners' progress in school work and performance in examination.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In this research paper, the researcher intended to identify the factors that contributed towards poor performance in English language. There was a comprehensive study of the teaching methods that are most suitable for learners with speech difficulties. An extensive awareness of learners with speech difficulties would also be made. Teachers would be encouraged to use individualized education programs to assist the learners with speech difficulties.

Another purpose of the study was to identify learners who experienced speech difficulties and try to devise the most suitable methods to help them to acquire speech skills.

In this research paper, the researcher tried to demystify speech difficulties by treating the difficulty just as any other problem that could be solved through the right intervention procedures.

The research study was supposed to enable teachers to handle those learners with speech difficulties and the regular learners effectively in an inclusive learning set up. As the students went through the lessons together, in an inclusive setting, they were later offered remedial lessons by their teachers.

1.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

Speech is a very important aspect of any language and can be used as a yardstick to determine the success of any language. In the acquisition of English language, speech is the most important fact that a language learner must achieve first, and then build other aspects like grammar, vocabulary, phrases and idioms based on speech. Speech is therefore the fundamental aspect of English language.

The researcher found out that performance in English language at secondary school level was very much dependent on good standards of speech among the learners. To study speech difficulties and its effects on performance of learners in English language, and to come up with recommendations on how to improve it, was therefore, a very important task that would go a long way in the improvement of learners' performance in English language.

This research paper was also supposed to recommend the most appropriate methods that could be used to effectively handle learners with speech difficulties. The main significance of the study could be to improve the standards of English and enable the learners to attain better results in examinations.

The research paper would provide teachers of English language with more insight on the teaching of the language. They would acquire a lot of skills on the best way to handle learners with speech difficulties. This would ultimately boost their performance in English language.

The study would also sensitize the parents of learners with speech difficulties to identify the problems that their children faced early enough and take them for educational assessment. Parents could also organize remedial lessons for the affected learners so that they could benefit more. Besides, the parents could avail the necessary educational resources like text books, audio tapes, video clips and other learning materials intended to assist the learners with speech difficulties.

The study, based on the ways in which speech difficulties can affect learners' performance in English language was also intended to be used as a resource material by curriculum developers to come up with a practical English curriculum so as to boost the teaching and learning of English language. The research paper will also enable curriculum developers to introduce practical methods of teaching English language. The intervention measures to assist learners with speech difficulties would also be put in place.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

The researcher was supposed to conduct a thorough study on the challenges of teaching and learning of English language on learners with speech difficulties in Madiany Zone. The researcher intended: (i) investigate the causes of speech difficulties among learners of English language at secondary school level.

Find out how speech difficulties affect reading and writing of English language.

Look into the problems that teachers experience while handling learners with speech difficulties.

)Highlight and recommend various teaching methods that teachers can use to assist the learners with speech difficulties and to improve their performance in the English language.

To enable learners with speech difficulties to improve in English language and attain a better grade.

5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- (i) What are the causes of speech difficulties among the learners at secondary school level?
- (ii) In what ways do speech difficulties among learners affect reading and writing skills?
- (iii) What problems do teachers experience while handling learners with speech difficulties?
- (iv) Which teaching methods can teachers use to assist learners with speech difficulties to improve their performance in English language?

SCOPE

The research was carried out in Madiany Zone which covers two locations. In this zone, there are three provincial schools, namely: Chianda High School, St. Sylvester's Madiany Secondary School and Nyakongo Girls Secondary school. There are three other district schools; Okela Mixed being one of them, giving a total of six secondary schools. However, the researcher selected Chianda High School which is a boys' school, St. Sylvester's School which is for girls and Okela Mixed Secondary, which is a co-educational institution. Basing the research work on these three schools ensured that gender balance was observed in the process of research.

The findings of the research would be used by all the teachers of English language within the district and the educational officers to improve on the performance of English language. The research paper was also supposed to be adapted by other teachers within the district to improve performance in those institutions.

The findings would also be availed to parents of learners in those institutions so that they would know the progress of their children at school.

proper intervention measures would be taken by the teachers so as to help alleviate the problems countered by learners with speech difficulties in secondary schools.

3.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.

Teachers may not give complete and accurate information about the learners. They may not be honest for fear that such information may be used to stereotype their students.

) Learners may withhold some information out of fear or ignorance

i) Lack of co-operation among some teachers, the school administration and the learners.

3.2 DELIMITATIONS.

The researcher and the respondents are able to use English which is the official language of communication in Kenyan schools.

) The distance between the schools is short hence the schools are accessible to the researcher.

) Most teachers are regular and live within the schools; hence they can be easily reached.

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY.

This study on the challenges of teaching and learning of English language performance on learners with speech difficulties in Madiany Zone is based on the ideas and contributions of Orderber (1988) who argues that "A speaker who produces clear consonants and distinct vowels is said to have good articulation. If the speaker combines precisely articulated sounds into distinct words, then the speaker is said to have good pronunciation." (Page 59)

A learner of language should produce vowel sounds and consonant sounds accurately in order to bring out the correct meaning of the word. The student should be able to identify silent letters in a word.

Orderber also underscores the importance of pronunciation in the study of speech and sound patterns. If the correct pronunciation of a word is used, then the exact meaning that was intended is conveyed. Correct pronunciation also removes ambiguity from a statement. The scholar further

highlights that the English language has only twenty- six letters but uses forty -five different sounds, twenty- five consonant sounds and twenty vowel sounds.

Orderber also highlights on the various consonant sounds. These are:

the plosives, for example: /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/. They are produced with a small explosion.

the fricatives make a friction-like noise as they are spoken. They are: /f/, /v/, / /, and / /, /s/, /z/, / and / /.

nasals are resonated in the nasal cavity. They are: /m/, /n/and / /

glides are sounds that result from gliding movement of the articulators. These are /l/, /v/, /w/ and w/.

The knowledge of these consonant sounds is essential for teachers and the learners who experience speech difficulties. Constant practice is recommended for the learners so that they may produce the right sounds. The teachers of English language should guide the learners to produce those sounds correctly.

9 OPERATION DEFINITION OF TERMS

Language – An organised system of communication used for interaction.

Speech – Production of sound/pronunciation.

Communication – Passing information from person to another and getting feedback in return.

rhyme – Refers to words that have the same sound in a poem.

Speech disorders – impairments in the production of oral or spoken language.

Stuttering – repetition or prolongation of sounds, words or phrases; hesitations or long pauses.

Rate – the speed at which you speak.

Intonation – upward or downward glide of your pitch as you speak.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the challenges of teaching and learning of English language performance on learners with speech difficulties. The researcher gave a comprehensive study of various types of speech difficulties that he identified after careful observation of the learners. The researcher found that there were many speech difficulties that students with speech disorders experienced like articulation difficulties, disfluency and stammering among others. These difficulties negatively affected the students' performance in the examinations. It was also evident that teachers experienced several challenges while handling learners with speech difficulties in the classroom setting. Also, preparing the learners for examination proved to be a challenging task since some of the learners with speech difficulties were not able to overcome the difficulties as fast as was expected.

.1 CAUSES OF SPEECH DIFFICULTIES.

Speech difficulties were found to be common among learners who experienced damage to some parts of the brain. Lihanda B. et al (2005) argued that, "The cerebrum is a highly developed part consisting of left and right cerebral hemispheres. It is important for integration of sensory pulses such as vision, hearing and taste. It controls voluntary body movements, for example, arms, limbs, lips and neck. This part of the brain also controls learning, memory and human individuality." (Page 87, 88). The researcher found that the damage of the cerebrum was a contributing factor towards some speech difficulties. Damage to the cerebrum also led to hearing problems among learners. For that reason, the learners were not able to receive the correct sound words as enunciated by the teacher in the class during the lesson.

Speech difficulties were also caused by the damage of the soft and the hard palate which are vital organs in the production of sounds and speech. Damage to other speech organs like the tongue, diaphragm and the vocal chords could easily lead to speech difficulties among learners.

researcher identified hearing impairments as a factor that affected pragmatics which (1988) defined as the study of how linguistic, situational or social context affect language use. The evaluation of pragmatics includes functional analysis (the intent of communication); conversational assessment (conversational turn-taking); topic maintenance and managing communicative breakdowns, conversational fine tuning (style) and the nature of an individual's discourse.

Speech difficulties could interfere with a student's flow of thought during conversation and it can lead to communication breakdown between the teacher and the learner. Speech difficulties also affected the learners' thought process and their discourse. It was evident that learners with hearing impairment could not use language effectively when writing essays, and were often found to deviate from the topic.

Teachers also found it difficult to instruct the learners with speech difficulties that resulted from hearing impairment. This was because they lacked receptive skills and could not hear every instruction that was given to them. They also experienced retention problems, that is, they could not keep whatever they had learnt for a long time.

Researcher also found out that learners who suffered from mild hearing impairment lacked social skills and could not interact easily and freely with their counterparts. These learners did not have the opportunity to develop their English language through practice since they tended to be quiet and withdraw from other people.

IMITATING WRONG PRONUNCIATION AND SOUNDS

Researcher found out that learners acquired sounds of words through imitation. They copied their mentors and teachers said. Sometimes, they ended up acquiring wrong pronunciation. Berry, (1995) argued that, "children construct their own language rules based on the imitations they make." (page15). Children observed parents as they spoke and in that way, acquired most of the sounds of words. Besides, the learners were able to acquire the basic structure of the language. The learners also acquired some of the speech sounds from their mentors but it was unfortunate that some of those speech sounds were not correct. Learners ended up acquiring the wrong sounds and using them in writing exercises. For

For example, such learners ended up confusing words. Ogundipe, P.A. (1998) highlights some of the words that are often confused: clouds and crowds; flock and frock; climb and crime; bled and lead, (page 40). Ogundipe (1998) further gives the confusion in the sounds /n/ and /ŋ/ (as in: g)

| /n/ | - | /ŋ/ |
|------|---|--------|
| Ton | - | tongue |
| Sins | - | sings |
| Wins | - | wings |
| Gone | - | gong |

The researcher observed that learners who were given wrong instructions by their teachers were likely to experience speech difficulties. Such a problem was not easy to correct for it came from teachers. There was a serious need for teachers to do proper preparation before going to class to conduct a lesson. The problem of confusing words also occurs when the speaker uses a variety of English that is used by the local people.

The learners experienced the problem of confusing words when they expressed themselves in class during discussions and question answering sessions. This problem was later manifested in writing, whereby learners tended to use incorrect words and therefore ended up scoring lower marks in the examination. It was clear that speech difficulties among learners was partly caused by teachers' inadequate preparation before conducting the lessons, and the learners' inability to distinguish between correct and wrong pronunciation of words. The problem was further worsened by teachers' use of local dialect which made them to confuse some letters. For example, instead of saying 'rough', the teacher said 'laugh' and instead of 'sour', 'shower' and students failed to distinguish between the two words.

Such problems often confused learners and led to poor spelling of words among the learners in most cases. This problem always had a negative impact on the learners' performance in the English language examinations.

3 INFLUENCE OF MOTHER TONGUE.

nea, M.T. (1984) Stated that, 'learners experiencing language difficulties, especially in speech, perform' below expectation especially in language subjects' (Page 120). In most cases, it was found that the way a student spoke influenced how he/she read or wrote. If a learner had speech defects, then, the same defects would be transferred to the written work. The researcher found out that some of the speech defects were brought about by influence of mother tongue that the learners acquired from the environment. Extensive use of Luo language in the local area influenced learners, most of who were drawn from the local community. Many learners tended to 'think' in mother tongue and as they wrote their exams, they often exhibited the problem of direct translation. The learners had difficulty with words that had the sounds /s/ and /sh/. For example, they pronounced the word short as sot and the word sort as shot. This brought about confusion as learners in most cases used the wrong alternative while reading and writing. The teachers confirmed that direct translation and mother tongue not only affected learners' speech, it also their writing.

hieng' P. In *The Dictatorship of English*, Daily Nation (March 6, 2002) page 11, wrote:

"In upper primary school, we were all required to speak only English and were often punished when we lapsed into 'vernacular', of course I benefited. I am one of the few who can take part effectively in global debate. "

hieng', P. supports the fact that vernacular was widely used in primary schools and that had a negative effect on the development of language. This problem of vernacular speaking was also a major hindrance of good performance in the schools in Rarieda District. The teachers observed that since the government abolished corporal punishment (caning) in schools, they had found it increasingly difficult to implement certain school policies like the use of English as the official language of communication.

The writer further highlighted the relationship between speaking, reading and writing. He wrote: "Language, both spoken and written, is the primary code of communication, illiteracy is the major obstacle to the development of communication." He highlighted the importance of thorough preparation for the learners at the lower levels.

The researcher found out that lack of adequate preparation of learners in secondary school was the reason for their poor performance in the examinations. Even Ochieng' was in agreement that speech and writing skills complimented each other and a student had to excel in both of them if s/he hoped to excel in the examinations.

4 ARTICULATION DISORDERS.

Lea, M.T. (1994) defines articulation difficulties as 'a consequence of faulty production of the phonemes of the sounds of the sounds of language' (Page 213, 214). He further mentions several types of articulation disorders or errors. These are substitution of phonemes, for example, ladder for mother. This problem was prevalent among some students that the researcher observed. Even after the teacher had highlighted the difference between the two symbols, the learners with speech difficulties not only made the mistake while reading, but they also manifested the problem in their written work. Other substitution problems were realised in the use of words like ladder and radar, rub and lab.

Another articulation disorder realised among the learners was disorder of phoneme, for example, the word 'shoup' being confused with 'soup'. There was also omission of sound as in 'mik' for 'milk'. This disorder definitely affected the learners' performance in examinations. Also there was the disorder of additions, an extra sound inserted within a word, for example 'warsh' for 'wash'. Most of the articulation disorders were common among the learners and adversely affected their acquisition of language. Since they had got used to the articulation disorders and took them as a norm, it was difficult for the teachers to assist the learners.

5 QUALITY OF SOUND

Derber, R.F. (1994) describes speech as, "The ability to form sounds and use them to communicate abstract ideas and feelings. To produce speech, the lungs, the mouth and the throat and other parts of the body coordinate to generate sound, resonate sound and articulate sound. To produce sound, the vocal folds have to vibrate." (Page 16)

and is voiceless when the vocal folds are held out so that air breathed out does not vibrate.

1. Pitch refers to highness or lowness of sound. Speaking in too high or too low a key can be

problem because it can strain your voice or cause it to sound unpleasant. Learners were to manifest either too low or too high a pitch that interfered with their speech.

There were some learners who had the problem of monotone, that is, they exhibited melody pattern consisting of one tone. They were unable to vary their melody to help give meaning to whatever they said. Their voices were not expressive. Learners with this problem faced difficulties when responding to questions based on stressed and unstressed syllables.

Some learners with speech difficulties also showed signs of difficulties in inflection, which is upward and downwards glide of your pitch as you speak. By altering your voice upward or downward, you express shades of meaning. Some learners with speech difficulties spoke very fast and loudly hence what they said did not come out clearly. Other learners talked too softly and that made it quite difficult for the teachers to assist them in speech development.

Some learners with speech difficulties also experienced the problem of nasality which resulted from too much nasal resonance of all vocal sounds caused by incomplete closure of the passage between the oral cavity and the nasal cavity. The learners with nasality problems had difficulties producing sounds like /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/. Their voices sounded whiny. Such students talked through their nose, an act that interfered with their speech.

Some of the learners with speech difficulties were also found to suffer from breathiness which is caused by too much unvoiced air escaping through the vocal folds as a person spoke. This resulted in listeners lacking interest in what the speaker said.

Rasiness was another problem characterised by unpleasant grating sound, hard or metallic resonance, which is characterised by thickness or a muffled or a rasping sound, caused by speaking with excessive tension in the larynx area.

SUBSTITUTING ONE SOUND FOR ANOTHER

Derber, F. (1988) argued that, 'substitutions diminish your effectiveness when you are communicating to some listeners' (Page 20).

Some common substitutions are like: /d/ for ~~th~~; 'da' for 'the'

/t/ for /θ/; 'tink' for 'think'

/n/ for ~~g~~; 'doin' for 'doing'

'growin' for 'growing'

'bein' for 'being'

The researcher found out that the learners who exhibited the problem of substituting one sound for another also experienced the problem of writing, for they did not use the correct spelling of words and ended up scoring low marks. Some learners were also fond of adding an extra sound, for instance, adding /a/:

filum- film

athletic athletic

children – children

Another problem noted among the learners with speech difficulties was transposition of sounds which refers to switching, or reversing of the order in which sounds are spoken.

| Transpositions | Examples |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| /ks/ for /sk/ | 'aks' for 'ask' |
| /ed/ for /red/ | 'hunderd' for 'hundred' |

IMPACT OF SPEECH DIFFICULTIES

Terrell (1995) stated that, 'Correcting either grammar or pronunciation is a futile' (Page 5). Teachers of English language faced a big challenge of teaching learners who had acquired wrong pronunciation to change and pronounce the words correctly. For example the word 'won' has the same way as 'one'. In most cases, learners pronounced the word 'won' with the / / sound which

is wrong. When teachers dictated notes to the learners, those with speech difficulties were unable to use the correct words said by the teacher. There are other words like 'aisle' and 'isle' which posed serious challenges to learners with speech difficulties.

In Kenya, English examination is composed of three papers. Pronunciation is tested in Paper One together with oral skills, cloze test and functional writing. The researcher found that many students performed poorly in this paper because of the difficulties that they experienced in speech, which is a very important component of English Paper One.

The problem of speech was also evident in functional writing. For example, if the learner was asked to develop a telephone conversation, between two people, many of them failed to use polite language and official tone which was crucial in this kind of writing. The polite words include: excuse me, pardon, could I..., please, thank you and I would like... among others. These polite words and phrases are acquired through practical use of English in both formal and informal settings. The students who shied away from communicating and interacting in English language during their day to day activities would not be in a position to use the same words and phrases in their English examinations; hence, they would only achieve low marks.

The researcher found out that learners were not comfortable with the use of polite since they thought that words like please and excuse me were meant for desperate people. They therefore needed an explanation from the teacher, and to constantly use the words and phrases in their speech.

Piper (1995) further stated that: "English has different sounds requiring different kinds of articulatory control" (Page 16). The researcher found out that there was need for learners to produce the sounds accurately to avoid confusion. In the junior classes at Chianda High School, the researcher learnt through observation, that the learners did not articulate the sounds correctly. The teacher had to always insist on repetition of the words, a practice that was both laborious and time consuming. Some of the learners with speech difficulties refrained from participating in class activities and ended up not listening effectively. Learners who failed to articulate words correctly had difficulty of identifying stressed and unstressed syllables in a word. Stress refers to the force with which words are articulated while intonation is the falling and rising of pitch. In

the three schools where the researcher worked, learners with speech difficulties were unable to distinguish between verbs and nouns, especially particular words that could be used as both nouns and verbs. To make a clear difference of the usage of these words, the learner ought to know the particular sound that is stressed and the one that is not stressed.

For example: **Project** Noun

project – verb

mistake – noun

mistake - verb

Learners who experienced difficulties in speech were not only unable to identify stress in words, but were also unable to use the words correctly in sentences. Since the topic Stress was often set for National examinations, learners with speech difficulties often performed poorly in English. In each of the streams with forty students at St. Sylvester's Secondary School, Okela Mixed and Ibanda High School, most of the learners who had speech difficulties had a problem of identifying rhymes in poems because they could not pronounce the words correctly. This therefore led to a common belief among learners that poetry is difficult. The teachers always had to demystify their belief that poetry is abstract so that learners could begin to appreciate the poem and answer the questions that were based on sound patterns like rhymes, alliteration and pronunciation.

Forms three and four, students with speech difficulties avoided brainstorming when they were in groups to do the same.

Further, Ronald et al (1986) defined brainstorming as discussing ideas and questions about a topic with others. Among the learners who remained quiet and detached during brainstorming sessions were those who stammer, chatter, parrot and clutter while speaking. Some of these learners were afraid to speak in public for fear of being laughed by their fellow learners. As a result they opted to remain quiet and ended up not gaining much from the discussion.

Further Terry (1995) also gives another category of learners as those who "Parrot back fully formed utterances." (Page15). This implied the learners who spoke very fast and confused

certain words. In other words, their speech was jumbled up and lacked coherence. Learners with the above mentioned speech defects were unable to benefit from discussions in class since they only participated passively. The challenge that the teachers had was to, first of all, assist the learners to develop self esteem and gain confidence to express themselves in the presence of others. .

Gregory Hamilton (1987) cited "Lack of confidence as a major impediment during the delivery of a speech and during one's contribution in a class discussion." (Page7). He argued that public speech is a challenging task." You can speak to a listener, but if the listener does not understand your message in the way you meant it to be understood, you've failed to communicate it." (Page 7)

There were some learners who spoke too fast to understand, hence their counterparts in the group discussion failed to understand them. .

Gregory H. (1997) Advised that there was need for clarity and volume while speaking in order to make speech interesting and effective.

..8 CONCLUSION

There was need for teachers of English language to provide appropriate intervention measures to assist learners with speech difficulties. The teachers should put more emphasis on speech work and class activities that develop speech. The teachers should also organise speaking and listening activities inside and outside class. Audio tapes and audio-visual tapes could also be used to enhance lessons on speech. Teachers were supposed to offer remedial lessons to learners who experienced severe speech difficulties. Teachers were also supposed to be patient with the learners and provide ample time for the completion of exercises and generally assist the learners who experienced speech difficulties. Learners ought to be guided to participate in dialogue and conversations in class so that the ones with speech difficulties may improve. English, which is the official language in schools should be made compulsory and used at all times. Teachers of English language should prepare adequately before they handle learners with speech difficulties. Topics like speech work and oral skills should be emphasised. If all stakeholders fully play their

roles in the efforts to improve speech of learners, the performance of learners in English language will definitely improve.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter, the data collected during the research will be analysed using tables, charts and graphs. These methods will ease the understanding of this research. Other areas that will be dealt with are sampling procedures, methods of data collection instruments, procedures of data collection and finally a thorough analysis of the data.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN/ STRATEGY.

In the course of this research, three schools were targeted to represent the other schools in the zone. This was a reasonable representation as there were a total of six secondary schools in the entire zone. The challenges facing teachers and learners with speech difficulties and its effects on the learners' performance in English language are common in most of the schools in Kenya. The findings in this research paper were a representation of the problems encountered in most schools. The researcher used questionnaires to gather information from teachers. The data collected would later be summarized numerically for easy understanding.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

In the analysis of data in this research paper, the researcher used quantitative research approach. This entailed presentation of data in form of tables, charts and graphs. There was selection of samples from known population of students in the three schools. The researcher also used the qualitative approach of data analysis whereby mainly words were used to present information. The researcher used questionnaires to collect the data, which was later summarized numerically for easy understanding.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION.

The researcher targeted teachers of English language in secondary school who handle learners with speech difficulties, most of whom perform poorly in English language examinations. The research also targeted school administrators who always advocate for good performance in

English language. The research also targeted Ministry of Education officials like the quality assurance department that always insist on good performance in the subject. This research was therefore important to many stakeholders in education for it unearthed some of the pertinent issues related to teacher- student interactions in and out of class, student- student interaction and interaction between the student and community members.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The research study covered three secondary schools in Madiany Zone. The student population in each school was as follows: Chianda High School- 750 students, St. Sylvester's Madiany 400 students, Okela Mixed Secondary School-300 students. A total of 10 teachers of English were also involved in the research as research respondents and interviewees. The total number of students involved in the research was 1,450 students. In each school, the researcher carried out observation in all the streams and also data from all the classes, beginning with form One class up to form Four.

3.5 SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Random sampling was used to get the students to respond to questions and also to be observed by the researcher. This was done by getting fifty students from each school to write their names on small pieces of paper. The papers were then folded and only 50 students were picked. This was a fair representation from each school. The selected students were the ones with speech difficulties and through the observations made, the researcher got a lot of vital information about their conditions. Ten teachers from the three schools were also involved in the research.

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND TOOLS

The questionnaire was used to extract information from the respondents. This method gave the respondents adequate time and conducive environment to provide accurate information to the researcher. The respondents were able to fill in the questionnaire when they were free from stress. The researcher also observed the learners with speech difficulties in various settings such as inside the classroom, outside the classroom and in any other situations.

7 DATA COLLECTION/ANALYSIS.

Before data collection, the researcher delivered the questionnaires to the respondents and collected them back after one week. That duration was considered long enough for the respondents to respond to them with accurate information. The researcher also availed himself personally in the three schools to conduct observation of the learners. This method provided more information to the researcher, which he used to discuss the topic. The method provided relevant data which was analysed through tabulation, graphs, charts and explanations.

8 PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY.

The researcher formulated questions from research questions and objectives. The questions were designed in such a way that the respondents would just tick the most appropriate responses. The researcher personally visited selected schools to ensure that all the activities related to the research continue as earlier planned. While conducting the research, the researcher had the opportunity of interacting closely with the teachers of the learners with speech difficulties, and was also able to observe the learners, both in and out of class.

The researcher ensured that there was gender balance among the respondents. That is, the number of male students was equivalent to the number of female students. Also among the teachers, the researcher ensured that the number of male teachers responding to the questions was similar to the number of female teachers.

The data was computed and presented in form of graphs, charts and percentages. All the respondents were cooperative and responded to the questions positively.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter, the researcher covered research findings, data presentation and discussion on the challenges faced by teachers of learners with speech difficulties and its effect on the performance of English language.

4.1 DATA ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS WITH SPEECH DIFFICULTIES IN VARIOUS FORMS.

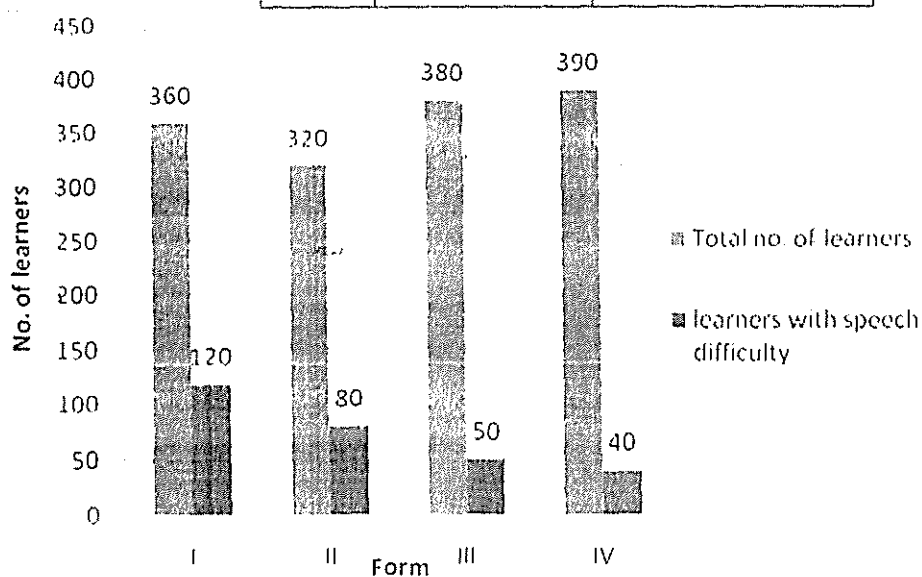
The researcher found out that as learners joined form one, they had more speech difficulties compared to students in the other forms. Out of 360 students that the researcher observed, 120 students experienced various speech difficulties like articulation difficulties, monotone, inflection, pitch, nasality and breathiness. Several students with speech difficulties confessed that in primary schools, they rarely communicated in English language when they were on their own. However, they only did so when asked questions by their teachers. A number of the students expressed shock when they found that in secondary school, they were expected to communicate in two languages only, that is, English and Kiswahili. As the learners moved to Form Two, 80 students still experienced serious speech difficulties. However, there was an improvement since 10 students had already overcome the problem of serious speech difficulties and now could communicate effectively. 80 students still had problems with speech and this adversely affected their performance in English examination. In Form Three, out of 380 students, 50 students experienced speech difficulties. This showed that as the learners progressed with their secondary syllabus, the number of learners with speech difficulties reduced. As the learners prepared to sit for K.C.S.E. examinations at form Four, forty students still experienced speech difficulties. This is what led to English language posting a low mean grade compared to the other subjects.

The constant reduction in the number of learners with speech difficulties was attributed to the appropriate measures taken by teachers of English to assist the learners with speech difficulties. However, some of the learners failed to improve even with extra teacher support programmes like remedial lessons and consultations.

The bar graph below shows the findings:

Learners with speech difficulties in various forms

| Form | Total number of learners | Learners with speech difficulties |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | 360 | 120 |
| 2 | 320 | 80 |
| 3 | 380 | 50 |
| 4 | 390 | 40 |



2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPEECH DIFFICULTIES AND PERFORMANCE

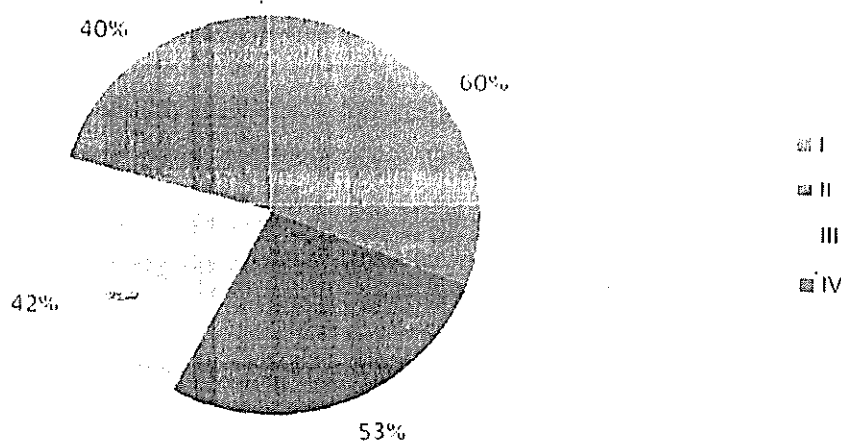
The researcher found that out of the 1,450 students, 290 students experienced difficulties in speech and this further had a negative effect in their examination. From the total of 290 students with various speech difficulties, the researcher further selected 50 students through random sampling and observed them for duration of one month. The researcher found out that most of

the students in this category had given up and had no hope of performing well in the examinations. In the two Continuous Assessment Tests (C.A.T.), and end of term results, the students performed poorly compared with the other learners who did not experience problems of speech.

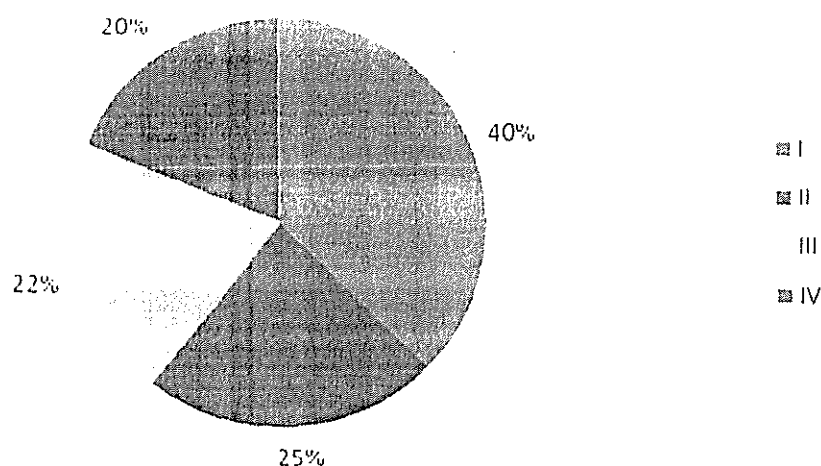
The following table shows the performance of learners in various classes:

| form | Average marks. Learners without speech difficulties | Average marks. Learners with speech difficulties |
|------|---|--|
| 1 | 60% | 40% |
| 2 | 53% | 25% |
| 3 | 42% | 22% |
| 4 | 40% | 20% |

learners without speech difficulties



Learners with speech difficulties



English is a practical subject that must be spoken by anybody who hopes to have command of its other aspects like writing and reading. The researcher found that there was a tendency of students who experienced speech difficulties to perform poorly in the examinations. Ogutu Odera (2002) states that, "A learner with expressive language difficulties faces sentence construction difficulty, inability to use appropriate word, word finding difficulty and difficulty in deciding how to respond to incoming message" (Page 55, 56). Speech difficulties like articulation disorders, inflection and nasality, substitution of sound, omission of a sound and adding of a sound are major contributors to poor performance among learners with speech difficulties. Since the overall performance per subject is always pegged on the mean of the students, the poor performance of learners with speech difficulties tend to drag down the mean of the school in national examinations. Research has also shown that the mean attained in English language examination is often very close to the average mean of all the subjects combined. This is attributed to the fact that all the other examinations apart from Kiswahili are set and done in English.

The researcher found that for the students to improve in the English language performance there was a need for teachers to work closely with the learners with speech difficulties so that they could

compete with the others and improve on the performance. There was a tendency among the teachers of English language to teach at the pace of bright students. The average students were therefore left to struggle to match their brilliant counterparts, but the learners with speech difficulties were seriously disadvantaged, for they failed to cope up with the rest. The performance in English language among the learners with speech difficulties was therefore very poor. They performed far below average in English language and this was attributed to neglect by the teachers. It was also attributed to the students' slow progress and lack of practice.

3.3 CATEGORIES OF SPEECH DIFFICULTIES.

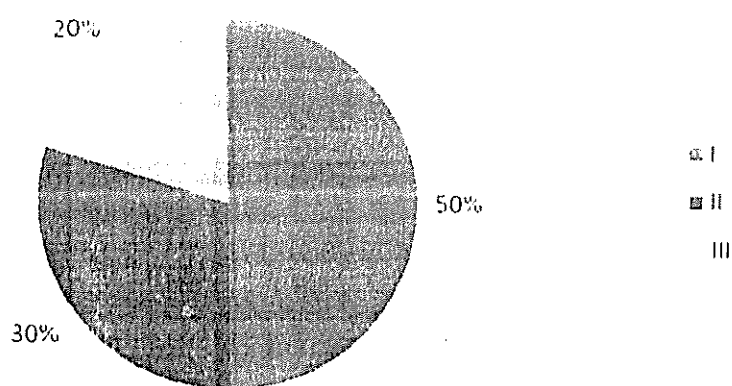
The researcher found that there were various categories of learners with speech difficulties. Learners with articulation difficulty were the majority comprising of 50% of the total number. They experienced various problems. Ogutu, T.A. (2002) lists the problems thus: misarticulating/pronunciation sounds wrongly, omissions, that is, leaving out a sound in words, substitutions; substituting a sound for another in words, for instance, substituting /s/ for /k/, additions, for example a learner adds a vowel to every word that ends in a consonant.

Another category of learners with speech difficulties was learners with voice quality problems. These learners comprised of 30% of the total population. They experienced difficulties like nasality, which is characterised by too much nasal resonance of all vocal sounds, breathiness which results from too much unvoiced air escaping through the vocal folds as a person speaks; harshness characterised by unpleasant grating sound and hoarseness characterised by a thickness of sound or a muffled sound. Learners who are disfluent; that is, those unable to use words fluently, and have a problem with rhythm of speech, accounted for 20% of the total population. These learners manifested problems like stuttering, which is a disruption in the timing of speech and cluttering which is a running together in rapid, jumbled speaking of sounds.

The pie chart below illustrates the numerical data:

| Speech difficulty | Percentage |
|-------------------------|------------|
| Articulation difficulty | 50% |
| Voice quality problems | 30% |
| Disfluency | 20% |

Speech difficulty in percentage



Note: I – articulation difficulty

II – voice quality problems

III - disfluency

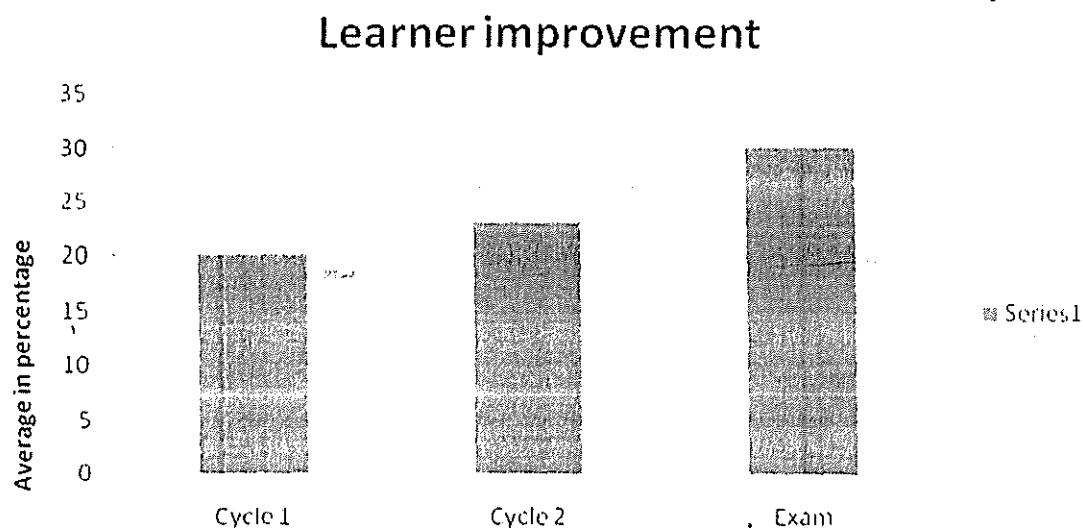
The researcher found that articulation difficulty, voice quality problems and disfluency problems seriously interfered with the learners' participation in English class lessons. The difficulties also had a negative impact on learners' writing and reading skills; hence this had a negative impact on the general performance of the learners in English language.

4 IMPROVEMENT IN PERFORMANCE AFTER INTERVENTION EFFORTS.

It was evident that after the teachers had put some intervention measures to assist the learners with speech difficulties, there was a slight improvement in their performance. In term two, two cycle exams and end term exams were done. After doing each exam, the teacher offered the students remedial lessons and engaged them in consultations on various areas where they experienced difficulties. The teacher also developed rapport between himself and the learners, thus instilling in them a lot of confidence. These efforts paid off because there was a marked improvement in the performance of the learners in successive examinations.

The bar graph below explains the improvement after intervention by teachers of English:

| Cycles | Average in % |
|---------|--------------|
| Cycle 1 | 20 |
| Cycle 2 | 23 |
| Exam 3 | 30 |



Even though the improvement was slight, it was still remarkable for it showed that there was progress among the learners.

It was therefore evident that with appropriate intervention measures put in place, learners with speech difficulties were able to perform far much better.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher has provided a detailed discussion on the outcome of the research, based on challenges faced in teaching and learning of learners with speech difficulties on the performance of English language in Rarieda District.

5.1 DISCUSSION

In this research project, the researcher found out that there were a number of causes of speech difficulties among learners. These included hereditary, defects in the speech organs like cleft palate, damage to the cerebrum part of the brain among others. However, in the course of the research, it was also evident that some speech disorders were caused by the environments where the children grew up, for example, the rural environment had a significant influence on the speech of the students. The environment had an influence on pronunciation of learners. Having acquired the wrong pronunciation and sounds of particular words, it was quite difficult for the learners to adopt the appropriate pronunciation. Speech disorders like articulation difficulty and voice quality problems became habits that were not easy to eliminate. As a result, many learners with speech difficulty acquired wrong pronunciation, wrong spelling and poor sentence construction skills. Transposing of sounds was found to be an impediment to good writing. For instance, learners would use the sound /ks/ instead of /sk/. Instead of pronouncing the word 'ask', they would pronounce it as 'aks'. Their spelling of the word 'ask' would often be wrong. They could also write the word 'hunderd' instead of the correct one, 'hundred'.

The researcher also found out that there was a significant relationship between spoken language and written language. A person's writing skill was basically determined by the way he spoke. If a person used broken English while speaking, the same would be evident in his/her written work. A student whose speech showed signs of disorder also experienced difficulties while reading. For example, learners with disfluency problems like cluttering and stuttering were not able to read passages, oral literature stories and poems within the allocated time. Such learners could therefore not complete examinations within the stipulated time. Also the learners with speech difficulties could not interpret the questions correctly and ended up providing answers

that were not accurate. English language being a subject that requires a great deal of keenness and accuracy, posed a challenge to the learners. The problem was glaring at the release of the results when these learners performed poorly not only in English language but also in art based subjects like history, Geography and Religious Education that required a lot of writing in English language.

The researcher noted that as long as learners from a particular ethnic group are left to learn together in a single educational institution, speech difficulties will persist. This is because certain speech disorders like articulation difficulty and voice quality problems are considered normal when in reality they are not normal. When a word is pronounced wrongly for a long time, there is a misconception that it is right, and should just be pronounced that way. The only solution to this problem is to adjust certain government policies of admitting learners to secondary schools. The government should scrape off the quota system, where children in a given district are allowed to join the schools within the district or enter the schools within the province. In most cases, the entire province has only one dominant ethnic community that speaks the same language. Students in such schools may be tempted to speak in their mother tongue when they are alone. As a result, they experience fluency problems when communicating in English.

The researcher found out that learners with speech difficulties would achieve tremendous milestones in speech development if teachers were consistent but patient with them. The teachers needed to guide the learners step by step through the learning tasks until they mastered the concepts. Besides, the teachers needed to enrich lessons on speech work or listening and speaking by using audio tapes for listening skills. The student would then be asked to repeat whatever was being said by the expert speaker. This method of teaching speech was found to be interesting and motivating to the learner.

It was also realised that such a systematic approach to teaching was both time consuming and laborious, and many teachers shied away from it. They cited a wide syllabus coverage across the board from form one to form four as a major obstacle to adopting this noble method. They argued that the solution was in the government's hands; the government should employ more teachers to minimise teacher shortage and create room for specialisation in secondary schools.

The researcher made an observation that some teachers were themselves victims of speech difficulties hence they could not guide learners properly. Some teachers turned out for lessons without preparing adequately and ended up teaching wrong pronunciation. This led to learners acquiring wrong concepts. Certain teachers were also faced with the problem of mother tongue influence and they could not pronounce words properly. There was need for teachers of English to lead by example, that is, polish their speech so that the learners could benefit more from the lessons.

The researcher found out that learners with speech difficulties could profit more if teachers engaged in speaking exercises. The teachers organised oral lessons and the students actively in the lessons. In this way, the learners were able to improve their speech and overcome some of the speech difficulties.

2 CONCLUSION

Speech difficulty is a real challenge affecting teaching and learning of English language in secondary schools, and negatively affects performance of learners in the subject. Urgent steps should therefore be taken by curriculum developers and implementers to address this problem. English is a very important subject and any matter affecting it should be taken seriously. It is now clear that speech difficulty affects the other aspects of language like reading and writing. Speaking influences writing, in that, one often writes as one speaks. Therefore, if a learner's speech is disordered, then his/her writing too will be affected. For that matter, the students will tend to perform poorly in English examination.

With improved teaching methods that respond to the needs of learners with speech difficulties, performance in English language will greatly improve teachers. Teachers should offer remedial work to the learners and allocate them more time during assignments. If teachers develop a positive attitude towards learners with speech difficulties, the learners will definitely improve their performance.

3 RECOMENDATIONS.

Teachers of learners with speech difficulties should apply the concept of IEP (Individualised Education Programme) to assist the learners with speech difficulties.

The teacher should use question and answer method and involve all the learners. This method will ensure that all the learners participate in the lesson.

Debating club should be established in schools to ensure that students express themselves in a formal set up and learn from their fellow students. The students should be guided by their teachers of English.

Drama club should also be made active to enable learners develop communication skills.

The teachers should encourage learners to practice speaking English at all times while they are in school; this will help improve their speech, reading and writing.

The teachers should encourage reading among learners.

The administration should avail teaching and learning resources for the teaching and learning of English language.

There should be adequate textbooks to be used by learners in class.

Teachers should encourage learners to read novels, short story books and drama books so that they can improve on their speech and writing.

Teachers should guide learners on techniques of answering examination questions.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Time frame

| APRIL | MAY | JUNE | JULY | AUGUST |
|------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Proposal writing | | | | |
| | Preparation and piloting of instruments | | | |
| | | Gaining access to study sites | | |
| | | | Data collection analysis | |
| | | | | Writing final report |

APPENDIX 2

BUDGET

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------|
| Subsistence | - | Ksh. 3,000 |
| Travel | - | Ksh. 2,000 |
| Secretarial services | - | Ksh. 3,000 |
| Equipment and stationery | - | Ksh. 2,000 |
| TOTAL | - | Ksh. 10,000 |

APPENDIX 3

TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

I, John Owino Nyarima, Registration Number BED/15473/71/DF, humbly request you to respond to this questionnaire.

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

| | | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| AGE 20- 30 | <input type="checkbox"/> | DEGREE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31- 40 | <input type="checkbox"/> | DIPLOMA | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 41 -50 | <input type="checkbox"/> | CERTIFICATE | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 50 and above | <input type="checkbox"/> | Others specify | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Speech difficulties among most learners are caused by:

| | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) Hearing impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) Hereditary | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) Accidents | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) Dental deformity | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. Speech difficulty affects learners of English language in your school.

STRONGLY AGREED ☐ AGREED ☐ NOT AGREED ☐

Teachers can offer intervention measures to learners with speech difficulties in order to improve performance in English.

STRONGLY AGREED ☐ AGREED ☐ NOT AGREED ☐

Speech difficulties among learners affect the teaching of English language.

STRONGLY AGREED ☐ AGREED ☐ NOT AGREED ☐

5. Speech difficulties among learners negatively affect performance of the learners in the subject. VERY TRUE ☐ TRUE ☐ NOT TRUE ☐

6. Learners who exhibit speech difficulties have low esteem that interferes with their social interactions in school.

VERY TRUE ☐ TRUE ☐ NOT TRUE ☐

7. There are educational resources used for teaching English learners with speech difficulties in your school.

VERY TRUE ☐ TRUE ☐ NOT TRUE ☐

8. Do parents of learners with speech difficulties take time to consult teachers of English language about the progress of their children?

YES ☐ NO ☐

9. Learners with speech difficulties can be assisted to improve their performance in English language.

YES ☐ NO ☐

10. Learners with speech difficulties can be assisted through:

a) Offering individualized teaching orientation ☐

b) Giving extra work to students ☐

c) Punishing the students ☐

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