

**SOCIO-PYSCHOLOGICAL FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNING OF
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG STUDENTS IN DAY SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN MUHORONI SUB-COUNTY, KISUMU COUNTY**

BY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

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This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Calvin Ouya Kongiyo and Rosemary Adongo, my husband Peter Oloo and sons Marx, Christophe, Clifford, and Calvin and my lovely sister Beryl for their love, patience and support.

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GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

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ABSTRACT

Current society seems to be undergoing changes at a very fast rate. With the introduction of modern technology, man has been found in a wanting situation, especially in terms of language. In order to gain the competitive advantage, one would need proven competence and ability to effectively communicate not only in the language of instruction in schools but also in extra language. The need to learn, or acquire extra languages come with problems that affect learning. This study was based on English grammar as part of English language in Kenya and the difficulties associated with pronunciation of some sounds was based on Luo students in Muhoroni sub-county, Kisumu County. The main goal of this research was to look into socio-psychological factors associated with learning of English grammar with regard to pronunciation, especially among Luo. It looked at attitude as a factor that contributes to this problem. Failure to encounter these sounds at an early age would be an impediment towards achieving competence. After an analysis of English grammar learning difficulties, this research would like to come up with possible solutions through which such difficulties can be eliminated for effective learning through enhancing acquisition of marked competence in speech production. Research methods that were used to collect data were questionnaires, interviews and observation. The questionnaire and interview questions entailed both open and closed questions. These easily reached the identified population samples from which responses given were analyzed. Interviews were also held in order to receive first hand and direct responses to the interviewees. This was in order to receive clarification concerning issues, which have been raised. Sampling method employed is systematic random sampling of Muhoroni sub-county secondary schools on which the research was based. The major problems cited included negative attitude and ill motivation towards learning of English, poor pronunciation of some sounds and failure to have been introduced to the language at an early age. Conversely with appropriate teaching methods, exposure to such facilities as audio-visual materials and pronunciation tests and a general positive attitude towards learning of English would help eliminate learner's difficulties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Improving the quality of education is a priority task for many countries globally. In Bolivia for example where education has become a crucial issue on the public agenda, it had been the subject of particular concern from 1994 on, when a new Educational Reform began (Contreras and Talavera, 2003). In Kenya, according to the Kamunge Report (1988), education and training are an investment for national development. It has been used to equip and prepare the youth with knowledge, skills and expertise necessary to enable them to play an effective role in society and to serve the needs of national development. Education also develops the individual talents, personality, attitudes towards work and prepares them for further formal education, training and employment. The report further states that there will be need to lay greater emphasis on quality and relevant education and training. It will also be necessary to intensify research as well as to develop science and technology, creative and performing arts and languages.

The Koech Report (1999) postulates that providing quality education to increasing numbers of students, as expected and using the available resources, is both a challenge and an opportunity. It is a challenge because of the inadequacy of the available Government resources in providing quality education characterized by excellent performance in English language as one of the subjects taught in schools. It is an opportunity because of the possibility of viewing education as both a service and an industry, which is marketed in order to widen the resource mobilization base. The government of Kenya has therefore been concerned with providing quality education to

increasing number of students through various measures and policies such as expanding the resource base beyond Government sources to fill up costing gaps; utilizing the available resources more efficiently; costing the education system in its totality; establishing autonomous funding system; strategizing the allocation of funds; and providing incentives for quality improvement in all the components of education. Despite these intervention measures, majority of Kenyan Day secondary students still perform poorly in English grammar especially when it comes to pronunciation. Yet, English language is a means of communication among human beings. English is indeed very important not only to those people for whom it is the mother tongue but also those for whom it is an official language, including Kenya. According to Broughton et al (1993), English is the language of the mass media. In Kenya, it is a national language and a compulsory subject in schools. It is rated the same with Kiswahili and also the language of official institutions- of law courts, local and central government and of education. The ministry of education in Kenya has expressed concern over the apparent decline in the performance of learners in English at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) National Examinations (KNEC Report, 2006).

It has also classified English among the core subjects in the curriculum. This means that for one to obtain a better grade in national examinations and therefore gain admission to a public University, he/she must pass in English. Acquiring university education is critical for individual career development because it is at the university that one acquires higher education. Specialized skills acquired at this level are vital in securing gainful employment and improve one's living standards. This enables individuals to effectively contribute to the national economic development. The central focus of this study was to

investigate socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English language among the students and to find out the relationship between socio-psychological factors and pronunciation skills based on motivation, age, and attitude.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The performance of English in both primary and secondary schools especially among the students of day primary or secondary schools in rural part of Kenya has been very dismal particularly when it comes to English grammar and pronunciation, hence, this has led to a public outcry from parents, teachers, educational planners and other education stakeholders. In Muhoroni Sub-county, local examination averages have been far below the national examination averages over the years. The residents of the district are indeed interested in improving this performance but they lack information about the most cost effective interventions they should take to improve students' national examinations performance in the district. The poor academic performance in general could be due to the integration of English and Literature. Before this integration the teaching and learning of English adopted a system in which English and Literature were examined separately. The English curriculum innovations since 2006 have led to the subject being examined in three papers. These are paper 1 (Functional Skills) comprising 60 marks, paper 2 (Comprehension, Literally Appreciation and Grammar) comprising 80 marks and paper 3 (Imaginative Composition and Essays based on set texts) comprising 60 marks (KNEC, 2006).

The reason for this integration was to make the subject lighter and therefore easy to pass. This however has not been achieved since the students' achievement in English is worryingly low. Mock results will be used to measure achievement, whereby values between 0-100 will be considered. Marks close to Zero will constitute lower achievement while marks close to 100 will constitute high achievement. In 2007 Form Four mock results the sub-county registered a dismal performance. English recorded a mean score of 6.327 and was ranked at position 9, while Agriculture which was ranked at position 1 had a mean score of 9.795. This was way below the performance of the neighboring sub-counties of Kisumu East and Nyakach which had MSS above 5.

The Ministry of Education (2005), laments that the performance of English in secondary schools in Kenya has been very low. The integration of English and Literature may have affected the subject's performance. English is very important in Kenya because it is a language of official communication. It is also the language of official instructions. In spite of this, its performance has continued to decline thus, costing the country a lot in terms of availability of skilled manpower and economic growth because English plays a central role in human capital development. Okwara (2009) argues that the integrated approach to the teaching of English is faced with many challenges such as unprepared teachers. He points out that English is a medium of instruction through which other curriculum content is communicated. In Muhoroni sub-county the performance of English grammar among students has persistently been poor over the years, a trend that needs to be investigated and corrected. The poor achievement in English in Muhoroni Sub-county may have contributed to the Sub-county's poor achievement. The study sought to investigate socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English

language among the students and to find out the relationship between socio-psychological factors and pronunciation skills based on motivation, age, and attitude. The study also sought to find out the reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds by Luo day secondary school students in Muhoroni sub-county.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose for this study was to investigate socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English language among the day secondary students of Muhoroni Sub-county.

1.4 Research objectives

The study was guided by the following research objectives

- i. To find out the reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds by Luo day secondary school students in Muhoroni sub-county.
- ii. To establish how students' attitude influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county
- iii. To determine in what ways students' motivation influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county.
- iv. To examine whether age of students influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county.
- v. To find out if teaching-learning resources influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What are the reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds by Luo day secondary school students in Muhoroni sub-county?
- ii. How does students' attitude influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county?
- iii. In what ways do students' motivation influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county?
- iv. Does the age of students influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county?
- v. Do teaching-learning resources influence learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research was undertaken due to the poor performance of English grammar in Muhoroni day secondary schools. The findings of this study would therefore be of help to various education stakeholders such as the government through the ministry of education, school managers, students, parents and academia. To the school managers, they may find this study useful in making decisions as to what teaching and learning materials to provide in schools in order to enhance performance in English grammar and pronunciation. Students may be helped by the study to be able to know the importance of textbooks and other learning materials in improving their achievements in English grammar and pronunciation. Parents may use this study to decide on what learning

materials to offer to their children in order to enhance their performance of English grammar and pronunciation. Educational planners may immensely benefit from the study because it will enable them to plan well for effective training of teachers, recruitment of quality teachers and selection of appropriate teaching and learning materials. They may also be able to strategically plan for appropriate linkages between schools and with institutions of higher learning. This may go a long way in improving both internal and external efficiency in our schools

To the academia, other than adding to the existing body of knowledge, the findings of this study may help the academia in formulating new theories in relation to socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English language among the students and to find out the relationship between socio-psychological factors and pronunciation skills based on motivation, age, and attitude. Moreover, any future researchers may use the recommendations and conclusions that are made in this study to aid them on the direction on which to base their future research.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The researcher faced several limitations in the study. Some respondents felt apprehensive in answering the questions, due to the nature of the study. However, the researcher handled this by assuring them of confidentiality of their identity. On the other hand, some of the respondents did not feel free to participate in the study, wondering whether it would benefit them in anyway. However, the researcher explained to them that the study was purely for academic purpose. The poor road network between the schools made data collection difficult as there was a lot of rain making movements difficult since the

schools are found in very interior locations where public service vehicles do not reach. The researcher was forced to visit one school at a time on a daily basis using a motor cycle to avoid time wastage and this culminated to more financial resources required.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study was conducted in Muhoroni sub-county which forms part of Kisumu County. This sub-county is unique in having large tracks of sugarcane farms and sugarcane factories. Many parents are workers in these farms and factories, they therefore have low education, low disposable income and live in crowded homes far from schools. The study was also concerned with only day secondary schools and their form four students leaving out the rest of the schools. The study revolved around form four students because they have been in school for a long time and any influence from home could easily affect their grammar and pronunciation performance compared to other forms and also because they are almost sitting exams and need more attention from both parents and teachers.

1.9 Basic assumptions of the study

The study assumed the following:

- i) That the sampled head teachers, deputy head teachers, teachers and students in the selected schools could co-operate in providing the relevant information.
- ii) That the sampled schools for the study could provide the required evidence to sufficiently address the study problem.
- iii) That the sampled respondents would answer the questions honestly and participate freely in the study.

iv) That the sampled respondents would be a true representative of the entire population.

1.10 Definition of significant terms used in the study

In order to understand the research to be undertaken, the following terms are defined:

Acquisition: This is the act of getting something, especially knowledge or a skill.

Age: This is how old one is.

Articulation: This is how clearly one speaks or pronounces words.

Attitude: Quality regarded as natural held by people and it can either be positive or negative.

Day school: A school that does not provide overnight accommodations. Students learn during the day and return to their homes in the evening.

Difficulty: This is the state of being hard for an exercise or subject to be done.

Factors: One of the elements contributing to a particular result or situation or brings about certain effects or results.

Grammar: This is the correct development and use of English words towards a system of management and rules by a learner. They govern form, style and meaning of English.

Influence: This is to have an effect on.

Learning: This refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills by the students.

Motivation: This is to make somebody want to do something especially something that involves some efforts.

Pronunciation: This is the way in which a language or a particular word or sound is pronounced.

Psychological factors: These are factors affecting or arising in the mind, or related to the mental and emotional state of a person.

Social factors: These are facts and experiences that influence individual's personality, attitudes and lifestyle.

Socio-psychological factors: This relates to or involves a combination of interrelated Psychological and social factors e.g. attitude, age, motivation, etc.

Teaching and Learning Resources: Refers to the facilities, materials, or articles used by the teachers when teaching.

1.11 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One consists of introduction which presents background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study and definition of significant terms.

Chapter Two entails review of related literature, conceptual and theoretical framework while chapter Three entails research methodology under research design, location of the study, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, research instrument, pilot testing, validity and reliability of the research instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents data analysis, presentation and interpretation while chapter Five gives the summary of findings, discussions, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English language among the students. It is therefore guided by the following research objectives; reasons for difficulty in articulation of sounds and learning of English language and the ways of eliminating these difficulties, students' attitude and learning of English language, students' motivation and learning of English language, age of students and learning of English language, teaching-learning resources and learning of English language among students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county.

2.1 Reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds and learning of English language

The language learning tasks starts by entry into a new, unfamiliar perhaps even forbidding cognitive system- the target language. It is a system that will invariably differ from the one he/she knows in ways that are striking and often quite spectacular. According to analysis of this kind of utterances made from the list of words that were read out by learners, it is evident that learners have major difficulties in pronunciation of some words. Difficulty in sound articulation is seen at phonetic level. The following seem to be major difficulty: the sounds are described phonetically as follows: /x/ oral, voiceless, palatal-alveolar, fricative;/z/ oral, voiced, alveolar, fricative. It has been identified that these sounds do not exist in Luo language. Most learners have thus conditioned their articulators to produce particular sounds. They thus, find it difficult to

articulate new sounds with a movement of the articulatory organs in a particular manner with different places of articulation. As a strategy to pronounce these sounds, most learners use forward placement in which such sounds could be replaced with sounds which are pronounced in almost a similar way and which are easier to articulate. This is what causes pronunciation errors.

2.1.1 Ways of eliminating these difficulties

For any language learning a dictionary is a very important facility. Audio visual materials are another faculty for a language learner. They provide a context for non-reciprocal discourse. Through such discourse a learner encounters sounds, words and expressions in actual use. These sounds give learners a clue on how certain sounds and words are used. It should also be emphasized that learning a language does not only involve reading texts, consulting dictionaries and listening to pre-recorded programs. It also involves a learner's actual participation in the discourse. Learners should take part in speech in order to make judgment of their level of competence and accuracy in the production of the speech especially pronunciation and grammar. Instructors should require learners to be actively engaged in group discussion, small personal presentations, individual question- response sessions and small plays. Such contexts provide evidence for areas of difficulties especially difficulty in articulation of sounds which should hence be worked upon for correction.

2.2 Students' Attitude and learning of a language

Attitude can be defined as a set of beliefs developed in a due course of time in a given socio-cultural setting. Although it does not necessarily determine behaviour but can have some impact on it. It is studied that positive attitude facilitates learning. If the learner is reluctant to learn or he/she does not have a positive attitude, he/she does not produce any result. Language learning is affected by attitude and motivation. Motivated, demotivated students have different perceptions of their class, teacher and curriculum. Their perceptions are responsible to for their attitudes. An individual's perception of the class, perception of the teacher, peer group, syllabus and his/her awareness for future needs affect his/her attitude to language learning. Learners differ in terms of motivation and aptitude and in the use of self-monitoring strategy for obtaining input for learners from it. A learner's attitude will be manifested in the willingness to search different materials and resources for accurate forms, engaging other learners and requesting for help from qualified authorities like teachers and inspectors. Learner's strategies will largely depend on the learner's willingness to make errors and is ready for corrections. Learning can only take place when the learner has interest and access to input in the second language.

Okwara et al (2009) terms availability of essential teaching and learning material as conditions ideal for the effective teaching of integrated English. However, according to research it has been found that not all learners have a positive attitude towards English. Some like it whereas others have a negative attitude towards the language. This is shown by lack of need to constantly consult such facilities as the dictionary. Teachers' attitude too plays an important role in the present context. In the professional courses, the

teachers' have changed their role from being the controller of the class to the facilitator. They accept students' mistakes in the language use as a necessary part of the language learning. They help and motivate students use more and more language in their daily life. Learners learning outcomes are influenced by the interpretation of teachers' interpersonal behaviour. If they believe that the teacher is associated with them and their learning outcome, the teacher empathize with them, understands their problems, they react positively and this factor contributes to their motivation level in the classroom. With the age of paradigm shift, the teacher has come a long way from being a strict disciplinarian to a facilitator. The teacher needs to make them realize that I am the one like you who also commits mistakes in the use of English and mistakes are a natural part of learning a language. A teacher needs to remember that demotivated students cannot learn. In our classes, we need to keep an eye on; what my learners' problems in learning English are, how these can be removed, if they are related to the grammar or to the student's perception about learning a language, what my learner wants and why he/she is learning English. Students want a teacher who can motivate them to speak more and more in the classroom and teach them how to use language outside the classroom. They want their teacher to be good at English and capable of correcting their mistakes without hurting their ego or without accusing them of not having knowledge of English. They want their teacher to create an informal environment in the class where they can learn with fun.

2.3 Motivation of Students and its influence on performance

Closely associated with the learners' attitude is motivation towards language learning which depends on the goal for which a language is learnt. According to Gardener (1985)

the term 'motivation' means 'referring to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity (p.10).'

According to the Pocket Oxford Dictionary (2004), motivation is the reason or reasons behind one's actions or behavior. Gardner highlights two different kinds of motivation in second language learning situation. On instrumental motivation, Gardner suggests that when the learner wants to learn a language to fulfill immediate goals, such as getting a job or passing an examination, his/her motivation is of instrumental kind. On integrative motivation, Gardner continues to point out that when the motive to learn a language is to communicate and integrate with people from another culture who speak the same language, it is called integrative motivation.

The study shows that in the present scenario the motivation to learn English by the target group is of instrumental kind. Their aim is, of course, to pass their current examinations and then to appear for an interview for a job. They want to pursue only the most required portions of their syllabus, which will fetch marks in the examination. They are also keen to join personality development and spoken English classes, which prepare them for interviews.

They concentrate on hypothetical questions which may be asked by the interviewer. According to Gardner and Lambart (1959, 1972) - when a language is learnt only for the utilitarian purposes, the success in a foreign/second language is supposed to be lower than if it is learnt for the integrative purpose. But this claim seems to be doubtful as the

instrumentally motivated students are effectively learning English. The reason seems to be that instrument motivation works as the force or the pressure to get a good job. The impact of 'intrinsic' and 'extrinsic' motivation is also reviewed. 'Intrinsic' motivation means the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake and 'extrinsic' motivation means motivation that is derived from external incentives. To know which among the two is predominant with the learner is crucial but important for teachers. Learners who are intrinsically motivated learn faster than learners who need external incentives to get motivated. Their learning is more likely to become mechanical learning in comparison to self-motivated lot of learners. Self-motivated or intrinsically motivated students with high aspirations and goal orientation show better results. Children are known to easily learn language because of a motivation to be by others and the desire to take part in other child activities. A child thus is focused in order to learn the language so fast. This can be attributed to the amount of time a child is able to dedicate to learning exposure to the target language and due to very few rigid opinions about groups and other languages that would otherwise inhibit learning of other languages.

On the contrary, adults learn a foreign language for various reasons; because of course or program requirements or because they are in another country with a different language. Adults thus learn language because of more conscious reasons and not spontaneously as children. Adults are also not bound to give all their attention to their learning task as they have other responsibilities. Motivation would also be enhanced by teaching methods used by language instructors. Language teaching should create situations that promote second language use and learning. Teaching involves organizing learning environments and language use and language learning task should be intended to facilitate learner's

language development. A major level for an unsatisfactory level of proficiency in languages such as English is that the reality of teaching the language does not favor its adequate acquisitions.

The language often plays no meaningful role in the life of the community from which a learner comes from. Usually the learners have commonly had no exposure to this language either in real life or on radio, television or other media. It is thus heard only in the school environment. There is also the general size of the classroom. Lecturers handle groups as large as 50 students and above. It means that learners will often not get a chance to say anything other than to repeat, usually in chorus version, the structures presented to them. Large classes also mean that, even if the instructor wanted to use a communicative approach to teach, they would find out that their classes were probably engaged in effective communication. Motivation is very important in overcoming unfavorable circumstances in some aspects of language learning. There are various sources of motivation.

They include the learning activities. Here the stimulus for motivation is the natural interest of learning. It can also be influenced by success or failure experienced by learners. Learners who do well experience rewards and are thus encouraged working harder. Poor performers are discouraged leading to lack of persistence success, greatly influenced learner performance. It should however be noted that instrument oriented motivation which is based on advantages that could become available if a language is proficiently known, such as professional advancement: the capacity to one's job well and

the ability to read useful materials in the target language, is less effective because it is rooted in the learners personality which is the dependent on external pressures. The learner is thus less likely to expand effort to achieve cumulative progress in the target language.

2.4 Age of the Students and its influence on Performance

According to the researches in the area of language acquisition in children, some linguistics have supposed that a child predisposed to a foreign language before the age of six years is bound to acquire a native- like accent. This is usually attributed to an innate device known as '*Language Acquisition Device*', which provides innate knowledge of linguistic universal. This device is said to be highly functional up to the age of puberty when the language acquisition process slows down considerably. It is thus highly doubted, if adult foreign language learners have access to this innate facility. Most language linguistic researchers have established that the process of localization of functions in the brain is completely slow at the puberty age. It is said that this could be reason why learners do not easily attain native-like control on a new language, especially as concerns pronunciation. This could be attributed to fact that, as learners grow older, the elasticity of the many muscle groups required to coordinate the different articulatory organs reduce or due to the fact that the muscles become so conditioned to producing sounds of first language. Learners will thus find it difficult to refrain the muscles to produce sounds found in the target language that differs from those of the first language. It could thus be said that most Luo students in Muhoroni sub-county find it difficult in

learning the language because they have attained the past age of puberty. They have already set opinions and perceptions concerning specific issues.

2.5 Use and Availability of Teaching-learning Resources

This includes among others reading materials, media and text books.

Some scholars in the field of educational technology emphasize the needs for use of instructional resources in learning. Tucker (1986), Romiszowski (1988) and Miller (1990), these scholars have generally concurred that proper utilization of instructional materials makes learning becomes more interesting, effective and meaningful, helps learners acquire various skills like reading construction, chart making among others, ensure that learning is retained longer than that acquired by purely verbal teaching and greater benefits can be obtained from the use of multimedia approach, when all the senses are involved in learning.

The advancement in educational technology implies that the use of mass media and teaching machines like overhead projectors and computer-assisted instruction are becoming increasingly necessary in the teaching of English. Mass media include radios and the video camera. As stated in the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 the government of Kenya realizes that technology is a critical form of wealth to any nation. For this reason, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and science and technology are perceived as the key pillars of education and training.

It has become a common trend for students in secondary schools to be shown videos based on the set texts. This is meant to enhance their quick revision of entire texts and aid them in grasping various aspects of the texts. Teachers from Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) have employed the use of video tapes, tape recorders and radio programs to reach students in many parts of the country including those in remote areas. According to the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 the government of Kenya through the MOE aims to promote and popularize ICT as well as science and technology education by 2008.

Okwako (1994) investigated on language learning and established the availability of reading materials as a crucial aspect of language learning. He states that reading widely requires a student who has the ability to read materials willingly and without any difficulty. A student should acquire different types of materials that are not just concerned with vocabulary but should be interesting as his or her age demands, environment, experience and his view concerning various issues (Okwako 1994: 102-104). The study relates well to the present study in that students should be in regular contact with different types of books, magazines and journals in order to master the rules of grammar. They should not focus on vocabularies only. The different appropriate materials should be selected well to increase the effectiveness of learning. They can only be used when they are made available at the right time, environment and enhance more experience.

2.6 Theoretical framework

This study was guided by two theories: Piaget's theory of cognitive development and functionalism theory of learning. Piaget's theory expounded by wads worth (1984) asserts that children mental constructions are developed through their experience in their environment. The theory states that, the cognitive structure develops interactively from the concrete to the more abstract one. Piagets states that: so we need pupils who are active, who learn early to find out for themselves, partly by their own spontaneous activity and partly through materials used and set up for them: who learn early to tell what is variable and what is simply the first ideas to come to them.(Piagets1964:5 in Mwamwenda 1989:7)

Piaget's theory suggests that teaching and learning language should be consistent with children levels of conceptual development. Active physical and mental interactions of the child with the environment that permit construction are seen as the most important school-related factor in cognitive development. The act of constructing is the essence of the intellectual development, regarding experiences and cognitive development. Piagets wrote: Experience is always necessary for intellectual development. But I fear that we may fall into the illusion of being submitted to the experience that is sufficient for a subject to disengage the structure involved. But more than this is required. The subject must be active and find the structure of his own actions on the objects. (Piagets1964:4in wads worth1984:195)

According to Piagets, cognitive reorganization resulting from assimilation and accommodation can come about only through the actions of the child. Thus, actions, physical and cognitive, must occur if cognitive reorganization is going to take place. Piagets asserts that assimilation and accommodation of actions are always under internal control and reorganization of cognitive structures in a particular way, which can never be ensured by external organization of experience. Throughout the stage of concrete operations the manipulation of objects and materials, dealing with concepts to be learned is most important.

Although Piagets was relating this theory to young children, it can be applied well to the adults. Piagets argues that with the attainment of formal operations children become able to develop some logical concepts without the aid of direct physical experience. However, conceptual development can proceed based on the child's action on written and verbal materials. Hence concrete experience will still be needed in order to develop new physical knowledge even in formal operations. This theory was applied to Luo students because most of them are at the critical stage of learning new concepts, which are as challenging to them as they are to the young children in their new environment. The theory lends itself well to the secondary students who are experiencing difficulty in learning English grammar with regard to pronunciation. For instance, if one has never had any experience on how to connect electrical wires, it will be difficult for them to acquire knowledge unless teaching aid is used.

The other theory is the functionalism theory of learning which states that the function of the behaviors is to promote survival and that, behavior are adoptive to allow the individual to survive. John Dewey, who lived around 1884 is one of the proponents of the theory, suggested that one reflective behavior of the lower animals have been replaced in human by mind which has evolved as the primary mechanisms for human survival. The brain therefore, allows the individual to adapt to the environment. His stand point is, where human beings are viewed as rational animals, which can behave in a given way or adapt to the environment, for their own survival. This is adapted for the purpose of this study in the same way learners can make use of the immediate environment to learn or may choose not to use it depending on the inherent attitudes held about the environment, which offer instructional facilities.

The proponents for functionalism theory of learning were mainly concerned with lower animals although they applied it to human beings. The theory explains that learners being human could choose to behave in a given way for survival purpose. Learners have their attitude towards learning of English. The question raised was, what poses the difficulties in acquisition of English grammar with regard to pronunciation? This theory explains the nature of human beings and the way they perform their duties. In learning, the use of instructional resources, translates abstract concepts into concrete facts. Language is a psychological aspect and is acquired from the environment. All children are born with the ability to learn languages. Learning becomes easier, motivating and interesting if a child is given an enriched environment he or she encounters. When this is ensured a child will be able to visualize and get meanings of things he/she interacts with by assigning specific

characteristics. A child will therefore be able to form relationships between phenomena because of continuous interaction and manipulation of teaching aid is used to convey the facts. Piagets (1964) cognitive development and functionalism theory of learning will be used to form the basic guide for the study since they complement and supplement each other.

2.7 Conceptual Framework

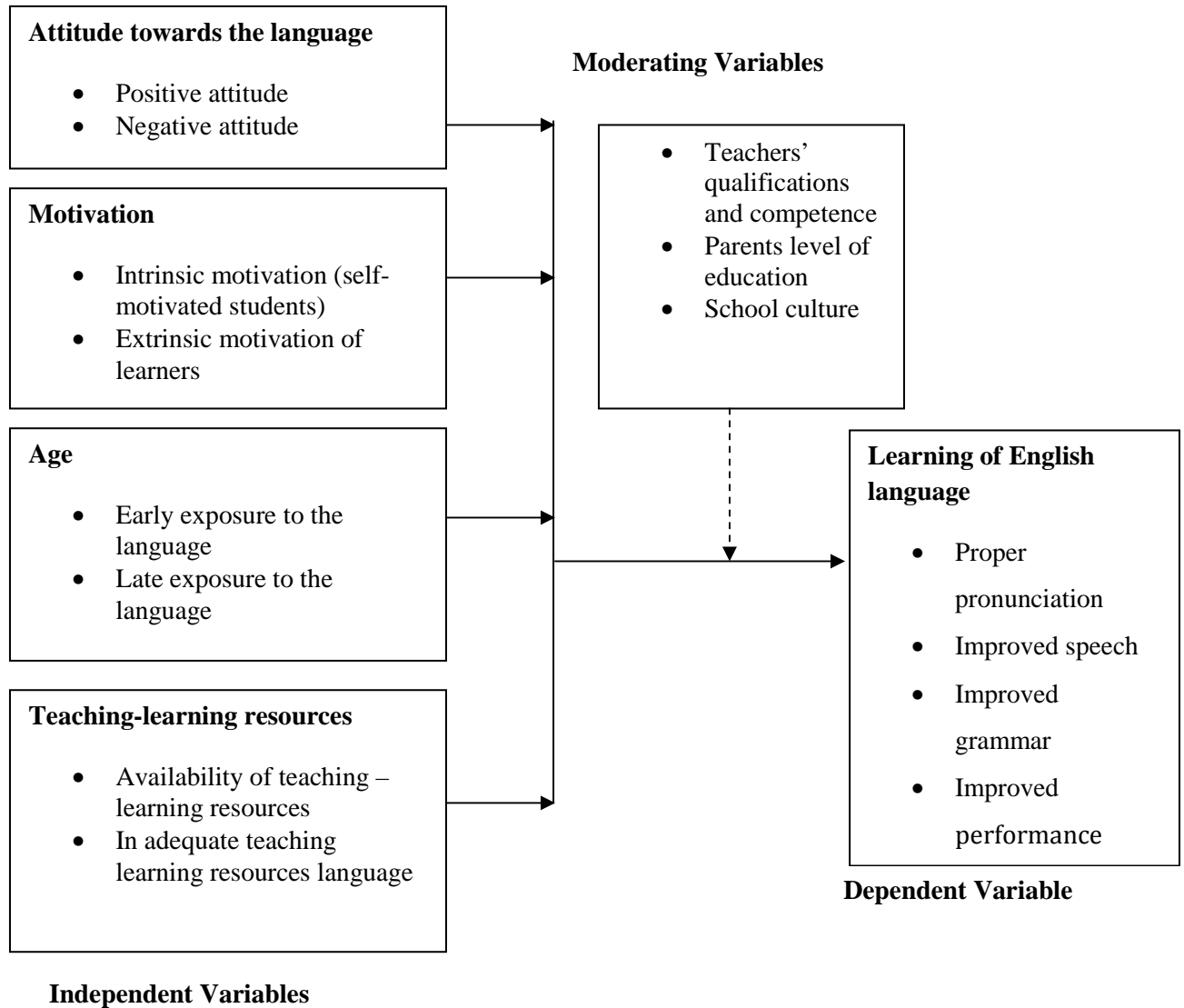


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework

The study has independent variables which include attitude towards the language, motivation, age and teaching-learning resources.

Attitude towards the language: Attitude here refers to quality regarded as natural held by the students and it can either be positive or negative. Positive attitude facilitates learning and mastery of a language while negative attitude affects language learning.

Motivation: This is to make somebody want to do something especially something that involves some efforts. It also refers to the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity. Learners who are intrinsically motivated learn faster than learners who need external incentives to get motivated.

Age: Age here refers to when the learner is exposed to the language. Early exposure to the language facilitates easy and better learning.

Teaching-learning resources: refers to the facilities, materials, or articles used by the teachers and learners during the teaching and learning of the language.

The study also has moderating variables which include: Teachers' qualification and competence: refers to how well the teachers are trained and their mastery of the language.

Parents' education level: in this study refers to the level of education of the parent or caretaker. This impact on the seriousness accorded to education due awareness of its relevance to the student.

School culture: here refers to the rules and guidelines set by the school in terms of language learning and speaking. For instance, in some schools, English is the mandatory language for communication among the students and teachers and this can facilitate better

learning and mastery of the language as opposed to some schools where students are free to communicate in any language of their choice.

The study has learning of English language as the dependent variable in this study.

Learning of English here depends on the independent variables and moderating variables which if positively used may lead to proper pronunciation, improved speech, improved grammar and hence improved performance.

All the above factors influence learning of the English language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses in detail the methodologies by which data was obtained, processed, analyzed and interpreted to fulfill the research objectives. The methodology elements herein include the research design to be applied; target population; sampling design and procedures; research instruments; as well as data processing and analysis techniques. Details of these are as discussed in the succeeding sections.

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Babbie (2007) a descriptive survey design refers to the way a researcher guards or attempts to eliminate bias and alternative interpretations of results. The descriptive survey design deals with four main questions corresponding to these ideas. These are the following; what strategy, within what framework, from whom and how (Punch, 2010). This research design was appropriate for this study because descriptive surveys design are used to gather information and describe a phenomenon at a single point in time. Descriptive survey design is also recommended for this kind of research because it can be used to collect peoples' or a group's opinions and attitudes (Wolverton, 2009). It studies the relationship between different variables at a point in time and so, investigating the socio-psychological factors influencing the learning of English language among the students in day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county would be best achieved using this research design.

3.2 Location of the study

The study was conducted among the day secondary schools within the borders of Muhoroni sub-county in Kisumu County. The sub-county borders: Kericho County to the South East and Nyando sub-county to the west. Socio-economically, Muhoroni sub-county is mainly an agricultural zone and the largest population practice subsistence and cash crop production. The ethnic groups in the district are mainly Luo and Kalenjin and this is crucial for the study because majority of the inhabitants of the sub-county are not native speakers of English. The most common spoken mother tongue is the Luo language. English is only used by students while at school. It is also spoken in urban areas of Muhoroni sub-county like Muhoroni, Chemelil and Koru towns.

3.3 Target population

The target population was all the 620 form four students in all the 17 day secondary schools of Muhoroni sub-county.

3.4 Sample size and sampling procedure

A sampling frame is a list of elements from which the sample is actually drawn and closely related to the population (Cooper and Schindler, 2006). In the current study, a sample frame of 620 students was used to obtain the sample size.

3.4.1 Sample size

According to Gay and Hilton (1995), a sample of 10% of the population is considered minimum while 20% of the total population is required for smaller populations. The

researcher adopted this for the purposes of this study, considering a total population of 620 in 17 day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county. Thus 20% gave a sample of 124 students.

3.4.2 Sampling procedure

The researcher used proportionate sampling methodology to calculate the sample population for each group. The total population for each school was divided by the overall total population and then multiplied by total sample population. For each school simple random sampling was used to select individual students who took part in the study. At the time of the investigation there were a number of public day secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county. Data was collected from Sub-county Education Officers office, Muhoroni sub-county later on for sampling. But the researcher sampled 10 public day secondary schools for investigation. A list of all public secondary schools in Muhoroni sub-county was prepared in an alphabetical order and systematic random sampling conducted. Given that limited time and financial resources might not allow a study of the whole population, systematic random sampling was used to obtain the respondents.

3.5 Research instrument

The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. This implies that an administered questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data, as well as in-depth interview guide was used to obtain qualitative data from the English teachers of the selected schools. It is an alternative method of collecting data in survey. Rather than

asking respondents to read questionnaires and enter their own answers, researcher sends or interviews respondents orally and record respondents answers. Interviews typically attain high response rate than questionnaires, the presence of interviewer also generally decreases the number of lack of response and the interviewer is able to clarify questions to the respondent (Wolverton, 2009).

3.5.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is an instrument specifically designed to elicit information that will be useful for analysis. These are primarily survey research tools (Babbie, 2007). There is both open ended and closed ended type of questionnaire. An open ended questionnaire usually has a number of pre-set questions that allows the respondent to write their own answers, while a closed ended questionnaire involves also pre-set questions with a limited number of multiple choices (Kombo and Delno, 2006). The study used structured or closed ended questionnaires as the main tool for collecting data. Questionnaires are commonly used to obtain information from a given population within a short time. This was quite ideal given the short period of time available for data collection. Each item in the questionnaire addressed a specific objective and a research question. One standardized questionnaire was developed with closed ended questions comprising a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents selected answers that best suit them. The questionnaire was developed for the student and it intended to capture various themes namely; academic performance and distance from school; parent's level of education, parents social economic status and family size.

3.5.2 Interview schedule

Interview schedule is a set of questions that the interviewer asks when interviewing the key informants. An interview schedule makes it possible to obtain the qualitative data required to meet specific objectives of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). This study used unstructured or informal interview that is based on an open ended questionnaire. Three In-depth interview schedules was used to elicit detailed qualitative data from the teachers for English who were well equipped with the information regarding the factors influencing the students' performance on English grammar and pronunciation. They were also divided into two sections; the section giving the personal details of the key informant and the section dealing with the objectives of the study.

3.6 Pilot Testing

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), pilot testing is an important step in the research process because it reveals vague questions and unclear instructions in the instrument. According to Punch 2010, pilot testing of the research instruments also helps in capturing important comments and suggestions from the respondents that enable the researcher to improve efficiency of the instrument, adjust strategies and approaches to maximize response rate. Therefore, the Pilot testing of research instruments was used for this study and was done within the selected region. For the sake of this study, the pilot testing was done at the neighboring day secondary schools in Nyando sub-county. This region was ideal given that it has similar geographical, ecological and social characteristics with the study area. Systematic random sampling was used to generate a sample size of 13 questionnaires which were administered to the selected day secondary

schools. The questionnaire was then administered to randomly selected students from the day secondary schools in the sub-county. 13 day scholars were randomly selected from the school through simple random sampling. These were form fours who were almost sitting for their examination. 13 students were 10% of the sample size. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents with the help of research assistants and interpretation of the response alternatives and queries was carried out to form items that bear the same meaning but are not identical. Order of response alternatives was similarly changed for questions with normal scale to assess the validity and reliability. Meanwhile, respondents' choices were evaluated for appropriateness. The researcher also verified if the questions were comprehended the same way by the respondents. In addition, average time taken to complete the questionnaires was noted and the overall pilot test results was discussed with the supervisors and adjustments made according to the results of the instruments review and pilot test prior to the production of the final instruments.

3.7 Validity of the Instrument

Researchers define validity as the accuracy, truthfulness and meaningfulness of inferences that are based on the data obtained from the use of a given tool or scale for each construct or variable in the study. Validity is an estimate of how accurately the data obtained from the use of a tool in a study represents a given variable or construct in the study (Punch, 2010). In this study pilot testing was used as an important step in making the instrument valid for the purposes of the study. During pilot testing vague questions and unclear instructions were revealed. Important suggestions and comments were also

captured from the respondents that enabled the researcher to improve efficiency of the instrument, adjust strategies and approaches to maximize the response rate. The responses from different participants were analyzed to get a generalized position which stood the validity test. The researcher ensured that all items in the instrument were based on the themes highlighted in the conceptual framework. The items were structured in simple English, which respondents found it easy to respond to.

3.8 Reliability of the Instrument.

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. It is influenced by random error. As random error increases reliability decreases random error is defined as the deviation from a true measurement due to factors that have not been addressed by the researcher. Errors may arise from coding fatigue and bias (Bryman, 2008). Split half technique was used to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. The computation of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient(r) between scores of the two halves of the tests was employed using SPSS. Afterwards reliability of the instrument was calculated using Spearman's Brown Prophecy formula shown below.

$$\text{Reliability of the tests} = 2 \frac{(\text{Reliability of O.Etest})(r)}{1+(\text{Reliability of O.E test})(r)}$$

Where r = coefficient of correlation

This is concerned with making accurate assessment of the incidence and relationships of the phenomenon. Data was collected by administering questionnaires, interview

questions and observing teachers and students during the English grammar, pronunciation. In this study, research hypothesis and objectives was used by the researcher to collect data. The data was analyzed and answers to the research questions sought. The researcher's aims were to find out the reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds, possible ways of eliminating these problems and making proposals on issues pertaining to pronunciation by students. The researcher used descriptive statistics for analysis of data because of the nature of raw data that was collected and the research tools that were used. The research tools that were mainly used were the questionnaire, interview questions and observation which boosted the interview answers recorded.

3.9 Data collection Procedure

The researcher did the following: Developed a tool for data collection, secured permission from the sampled schools before embarking on the study, acquired an introductory letter from the university and trained research assistants. The researcher and the research assistants then visited the respondents with the questionnaires that had to be filled by respondents, as for the interview schedule, the researcher had a one on one discussion with the teachers for English using a pre-conceived set of questions and during this talk, the researcher wrote down answers as given by the respondent. Attention was paid to the principle for voluntary participation and the requirement of informed consent.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of modeling or adjusting and transforming data with the aim of underlining essential information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision making (Kombo and Delno 2006). Data analysis has various approaches, encompassing diverse methods under a variety of names, in different business, science, and social science domains (Bryman 2008). For the purposes of this study, data analysis entailed field editing before bringing the instruments together in order to reduce errors and ensure that all instruments had been completed with the desired information. This was followed by categorization and coding of all open ended data. The next step was entry into a preset screen, cleaning, transformation and analysis, while charts and tables were produced using Microsoft-Excel. Eventually, qualitative data was organized in tables sorted by respondents and questions. Analysis was carried out for common themes based on patterns, relationships and differences.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

According to Babbie (2007) ethical consideration involves a researcher being careful when collecting the data to avoid causing any psychological interference to respondents by asking embarrassing and irrelevant questions, threatening language or making respondents nervous. For the purpose of this study, respondents were informed about the nature and purpose of the study and what would take place during the interviewing session. They were also guaranteed that all data gathered from them were coded to protect their identity and privacy. In addition, they were informed that the study was basically for academic purposes and not for any future considerations for any form of

purpose and that they are entitled to a summary of the outcome of the study if, they so wish. They were assured of confidentiality and they were also told that they were free to decline.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis and presentation of the research findings from the respondents. The chapter examines the research questions and presents the findings in tables, graphs and pie charts.

4.1 Presentation of the Findings

4.1.1 Number of Respondents

Quantitative primary data was obtained through issuance of questionnaires to the respondents who were the students from the selected day secondary schools in Muhoroni Sub-County. This data was obtained through the aid of research assistants who directly administered the questionnaires to the study respondents. The response rate was shown using table 1 as illustrated below;

Table 4.1: Response Rate Analysis

Respondent	Frequency	Percentage %
Targeted respondents	124	100
Actual respondent	119	96

In the study, out of the 124 respondents targeted in this study, 96% responses were obtained. This implies that all except 5 respondents targeted in this category took part and responded to the study questionnaire. This was accomplished because the researche made

a school to school visit to the respondents targeted to ensure that each and every one took part in the study. However, only five respondents failed to respond to the questionnaire after being introduced to the study because they felt apprehensive about the study and also could not comprehend the questions that were being asked. The quantitative data analyzed, presented and discussed depends on this category of respondents

4.1.2 Demographic information

The study sought to underscore the demographic information of the students from the selected day secondary schools in Muhoroni Sub-County. This was imperative in order to investigate the socio-psychological factors influencing their grammar performance and pronunciation based on their knowledge, attitudes and practices.

4.1.3 Gender of Students

The researcher sought to establish achievement of both boys and girls in secondary schools. All the students who were involved in the study were in the fourth grade of secondary school education. Secondary school education is inequitably distributed in Kenya between genders According to the MOE Strategic plan 2006-2011 the total enrolment in Kenyan secondary schools in 2003 was 926149 with 48% being female students. For this reason it was necessary to assess the distribution of boys and girls among Form 4 boys and girls.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Students by Gender

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Male	70	58.8
Female	49	41.2
Total	119	100

As reported in the Table 4.1 a total of 119 students at the secondary school level in Muhoroni Sub-County participated in the study. Of these 58.8% were male while 41.2% were female. This distribution is similar to the national average where secondary school education is inequitably distributed. The Kenyan situation confirms Musili (2002) studies on marginalized populations in Ethiopia and Tanzania. It was revealed that in Sub-Saharan countries there is low enrolment for girls and high wastage. In this part of Africa males are expected to do wonders in the world of knowledge and technology while a woman's place is at home, keeping up with the livelihood of the family.

4.1.4 Adults that Resided With Students as Reported by Students

The adults who resided with the students were a crucial component in shading light on the students' background and its influence on their achievement. The researcher sought this information from students. Their responses are reported in Table 3.

Table 4.3 Adults that Resided with Students as Reported by Students

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Both parents	47	40.8
Father only	7	4.4
Mother only	30	25.6
Guardian	35	29.2
Total	119	100

The study findings as reported in Table 4.3 revealed that 40.8% of the students involved in the study lived with all their parents. Of the remaining, 59.2% either belonged to single parents or lived with their relatives. The students who never lived with parents could be faced with life challenges such as lack of uniforms and stationery, which could have impacted negatively on their concentration and achievement in school. The likely cause of this problem is children being orphaned by HIV/AIDS and other life threatening diseases like malaria and TB.

4.1.5 Parental/Guardian Highest Educational Level

Fiskes (2002) while assessing learning achievement concluded that family background contributes more to learning out comes than school resources. Khan (1993) argues that girls' education, for example, varies positively with their families' incomes and holdings. Table 4 shows the educational level of students' parents/guardians.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Parental/Guardian Highest Educational Level

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Never went to school	12	10.0
Primary school	51	42.9
Secondary school	35	30.5
University/college	21	17.6
Total	119	100

It is apparent from Table 4.4 that most of the students' parents/guardians had primary education and constituted 42.9% of the total sample size. They were followed by those whose parents/guardians had secondary school education who comprised 30.5% of the total sample size. Those whose parents/guardians went to college/diploma level constituted 17.6% while 10.0% of the students' parents/guardians never went to school. The findings indicated that the majority of students were from families with very low levels of education while others had parents who were illiterate.

This could affect the students' achievement in school because firstly, parents with low levels of education are least concerned with their children's academic achievement and do not even value taking them to school. This is captured in the Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005, A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research. Secondly, poverty levels are very high in such households because it is unlikely that someone whose highest level of education is primary or secondary school could get gainful employment if at all.

Consequently, they would be unable to provide basic needs to their children to enable them learn comfortably in school or even afford to take them to better schools (Glewwe 2002).

4.1.6 Students' Attitudes in English language and its influence on the performance

The study focused on students' grades in English. An analysis of students' grades was conducted for Form 4 students in 2014 end of second term exams. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 4.5

Table 4.5: Distribution of Students' Marks in English

Marks	Frequency	Percentages
23 – 33	13	11.2
34 – 43	26	21.2
44 – 53	30	25.6
54 – 63	31	26.0
64 – 73	12	10.4
74 and above	7	5.6
Total	119	100

As shown in Table 4.5 English marks were obtained from 119 students. From this number 11.2 % of the respondents had between 23-33 marks, while 21.2% had between 34-43 marks. There were 25.6% students who had scored between 44-53 marks and 26% with between 54-63 marks. Those who had between 64-73 marks constituted 10.4% while 5.6% had between 74-83 marks. It is evident from the table that more than half, i.e.

60 students of all the students had 53 marks and below in English while less than half, that is 50 students had managed to score 53 marks and above.

These figures clearly indicate that the performance of English in the sub-county was very low

4.1.7 Students' Motivation and Ability in English language

For students to do well in English, they must first and foremost develop motivation in the subject and secondly, have the ability to tackle the subject. Table 4.6 reports on the students' responses when they were asked to state their motivation in English.

Table 5.6 Students' Motivation in learning English

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Highly Motivated	21	17.6
Motivated	29	24.4
Undecided	17	14.3
Slightly Motivated	38	32.9
Not Motivated	13	10.8
Total	119	100

According to the findings, only 17.6 % of the students interviewed were highly motivated in learning English while 32.9% were slightly motivated. These findings suggest that majority of the students had no motivation in English which could affect their performance in English learning and pronunciation.

4.1.8 Language difficulties encountered based on different language aspects.

According to data findings, the following table shows the different aspects of language and respondents having difficulties with different aspects of language.

Table 5.7: Language difficulties encountered with special reference to the different language aspects.

Language aspects	Number of respondents with difficulty in different language aspects.	
	Frequency	Percentages
Spoken	39	31.9
Written	33	27.7
Listening	26	21.8
Reading	21	17.6
Total	119	100

From the findings it can be seen that majority of the respondents at 31.9% had difficulty in speaking fluent language, the language aspects providing major learner difficulties is speech, followed by written English, listening and reading at 27.7%, 21.8% and 17.6% respectively. This shows how speaking and writing English language takes the mainstream in any attempt to learn the language.

4.1.9 Reasons for difficulties in English grammar

Various reasons were given to the existence of the cited problems encountered with different language aspects. A majority of learners seemed to have non-existence of certain sounds in mother tongue; lack of clear cut differences between the sounds and others which include teaching methods, lack of practice and late exposure of the sounds.

Table 5.8: Reasons for difficulties in English grammar aspects

Reason	Number of learners	Percentages
Non-existence of some sounds	57	47.9
Negative attitude	44	37.0
Late exposure	18	15.1
Total	119	100

According to the study it can be seen that there are various reasons for occurrence of difficulties cited in English grammar aspects. Out of the 119 students that took part in answering this question, majority of the respondents at 47.9% indicated non-existence of some sounds in the learners' first language, 37.0 cited negative attitude towards the language, while 15.1% indicated late exposure.

4.2 Reasons for pronunciation difficulties

Also closely associated occurrences of learners difficulties in pronunciation is the learners attempt to reduce pronunciation errors, effectiveness in teaching methods and

willingness to consult available facilities like dictionaries, resource centers', library, lecturers and fellow learners. Out of the 119 respondents that took part in the study, majority at 53 cited mother tongue interference as one of the main reasons for pronunciation difficulties in English language, 31% indicated poor reading skills, while 16% indicated low interest in the language.

4.2.1 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

The researcher sought the opinion of teachers with regard to the availability of teaching and learning materials. Table 4.9 reports on the students responses on whether there were enough teaching and learning materials.

Table 4.9: Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

Variables	Frequency	Percentages
Strongly disagree	32	26.3
Disagree	56	47.4
Undecided	6	5.3
Agree	25	21.4
Strongly Agree	0	0.0
Total	119	100%

As reported in Table 4.9, 73.7% of the students were of the view that the teaching and learning materials in their schools were not enough for effective teaching. Another

5.3% of the students were undecided while 21.4% of the students were of the view that there were enough teaching and learning materials to enhance effective teaching. It is clear from the study that the majority of teachers involved were of the view that the teaching and learning materials were inadequate for effective teaching. This also would have contributed to low students' achievement in English language learning.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The conclusions made in this chapter are based on the research findings. The recommendations have also been based on the conclusion. The study was carried among the form four students from the selected day secondary schools in Muhoroni Sub-County, to find out the socio-psychological factors influencing their performance on English grammar and pronunciation. Students were the major respondents whose views and opinions were analyzed.

5.1. Summary of findings

The main objective of this study was to find out the reasons for difficulty in articulation of some sounds by Luo day secondary school students and also to investigate the relationship between socio-psychological factors e.g. attitude, motivation, age, and their influence on the learning of English language among the students of Muhoroni Sub-county and to establish possible ways to eliminate these difficulties in the students' performance.

According to the study it can be seen that there are various reasons for occurrence of difficulties cited in proper English language articulation aspects. Out of the 119 respondents that took part in the study, majority at 53% cited mother tongue interference as one of the main reasons for pronunciation difficulties in English language, 31%

indicated poor reading skills, while 16% indicated low interest in the language. Also cited were lack of clear cut differences between the sounds and others which include teaching methods and lack of practice and lastly late exposure to the language. According to the findings, only 17.6 % of the students interviewed were highly interested in English language while 32.9% were slightly interested. These findings suggest that majority of the students had no interest in English which could affect their performance in English language. This interest constituted the attitude the learners had towards the language as the interest here represented the attitude learners had towards the language.

5.1.1 Motivation

For students to do well in English, they must first and foremost develop motivation in the subject and secondly, have the ability to tackle the subject. According to the study findings, only 17.6 % of the students interviewed were highly motivated in learning English while 32.9% were slightly motivated. These findings suggest that majority of the students had no motivation in English which could affect their performance in English learning and pronunciation.

5.1.2 Age

According to the study it can be seen that language learning is affected by the age at which a learner is exposed to the language for the first time. A majority of learners seemed to have had late exposure to the language and other reasons which include use of mother tongue as language of instruction, non-comprehensive teaching methods and lack of language practice and use at an early age.

5.1.3 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

As reported in the study, 73.7% of the students were of the view that the teaching and learning materials in their schools were not enough for effective teaching. Another 5.3% of the students were undecided while 21.4% of the students were of the view that there were enough teaching and learning materials to enhance effective teaching. The study also showed clearly that the majority of teachers involved were of the view that the teaching and learning materials were inadequate for effective teaching. This also would have contributed to low students' achievement in English language learning and mastery and use.

5.2 Discussions of the findings.

5.2.1 Sound articulation and learning of English language

The language learning tasks starts by entry into a new, unfamiliar perhaps even forbidding cognitive system- the target language. It is a system that will invariably differ from the one he/she knows in ways that are striking and often quite spectacular. According to analysis of this kind of utterances made from the list of words that were read out by learners, it is evident that learners have major difficulties in pronunciation of some words. Difficulty in sound articulation is seen at phonetic level. The following seem to be major difficulty: the sounds are described phonetically as follows: /x/ oral, voiceless, palatal-alveolar, fricative; /z/ oral, voiced, alveolar, fricative. It has been identified that these sounds do not exist in Luo language. Most learners have thus conditioned their articulators to produce particular sounds. They thus, find it difficult to articulate new sounds which a movement of the articulatory organs in a particular manner

with different places of articulation. As a strategy to pronounce these sounds, most learners use forward placement in which such sounds could be replaced with sounds which are pronounced in almost a similar way and which are easier to articulate. This is what causes pronunciation errors.

5.2.2 Students' Attitude and its influence on performance

There is the question of the learner differences with regard to accuracy. Learners differ in terms of motivation and aptitude and in the use of self-monitoring strategy for obtaining input for learners from it. A learner's attitude will be manifested in the willingness to search different materials and resources for accurate forms, engaging other learners and requesting for help from qualified authorities like inspectors. Learner's strategies will largely depend on the learner's willingness to make errors and is ready for corrections. Learning can only take place when the learner has access to input in the second language. Okwara et al (2009) terms availability of essential teaching and learning material as conditions ideal for the effective teaching of integrated English. Spoken input will occur in the context of interaction involving in a learners attempt to converse with another speaker. It can also be found in such contexts involving discourse for example listening to the radio or watching a program or film on television. According to research it has been found that not all learners have a positive attitude towards English. Some like it whereas others have a negative attitude towards the language. This is shown by lack of need to constantly consult such facilities as the dictionary. For any language learner a dictionary is a very important facility. Audio visual materials are another faculty for a language learner. They provide a context for non-reciprocal discourse. Through such

discourse a learner encounter sounds, words and expressions in actual use. These sounds give learners a clue on how certain sounds and words are used. It should also be emphasized that learning a language does not only involve reading texts, consulting dictionaries and listening to pre-recorded programs. It also involves a learner's actual participation in the discourse. Learners should take part in speech in order to make judgment of their level of competence and accuracy in the production of the speech especially pronunciation and grammar. Instructors should require learners to be actively engaged in group discussion, small personal presentations, individual question- response sessions and small plays. Such contexts provide evidence for areas of difficulties which should hence be worked upon for correction. Most learners have preference for known language over English.

5.2.3 Motivation of Students and its influence on performance

Closely associated with the learners attitude is motivation towards language learning which depends for goal which a language is learnt. Children are known to easily learn language because of a motivation to be like others and the desire to take part in other child activities. A child thus is focused in order to learn the language so fast. This can be attributed to the amount of time a child is able to dedicate to learning exposure to the target language and due to very few rigid opinions about groups and other languages that would otherwise inhibit learning of other languages. On the contrary, adults learn a foreign language for various reasons; because of course or program requirements or because they are in another country with a different language.

Adults thus learn language because of more conscious reasons and not spontaneously as children. Adults are also not bound to give all their attention to their learning task as they have other responsibilities. Motivation would also be enhanced by teaching methods used by language instructors. Language teaching should create situations that promote second language use and learning. Teaching involves organizing learning environments and language use and language learning task should be intended to facilitate learner's language development. A major level for an unsatisfactory level of proficiency in languages such as English is that the reality of teaching the language does not favor its adequate acquisitions.

The language often plays no meaningful role in the life of the community from which a learner comes from. Usually the learners have commonly had no exposure to this language either in real life or on radio, television or other media. It is thus heard only in the school environment. There is also the general size of the classroom. Lecturers handle groups as large as 50 students and above. It means that learners will often not get a chance to say anything other than to repeat, usually in chorus version, the structures presented to them. Large classes also mean that, even if the instructor wanted to use a communicative approach to teach, they would find out that their classes were probably engaged in effective communication. Motivation is very important in overcoming unfavorable circumstances in some aspects of language learning. There are various sources of motivation.

They include the learning activities. Here the stimulus for motivation is the natural interest of learning. It can also be influenced by success or failure experienced by learners. Learners who do well experience rewards and are thus encouraged working harder. Poor performers are discouraged leading to lack of persistence success, greatly influenced learner performance. It should however be noted that instrument oriented motivation which is based on advantages that could become available if a language is proficiently known, such as professional advancement: the capacity to ones job well and the ability to read useful materials in the target language, is less effective because it is rooted in the learners personality which is the dependent on external pressures. The learner is thus less likely to expand effort to achieve cumulative progress in the target language.

5.2.4 Age of the Students and its influence on Performance

According to the researches in the area of language acquisition in children, some linguistics have supposed that a child predisposed to a foreign language before the age of six years is bound to acquire a native- like accent. This is usually attributed to an innate device known as '*Language Acquisition Device*', which provides innate knowledge of linguistic universal. This device is said to be highly functional up to the age of puberty when the language acquisition process slows down considerably. It is thus highly doubted, if adult foreign language learners have access to this innate facility. Most language linguistic researchers have established that the process of localization of functions in the brain is completely at the puberty age. It is said that this could be reason why learners do not easily attain native-like control on a new language, especially as

concerns pronunciation. This could be attributed to fact that, as learners grow older, the elasticity of the many muscle groups required to coordinate the different articulatory organs reduce or due to the fact that the muscles become so conditioned to producing sounds of first language. Learners will thus find it difficult to refrain the muscles to produce sounds found in the target language that differs from those of the first language. It could thus be said that most Luo students in Muhoroni sub-county find it difficult in learning the language because they have attained the past age of puberty. They have already set opinions and perceptions concerning specific issues.

5.3 Conclusions

According to the analysis based on the study, it was evident that learners have major difficulties in pronunciation of some words. Difficulty in sound articulation which was seen at phonetic level. It was identified that these sounds do not exist in Luo language. Most learners have thus conditioned their articulators to produce particular sounds. However these difficulties could be eliminated by adopting the following measures among others: Involving a learner into actual participation in the discourse. Learners should take part in speech in order to make judgment of their level of competence and accuracy in the production of the speech especially pronunciation and grammar. Instructors should require learners to be actively engaged in group discussion, small personal presentations, individual question- response sessions and small plays. Such contexts could provide evidence for areas of difficulties especially difficulty in articulation of sounds which should hence be worked upon for correction.

The study also established that Language learning is affected by attitude and motivation. Motivated, demotivated students have different perceptions of their class, teacher and curriculum. Their perceptions are responsible to for their attitudes. An individual's perception of the class, perception of the teacher, peer group, syllabus and his/her awareness for future needs affect his/her attitude to language learning. Learners differ in terms of motivation and aptitude and in the use of self-monitoring strategy for obtaining input for learners from it. A learner's attitude will be manifested in the willingness to search different materials and resources for accurate forms, engaging other learners and requesting for help from qualified authorities like teachers and inspectors. Learner's strategies will largely depend on the learner's willingness to make errors and is ready for corrections. Learning can only take place when the learner has interest and access to input in the second language.

It was also established that Learners who are intrinsically motivated learn faster than learners who need external incentives to get motivated. Their learning is more likely to become mechanical learning in comparison to self-motivated lot of learners. Self-motivated or intrinsically motivated students with high aspirations and goal orientation show better results. Some researchers have also supposed that a child predisposed to a foreign language before the age of six years is bound to acquire a native- like accent. This is usually attributed to an innate device known as '*Language Acquisition Device*', which provides innate knowledge of linguistic universal. This device is said to be highly functional up to the age of puberty when the language acquisition process slows down

considerably. Most language linguistic researchers have established that the process of localization of functions in the brain is completely slow at the puberty age.

Some scholars in the field of educational technology emphasize the needs for use of instructional resources in learning. Tucker (1986), Romiszowski (1988) and Miller (1990), these scholars have generally concurred that proper utilization of instructional materials makes learning become more interesting, effective and meaningful, helps learners acquire various skills like reading construction, chart making among others, ensure that learning is retained longer than that acquired by purely verbal teaching and greater benefits can be obtained from the use of multimedia approach, when all the senses are involved in learning. The advancement in educational technology implies that the use of mass media and teaching machines like overhead projectors and computer-assisted instruction are becoming increasingly necessary in the teaching of English.

5.4 Recommendations

This study has tried to identify the problem of pronunciation and by extension possible reasons for existence of learner difficulties in learning English specifically grammar. It particularly concerned with Luo students of Muhoroni sub-county. It has thus come up with the following recommendations which could help eliminate some of the problems encountered in learning English grammar:

- Schools mostly department of languages, should start working towards the establishment of a language laboratory. This facility is helpful to all learners of foreign languages. It would encompass facilities showing how specific sounds

should be articulated and perceived. Learners would know from expert sources how such sounds are produced, organs involved in both articulation and perception.

- These departments should provide for unlimited availability of text and audiovisual materials. All learners should have access to books, dictionaries, journals and newspapers at all times. Learners should also have access to radio and television programs, audio cassettes and films. This should promote a live participation and would especially indicate how sounds and words are used.
- Class sessions should be more participative rather than receptive and dormant. The instructor-student relationship should not explicitly show superiority of the instructor as a major participator. Instructors should possibly adopt the direct method of teaching, a kind of immersion approach, in which the target language is used extensively as a way of instructing and communication in the language classroom. Much of the learning should be oral.
- To avoid the issue of oversized classes, schools should request for more instructors of English. Learners if well should be below 20 in number per session. This could enhance learner's participation and ensure close monitoring of learner progress and difficulties of pronunciation. The instructor could thus know which teaching approach would suit best to ensure high levels of proficiency.
- The learners should be highly motivated in learning English so as to familiarize with the sounds. The English teacher should make the students more active

through oral participation. This could highly motivate learners as they would set their targets on how to achieve a better performance and be competent.

- Learners should be encouraged to learn English and hold a positive attitude towards it. The learner exercise should not be approached with any prejudice whatsoever. A positive attitude could enhance acceptance of the language and the need to know the language hence become familiar with the sounds thus being proficient and competent in the performance.
- The English language should be introduced to a learner at an early age when the ‘language acquisition device’ is still active. It should also not be learnt for a limited time of three hours per week.
- Learners should be encouraged and should train themselves to be continuously proactive even when away from the classroom environments.
- They should engage fellow learners, advanced learners especially their instructors. This would provide them with sufficient input for language processing and learning.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

There is need for researchers to fill the gaps that has been left by this study. For example, the study has not covered conclusively on the socio-psychological factors influencing the performance of students in boarding schools. Besides it has not covered institutional factors influencing the performance of the students in English languages. Future researchers and academia should look at these areas and also put into consideration the findings of this research study when designing theories that will help in understanding

better on socio-psychological factors affecting the performance and achievements of students from both boarding and day secondary schools.

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APPENDIX I
INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear student,

I'm Josephine Akoth Ouya, a postgraduate student in the department of education at the University of Nairobi, carrying out a study on difficulties in acquisition of English grammar with pronunciation among Luo day secondary school students in Muhoroni sub-county.

The information collected will be used to make recommendations for the improvement of pronunciation of some English sounds. All information collected will be useful and will be treated confidentially.

Your cooperation and assistance will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Josephine Ouya.

APPENDIX II

STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read and answer the following questions as per the instructions given. Give honest and accurate information in each question given. Kindly do not write your name anywhere.

Put a tick on the space provided

Demographic information

Gender: Male

☐

Female

☐

1. Which sounds have you encountered that gives you pronunciation problem?

a) sh

☐

b) /Z/

☐

c) Zea

☐

d) Zoo

☐

2. What reasons make you find difficulty in articulation of sounds?

a) Non-existence of some sounds

☐

b) Negative attitude

☐

c) Late exposure

☐

3. Which learning resources do you feel can help you acquire good pronunciation?

a) Audiovisual

b) Story books

c) Text books

d) Dictionary

4. Have you ever contacted a dictionary to aid you in pronunciation?

a) Yes

b) No

5. Do you think laboratory invention can assist in enhancing the pronunciation?

a) Yes

b) No

6. At what age did you start learning English language?

a) 0-6 years

b) 6-10 years

c) 10-14 years

d) 15-20 years

7. Do you find reading English materials interesting?

a) Highly interesting

b) Interesting

c) Slightly interesting

d) Not interesting

e) Undecided

8. How often do you speak in English?
- a) During English lesson only
 - b) Always
 - c) Never
 - d) Occasionally
9. What is your general attitude towards English?
- a) Positive
 - b) Negative
 - c) Do not know
10. Which aspect of English language do you find most difficult?
- a) Spoken
 - b) Written
 - c) Listening
 - d) Reading
 - e) Comprehension
11. What motivates you towards learning English?
- a) To pass exams
 - b) To gain knowledge
 - c) For curiosity

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Demographic information

Gender: Male

Female

1. Which sounds have you encountered that gives you pronunciation problem?
2. Why do you find difficulty to articulate?
3. Which learning resources do you feel can help you acquire good pronunciation?
4. Have you ever contacted a dictionary to aid you?
5. Do you think laboratory invention can assist in enhancing the pronunciation?
6. At what age did you start learning English language?
7. Do you find speaking and reading English materials interesting?
8. How often do you speak in English?
9. What is your general attitude towards English?
10. Which aspect of English language do you find most difficult?
11. What motivates you towards learning English?

APPENDIX III
SAMPLE OF WORDS TO BE PRONOUNCED

SOUNDS/ /

WORD	STUDENTS VERSION
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VERSION

1. Share	/sea/
2. Shame	sem/
3. Shambolic	/sambolic/
4. Shallot	/salot/
5. Shell	/sell/
6. Sherry	/seri/
7. She's	/si:s/
8. Shoes	/soes/
9. Shock	/sok/

SOUND/Z/

1. Zap	/ sap/
2. Zeal	/si:l/
3. Zealot	/si:lot/
4. Zeta	/se:ta/
5. Zoology	/suoloji/
6. Zoom	/soom/
7. Zuni	/suni/
8. Zygote	/saigot/
9. Zoo	/su:/

APPENDIX IV

LIST OF DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MUHORONI SUB -COUNTY

10. Bishop Okoth mixed Day
11. God- abuoro mixed Day
12. Kandege mixed day
13. Kibigori mixed-day
14. Magare mixed day
15. Mariwa mixed day
16. Masara mixed day
17. Ng'eny mixed day
18. Ngere mixed day
19. Nyakoko mixed day
20. Nyando mixed day
21. Nyang'oma mixed day
22. Nyatao mixed day
23. Obumba mixed day
24. Oduwo mixed day
25. Ogen mixed day
26. Oginga- Odinga mixed day