

**FACTORS AFFECTING LEARNERS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN
THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ENABIBEL ZONE,
NAROK NORTH DISTRICT-KENYA**

BY

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**A RESEARCH SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE
LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELORS OF EDUCATION DEGREE
IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

AUGUST, 2011

DECLARATION

I **Nenokuai Pesi**, declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any Institution of higher learning for the award of a degree or any other award.

Nenokuai Pesi (Student)

Signed..........

Date ..26-8-2011.....

APPROVAL

This work has been submitted under my supervision

Signed 

Mujuni Evarist

(Supervisor)

Date 29/8/11

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this entire work to my dear husband, children

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to thank everybody who has helped me in the pursuit of education.

I specially wish to extend my sincere gratitude to my dear wife, children and wife for the financial and moral support and prayer they offered me throughout my education endeavors.

More thanks to all the staff members and pupils of Enabibel model Kisiriri and Skinter primary schools who quickly and dedicatedly responded to my questionnaires; without which I would not have accomplished this work in time.

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Mujuni Evarist for his parental guidance and corrections that have not only to accomplish this work but also improved my skills in the field of research

Special thanks go to the Collge of Open and Distance Learning Kampala International University staff, friend and students' fraternity especially Serah Kamundi who offered constructive criticism especially during the preparation of questionnaires and editing this work.

To all individual friends who assisted me through research period in one way or another, but whose names have not been mentioned, may the Almighty richly reward you. You spared much of your time to help me.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research study was to establish the factors affecting the learning of English language by learners with specific leaning difficulties (SLD) in the three selected schools.

There were about nine classes which were involved to represent the fifteen classes in the schools representing regular schools in the division.

The researcher targeted two learners from each class. Fortunately all of them and returned the questionnaire since the researcher was in that school and could easily do the follow up. The researcher also targeted a sample population of ten teachers teaching English language from different classes in that school. They all co-operated and responded very well.

During the research, qualitative approach was preferred by the researcher. Questionnaires were used as to the instruments of collecting data. Three type of questionnaire were used. One was meant for the learners another one for the head teacher and the other one was for the subject teachers.

From the findings of the research, it was established that learners with specific leaning difficulties face problem in regular schools. They include lack of especially trained teachers in special needs education, negative attitude by the teachers and other learners, lack of adequate learning methods used by the teachers. These learners also have negative attitude towards themselves.

The researcher therefore suggests steps that can be undertaken to improve the academic Achievements in English language of the learners with specific leaning difficulties in regular schools.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Education is a right to everyone and is supposed to be free and compulsory as stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This forms an important basis for the education of all in the world regardless of disabilities. This is especially so in Kenya as the government has embraced the policies of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA) by the year 2005 and 2015 respectively (Mwaura and Wangera (2002). The main goal of these policies is for every child to achieve the ability of being active, productive and independent member of society irrespective of his/her ability, race, tribe and social-economic background.

There are various types of learners with special needs who are found in various regular schools countrywide. They include the visually impaired, the mentally retarded, the hearing impaired and those with specific learning difficulties (learning disability) among others.

Specific learning difficulties are a unique handicap which is not easily recognized at a distance just like the physical disability or visual handicap. learners with specific learning difficulties (SLD) fail in specific areas like reading, spelling, arithmetic, among others. For a long time, some of these learners have not been identified and thought to be mentally challenged. They have been neglected, stigmatized and isolated. There is therefore need to understand the individual learner in light of social relationship, attitude, teaching approaches, teaching/learning resources and not his/her in terms of disability, family background or behavior.

The area under study has a number of learners with specific learning difficulties in different classes who do not perform as expected in one subject or the other. Findings have shown that English is the poorly performed subject in comparison to other subjects at school and national levels.

Some of the learners cannot spell, read and write correctly thus have specific learning difficulties. They are said to be dyslexic.

Ordinary teachers find it difficult to help these learners since are not aware of their challenges. For these learners to perform better, they need to be identified early and be given appropriate support by means of individualized education programs (IEP), appropriate teaching approaches and instructional materials and modification of curriculum to suit every learner by specially qualified teachers.

Networking among teachers, parents and other stakeholders is a very important tool in improving the performance of learners with specific learning difficulties in English as English is the medium of instruction and almost all other subjects apart from Kiswahili and mother tongue are taught using English. Thus it is crucial in improving the overall performance of every learner. By doing this it will reduce cases of specific learning difficulties in English, dropping out of schools, early marriages, drug abuse and other criminal offences which are increasing at high rate. Learners will feel motivated and encouraged to stay in school and learn.

It is in this regard that the researcher studied variables like teaching methods, teaching and learning resources available for teaching English, learners' attitude towards English and subject teachers, teachers' attitude towards learners with specific learning difficulties, learning

environment and the national curriculum to establish factors affecting learning of English learners with specific learning difficulties in this area.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English is an essential subject because is a medium of instruction in schools and other higher institutions. It is also used in offices and can assist individuals in many other fields like interacting with people from different tribes, nations and races. This means that acquisition of adequate skills in English pronunciation, speaking, reading and writing will determine one's performance not only in English but other subjects.

Quality education is a right to every child as stipulated in many education policies, declarations and statements such as the Salamanca statement on inclusive education of 1994 which among others recommended that it is a right of every child to have education that considers the child's unique abilities and learning needs. However these have not been successfully catered for owing to different curricular being tried here and there. The current curriculum is not specifically designed to accommodate children with varied learning difficulties including those with specific learning difficulties. Their potential are not fully nurtured, developed and exploited through educating them appropriately. Schools in this area have been found to have various challenges which eventually lead to poor learning and subsequent failure in internal and national examinations.

The researcher feels that this state of affairs is undesirable owing to the various attempts the government has made towards inclusive education. Despite this, it is also known that if these challenges are addressed earlier before it is too late, these children can lead a normal life,, integrate well in society and become productive citizens. This study is therefore intended to investigate the factors the learning of English by learners with specific learning difficulties with

a view to elaborate on measures that can be taken to improve the situation and enable these children lead a quality life.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the factors affecting the learning of English language by learners with specific learning difficulties in selected schools. The study was also aimed at establishing the attitudes of learners towards language subjects as well the teachers' attitudes towards learners with special learning needs in a regular classroom setting.

It was also the researcher's need to investigate the possible causes of specific learning difficulties in language acquisition especially English as a subject. The researcher also aimed at making necessary contribution by suggesting recommendations that once adopted will assist to solve the challenges both learners with specific learning difficulties and teachers face in the learning and teaching of language and communication.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify the causes of specific learning difficulties in children.
- To find out challenges encountered in teaching children with specific learning difficulties
- To suggest possible intervention measures that could be made to overcome the challenges encountered

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the set objectives, the researcher focused on the following questions:

1. What are the causes of specific learning difficulties in children?
2. What challenges are faced by teachers in teaching learners with specific learning difficulties?
3. What measures can be taken to overcome these challenges?

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in Enabibel Zone, Narok North District-Kenya. It was limited to only primary schools and only three schools were chosen to cover this study. One of these schools a unit for children with mental retardation while rest of the two are mainstream schools. The researcher identified three head teachers, six teachers, three parents and six mentally challenged children as respondents of the study.

The study addressed the challenges encountered in teaching children with specific learning difficulties in the area and centered on the attitudes of the mentally challenged children and the views of their parents towards their education and other factors that affect the education of children with specific learning difficulties while at school and the learning environment.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is the researcher's hope that the findings of the study will:

- Improve the teachers, parents and community attitudes towards children with specific learning difficulties.
- Create awareness about the need to educate all children irrespective of their varying abilities in the division and the country as a whole.
- Shade light to policy makers and implementers the educational needs of children with specific learning difficulties such that attempts can be made to implement and enforce the laws that have been put in place but have rather remained to be seen in books and not on the ground
- .Help the researcher as a teacher to be in better position to help children with specific learning difficulties.
- Be used as a springboard for further research in future to uplift the wellbeing of children with mental problems and all children with special needs in their struggle for equal opportunities and dignity.

LIMITATIONS

The researcher encountered the following limitations among others:

- The time scheduled for this study was limited. This time also coincided with the time set by the district for athletics and theatre act competitions. It was therefore hard for the researcher to get teachers and children since they were out for these activities. The researcher was therefore made to visit the schools several times.
- Some respondents expected to be paid back in exchange of their answers. They were therefore rigid in giving their responses.
- The study was too expensive for the researcher in terms of transport, stationery, typing and binding among others.
- It was tiresome for the researcher because she had to carry out the study and at the same time continue with the work program and teaching practice.

DELIMITATIONS

- The knowledge of the respondents' mother language enabled the researcher to collect data with much ease.
- The manageable study sample enabled the researcher to collect data easily within short time given.
- Costs were lowered because of the distance from the researcher's working place to the sampled schools. There was therefore no need for accommodation expenditure as the researcher gathered information.
- Seeking help from people of good will also enabled the researcher to get such services as typing and binding at a subsidized cost.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Disability – A condition which makes an individual unable to function normally.
 2. Normal learners – learners who do not suffer from any kind of disability.
 3. Specific learning difficulties – problems learners encounter in learning that affect their academic achievements and daily life skills.
- Inclusive education – Equal opportunities given to learners who have learning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Special education has been seen for many years as to be centred in special schools separate from the regular schools. Many schools were started initially for learners with sensory handicaps and then universal elementary education spread for those with learning difficulties. The 1944 act opened up the possibility of integration.

According to Pockington and Lucas (1983), the act states that:-

"Apart from the special schools ordinary schools could also give special education to pupils who suffered from any disability of the mind and the body "

There are different definitions of specific learning difficulties or disabilities that have been given by different writers.

Children with specific difficulties are not combined in one group but are different categories. These children are not mentally retarded although their performance is impaired by the inability to sustain attention.-

According to the public law 94 - 142 as in Ndurumo (1930 P. 252) proposed the following definitions.

"Specific learning difficulty or disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell and do mathematical calculation "

According to Samuel Kirk (1962) as cited in Michael M. Ndurumo defined learning

disability as;

"A retardation, disorder or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing or arithmetics resulting from possible cerebral dysfunction and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation or cultural or instructional factors."

The researcher does not wholly agree with Samuel Kirk above since poor instructional factors cause specific learning difficulties, sensory deprivation such as hearing and visual impairment do not allow incidental learning and stimulation leading to delayed development milestones and specific learning difficulties.

Mental retardation also can be a cause of specific learning difficulties since delayed language acquisition which is important in learning other subjects. A mentally retarded child has short attention span.

3 Causes of Specific Learning Difficulties

Teaching Approaches

These are the procedures by which learners can be helped to move from their initial ways of behaving to those that have been set up as objectives.

According to Dawn Quist, learners learn more effectively when teachers use a variety of teaching methods. Each lesson should include:-

spoken information, supporting teaching and opportunities for discussion both teacher and learner and learner and learner, time for thinking and reflection.

According to psychological Jean Piaget (2002) teachers should understand the developmental milestones and plan learning and teaching experiences for these learners according to which will cause specific learning difficulties in learners

2.4 Educational Factors

Educational factors also are assumed to cause learning disabilities. Lovitt (1978), observed that;

"Inadequate instruction prevents children mastering the subject matter"

Wallace and Mcloughlin (1975) and Hirsch (1970) note that:-

"Inadequate teaching methods are used by some teachers to teach certain subjects "

According to D. J. Williams (1991), teachers should use variations of teaching methods to cater for individual needs and the needs for a particular class.

Teachers should use appropriate teaching methods and vary them accordingly considering the needs of individual learners and the child's interest. This will make them master the subject matter intended.

2.5 Environmental Factors

These are factors within the environment that influence or affect how a child learns.

According to Grace Osodo Ogonia (2002) causes of specific learning difficulties are divided into three main classes, before birth, during and after birth.

2.5.1 Causes before Birth (Pre-Natal)

These are conditions, which may damage a child's brain leading to a child developing learning difficulties before the child is born. They interfere with growth and development of the foetus brain. These are:-

- Genetic or hereditary factor

- Air pollution
- Smoking
- Misuse of drugs
- Rubella (German measles)

2.5.2 Perinatal (During Birth)

- Unusual delivery
- Prolonged labour
- Low birth weight
- Unfavourable birth conditions
- Anoxia (lack of oxygen)

2.5.3 Post Natal Cause (After Birth)

Head injuries - head and skull abnormalities

- Child abuse
- Diseases
- Lack of stimulation
- Contact with some chemicals

According to Wallace and Mcloghlin (1975), Lovitt (1978) Reid and Hresko (1980),

"Environmental factors include nutrition health, safety, sensory stimulation, language stimulation and emotional and social development. "

If all the environmental factors are not provided for the child, then the child cannot concentrate properly or attend to a given task as expected and thereby develop specific learning difficulties. The child will absente himself from school or class due to sickness or hunger or lack of security which may make him with drawn. He may develop anti-social

behaviours. Isiolo being semi arid area, people depend on relieve food and at Kilimani primary school children depend on school feeding programme and when both are there, they go hungry and cannot concentrate on learning. They can be away from school until programmes resumes thus having very many learners with specific learning difficulties in the school due to lack of continuity.

2.6 Attitude

Attitudes are the feelings towards something or somebody. They can be positive or negative.

According to cammy (2002), on teachers attitudes states that,

"A good teacher in an inclusive classroom must understand learners needs and plan on how best to ensure they benefit from the learning experiences without being ridiculed by others. In that way children with special needs feel good and enjoy being a member of the class. If a teacher has negative attitudes towards the learners, the learner will develop negative attitudes towards the teacher and the subject and among the learners themselves."

2.7 Heredity

It is the conditions that are passed from parents to their offspring.

According to Michael Ndurumo (2002),

"Some education psychologist believe that heredity plays an important influence in a child learning. The child inherits some characteristics from parents that have an effect on his/her future development and behaviour. "

2.8 Exposure

According to Gichangi'a (2002) states that

"A child may at times miss an opportunity to learn simply because the environment fails to provide it. A child who is allowed to explore and manipulate environment learns faster that that one in a restrictive environment. "

According to Williams (1991),

"Hearing poor English spoken outside the school hinders the learning of English at school"

After (1978) states that,

"Language learning would not be complete without relating it to the niceties of expression. This calls for various language games and activities and all work which makes learning interesting and alively. "

2.9 Education Resources

Educational resources refer to all factors outside and within the classroom that makes teaching and learning experiences more effective in an inclusive setting. They may be human or materials to be used to facilitate or support learning.

According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2001)

"Teaching and learning materials make the learning and learning more vivid and more interesting."

Williams (1991) states that,

"No one can do a good job unless he has good and appropriate tools. This is just the same way a teacher needs teaching aids to us in his teaching reading and writing. The chalkboard, chalk and course books are not enough. "If a teacher does not appropriate teaching aids the learning is not effective and the learners fail to understand and master the concept taught thus developing specific learning difficulties.

If learners with specific learning difficulties are not provided with appropriate learning resources, they will not learn effectively for the resources assist them to explore discover, experiment, image or figure out and language development.

specifically they have problems in perceiving how word form or sentence form. In word formation they mix up the word and come up with a word such as "ITKCHEN" for "kitchen" and in a sentence form with "what this is?" for "what is this?".

The two also goes on to state,

"These children have a problem in sequencing and remembering names, people, things or events as they occur in a sentence or paragraph. In order to reduce the stress induced by this problem, they would rather keep quite or reply in a telegraphic form of speech in which two words communicate the answer."

Njuki and Oganda (2001), stated that learners with specific learning difficulties deficit the following characteristics:-

- Problems in written language including spelling.
- Spoken language including learning a second language like English.
- Reading comprehension.
- Basic reading skills.
- Mathematical calculations and reasoning.
- Excessive motor activity (hyperactive).
- Poor co-ordinator of both sensory and motor activities.
- Difficulty in thinking and remembering past experiences.
- Acting without thinking (impulsivity).
- Difficulty in paying attention to an on-going activity.

According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2001), The pupil changes mood frequently Child is unable to perform with hands and legs.

Have speech and hearing disorder that have nothing to do with ear problems

May have memory and thinking disorders

2.12 Intervention Measures

According To Oscar In His Article "Patience And Time Crucial For Pupils With Severe Difficulties". That Appeared In The East Africa Standard Of 10th June 2004 Stated That children with specific learning difficulties need patience and time. He further states that school authorities should provide different ways of teaching English to students with severe learning difficulties in English.

The students and the teacher should work hard to visualize English problems e.g spelling, sentence structure and pattern, punctuations, vocabulary and word formation including handwriting by actively involving the learners and using appropriate teaching , learning aids and varying the teaching approaches to make the subject easier to understand and practical.

Extra time should be given for more practical since such students have reading and comprehension difficulties, the student should read loud and listen carefully. This strengthens their hearing skills. The writer emphasized that the main problem of dyslexia and dyscalculics is memory deficit. The ministry of education Science and Technology English core module (2002) cited how learners with specific learning difficulties require proper techniques when assisting them solve some academic tasks. Some of these are : setting reasonable goals. Tasks set should be manageable and be to the ability of the learners. Teachers should give clear instructions to the learners. Some learners with SLD"S look as if they understand given instructions while they are actually confused. Teachers should make physical arrangement for the highly destructive and hyperactive learners. Guideline should be set for appropriate classroom behavior and help the pupils to work

towards them. Teachers should modify their activities from the simplest to the most complex. Children need to be given evaluation test to see if they need more help. The teacher should use visual aids in the class and should also correct or mark the pupils work and reward their successful performance and help them understand what they did not get right. The teacher needs to develop individualized Education programme in English where there are difficulties.

Other intervention measures according to Ndurumo, (1993) include task analysis, precision teaching, behaviour modification and educational programming. He further states that residential school placement although rarely used, can serve children who require full time placement in an educational setting.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the methods and ways that the researcher used in carrying out this study. It includes the research design, target population, sample technique and size, research procedure and data analysis techniques. It describes the nature and patterns the researcher followed while compiling data.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study used descriptive research design as it involved qualitative methods of data collection. This study adopted a descriptive research design. This enabled the researcher to obtain a better understanding of the causes and impact of teacher quality on academic performance of learners not only in this area but elsewhere world over. The method chosen allowed a collection of comprehensive and intensive data and provided an in-depth understanding of the topic under study

3.2 AREA OF STUDY

The study was carried out Enabibel zone, Narok North district-Kenya. The area was chosen because the researcher teaches in this area and has identified learners with hearing impairment and their minimal performance. The sampled schools have large numbers of learners and teachers as well.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZE

The study concentrated on teachers and management of the sampled schools from the area. The management and teachers helped in investigating challenges facing hearing impaired learners and suggesting possible intervention strategies.

The population involved in the study comprised Head teachers, teachers and learners from the sampled schools in the division.

3.4 SAMPLE PROCEDURE

Respondents were selected using convenient sampling but with regard to their individual ability to provide the required information through each instrument. Convenient sampling enables the researcher to choose the nearest and most convenient person to act as a respondent for the study. The process is continued until the required sample size has been reached. Both male and female teachers were given equal opportunities to participate in the study.

3.5 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The researcher used questionnaire approach as it was considered ideal for collecting required data. It is the most commonly method used when respondents can be easily reached and are willing to cooperate. This method can reach a larger number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. The respondents have freedom to say whatever they want to say and what they know since their identity is not revealed

3.6 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher developed questionnaire from the set objectives of the study. With the introduction letter form Kampala International University, the researcher obtained permission from the Head teachers of the sampled schools to carry out the study. The researcher then

designed a program on how to visit the schools at different times. The researcher distributed questionnaires to the sampled respondents and collected them later after they had been filled.

3.7 DOCUMENTARY REVIEW

Secondary data used was obtained from the main library of Kampala International University, records from district Education Assessment and Research Services (EARS) centre, Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), Kenya Methodist University, and records from the sampled schools

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

After the data had been collected, brief information was presented in frequency distribution. The data was analyzed in three columns; the first column showed category, the second showed frequency and the last showed percentages. The data collected was analyzed, presented and then discussed briefly concerning learners with mental retardation. The data in frequency columns was converted into percentages and recorded in percentage columns. It consisted of a number of tables, well analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction.

In this chapter, the researcher presents analyses and discusses based on the objective. Data analysis is on variables like teaching approaches, educational resources, relevant for teaching learners with specific learning difficulties, leaning environment and the support given to learners with specific learning difficulties.

When analyzing the data, the research used descriptions and tables for easy reading and interpretation.

The questionnaires were given to ten learners and ten English subject teachers. They all gave the responses on each case. The collected data enabled the researcher to make some suggestions on how to assist learners with specific learning difficulties in English.

4.1 Presentation and analysis of the teacher's Responses.

Table 1:No. Teachers in the school and their qualifications

QUALIFICATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ATS 1	2	10
ATS 2	1	5
ATS 4	2	10
P1	13	65
P2	2	10
SNE	-	
TOTAL	20	100%

From table 1, it shows that the school has twenty trained teachers in different qualification. There is 10% ATS 1, 5% ATS 2, 10% ATS 4, 65% P2 and no teacher is trained in special needs education. From the head teacher's response there were two male teachers and eighteen female teachers. This meant that there was gender imbalance in the school. From the same response, four teachers were undergoing special needs education training. That means only twenty percent of the teachers in the school had some knowledge on special needs education and eighty percent had no knowledge at all. Even the head teacher had no knowledge on special needs education.

According to the researcher the learners were almost not identified and supported. Therefore the teachers need to be sensitized on special needs education so that they can be able to handle learners with specific learning difficulties and support them approximately. Also the school needs to be provided with at least a few teachers who are qualified in special education so that all the learners needs can be met and ensure everybody acquires the intended knowledge, skills and attitudes in learning. Gender balance also be done in the school.

TABLE 2: SCHOOL ENROLMENTS

CLASS	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL
1 E	25	25	50
1 W	20	28	48
2E	17	18	35
2 W	18	20	38
3E	25	23	48
3 W	20	24	44
4E	17	28	45
4W	18	22	40
5E	20	24	44
5 W	22	23	45
6N	25	22	47
6S	18	28	46
7N	18	23	41
7S	17	25	42
8	27	8	35
TOTAL	244	341	585

From table 2 above, it shows that there are five hundred and eighty five pupils in the school. There are three hundred and forty one boys and two hundred and fifty four girls.

The classes were large with an average of forty pupils in each class. It is not easy to manage large classes, therefore the size of the classes contribute to specific learning difficulties since class control is difficult and the teacher gets tired quickly and does not attend to each and every learner. The large classes are as a result of free primary education.

The size of the class also determines the teaching approaches to be used by the teachers. According to the researcher these large classes needed to be divided to ensure effective learning takes place. The teachers need to group the learners into mixed abilities, use peer tutoring and exercise team teaching in order to support learners with specific learning difficulties in English. Also it will ensure a good class control whereby everybody will be attentive and learning effectively. Noise hinders proper learning.

QUESTION 6

From question 6 on the questionnaire, the information given by the head teacher was that the deployment of teachers teaching English is on teacher's interest. Other times the head teacher delegates duties without considering the interest or qualifications of the teachers.

This implied that a teacher may be allocated a subject he / she can not handle comfortably. May be the teacher has failed in this subject or has not mastered any knowledge of the subject. This will lead to many learners having specific learning difficulties in that subject. Transfer of teachers and lack consistency leads to lack of accountability in the teaching of English and the result is specific learning difficulties.

QUESTION 7

From question 7 on the questionnaire, the information got from the head teacher was that the physical facilities like classroom, desks, chairs and tables, playground, toilets and game balls are not adequate. They need to be added so that learners can learn comfortably.

Playing facilities were not enough. They need to be provided so that the child can develop in all the areas since play is the child's main business in life. Therefore those physical facilities are important.

According to the researcher, lack of all these essential facilities in learning, bring ineffective learning in the school. Congested classes lead to poor class control and hinders acquisition

of knowledge. Teachers become tired and are not able to attend to individual learners effectively.

In the schools some children in the lower primary classes come to school in the afternoon for their classes. These are young children and cannot concentrate much especially when it is dry and hot in Lugari.

Classes begin when the children are already tired after morning play or work. This calls for parents to provide these physical facilities.

QUESTION 8

From question eight on the questionnaire, the information derived from the head teacher is that the teaching and learning resources in the school are not yet adequate. They are shared and improvised. Luckily with the current government, grants for free primary education, they are trying to provide them although not yet adequate.

Therefore lack of enough learning and teaching resources lead to specific learning difficulties in English.

TABLE 3: SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Subject	(x) scores	Frequency	Fx	Total
Kiswahili	75	3	225	28.7
Maths	36	3	108	13.8
English	33	3	99	12.6
Science	62	3	186	23.7
J.H.C.R	52	3	166	21.2
TOTAL		15	784	100

The table above gives information on the performance of the school for three terms 2007 from class one to class eight in five subjects. The general performance of the school is average.

English and mathematics are lowering performance. They are below average in relation to

other subjects. English is poorly performed in the whole school with the mean score of 12.6%. According to the table, Kiswahili is the best performed subject in the school with a mean score of 28%, followed by science with 23% then G.H.C.R. with 21% then maths with 13.8% and then lastly English with 12.6% which is poorly done:

According to the researcher, there were very many learners with specific learning difficulties in English who need to be identified and supported accordingly. This will improve their performance in English and the school's general performance.

The subject panel in the school to discuss the causes of poor performance in English and how to improve its performance. The teachers to change the teaching approaches or see how they can modify the exam or evaluation to suit learners' needs. If learners fail continuously in a subject they tend to despair and become withdrawn. They might develop negative attitudes towards the teacher and the subject. So teachers should motivate and encourage them to have a good rapport for effective learning. They have to work as a team from class one to eight.

QUESTION 15

From question 15 on the questionnaire the information got from the head teacher response was that the possible causes of specific learning difficulties are absenteeism of both the teachers and learners, teaching approaches used by the teachers when teaching in class, lack of appropriate teaching and learning resources and congested classes. Time factor is also a cause because time is limited to cover certain topic or item forcing the teacher to rush over it even before the learners have understood. Attitudes of teachers toward the subject and the learners. Also learners attitudes towards school, teachers and the subject. Then lastly

transfer of teachers anytime of the every now and then leads to lack of continuity and accountability in teaching and learning.

According to the researcher, if absenteeism is minimized and teachers sensitized on special needs education, they will have a change in their attitudes towards learners and take them as unique individuals with diverse needs. They will be able to identify and support them where they are experiencing difficulties in English. Teachers also should create a good or conclusive learning environment where learners will be actively involved in the learning of English.

Table 4: presentation and analysis of the English teachers responses

TEACHERS CODE	CLASS	NUMBER OF PUPILS
TA	1E	50
TB	2W	38
TC	3E	42
TD	4W	40
TE	5W	45
TF	5E	44
TG	6S	46
TH	7N	41
TI	7S	42
TJ	8	35
		423

The researcher used the questionnaire to find out if sizes of the classes at Baharini school has affected the learning of English by learners with specific learning difficulties in English.

For the table 4 above, it is observed that the classes have over forty learners except two west and eight which have thirty eight and thirty five respectively.

There were fifty learners in class one East, forty eight in class three East, forty in class four

west, forty in class five west, forty four in class five east, forty six in six south, forty two in seven south, forty one in seven north and thirty five in eight.

According to the researcher, it is not easy to manage large classes and therefore the size of the classes affect the learning of English by learners with specific learning difficulties in Lugari south schools. This is because teachers are unable to attend to each and every pupils in the class who have diverse needs. The size of the class also determines the teaching methods to be used by the teachers.

The researcher feels that teachers in Lugari should be sensitized on special needs education so that they will be able to cater for individual differences and interest. Teachers can also group learners into mixed ability and guide them to do peer tutoring where learners with specific learning difficulties are assisted by their peers. This will foster good relationship among the teacher and the learner themselves. If possible the classes can be sub-divided in manageable units to curb the problem of specific learning difficulties.

Table 5: Teaching methods used by the English teachers.

NO	TEACHING METHOD	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Question and answer	10	24.4
2	Discussion	4	9.8
3	Lecture	7	17.1
4	Discovery	4	9.8
5	Group discussion	6	14.6
6	Look and say	5	12.2
7	Explanation	2	4.9
8	Demonstration	3	7.3
	Total		100%

The table above shows the teaching methods used by teachers teaching English in the area of study.

It shows 24.4% of the ten teachers teaching English in the schools use question and answer

method. 17.1% use lecture method. 14.6% use group discussion, 12.2 use look and say while discussion and discovery methods are used each by 9.8% of the teachers. Explanation and demonstration are used by 4.9% and 7.3% of the teachers respectively.

According to the researcher, teachers should have a variety of teaching methods in order to arouse and sustain interest and stimulate learners with specific learning difficulties in English.

The researcher felt that lecture method is teacher centred and a boring method of teaching. The learners do not practically participate in the learning. Therefore teachers should avoid it and involve learners into other activities that promote learning and more the lesson learner centred. This will avoid passive learning. Question and answer is used by 100% of the teachers. It is a method which provokes learners to think, reason and solve a problem. It also promotes good teacher interactions.

TABLE 6: POSSIBLE CAUSES OF SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

NO.	RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
	Lack of trained teachers in special	6	9.5
	Broad syllabus	10	15.9
	Time factor	10	15.9
	Lack of facilities	5	7.9
	Learners negative attitudes towards	6	9.5
	Teaching method	4	6.3
	Heredity	3	4.8
	Large classes	8	12.7
	Inadequate L/T resources	5	7.9
	Teachers feelings towards learners	2	3.2
	Teachers attitudes towards the	4	6.3
	TOTAL	63	100

The above table shows that teachers agreed that there are factors that affect the learning of English leading to learners with specific learning difficulties at Koromaiti primary school. 15.9% of the teachers agreed that broad syllabus and time factor affect learners with specific learning difficulties. These are major causes. 9.5% of them said that learners' negative attitudes towards English contributes to the problem. The learners absent themselves from school just to escape learning of English. 12.7% said large classes, 7.9% cited lack of facilities and inadequate teaching and learning resources in each case.

Teachers' attitude towards the subject and the teaching methods also 6.3% of the teachers in each case felt that they affect the learning of English. 4.8% agreed that heredity is also a cause. 3.2% of the teachers felt teachers' attitude towards learners 9.5% cited lack of specially trained teachers in special needs education.

According to the researcher specific learning difficulties in English at the school might have been contributed by a combination of factors as supported by the respondents. So to eradicate or reduce the cited factors, ways should be found to support learners encountering such problems in English.

There were no qualified personnel in special needs education in the schools. This means that learners with specific learning difficulties are not being catered for adequately. There was need for the school to be provided with at least a few qualified teachers in special needs education. In order to handle learners with specific learning difficulties in the school effectively more so in English language.

TABLE 7: TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES FOR ENGLISH.

NO.	L / T RESOURCES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
1.	Text books	1	10%
2.	Learning centres	1	10%
3.	Words and pictures	1	10%
4.	Picture word matching	2	20%
5.	Flash cards	1	10%
6.	Blackboard	4	40%
	TOTAL		

From the above table, it shows out of the ten teachers teaching English in the school, 40% of them use blackboard as the main resource, 20% use picture word matching, flash cards, word and pictures, textbooks and learning centres are used by only 10% of the teachers in each case.

According to the table it shows very few education resources are used in teaching of English. There is a big problem at support materials and teaching aids used in school. Learners with specific learning difficulties are not exposed to a variety of them.

The researcher feels that to use more learning and teaching materials aim at developing various skills. A resource like the blackboard should be used by all the English teachers to show learners how to write good and legible handwriting, spelling of words, and sentence structure. When a variety of learning and teaching resources are used, they arouse and sustain learners interest and they are motivated to carry out the task.

The resource should be carefully selected from the general classroom resources if the learners with specific learning difficulties have to benefit from an educational programmes of the school.

TABLE 8: ATTITUDES OF LEARNERS TOWARDS LEARNING OF ENGLISH.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Positive	4	40%
Negative	4	40%
Mixed	2	20%
TOTAL	10	100%

From the table it is noted that 40% of the teachers agreed that learners with specific learning difficulties in the school have positive attitude towards learning of English. 40% of learners with specific learning difficulties have negative attitudes towards learning of English. 20% of the learners have mixed feelings. They do not know whether they like it or not.

The researcher felt that the attitudes of learners towards learning English affect their performance. Negative attitude lead to lack of interest in English and lack of motivation. Attitudes and subjects are learned simultaneously through complex interaction. What we learn in school and how well we learn it are very closely tied to our attitudes about the school and the subject taught.

TABLE 9: TEACHERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH SUBJECT

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Positive	4	40%
Negative	5	50%
Mixed	1	10%
TOTAL	10	100%

From the table it shows attitudes of teachers towards English subject. 40% have negative attitudes towards English. 50% of the teachers have positive attitudes and 10% have a mixed feelings.

The attitudes of teachers towards a subject can affect the teaching and learning of the subject. The researcher feels that teachers who are positive plans and are always ready to teach to meet individual needs of the learners. They will create a conducive learning atmosphere and handle the subject comfortably and try to do remedial teaching when necessary. Negative attitudes affects teaching and learning of English and leads to learners with specific learning difficulties. So teachers should be allocated a subject they will be able to handle comfortably and have interest in.

TABLE 10: SPECIFIC SKILL AREAS LEARNERS HAVE DIFFICULTIES IN ENGLISH.

NO.	SPECIFIC SKILL AREA	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Illegible handwriting	2	20%
2.	Spelling	1	10%
3.	Inability to hold own ground in an	2	20%
4.	Reading comprehension	1	10%
5.	Failure to follow instructions	1	10%
6.	Failure to identify various speech	1	10%
7.	Poor oral reading	1	10%
8.	Reversal and inversions of letters	1	10%
	TOTAL	10	100%

From the above table, it is observed that 20% of the teachers noted that children have problem in handwriting (written language) and inability to hold ones ground in argument (spoken language) in each case. 10% observed that children have problem in spelling, reading comprehension, failure to follow instructions (listening comprehension), inability to identify various speech sounds in a word, poor oral reading (basic reading skills) and reversal and inversions of letters in each case.

From the table it is noted that learners have problems in different skill areas in English.

Therefore teachers should identify specific areas learners experience difficulties and support them accordingly. This will eradicate the problem experienced by learners in English. Learners should be actively involved in learning by giving them a lot of practice in all those skill areas. Therefore teachers to vary their teaching approaches for effective learning.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS RESPONSES

TABLE 11: WHETHER LEARNERS LIKE BEING IN SCHOOL AND DOING SCHOOL WORK

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	14	78%
No	3	17%
Neutral	1	5%
TOTAL	18	100

The above table shows the number of children who like being in school and doing school work, those who don't like and those who are neutral.

It is observed that majority of the learners in the school like being in the school. 78% of the learners like being in the school and doing school work. 17% do not like being in the school and doing work and 5% are neutral. They don't know whether they like or not. Those who like being in school enjoy the activities in the school and have good relationship with the teachers and other learners. Therefore they should be encouraged to continue in order to achieve their goal.

For those who do not like being in the school and doing school work, they do not enjoy school's activities and do not have good relationship in the school

The neutral learners sometimes enjoy being in school enjoying the activities and other times they do not enjoy. These last two groups of learners have a problem in school.

The problem to be identified and supported both in school and at home. They should be encouraged, motivated, given attention and love. This will make them change their attitude towards schools and work.

TABLE 12: SUBJECT PUPILS LIKE MOST

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Kiswahili	5	28%
P.E	3	17%
Maths	3	17%
Science	2	11%
GHCR	1	5%
TOTAL	18	100%

The table above shows that Kiswahili is the most liked subject by 28% learners. 22% of them like English, Maths and P.E are like each by 17% of the learners. 11% like science and 5% like G.H.C.R.G.H.R is the least liked subject in the school.

From the table pupils like certain subjects more than others. But generally all subjects are not liked by learners at the selected schools. The teachers should work as a team and the subject panel to identify the problem and lay strategies to make learners motivated. This will reduce the number of specific learning difficulties in English. Negative feelings affect effective learning.

TABLE 13: AVAILABILITY OF ENOUGH ENGLISH BOOKS

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Yes	12	67%
No	6	33%
Total	18	100%

From the above table 13, 67% of the learners feel that the English books in the schools are enough. 33% noted that English books are there but not enough. The school might, not be having enough English books for each and every learner because the classed are large.

According to the researcher English books are shared among learners. More English books to be bought for effective learning.

TABLE 14: LEARNER'S FEELINGS TOWARDS LEARNING ON ENGLISH

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Positive	8	44%
Negative	10	56%
Total	18	100%

From the table, it is observed that 44% of the learners enjoying learning English. 56% do not enjoy. A large number of respondents have negative attitudes towards learning of English hence is one of the factors that cause specific learning difficulties in English. Teachers teaching English should plan lessons with individual learners' differences in mind. They should be taught from known to unknown varying the teaching approaches and interesting activities. By so doing the learners will feel motivated and supported accordingly.

TABLE 15: ADEQUATE LEARNING FACILITIES DESK, BOOKS AND CHALKBOARD IN THE SCHOOL

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
No	14	78%
Yes	4	22%
Total	18	100%

From the table above, 22% of the learners agreed that learning facilities are adequate in the school. 78% felt that the learning facilities are not adequate in the school.

The researcher feels that learners should be comfortable in the school. Learners learn

effectively when they are comfortable and provided with enough learning facilities. The school administration and parents to ensure these facilities are available and enough for effective learning of English in the school.

TABLE 16: LEARNERS ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENGLISH SUBJECT TEACHERS

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Negative	10	56%
Positive	8	44%
Total	18	100%

From the table it is observed that 44% of the learners have positive attitudes towards their English teachers. 56% of them have negative attitudes towards their English teachers.

The researcher feels that those who have positive attitudes towards their teachers also like the English subject and perform it well. Those with negative attitudes towards their teachers are also negative towards English.

Therefore the teachers to use a variety of teaching methods to cater for individual differences. They have to plan interesting and motivating activities to arouse and sustain learners interest in learning. They also have to create good rapport with the learners.

Negative attitudes towards the teachers also affects learning of English and contribute to specific Learning difficulties in the school. The learners need to be counseled and guided to change their negative attitudes towards teachers in order to benefit from their teaching.

TABLE 17: WHETHER LEARNERS ENJOY LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN CLASS.

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Very much	6	33%
Much	10	56%
No	2	11%
Total	18	100%

The table above shows that 33% of the learners enjoy very much the activities given by their teachers. 56% like the activities and 11% do not enjoy the activities give by their teachers. Pupils should actively participate in the learning. So involving learners in learning activities promotes effective learning. Learners are able to learn new skills by doing arid improves the quality of relationships in the classroom making learning a fun. It also creates a good learning atmosphere.

Activities given should be appropriate and to the level of learners. They should be carefully selected and interesting to capture and sustain their interest. They also should stimulate thinking and reasoning in learners. Teachers should give a variety of them. If they do not enjoy they will develop negative attitude towards the subject and the teacher leading to specific learning difficulties.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the researcher summarizes the findings of the study, gives recommendations and draws conclusion on the findings.

5.1 SUMMARY

The study carried out to investigate the factors affecting the learning of English language by learners with specific learning difficulties in English in the selected schools in the district. The researcher limited himself to one school as a case study. He used questionnaires to collect data from the respondents. Qualitative methods were used to present and analyze data collected.

The researcher did some review on the related literature on the area of study. It was noted that in Kenya there are many types of learners with specific needs. Learners with specific learning difficulties are also found.

The review focused on definition of specific learning difficulties such as teaching methods, attitudes, environmental factors, educational resources heredity. Exposure and characteristics of learners with specific learning difficulties in English.

From the research findings the researcher found that specific learning difficulties in English have been caused by a combination of factors as indicated by the respondents' response in chapter 4.

The researcher observed that there was no single qualified teacher in special needs education in the school. That means learners with specific learning difficulties in English were not identified and supported accordingly.

The classes in the school were large due to free primary education by the government. The classes are difficult to manage leading to lack of individual attention in the school. Note was also taken that sometime teachers were allocated subjects by the head teacher without considering their interest or qualifications. These teachers could not handle the subject like English comfortably. Other times there was no consistency due to reshuffles from subject to another or class to another and other times transfers in between the terms. This leads to lack of accountability and continuity in teaching of English and causes specific learning difficulties.

Learning and teaching resources were not adequate in the school. They were shared and improvised. Physical facilities were there but not enough. In relation to other subjects English is poorly performed in the school. This means that there are very many learners with specific learning difficulties in English.

The teachers were not using varied learning and teaching methods and learning teaching resources in order to arouse and sustain learner interest and curiosity to learn. Learners were not actively involved in learning. They had negative attitudes towards English teachers. Learners in English experience difficulties in different skills areas.

Generally learners do not like the subject very much. Some learners do not enjoy the learning activities in the class.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The writer concludes that learners with specific learning difficulties look normal and it is not easy to identify them from a distance like physically handicapped or visually impaired learners. Therefore teachers teaching English should be sensitized on special needs education. They will be able to identify these learners and the skill areas they have problems and support them accordingly.

Children develop, learn better and play well when they receive constant care and attention.

Specially trained teachers in special needs education are very useful in each and every school for those learners with special needs.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

To achieve success in the education of learners with specific learning difficulties in English in a regular school, the researcher make the following recommendations:-

The government to train more teachers on special needs education and provide the schools with at least a few qualified personnel.

Other regular teachers to be sensitized on special needs education. This will make it possible for learners with specific learning difficulties to be identified and be given the appropriate support.

The large classes in the school to be sub-divided into a manageable classes so that

teachers can give learners individual attention and meet individual needs. This will ensure effective learning.

When the head teacher, is deploying teachers, he / she should do so considering their interest and qualifications. They get subjects they are competent in and can handle comfortably. There also must be consistence in teaching for continuity and accountability. Therefore transfers and reshuffles should not be done any time of the year. So that teachers can have continuity and accountability in teaching of English.

Physical facilities are essential in learning and should be provided. Parents could be involved in the provision *of* these facilities.

Teachers teaching English to indentify those learners with specific learning difficulties in English and support them accordingly so that they can improve in English. They need to be motivated in order to learn and individual differences catered for.

Teachers to vary the learning resources and teaching methods to arouse and sustain learners interest. Learners should be actively involved in learning practically.

Learners with negative attitudes towards their teachers and subjects should he guided and counseled in order to change their attitudes. Teachers should create conducive learning environment where all learners feel included and loved. There should be good relationship between learners and teachers and among learners themselves. They will develop positive attitudes towards their English teachers and English subject thus making them improve. Teachers to identify the skill areas in English which learners are experiencing difficulties and

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT FOR THE HEADTEACHER

The questionnaire based on problems experienced in learning of English language by learners with specific learning difficulties in English language in our district.

The information provide will be treated confidentially.

1. How many teachers do you *have* in your school.....
2. How man are trained.....
3. What are their qualifications?.....
4. How many teachers are trained in special needs, education in your school?
5. How many classes do you have in the school?
- b) How many classes do you have in the school?
6. How do you deploy teachers in teaching English language subject?
.....
.....
7. Do you have enough physical facilities like;
 - a) Classroom
 - b) Game balls
 - c) Playground
 - d) Chalkboard

b) Desks (0 Tables

c) Chairs

8. Do you have adequate teaching and learning resources in your school?

.....

9. (a) Are parent actively Involved In the learning of their children?

(b) it yes how?

(c) It no why?

10. What is the general performance of the school?

.....

11. Which subject is performed well in the school?

.....

12. Which subject is performed poorly in the school?

.....

13. What is the general performance of English subject in the school in relation to other subjects?

.....

14. (a) Are there learners with specific learning difficulties in the school?

.....

(b) if yes, how are they supported by the teachers?

.....

15. (a) What do you think are the possible causes of specific learning difficulties in the school?

.....

16. (b) How do you think problems could be solved?

.....

17. What other special needs do learners have in the school?

i)

ii)

iii)

iv)

v)

(b) How are they supported?

.....

18. What do you think could be done to improve the general performance of the school?

.....

19. What is the effect of free education on learning in the school?

.....

APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FORMAT FOR THE LEARNERS

The questionnaire is based on problems experienced in the learning of English by learners with specific learning difficulties in English in learning languages. The information given will be treated confidentially.

1. How many learners have you in your class?
2. a) How many learners have special needs are in your class? Specific the type of special need,
.....
.....
3. b) How are they supported?
.....
.....
4. Which methods of teaching do you use in teaching English in you school?
 - (i)
 - (ii)
 - (iii).....
 - (iv).....
 - (v)
5. What problems do you encounter in teaching of English in your class?
.....
6. a) Are there learners in your class who have specific learning difficulties in English language?
.....

b. If yes states the specific difficult areas'?

.....

c. How do you support them?

.....

d. What is their attitude towards learning of English language'?

.....

e. What is their relationship with other Learners?

.....

f: What is your relationship with them?

.....

g. What is you thick are the possible causes of specific learning difficulties in English language?

.....

h. What can be done to prevent the problem of specific learning difficulties?

.....

7. What teaching and teaming resources do you use in teaching English Language?

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

8. What is the performance of English in comparison to other subjects taught in your

.....

9. How is the parental involvement in the learning of learners in English language?

.....

10. What is the effect of three educations on learning and teaching a English language?



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Office of the Director

Date: 18th August, 2011

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

NENKOKUAI PESI REG NO. BED/42460/92/DF

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Research/Project.

The above named is our student in the College of Open Education and Distance Learning (CODL), pursuing a Bachelors Degree in Education Special Needs.

He or she wishes to carry out Research in your school/ Organization.

Research is a requirement for the award of a Bachelors Degree in Education Special Needs. Any assistance accorded to him or her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you,

