

**FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KISII SOUTH  
DISTRICT KENYA**

**BY**

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**DECLARATION**

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

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors influencing students' achievement in English language in secondary schools in Kisii South District Kenya. The specific objectives of the study were to investigate whether the teacher characteristics, institutional factors and facility related factors affected students' achievement in English. The study was guided by the Educational Production Function Theory (EPF) which explains the relationship between inputs and outputs in a firm. The study's target population was drawn from 18 secondary schools in the district. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the study sample, which comprised of 15 secondary schools. Questionnaires were administered to 19 English teachers and 250 Form Three students from the selected schools. The researcher interviewed 15 Head teachers from the selected schools. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive techniques estimated means, standard deviation and percentages. Inferential statistics used was multiple linear regression analysis. The major findings of the study were that low academic achievement in the district is caused by lack of teaching and learning resources and textbooks. Maternal education was found to influence students' academic achievement. Laxity among the unmotivated teachers was also a major cause of students' low academic achievement. Another finding of the study was that the type of school had a positive effect with students' academic achievement. The adequacy of English class readers had a positive relationship with students' achievement in English. It was also established that the English teachers' use of language that is easy to understand and their enthusiasm towards English led to the students' high achievement in the subject. The researcher recommended that for schools to perform better in national examinations, teachers should be given an opportunity to pursue further education and training. They should be motivated upon graduation in form of promotions and better remuneration. The Government should strengthen the policy on Free Primary Education (FPE) and subsidized secondary education. The Government should also employ affirmative action to increase the girl child's enrollment in schools. It should strive to ensure an equitable distribution of educational resources to all schools in Kenya. The results of the study are expected be useful to parents, students and teachers of English. They are also expected to be useful to educational planners and KNEC.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my parents Thomas Misati Makori and Clemensia Bosibori for their support love and encouragement.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

**B. Ed:** Bachelor Of education

**BEST:** Building Education Success Together

**DEO:** District Education Officer

**DQASO:** Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers

**FPE:** Free Primary Education

**HIV/AIDS:** Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

**KCPE:** Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

**KCSE:** Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

**KIE:** Kenya Institute of Education

**KNEC:** Kenya National Examination Council

**MOE:** Ministry of Education

**MSS:** Mean Standard Score

**TB:** Tuberculosis

**TSC:** Teachers Service Commission

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

#### **Background of the Study.**

Improving the quality of education is a priority task for many countries in the world such as Bolivia. 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. 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.

Providing quality education to increasing number of students as correctly observed by the Koech Report (1999) therefore means firstly 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.

The Kamunge Report (1988) recommended that the philosophy of education and training must always be in consonance with national philosophy in order for education and training to contribute positively to national development. Education and training the report states should prepare Kenyans to be nationalistic and patriotic. Consequently, the Kenyan philosophy of education will embrace the inculcation of a high quality of instruction. (Koech Report, 1999)

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence students' achievement. It was also to identify factors associated with students and their teachers, along with those associated with schools. In addition it was to compare the performance of schools in Kisii South District according to analysis of standardized performance tests.

Language is a means of communication among human beings. This implies that without language communication will be a problem. 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. It is 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 the students and the problems they encounter in their endeavors to learn English language. The study will concentrate on Kisii South District and seek to find the problems of learning English experienced in the area hence contribute to the knowledge obtained from similar researches in other areas. The researcher will pick on Kisii South District because of its dismal academic performance in the recent past. This is especially in the period between the year 2004-2007.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The performance of English in both primary and secondary schools in Kenya has been very dismal over the years. This has led to a public outcry from parents, teachers, educational planners and other education stakeholders.

In Kisii South District, 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 60marks. (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 district 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. The District's MSS was 3.5312. This was way below the performance of the neighbouring Districts of Kisii Central and Rongo which had MSS above 5. English was chosen in this study because it is the medium of instruction in Kenya from primary four, through secondary education, colleges and universities. (Okwara, 2009).

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. The poor achievement in English in Kisii South District may have contributed to the district's poor achievement.

The district's average achievement in KCSE was critical in determining the extent to which poor achievement in English had contributed to poor achievement in the district. Table 1.0 reports on the district's performance in KCSE since 2004.

**Table 1.0: Kisii South KCSE Past Average Achievement**

YEAR	MSS
2004	3.4511
2005	3.9778
2006	3.9244
2007	3.8369

It is evident from Table 1.0 that the district has continued to perform poorly in national examinations over the years as compared to the national averages. This data necessitates studies to establish the root cause of this problem. It was therefore, the intention of this study to identify the causes of low students' achievement in English in the study area and assist in formulating intervention mechanisms for improving performance in Kisii South District.

### **1.3. The Purpose of the Study**

To establish the factors affecting students' achievement in English language in secondary schools in Kisii South District.

### **1.4.. Specific Objectives of the Study.**

- a) To establish the influence of availability of teaching and learning facilities on students' achievement.
- b) To establish whether the teacher characteristics influence students' achievement.
- c) To find out the institutional factors that affect students' achievement in English.



### **1.5.0. Main Research Question**

What factors affect students' achievement in English among secondary school students' in Kisii South District?

### **1.5.1. Subsidiary Research Questions**

- a) What is the influence of the availability of teaching and learning facilities on students' achievement?
- b) What is the influence of characteristics of the English teachers on students' achievement?
- c) What is the influence of institutional factors on students' achievement?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study.**

The research findings will be useful to school managers, students, teachers, parents and educational planners. The school managers will find this study useful in making decisions as to what teaching and learning materials to provide in schools in order to enhance performance.

Students will be helped by the study to be able to know the importance of textbooks and other learning materials in improving their achievements. Parents will use this study to decide on what learning materials to offer to their children in order to enhance their performance. Educational planners will 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 will also be able to strategically plan for appropriate linkages between schools and with institutions of higher learning. This will go a long way in improving both internal and external efficiency in our schools.

### **1.7.0. Scope and Limitation of the Study**

#### **1.7.1.Scope of the Study**

The study was conducted in Kisii South District which had been newly carved from both Kisii Central and Gucha Districts. Kisii South is made up of one division namely; Suneka. It has a total of 18 secondary schools.

The independent variables that were considered in the study were the teacher factors, institutional factors and educational facilities. These factors had been identified to be related to students' achievement in other areas. It was therefore the intention of this study to investigate whether the same factors influenced students' achievement in Kisii South District in Kenya. All the conclusions made were derived from the data collected from Kisii South District.

Since secondary schools in Kenya receive teachers with similar qualifications and experience similar educational challenges, the results could be generalized to other schools in Kenya.

#### **1.7.2.Limitations of the Study**

Collecting information on the perception of English by students was faced with some problems whereby students had different beliefs about the English language. While others considered it more difficult to pass than other subjects, others regarded it easy. Another limitation of the study arose from the integration of English and Literature.

It was difficult for the researcher to determine which area of English was difficult for students. Was it functional skills, composition, comprehension, literary appreciation or grammar? The researcher relied on the overall grade scored by students in English to determine their achievement.

Collecting data on the number of lessons English teachers taught per week and whether they actually taught them was a limitation to this study. Some teachers inflated the number of lessons they taught in a week to create an impression that they were overloaded thus justify their laxity. The Head teachers provided the relevant information through interview schedules.

### **1.8. Theoretical Framework**

The study was based on the Education Production Function (EPF). It usually refers to an explicit mathematical equation between outcomes and inputs and an econometric strategy for estimating those relationships. Most often the significance and the strength of these relationships are investigated by multiple regression analysis such as ordinary least squares (Boissiere, 2004).

This model explains the relationship between inputs and outputs of a firm. In education, a school is considered as a firm although its main aim is not profit maximization but to process people into desirable and productive graduates. In EPF schools are treated as organizations that should try to maximize output such as learning in a variety of knowledge areas subject to their budget constraints.

Under this framework (EPF), it will be assumed that educational output as indicated by students' progression from one grade to the next is explained by educational input made of teacher factors, institutional factors and facility related factors. The output of EPF is usually specified as some level of achievement as measured by test scores.

To operationalize the EPF, this study assumed a log-linear relationship between school inputs and school outputs. The study was therefore based on the conceptual presumption represented by the following model.

$$A = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 I + \beta_3 F + \mu$$

Where: A is student achievement

$\alpha$  is a constant that indicates effects not measured by the factors under investigation.

$\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$  and  $\beta_3$  are estimated coefficients of regression that indicate effects of independent variables on the dependent variables.

T is a vector of teacher factors including quality of teachers, perception of English by teachers and selection of teaching and learning materials.

I is a vector of institutional factors including type of school practices, culture and Government policies.

F is a vector of facility related factors such as pupil-textbook ratio and use of teaching machines.

$\mu$  is the error of regression, which is to be normally distributed with a constant standard deviation.

## **1.9. Operational Definitions of Key Terms**

### **Students' Achievement:**

Refers to the students' attainment of good grades in mock examinations. The exam consisted of English paper 1, 2 and 3. The average marks a student could score is 100 the lowest being 0. The test was marked by English teachers and presented to the researcher as secondary data.

### **Facilities:**

Refers to the buildings equipment and services provided for teaching and learning purpose. They are measured in terms of availability using a 5 point likert scale. When the variable is favourable, strongly agree is given the value 1 and strongly disagree is given the value of 5. When it is unfavourable strongly agree is given the value of 5 and strongly disagree is assigned the value of 1.

### **Institutional Factors:**

Refers to those factors in an educational institution that influence the students' achievement.

They are basically policy issues that affect institutions over which respondents have no control of. These are type of school practices, culture and Government policies such as statutory class size, number of lessons taught in a week and integration of English and Literature. Respondents' views are sought over each factor. Appropriate choices are provided to choose from. Respondents would also be given freedom to express their views on non-structured items.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

Considerable international literature deals with factors affecting school performance. It is widely recognized that one of the essential factors influencing performance is family: particularly educational level and socio-economic characteristics. There is more controversy about the specific impact of other factors: spending levels, teacher and school characteristics, or other elements generally referred to as inputs into the educational process.

With respect to health and nutrition outcomes of schooling Glewwe (2002) reviews a number of studies that present evidence that mother's education can influence the health and nutrition status of children in the household. Thus children whose mothers are educated are likely to excel in education. Bossiere (2004) agrees with this view when in his study on the determinants of primary education outcomes in developing countries concludes that in poor countries households may not enroll their children even when they have access to education.

Over the past 25 years, researchers have carried out around a hundred studies to try to pinpoint the decisive factors influencing school performance in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, only recently do we find a few studies that specifically examine production functions, which provide a more objective base for analyzing factors influencing the quality of learning.

An example of such a study was done by Boissiere (2004). He thought of schools as producers of educational services that lead naturally to the notion of the education production function as used in microeconomics theory. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of evaluation.

Some of the findings from the study were that small class size is not cost effective in developing countries compared to providing more textbooks. Increasing the total hour of class instructional time was also found to be critical in determining students' achievement. The study compares very well with this study since it seeks to investigate the factors influencing students' achievement in English.

These studies also highlight educational inputs that contribute to acquiring cognitive skills, independently of the characteristics of the family medium. These studies, as demonstrated by Boissiere (2004) emphasize that the availability of texts and the provision of basic infrastructure show a high correlation with performance, and they confirm the importance of preschool education to performance in primary school. Other positive relationships include more personalized and flexible teaching methods, initial teacher training, teacher experience, teachers' presence in class, time dedicated to learning, homework, parents' participation and curriculum coverage. On the other hand, one factor that shows no consistent correlation is class size.

This is as per the study by Heyneman and Loxely (1983) on the effect of primary school academic achievement across twenty nine high and low income countries.

In comparative terms, although there is little data on school performance in Kisii South District, the available data clearly indicate that the performance of the District in national examinations is significantly lower than that of the other districts in Kenya. English is apparently one of the most poorly performed subjects not only in Kisii South District but also in Kenya.

In order to develop learners speaking and writing abilities, there is need for language education. Sifuna (1990) view English language as a necessary inclusion in the school curriculum. The reasons for language education according to the scholar are captured by (KIE, 1992): Fluency in English language enables the student to perform better in all other subjects. In addition he says that the school leaver will require good English in large variety of professional, commercial and day-to-day transactions in Kenya and the international environment. Sifuna's study underscores the importance of English which is also emphasized in this study.

English is indeed a very important subject in the school curriculum. Broughton (1993) states that when anyone learns a foreign language instrumentally, he needs it for operational purposes- to be able to read books in the new language and to be able to communicate with other speakers of that language. He goes ahead to observe that English is the language of the mass media. It is also the language of official institutions- of law courts, local and central government and of education. It is the language of large commercial and industrial organizations.

The fact that the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) classifies English as a core subject in the school curriculum underscores the value of this subject (KNEC,



2005). Clearly, a good command of English in a second language situation is the passport to social and economic advancement and the successful user of the appropriate variety of English identifies himself as a successful, integrated member of that language community. In addition, fluency in all aspects of English language enables a student to perform well in all other subjects offered in Kenya's secondary education curriculum.

## **2.2. Teacher Factors**

### **2.2.1 Quality Teachers**

According to Piras (1998) the dropping quality of public education has contributed to increased interest in high cost private schools and well-established provincial and national schools. This is also the case in Kenya. Parents able to assume the cost of a private school prefer to move their children from the public to the private system, under the assumption that this way they will receive a better education. Among the factors influencing this decision are frequent strikes by the Teachers' Union, which often interrupt public school activities.

Private education, while still serving a small fraction of students, has grown significantly in Kenya. Kisii South District alone had 2 private secondary schools during the time of this study. White (2004) in his studies on quality education asserts that school quality and learning outcomes can play a role in both supply and demand of education as with most goods and services.

If parents in poor rural households perceive the quality of their children's schooling to be poor (for example, the building is unsafe or teachers do not show up) they may be reluctant to send their children to school.

Studies done by Purves (2003) demonstrate that teachers' experience and training have a significant bearing on students' performance. Hanushek (1999), suggest that teaching upgrades by service training do not seem to improve the academic results of students. In contrast, the knowledge that teachers have of their subject, their experience in the use of didactic material and their expectations in terms of students are variables associated with improved student performance.

This correlates well with the intention of this study which was to establish the teacher characteristics in the study area. That is their level of training and teaching experience. With regard to the characteristics of each teacher, pedagogical practices including availability of time and homework are positively associated with students' performance (Psacharopoulos, 1985). According to Boissiere (2004, p.19) studies in developing countries show that there is a large difference between official and the actual instructional time in the classroom.

Teacher absenteeism is one major factor. Teachers' absenteeism is associated with poorer performance and, on the contrary, the more the hours (the more teaching time),

and the more positive student performance. His study was to investigate determinants of educational outcomes in primary schools.

Good teachers are careful to explain outline, summarize and review. They also give a lot of attention to vocabulary work. Good teachers also make sure students know what constituents successful performance so that they know when they are achieving success or they are given information on how to achieve success. This view was advanced by Broughton et al (1993). This means that for a teacher to be able to teach effectively and efficiently he/she must be well trained and qualified. This view is in agreement with that of Boissiere (2004) that pre-service training could be more effective. The overall suggestion here with regard to his study is that better trained teachers are more effective in cognitive achievement.

Effective teaching and learning entails well-organized lessons. Broughton et al (1993, P.38) observes that the often forgotten field of pedagogy is concerned with class management, questioning techniques, lesson planning and teaching strategies and the numerous daily tricks of the trade that separates the professional teacher from the amateur. The teacher apparently makes decisions about the problems involved in learning English. He/she reflects in his/her teaching the beliefs he/she holds about the needs of the learners, their ways of learning and the best method of motivating them.

In the light of his knowledge, the teacher can decide what English to teach, how to give practice in a meaningful way and how to prepare and execute a progression of enjoyable, well-organized lesson.

This is as per Broughton et al (1993, P.39) in his studies on reflections of education in East Africa. Bogonko (1992) correctly asserts that teachers are supposed to provide leadership. They are expected to be persons of refined tastes and sophistication. They should also be avid explorers of the world of ideas and experts in child development.

It is indeed true as Bogonko (1992) further argues that at the school the teacher is a disciplinarian, a parent substitute, a judge, a confidant and above all, a mediator of learning who guides children to achieve certification in education. These views help to emphasize the indisputable importance of a teacher in school. It is for this reason that schools should not only strive to have enough teachers, but they should be quality teachers.

The teacher should therefore be well trained to handle his heavy tasks to the satisfaction of everybody concerned. Proper teacher education is necessary to develop the teacher's moral and intellectual virtues and make of him an effective counselor, instructor, a master in his classroom and a real promoter of academic pursuits. Stones (1992) conducted studies on quality teaching.

He took a sample of cases from which he concluded that a fundamental thesis of teaching quality which is still alive and thriving in many parts of the world is that it is sufficient for teachers to have a thorough knowledge of subject matter and practical classroom experience: the former to ensure that they are up- to-date on the product they are to deliver, and the latter to ensure that they know how to deliver it.

The essence of a teacher's work is to communicate subject matter to pupils and sustain order within the particular context of the classroom.

According to Hughes (1994), it is the teacher's ability to teach successfully within the demanding circumstances of the classroom which is central to the primary teacher's professional expertise and distinguishes her from teachers in other walks of life.

### **2.2.2 Perception of English**

Richards and Lockhart (1994) conducted studies in The United States (US) to investigate the perception of both teachers and students on English as a second language. The study revealed that English represents different things to different people. For some it represents the language of English literature. For others it is the language of the English-speaking world. Some associate it with the language of colonialism. This implies that how well a student, for example, performs in the English language will depend on his or her own perceptions to that particular language.

From this study learners were found to have different beliefs about the nature of the English language which to a larger extent influenced their achievement. Some learners had a belief that English is much more difficult to learn than other languages while others had a belief that the most difficult part of learning English is learning Grammar, yet others had a belief that English is the world's most important language.

It is apparent from these beliefs that the learners' achievement of low or high grades would be determined by their own belief about the language that they are learning.

If they, for example, believe that English is the most difficult language to learn, they may be discouraged from working hard thus ending up with low grades. However their perception of English as the world's most important language will give them impetus to work hard and improve their achievement.

Teaching in secondary schools is indeed a challenging undertaking because as Tomlinson (1993) observes secondary schools expect professional skills from teachers such as competence in basic classroom management and the ability to organize and control pupils across the age and ability range. They should also have competence in good planning and preparation as well as a range of up-to-date teaching techniques and an ability to vary teaching and make effective use of resources. In addition they should have skills in assessment, marking and record keeping, good communication and a willingness to work within departmental guidelines.

### **2.2.3. Selection of Teaching and Learning Materials- Set Books.**

Piras (1998) argues that the choice of school texts and their distribution, along with the System for Measuring and Evaluating the Quality of Education should involve all the educational stakeholders. However, in Kenya most literature set books and material are selected by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the KIE subject panels and imposed on both students and teachers without consulting them. It is interesting to note that some of the KIE subject panelists are trained teachers.

It is therefore surprising that they can recommend obscure texts as set books. A good example is *The Merchant of Venice* by William Shakespeare. The author of this text has used Elizabethan English which is no longer in use.

Most of the words used in the text are not in modern dictionaries. This makes it cumbersome for students to find their meanings. The sentence construction and structure in this text do not have subject verb agreement. They are not in concord thus confusing to students.

Broughton et al (1993) postulates that English language teaching requires that decision are made about what is to be taught; the process of selection and about the breaking down of that body of knowledge or skills into teachable units. This is contrary to what is currently the case in Kenya. The content of what is to be taught in Kenyan secondary schools is, in most cases, hurriedly constituted and imposed on both students and teachers. This was especially done during the integration of English and Literature.

It is also imperative to note that any material selected to be taught in schools must be relevant to the local situation. Gakkai (1989) says that the standards of selecting material to be taught must come down to questions as mundane as what will have meaning in the lives of common people (students). He argues that to guide students on how to live their lives in harmony with the natural world and the human world is to guide them in creating value in these many areas.

## **2.3 Institutional Factors**

### **2.3.1 Integration of English and Literature**

Current trends in English have led to the integration of English and Literature. Innovations that have evolved due to information technology have also influenced the teaching, learning and examining of English. The subject is now being tested in three papers. These are: English paper 1, which dwells on functional skills. English paper 2, which deals with comprehension, literally appreciation and grammar while English paper 3 deals with creative composition and essays based on set texts. (KNEC, 2005). Initially English paper 1 consisted of comprehension, summary writing and grammar. Paper 2 was Literature in English while in paper 3 students wrote essays which were not based on set texts.

Clearly, the integration of English and Literature calls for adequate teaching and learning materials and in-service courses for teachers to enable them handle this area effectively and efficiently. However in the Kenyan situation teachers are expected to implement new policies such as this without proper or any in-service training at all. In most cases circulars of the guidelines on how such changes should be implemented take too long to reach the affected teachers if ever. There is no trustworthy information available on fundamental aspects, among them, number of teachers, administrative personnel and conditions in which schools function.

From the educational point of view, the reforms would have also dealt with providing support to teaching. There was need to develop guidelines for teachers and courses for upgrading teaching skills. It was also vital to add pedagogical advisors to provide technical assistance to educational units.



### **2.3.2 School Size and Link with Other Schools and Students' Achievement**

Raywid (1994) carried out studies in the US to determine whether the school size affects academic outcomes. He discovered that schools in the US have grown larger and larger but how this growth affects learning is still being explored. The studies revealed buildings housing two or three thousand students are not uncommon. High schools in some large cities house five thousand students. The trend towards large schools according to Raywid's study stems from the belief that large schools can deliver education with major economies of scale. This trend is true even in the Kenyan situation where it is believed that large schools are economical to run and that they produce high quality output.

In the US ironically despite the need for more classrooms because of renewed enrollment growth, any neighbourhoods face losing their schools because of declining enrollments or school consolidation. This is also true in the Kenyan situation whereby many schools that are with less than 100 students are in the threat of being closed or merged to enhance efficiency in teaching and learning resources. (MOE, 2008).

According to estimates of the Building Education Success Together (BEST), nearly 200 schools in Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati and Washington, D.C., may be closed or consolidated because they have smaller student populations than they were originally designed for. (BEST, 2002). Yet this decision is being made even while evidence accumulates that small schools may work better than large ones, especially for students with lower socio-economic status. Indeed, there's an impressive body of literature linking small school size to positive outcomes. Hanushek (1999), for

example, beliefs that smaller classes are better. Pinnel (2000) is another scholar whose results of his study were in favour of smaller classes.

Howley, Strange and Bickel (2000) researched about school size and school performance in impoverished communities where they gathered evidence that smaller schools enhance achievement. While the evidence from their study affirms that small is generally better, they argue that the definition of small varies across studies. They further argue that at one level there is the question about whether or not policy makers should be aiming to create schools of some specific size. In contrast, many studies are looking at the effects of size as a “continuous” variable.

This finding implies that a policy of smaller size, no matter the starting point, and notwithstanding any absolute definition of smallness, is appropriate. This may be especially true in low-income communities. But despite the possibility that any reduction in size is good, the consensus seems to be that small-school benefits are achieved in the 300- to 400-student range for elementary schools and less than 1,000 students for high schools (Cotton 2001). Much of the work linking school size to education outcomes derives from case studies and other less quantitative evidence in various parts of the world.

There is even stronger evidence linking the effects of small school size and higher performance in communities having low socio-economic status. Pertinent findings often stem from the Matthew Project, inspired by the 1988 work of Friedkin and

Necochea, who presented empirical evidence linking smaller schools with stronger academic performance in impoverished communities.

Over time, Friedkin's and Necochea's findings have been replicated in studies conducted in schools in districts in Arkansas, Georgia, Ohio, Montana, Texas, and West Virginia, and in districts in California other than those Friedkin and Necochea studied (Howley and Bickel 2000). While specific effects vary from study to study, and while the definition of small varies across studies, the cumulative evidence in these works is that smaller school size leads to higher performance in poor communities.

In general, school size has been tied to other desirable outcomes besides better academic performance. Small schools can improve teacher attitudes. There is less research on this point, but most of it links smaller schools to higher levels of cooperation between teachers, better relations with school administrators, and more positive attitudes toward teaching. Lee and Loeb (2000) found more positive teacher attitudes in the small schools that planners created in Chicago as part of a city-wide plan to reduce school size.

Many studies dispute the often-heard justification for consolidating smaller schools into larger ones based on economies of scale. These works document the absence of economies of scale in public organizations and especially in public organizations that are labour intensive, such as schools. The evidence is fairly conclusive that economies of scale quickly become dis-economies of scale as schools grow in size.

(Steifel et al., 2000). He points out that the perceived limitations in the program that small high schools can deliver, and their presumed high cost, regularly have been cited as justifications for our steady march toward giantism.

The research convincingly stamps both of these views as misconceptions. Not only does the cost of education increase with larger schools, but related research shows that curricula do not improve with increased school size. Indeed, some research indicates that the supposed improvements in curricula associated with school size face rapidly diminishing marginal returns. Pittman and Haughwout (2002, p. 337) argues that “It takes a lot of bigness to add a little variety.” All these studies agree on one thing. A specific benefit associated with smaller schools is higher student achievement.

While the school is properly the centre of care for induction, it should not try to do it all. It is imperative for the school to have a linking within other schools and with higher education because as Tomlinson (1993) observes, this brings essential contacts and wider horizons. By establishing such links therefore, schools would learn the secret behind other schools’ excellent performance in national examinations. English teachers would also benefit immensely from such linking.

This broader context can help create a frame work for assessment of the work of the teacher and could provide for second thoughts and appeals. Good performance in schools is mandatory because according to Hughes (1994) recent education reforms have increased pressure on schools to be seen to deliver ‘the goods’. This is in agreement with the current study which reveals that schools are under pressure to demonstrate efficiency.

### 2.3.3 Class Size

In spite of expectations to the contrary, there have been cases where larger class size was associated with improved performance. This argument is advanced by Hanushek (1999) in his study on the influence of class size on students' achievement. Studies conducted by Boissiere (2004) point out how instructional time on task is related to other factors often identified as determinants of education outcomes. Class size is therefore related to time on task insofar as many educators believe that smaller classes allow for more time and attention to each student.

Class size is an important factor in school design and derives a host of costly facility-related issues that are part and parcel of the school building's planning, design, construction, cost, maintenance, and operation. Given that education is labour intensive, class size is a big factor in determining the number of teachers needed and, hence, how much education will cost. While social scientists are engaged in an intense debate over the effects of class size on educational outcomes, there is widespread popular belief that smaller classes are better. (Hanushek, 1999).

The idea that smaller classes are better is supported by studies conducted by Pinell (2000) in the US. He concluded that small class size is more important to student achievement than bigger class size. He found out that nearly half the states in the US have enacted legislation and are spending hundreds of millions of dollars each year to reconfigure school buildings to reduce the student-teacher ratio to twenty or fewer students per teacher. This is in line with this study which sets out to verify whether class size do influence students' achievement in English.

More positive conclusions on the influence of class size have been drawn from an analysis of Texas schools. Using data from more than 800 districts containing more than 2.4 million students, Ferguson (1991) found significant relationships among teacher quality, class size, and student achievement from first through seventh grades, using student/teacher ratio as a measure of class size.

Ferguson found that district student achievement fell as the student/teacher ratio increased for every student above 18:1 ratio. Other studies find that class size affects test scores (Ferguson, 1991). These effects were greatest for students of lower socio-economic status. While the econometric evidence has been inconclusive, there have been a series of experiments in which class sizes have been reduced, and the results of these experiments have been interpreted to support the benefits of smaller class size. In Indiana, the Prime Time project reduced class size from approximately twenty-two to nineteen students in first grade and from twenty-one to twenty students in second grade. According to Egelson et al. (1996), increased time on task decreased disciplinary problems substantially. Smaller classes allow more time for instruction and require less time for discipline. This conclusion was reported by Molnar et al. (1999).

His studies revealed that students in small classes did better in math and reading tests at the end of kindergarten. The kindergarten achievement gap between the two class sizes remained the same in first, second, and third grades. Students from smaller classes behaved better than students from larger classes, and these differences persisted through at least to fourth grade. The effects were stronger for students of lower, rather than higher, socio-economic status.

Boissiere (2004) postulates that many educators relate the class size argument to that of “time-on-task” issues, claiming smaller class size minimizes disruption and allows teachers to give more individual attention to students, thereby increasing the effective time of instruction. He further argues that some research studies of actual classroom teaching practices show that teachers often do not change their method of teaching in response to a smaller class size. Instead they still lecture and go about assigning homework in much the same way

Boissiere (2004) cites The World Development Report 2004 which reviewed the class debate worldwide and concluded that the uncertainty of research results over such a seemingly simple issue illustrates how truly complex the research question is, with results varying across time, context and content. Still the overall conclusion was that a policy of promoting relatively small class size (below 40 students per teacher) is not cost effective in developing countries, compared to providing more textbooks, increasing the total hours of class instruction over the year, or restructuring overcrowded curricula, so that more time is spent in class on the core subject of reading and mathematics. He argues that excessively large classes (above 60 students per teacher) are also unacceptable, since they are detrimental to learning.

#### **2.4 Facility Related Factors and Students’ Achievement**

In terms of school characteristics, most infrastructure indicators consider not only building quality, but also the presence of furniture, equipment and access to electricity and water. The effect of this variable is ambiguous, with some studies finding a positive correlation and others finding none at all (Hanushek, 1999). Some studies

conclude that these factors have more impact on performance when students are from low-income families. The comprehensive case studies of Brazil by Harbison and Hanushek (1992) and of Ghana by White (2004) offer specific evidence that a minimum basic quality of school facilities matters significantly for achievement outcomes.

For example, in Ghana, schools would often lose days of instruction due to leaking roofs. The studies also found out that a basic standard of school facilities would include enough classrooms to accommodate about 40 students per classroom, sufficient desks in preference to using floor mats, chalk boards and maybe a storage cupboard for books and materials. In addition to classrooms, there should be adequate sanitation in terms of water and latrines.

Purves (2003) observes that there is a positive relationship between availability of didactic material and student Performance. Similarly Husen (2001) says that access to other didactic material, like globes and maps has a combined, positive effect on performance.

These arguments reinforce the current study findings that textbooks and availability of teaching and learning resources influence students' achievement. These studies underline the importance of didactic material and libraries as crucial elements contributing to improved performance in primary and secondary schools.



#### **2.4.1 Technological Advancement and Students' Achievement**

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 realises 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 programmes 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.

#### **2.4.2 Pupils Textbook Ratio and Students' Achievement**

There is sufficient literature which also identifies another problem affecting performance: lack of support in the home, a characteristic of the homes of lower-income groups. These children lack reading material in their homes and may even be the children of illiterate parents. Similarly, their mother tongue may be a native language other than English. (Krueger, 1998).

White (2004) studies in Ghana revealed that before the improved provision of textbooks, primary schools in Ghana, which had been among the best in Africa, deteriorated to the point where primary graduates scored no better on simple reading tests than those who had not been to school. Boissiere (2004) developed a composite picture of the deterioration of primary schooling in Africa. He points out that textbooks are often not available and even when they are, they are not used because they do not get to the classroom for a variety of reasons or teachers are not trained in how to use new textbooks. The result is evident in poor academic achievement of students. This revelation correlates very well with the current study which finds out that mere availability of textbooks do not translate to better grades in English.

Studies done by Heinemann et al (1984) to assess the impact of textbooks on student achievement concluded that an increase in the number of textbooks had a sizeable effect on pupils' achievement all over Philippines. Heinemann et al (1984) are more vivid in saying that the availability of books appears to be the single most consistently positive factor in predicting achievement even more than teacher training and that textbooks considerably reduce pupil grade repetitions.

Alexander and Simmons (1980) agree that textbooks are important in students' achievement. They also assert that student homework and free reading at home much more improves student examination scores. Homework, they argue, provides the learners with a means to check their results to receive suitable reinforcement. Fuller (1985) who points out that the frequency of homework and teachers' correction of pupils exercise books are quality variables of promise also underscores the

importance of homework in enhancing students' achievement in English. Eshiwani (1988) while conducting studies to establish the effect of non-availability of textbooks in Kajiado District, Kenya found a significant relationship between the availability of textbooks and pupil achievement.

In the past, the government provided specialized equipment to public institutions. Parents provided textbooks and supplementary readers, stationery and consumable material. (Kamunge, Report 1988). However, the trend has now changed in the sense that the government has taken up the responsibility of paying for these expenses by subsidizing secondary education with Kshs 10265 per student per year. Of this, tuition fee comprises Kshs 3600. Tuition expenditure items include classroom teaching and learning materials such as textbooks excluding literature set books (MOE, 2008). This demonstrates the Government of Kenya's realization of the importance of text books in students' achievement.

The Government's commitment is in line with the Koech Report (1999) on Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TQET) for unity, equity and development which recommended that basic education be declared compulsory and ways be found for providing subsidized education for poor and marginalized groups. The report further recommended that necessary changes be instituted for making education affordable for the average Kenyan parent. The provision of money to schools to buy textbooks by the government as is evident from the present study is geared towards realizing this goal.

## **2.5 Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature on the teaching, learning and students' achievement in the English language in KCSE. It has been noted that the education sector is faced with the problem of inappropriate curriculum and examinations, lack of teaching materials such as textbooks as well as overstretching of physical facilities in schools.

Latest innovations in the English language have also been noted to have serious implications on the performance of English. These include the integration of English and literature and the attendant problem of poor selection of teaching and learning materials, coupled with poor teaching methods. Advances in education technology have led to the introduction of teaching machines such as computer assisted instruction and projectors. Mass media such as radios television and video cameras have also been used. However, technological advancement is yet to be applied in most rural and even urban schools in Kenya due to the high cost and/or lack of electricity that most teaching machines such as computers depend on.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Area of Study**

The study was undertaken in Kisii South District in Nyanza province. The district borders Gucha South District to the South, Gucha District to the East and Kisii Central District to the North. The district has one division - Suneka.

Kisii South District has a total of 18 registered secondary schools. (D.E.O's office). It has a total of 5400 students. The researcher selected 15 out of these secondary schools to participate in this study. South Kisii District was selected for the study because it had recorded poor academic performance for a number of years (D.E.O's office). These years are 20004, 2005, 2006 and 2007. The average score of the district as per the available data is 3.7976. English being a medium of instructions in secondary schools, poor performance in English in particular could be contributing to poor performance in the area.

The researcher was interested in finding out the factors contributing to this poor academic performance in the area which had led to the underdevelopment of human capital. The district is therefore loosing its investment because of low academic achievement.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The design of this study was a descriptive survey. A descriptive research was appropriate because it offered a vivid description of teachers, institutional and facility

related factors (Mugenda, 2003). It also provided a cross-sectional data on factors that affect students' achievement in English. (Oso and Onen, 2005).

Since the aim of the study was to investigate the factors affecting students' achievement in English in secondary schools, the descriptive survey research design enabled the researcher to extensively explore the teacher, institutional and facility related factors that affected students' achievement in the English language.

### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population was all the 5400 students, 28 English teachers and 18 head teachers in Kisii South District. English teachers provided information regarding to their training, number of lessons taught and class size. Head teachers were selected to provide information based on policy related matters such as the number of teachers, number of lessons taught by English teachers per week and total student population.

Form 3 students were chosen because they had stayed in school long enough, therefore well placed to provide useful information for the study. Form 4 students were not chosen because these were candidates and their involvement would have disrupted their preparation for national examinations.

### **3.4 Sample of the Study**

The sample of the study was selected from English teachers, head teachers and all the students from the 3 zones in the district. Stratified random sampling was used to select 15 schools out of the total 18 secondary schools in the district. Five schools were selected from each of the 3 zones. The 5 schools were selected using simple

random sampling. In order to obtain the sample of students, a class register for Form Three students in each school was obtained from the class teachers.

For the purpose of this study stratified random sampling technique was used to select 250 students for the study. It was also used to select boys and girls in mixed schools. This method was used to obtain a desired representation from the subgroups in the population. These were boys and girls from all types and categories of schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 19 teachers of English and 15 head teachers from sample schools to participate in the study. It enabled the researcher to select typical and useful cases only. (Oso and Onen, 2005).

### **3.5 Instruments of Data Collection**

The instruments that were used for data collection were questionnaires and interview schedules. Questionnaires were used because they were less costly than interviews and gave respondents enough time to give well thought out responses. They were also suitable to collect information from large samples, thus more dependable and reliable. Interviews were settled on because they generated information that was more detailed. They were also flexible and adaptable.

The questionnaires were administered to both the teachers and students selected for the study. They sought information pertaining to the teacher's qualifications, the number of students handled and the number of lessons taught per week and the availability of teaching and learning resources. Interviews were used to seek relevant information related to teachers, students, facilities and the institution from the head teachers.

### **3.6.0 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments**

#### **3.6.1 Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity is the degree to which results from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda, 2003). A research instrument is valid if its content is relevant and appropriate to what is being measured. The questionnaires and interview schedules were designed through consultation with 3 lecturers in the department of Educational Management and Policy Studies. They discussed with the researcher and arrived at a unanimous decision that the instruments were valid.

#### **3.6.2 Reliability of Research Instruments**

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda, 2003). The instruments were tested for reliability using test- retest method. The instruments were piloted in one secondary school in Kisii Central District, which did not form part of the study sample. The questionnaires and interview schedules were administered within an interval of 2 weeks. The responses to the items were then assigned numerical values and Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) estimated. Reliability values ranged from 0-1 whereby 0.5 was a cut off/midpoint. Since  $r$  was 0.75 which is above 0.5, the instruments were found to be reliable thus adopted. If  $r$  was to be less than 0.5, the instruments were to be modified and retested.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Techniques**

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics used were means, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages. Inferential statistics used was multiple linear regressions to determine significance of



coefficients of each factor in explaining achievement. The dependent variable was achievement while the independent variables were teacher factors, institutional factors and facility related factors. The results were tested at  $\alpha = 0.05$  significant level. The results that were less than or equal to the significant level were found to be significant. Results above the significant level were not significant.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, DISSCUSION AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter intends to establish the causes of low students' achievement in English in Kisii South District. It is devoted to the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data collected on the factors affecting students' achievement in English in secondary schools in Kenya. The chapter is divided into students' background information, teaching and learning resources and teacher characteristics.

The specific objectives of the study were to establish the influence of the availability of teaching and learning facilities on students' achievement. To establish whether the teacher characteristics influence students' achievement and to find out the institutional factors that affect students' achievement in English. The chapter presents background information, teacher factors, institutional factors and facility related factors.

#### **4.2 Background Information**

Students' background is important in understanding students' entry behaviour especially in developing countries.

##### **4.2.1 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 third 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 3 boys and girls. Table 4.1 is a summary of this assessment.

**Table 4. 1: Distribution of Students by Gender.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>	
Male	147	(58.8)
Female	103	(41.2)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>(100.0)</b>

As reported in the Table 4.1 a total of 250 students at the secondary school level in Kisii South District 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.

#### 4.2.2 Students' Distribution in Various School Types and Categories

The study intended to gather data from students in all categories and types of schools in the district namely: district, provincial and national. There are 3 provincial and 15 district secondary schools in the district. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of students from each category of schools in the district. It also reports on the various types of secondary schools in the district. The gender based school type was critical in the study.

**Table 4. 2: Students' Distribution by School Type and Category**

<b>Type of school</b>		<b>Category</b>	
<b>Frequency /%</b>		<b>Frequency/%</b>	
Girls'	14(6)	District	192 (77.0)
Boys'	8(3)	Provincial	58 (23.0)
Mixed Boarding	9(4)		
Day – Boarding	29(12)		
Mixed day	190(75)		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250(100)</b>		<b>250 (100.0)</b>

As reported in Table 4.2, 6% of the students were from girls' schools while 3% were from boys' schools. Students from mixed boarding schools were 4% while those from day boarding schools were 12%. A further 75% of the students were from mixed day schools. Most of the students were therefore enrolled in mixed day schools. This probably was because of the low cost of mixed day schools to parents.

According to the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 day schools are cheaper than boarding schools by more than 50%. From the findings, it was noted that 77% of the students were from district schools. While only 23 % were from provincial schools. As was evident from Table 4.3 there are no national schools in the district. Although national schools in Kenya admit the top students in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), provincial schools also do admit students of upto 400 out of the total 500 marks.

This implies that the district has an opportunity to admit the top students in existing secondary schools in the district. These students are expected to score better grades in national exams. District schools are required to admit students with between 250-300 marks. Curiously students with as low as 100 marks could still find their way to some district secondary schools because head teachers seek to increase enrolment to recommended levels. According to MEO (2008) for a school to be considered as viable it should have a minimum of 160 students.

#### **4.2.3 Students Marks in English**

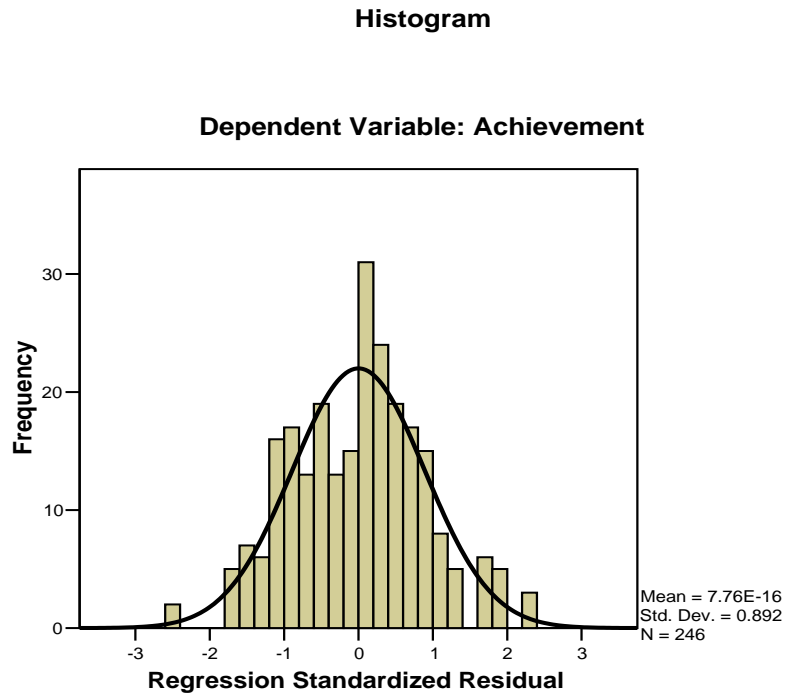
The study focused on students' grades in English. An analysis of students' grades was conducted for Form 3 students in 2006 end of year exams. The results of this analysis are reported in Table 4.3.

**Table 4. 3: Distribution of Students' Marks in English**

<b>Marks</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
23 – 33	28	11.2
34 – 43	53	21.2
44 – 53	64	25.6
54 – 63	65	26.0
64 – 73	26	10.4
74 – 83	14	5.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in Table 4.3 English marks were obtained from 250 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. 145 students of all the students had 53 marks and below in English while less than half, that is 105 students had managed to score 53 marks and above. These figures clearly indicate that the performance of English in the district was very low.

**Figure 1: Histogram Showing Distribution of Students' Performance Scores**



As shown in Figure 1 the distribution of students' performance scores was fairly normal whereby 50% of the results were fairly distributed. The established standard deviation is 7.76. This distribution verifies the least square distribution which is normal and fairly distributed.

#### **4.2.4 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 4.4.

**Table 4.4 Adults that Resided with Students as Reported by Students**

Parent / guardian	Frequency	Percentage
Both parents	162	64.8
Father only	11	4.4
Mother only	44	17.6
Grand parents only	6	2.4
Brothers & sisters only	23	9.2
Well wishers	4	1.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The study findings as reported in Table 4.4 revealed that 64% of the students involved in the study lived with all their parents. Of the remaining, 35.2% 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.

#### **4.2.5 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 4.5 shows the educational level of students' parents/guardians.

**Table 4.5 Distribution of Parental/Guardian Highest Educational Level**

	<b>MATERNAL</b>	<b>PATERNAL</b>
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency/%</b>	<b>Frequency/%</b>
Not applicable	13 (5.0)	15 (6.0)
Never went to school	29 (12.0)	16 (6.4)
Primary school	79 (31.0)	73 (29.2)
Secondary school	64 (26.0)	71 (28.4)
College/Diploma	57 (23.0)	61 (24.4)
University Education	8 (3.0)	14 (5.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>250 (100.0)</b>	<b>250 (100.0)</b>

It is apparent from Table 4.5 that most of the students' parents/guardians had primary education and constituted 31% of the total sample size. They were followed by those whose parents/guardians had secondary school education who comprised 26% of the total sample size. Those whose parents/guardians went to college/diploma level constituted 23% while 3.0% of the students' parents/guardians had attained university education. Those whose parents/guardians never went to school at all constituted 12% of the total sample size.

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).

#### 4.2.6 Students' Interest and Ability in English

For students to do well in English, they must first and foremost develop an interest 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 interest in English.

**Table 4.6: Students' Interest in English**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Highly interested	121	49.6
Interested	124	48.4
Undecided	0	0.0
Slightly interested	5	2.0
Not Interested	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.6 reports that 49.6 % of the students were interested in English while 48.4% were highly interested. Only 2.0 % of the students were slightly interested.

These findings suggest that nearly all the students in the district had an interest in the subject, which implied that they were prepared and ready to learn the subject. This was confirmed by the fact that 242 out of the 250 students said that they wanted to get best results in English. This constituted 96.8% of all the students.

### 4.3.0 Teaching and Learning Resources

#### 4.3.1 Adequacy of English textbooks

Availability of adequate number of textbooks is critical for high scholastic achievement Eshiwani (1988) found a significant relationship between the availability of textbooks and achievement. The researcher intended to establish whether there were enough English textbooks in schools in the study area. Table 4.7 illustrates the students' and teachers' perceptions.

**Table 4.7: Students' and Teachers' Perception of the Adequacy of English Textbooks**

Response	Students		Teachers	
	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency
Strongly disagree	8.4	21	15.8	3
Disagree	42.0	105	57.9	11
Undecided	2.0	5	0	0
Agree	35.2	88	26.3	5
Strongly agree	12.4	31	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19</b>

From the study whose findings are reported in Table 4.7 it was clearly indicated that there were inadequate English textbooks in schools under study in the district. This was amplified by majority of the respondents whereby 42% of the students and 57.9% of the teachers disagreed with the view that there were adequate English textbooks in the schools. The number of students and teachers who agreed with the view constituted 35% and 26.3% respectively. This seems to indicate that inadequate textbooks could be a major contributor to students' low achievement in the district because textbooks do contribute to students' achievement as it is accurately pointed out by (Boissiere, 2004).

#### 4.3.2 Availability of Revision Books for English

The study intended to establish whether there were revision books for English in secondary schools in Kisii South District. Table 4.8 shows the students' responses on whether revision books for English were available.

**Table 4.8: Students' Perception of the Availability of Revision Books for English**

Students' response	Number of students	Percentage
Strongly disagree	51	20.4
Disagree	71	28.4
Undecided	18	7.2
Agree	77	30.8
Strongly agree	33	13.2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown from Table 4.8, 43.2% of the students felt that revision books for English were available 48.8% of them felt that revision books for English were not available. Only 7.2% percent were undecided.

#### 4.3.3 Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials

The researcher sought the opinion of teachers with regard to the availability of teaching and learning materials. Okwara et al (2009) terms availability of essential teaching and learning material as conditions ideal for the effective teaching of integrated English. Table 4.9 reports on the teacher responses on whether there were enough teaching and learning materials.

**Table 4.9: Teachers Views on the Availability of Teaching and Learning Materials**

Teachers' responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	5	26.3
Disagree	9	47.4
Undecided	1	5.3
Agree	4	21.4
Strongly Agree	0	0.0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As reported in Table 4.9, 73.7% of the teachers were of the view that the teaching and learning materials in their schools were not enough for effective teaching. Another 5.3% of the teachers were undecided while 21.4% of the teachers 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.

#### 4.3.4 Adequacy of English Class Readers

The study also intended to establish whether there were an adequate number of English readers in secondary schools in the district. Table 4.1.1 shows students' and teachers' responses to the question whether English class readers were adequate.

**Table 4.1.1: Students' and Teachers' Views on the Adequacy of English Class Readers**

Responses	Students		Teachers	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	26	10.4	7	36.8
Disagree	70	28.0	6	31.8
Undecided	9	3.6	4	21.1
Agree	82	32.8	2	10.5
Strongly agree	63	25.2	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As shown in Table 4.1.1, 38.4% of the students were of the view that there were inadequate numbers of English readers while 58% were of the view that the English readers were adequate. 3.6% of the students were undecided.

It is apparent from Table 4.1.1 that the majority of teachers were of the view that the English readers were inadequate.

In the study 68.6% of the teachers were of the view that English readers were inadequate. Among them 10.5% were of the view that the English readers were adequate. A further 21.1% were undecided.

#### 4.3.5 Recommended Oral Literature Books.

According to KNEC (2006) Oral Literature is an integral part of the English language. The integration of English and Literature includes Oral Literature. It was therefore vital for the researcher to establish whether schools had enough recommended Oral Literature books. Table 4.1.2 reports on the teachers' responses to the question whether recommended oral literature books were available for each student.

**Table 4.1.2: Teachers' Views On the Availability of Recommended Oral Literature Books**

<b>Teachers' responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly Agree	0	0.0
Agree	0	0.0
Undecided	0	0.0
Strongly Disagree	11	57.9
Disagree	8	42.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.1.2 indicates a strong perception that there was indeed inadequate number of recommended oral literature books in the district.

Eleven teachers (57.9%) strongly disagreed with the view that recommended oral literature books were available while 42.1% of the teachers disagreed. This showed that there was a major problem in the teaching of oral literature in the area because either there were no or inadequate oral literature books.

#### 4.3.6 Student- Text book Ratio

The researcher also sought to establish the student text-book ratio. Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) emphasize the importance attached to textbooks in determining students' achievement. Table 4.1.3 reports the teachers' responses to the question relating to the student-textbook ratio.

**Table4.1.3: Teachers Views on the Student-Text book Ratio**

<b>Teachers' Responses</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
2:1	3	15.8
3:1	10	52.6
4:1	6	31.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.1.3 15.8% of the teachers reported that the student text-book ratio was 2:1 while 52.6% reported that it was 3:1. A further 31.6% reported the student-text book ratio to be 4:1. It is clear from the table that there is insufficient number of textbooks in schools in the study area.



#### 4.4.0 Teacher Characteristics

According to Purves, (2003) teachers' experience and training have a significant bearing on students' performance. However, Hanushek (1999), suggest that teaching upgrades, by service training, do not seem to improve the academic results of students. In contrast, the knowledge that teachers have of their subject, their experience in the use of didactic materials and their expectations in terms of students are variables associated with improved student performance.

#### 4.4.1 Teaching Experience

The teachers who participated in the study reported on their varied teaching experiences as shown in Table 4.1.4.

**Table 4.1.4: Teaching Experience**

Teaching experience	Number of teachers	Percentage
2 – 5	8	42.1
5 – 10	3	15.8
More than 10 years	8	42.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The researcher established that most teachers had taught English for more than 5 years. Table 4.1.4 indicates 15.8% of the teachers had a teaching experience of 5 – 10 years while 42.1% of the teachers had taught for more than 10 years. A further 42.1% had taught for a period ranging between 2 – 5 years.

The findings were an indication that most English teachers in the district were experienced since they had taught for more than 5 years. These teachers were expected to produce better results in terms of students' achievement due to their long teaching experience.

#### 4.4.2 Professional Qualification

Most of the teachers teaching in Kisii South district had Bachelor of Education (B.ed) degree while a few had diploma in education. Some were pursuing their masters degrees. Studies done by Boissiere, (2004) find that pre-service training is important. The overall suggestion is that better trained teachers are more effective in cognitive achievement.

In line with these findings the researcher sought to establish the professional qualification of teachers in the study area. They responded to what was their highest professional qualification as shown in Table 4.1.5.

**Table 4.1.5: Highest Professional Qualification for English Teachers**

<b>Professional qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Diploma	2	10.5
Bachelors	17	89.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.1.5 it is clear that many teachers in the district were well trained since 78.5% of them had B.ed degrees. There were 10.5% of them who had diplomas.

As Stones (1992) correctly observes, it is sufficient for teachers to have a thorough knowledge of subject matter and practical classroom experience. This could be attained through proper education and training.

#### 4.4.3 Giving Assignments to Students

Giving assignments to students is very critical in the teaching and learning process. The study intended to establish from both teachers and students how often assignments were given to students.

Their responses were as shown in Table 4.1.6.

**Table 4.1.6: How Often Students do Assignments**

Responses	Teachers		Students	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Never	0	0	11	4.4
Once a term/less	0	0	2	.8
Once a month	0	0	6	2.4
Once a week	3	15.8	38	15.2
Every lesson	16	84.2	193	77.2
Total	19	100.0	250	100.0

As reported in Table 4.1.6, out of the 19 English teachers who filled questionnaires 84.2% of them were of the view that they gave assignments daily while 15.8% were of the view that they gave assignments weekly. This implies that most teachers knew the importance of giving assignments to students at the end of every lesson.

Very few teachers seemed not to be aware of this fact or if they did had chosen to ignore it. Most students confirmed that they were given assignments. As it is correctly observed by Eshiwani (1988) in his study of the determinants of school achievement in Kenya, frequent exposure of students to tests improved exam performance. Most students confirmed that they were given assignments. Those who said they did assignments nearly every lesson were 193, comprising 77.2% of the respondents.

#### **4.4.4 The Average Class Size Handled by English Teachers**

The researcher sought to find out from the English teachers in the study area the average class sizes that they taught. There had been a heated debate over the relationship between the class size and students' achievement. Whereas Hanushek, (1999) associates large class size with improved performance, Pinell, (2000) found out that small class size is more important to school achievement. On the contrary Boissiere, (2004) didn't consider small class size of below 40 students per teacher as cost effective. This means that class size is important in understanding school effectiveness. Table 4.1.7 reports on the teachers and students responses on the question of the average number of students in their classes.

**Table 4.1.7: Average Class Size taught by English Teachers**

	<b>TEACHERS</b>	<b>STUDENTS</b>
<b>Class size</b>	<b>Frequency/%</b>	<b>Frequency/%</b>
30 – 40	5 (26.0)	132 (58.2)
41 – 50	9 (47.0)	74 (29.6)
51 – 60	1 (5.0)	29 (11.6)
61 – 70	1 (5.0)	1 (0.4)
71 – 80	3 (5.0)	0 (0.0)
81-90	0 (0.0)	14 (5.6)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19 (100.0)</b>	<b>250 (100.0)</b>

As indicated in Table 4.1.7, 26% of the teachers taught in classes of between 30 – 40 students, whilst 47% taught in classes of between 41 – 50 students. Only 5% of the teachers taught in a class population of 51 – 60 students. Another 5% taught in a class of between 61 -70, while 16% of the teachers taught in classes of 71 – 80 students. Teachers who taught in classes of above 40 students would have their efficiency affected because it was not possible to pay attention to individual students in huge classes of above 40 students.

Learning facilities were also found to be strained since the statutory class size in Kenya is 40 students. (MOE, 2008). In the study it was found out that 62% of the teachers taught more than 40 students in a class. Wako (1995) in his study on basic indicators of educational systems performance correctly observes that pupil teacher ratio is one of the most common indicators used in planning.

He further argues that low number of pupils per teacher indicate pupils will have better chance of contact with the teacher and hence better teaching/learning process.

#### 4.4.5 Supervising Students' Reading of Set books

The researcher sought to find out whether teachers supervised students' reading of set books because this is a vital component of teachers' duties. The integration of English and Literature demands that teachers give serious attention to students' learning of Literature. Table 4.1.8 summarizes their responses to the question whether they supervised students' reading of set books.

**Table 4.1.8: Teachers' Supervising of Students' reading of Set books**

<b>Teachers' Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
About once a month	3	15.8
About once a week	5	26.3
Nearly every lesson	11	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Of all the teachers involved in the study 57.9% supervised students reading of set books nearly every lesson while 26.3% percent did so about once a week. There were 15.8% of the teachers who supervised students reading of set books about once a month.

Teachers who supervised students reading of set books nearly every lesson contributed to students' good performance in literature, which is an integral part of

English. KNEC (2006). Those who did so once a week or once a month may have contributed to their low achievement.

#### 4.4.6 Let Students Choose Topics for Discussion

Class discussion is core to the learning and teaching of English. Based on the responses of both students and teachers as to whether students were allowed to choose topics for discussion, this technique had not been properly utilized. Table 4.1.9 illustrates this.

**Table 4.1.9: Letting Students Choose Topics for Discussion and Students' Achievement in English**

Responses	Teachers		Students	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Never			47	18.8
Once a term or less	3	15.8	5	2.0
About once a month	3	15.8	24	9.6
About once a week	9	47.4	117	46.8
Nearly every lesson	4	21.1	57	22.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.1.9 shows that a majority of teachers let students choose topics for discussion about once a week. They comprised 47.4%. Those who allowed students choose topics for discussion nearly every lesson comprised 21.1%. Teachers who let students choose topics for discussion once a month constituted 15.8%. An equal number of teachers let students choose topics for discussion once a term. This information confirm the fact that discussion method was not commonly used by teachers in the

classroom because teachers were reluctant to encourage students to discuss in small groups, a factor that may have led to negative implications on students achievement.

On the side of students 18.8% reported that they never had discussion groups. Those who had discussions once a term or less constituted 2.0%. Those who discussed about once a month constituted 9.6%. Those who discussed about once a week constituted 46.8%. The percentage of students who had discussions nearly every lesson constituted 22.8%.

Whereas it was expected that teachers could guide students in forming discussion groups and give them topics for discussion, the responses obtained proof that discussion among students was not so frequent. They could therefore be unable to share their problems and experiences or even engage in peer teaching. This is what would have contributed to their low achievement in English.

#### **4.4.7 Frequency of Marking Students' Work**

While a good number of teachers marked students' work and gave it back quickly. Others did not do so. Asked whether they marked students' work and gave it back quickly, the teachers' responses were as shown in Table 4.2.1.



**Table 4.2.1: Marking Students' Work**

<b>Teacher's responses</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Once a term or less	2	10.5
About once a month	1	5.3
About once a week	5	26.3
Nearly every lesson	11	57.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.2.1 indicates that 10.5% of the teachers marked students' work about once a month. Teachers who marked students' work about once a week was comprised 26.3%. Those who marked students' work nearly every lesson were 57.9%.

When teachers do not mark students' work, it means that they can not only be unable to evaluate students' achievement, but they would also be unable to correct students whenever they go wrong to enable them (students) improve on their performance. This results to poor academic achievement.

Failure to mark students' work makes it difficult for teachers to advise students on how to improve their performance. It also leads to difficulties for the teachers to make it clear what students need to do to achieve good marks not only in English but also in all other subjects. Maundu (1986) attributed the performance in provincial schools to excellent instructions given by qualified teachers in addition to other inputs. Marking of students' work constitutes excellent instructions.

This view is shared with Eshiwani (1988) who conducted studies on determinants of students' achievement in Kenya and concluded that the promptness with which homework is assessed has no bearing on a school's performance for all subjects except language. This is in agreement with Tomlison (1993) who describes a professional teacher in part as one who marks students' work and keeps proper records of students' progress in school.

#### 4.4.8 Taking Note of Students' Ideas

This encompasses student's comments in class and students' suggestions on how their English lessons could be improved to enable them learn better and achieve high scores in English exams. It is something that teachers need to do to improve on students' achievement. Table 4.2.2 illustrates teachers' responses on how often they took note of students' ideas.

**Table 4.2.2: Teachers' Taking Note of students' Ideas**

<b>Teachers responses</b>	<b>Number of teachers</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
About once a month	1	5.3
About once a week	5	26.3
Nearly every lesson	13	68.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.2.2 shows that 5.3% of the teachers took note of students' ideas about once a month 26.3% of them took note of students' ideas about once a week. Teachers who took note of students' ideas nearly every lesson comprised 68.4%.

For successful teaching and learning to take place and to ensure high quality output in schools all teachers must take note of students' ideas on how they would wish to be assisted to enhance their efficiency. Chemwei and Nyandusi (2008) postulates that it is important that teachers get the students' attention when they are working in class. Failure to do so will lead to low quality output because teachers will be oblivious of students' weaknesses and academic needs.

#### **4.4.9 Showing Sensitivity to Individual Differences**

Students in any school or class have different learning needs that must be addressed by teachers. Some students, for example could have various disabilities such as visual impairment and hearing problems while others could be mentally retarded. All these individual differences must be taken care of to ensure effective teaching and learning. In schools we also have students who are fast learners while others are slow learners. Fast learners should be given more challenging work while slow learners should be given remedial teaching. Table 4.2.3 is an illustration on how teachers responded to the question whether they showed sensitivity to individual differences.

**Table 4.2.3: Teachers' Views on Whether they Show Sensitivity to Individual Differences and use helpful examples.**

Teacher's responses	Showing sensitivity		Use helpful examples and references	
	Freq	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
Strongly disagree	2	10.5	0	0
Disagree	0	0	1	5.3
Agree	9	47.4	10	52.6
Strongly agree	8	42.1	8	42.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 4.2.3 reports that 42.1% of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that they did show sensitivity to individual differences while 47.4% agreed. The remaining 10.5% did not bother about individual differences, which was a shortcoming on their part. Failure to show sensitivity to students' individual differences leads to low achievement in English, which is a medium of instruction thus affecting the overall performance of a student. (Broughton et al, 1993).

Table 4.2.3 also demonstrates that 42.1% of the teachers strongly agreed with the view that they used helpful examples. There were 52.6% Of the teachers who agreed. Those teachers who disagreed comprised 5.3%. This indeed was good demonstration of commitment on the side of teachers, which would have assisted students learn better and improve their performance. According to Boissiere (2004) availability of sufficient textbooks (references) can reduce time on task otherwise, the teacher has to

resort to writing much of the material on the chalkboard for students to see and / or copy.

#### **4.5.0 Institutional Factors**

##### **4.5.1 Number of Lessons Taught by English Teachers**

English teachers were found to teach between 14 – 48 lessons per week. Table 4.2.4 shows how lessons were distributed among English teachers. The number of lessons taught by teachers is critical in determining their efficiency in the delivery of the lesson's content in any subject. As it is spelt out by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) (2005) a teacher's minimum teaching load is 27 lessons a week. Conditions of service are therefore important. Having manageable lessons therefore helps improve the teachers' conditions of service.

Perry et al (1995) agree that teaching load affects teacher efficiency. They argue that when teachers experience too many demands on their skills and abilities they become irritated and confused which affects their commitment and performance. Table 4.2.4 shows the English teachers' responses on the number of lessons they taught per week.

**Table 4.2.4: Number of Lessons Taught by English Teachers**

<b>Number of Lessons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
10-15	2	10.5
16-20	4	21.0
21-25	7	36.9
26-30	5	26.3
Above 30	1	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Whereas those teachers who taught less than 27 lessons a week were underutilized, those who taught more than 27 lessons a week were apparently overworked. This is because English has various components namely; poetry, comprehension, oral literature, literature and grammar, thanks to the integration of English and Literature (KNEC, 2006). This means that for English teachers to be efficient in their teaching, they should handle manageable lessons per week. Educational output would be influenced positively where teachers have a low teaching load. The study revealed that 5.3% Of the teachers taught more than 30 lessons a week thus were overloaded.

#### 4.5.2 Satisfaction with the School Support

The study sought to find out whether teachers were satisfied with the kind of support they got from the school. Table 4.2.5 reports how they responded to the question whether they were satisfied with the schools support in the teaching and learning of English.

**Table 4.2.5: Teachers' Perception on Whether they were Satisfied with the School Support.**

Teachers responses	Number of teachers	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
Disagree	8	42.1
Undecided	1	5.3
Agree	10	52.6
Strongly Agree	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 4.2.5, 52.6% Of the teachers agreed with the view that they were satisfied with the kind of support they got from the school while 5.3% were undecided. Teachers who were not satisfied with the school support constituted 42.1%.

The kind of support expected from the school in this case include; purchasing the right textbooks for English as recommended by English teachers. Such books include literature set books, poetry and oral literature books. These books are not only crucial but mandatory due to the integration of English and literature. Schools are also expected to finance symposiums organized by English teachers as well as encourage English students to participate in drama together with their teachers. This will enhance students' communicative skills as well as enhance their understanding of current issues better through dramatization.

It should be emphasized here that English paper 3 i.e. composition entails a student's knowledge of current affairs issues, which he/she should link with the set texts and explain how they relate to normal life situations. This means that students only draw illustrations from set books but use ordinary life situations to express themselves. These issues include colonialism, corruption and politics.

English teachers may also require schools to purchase video machines to enable them show students video shows on the set books. This will go along way in helping the students to visualize and internalize what they read from set books. It is always not easy for students to forget what they see compared to what they hear. Schools could also assist English teachers to organize live performances for the benefit of English students.

### 4.5.3 Adequacy of Teachers

Most head teachers who were interviewed said that the number of teachers in their schools were not enough. This was in response to the question whether there were enough teachers in their schools. Table 4.2.6 below attests to this.

**Table 4.2.6: Head Teachers' Views on Whether there were Enough Teachers in their Schools**

<b>Head teachers response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	3	20.0
No	12	80.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As reported in Table 4.2.6, of all the head teachers who were interviewed 20% of them said the number of teachers in their schools were enough while 80% said that the number of teachers in their schools were not enough.

The inadequacy of teachers in the district could be due to the influx of pupils in primary schools due to Free Primary Education (FPE), which has had a spillover effect to secondary schools. The government of Kenya has also introduced subsidized secondary education, which has led to increased enrolment in secondary schools. In spite of this positive gesture from the government, it had been reluctant to employ more teachers to correspond to the recommended pupil teacher ratio of 1:40. (MOE, 2008). Inadequate number of teachers has led to the increased workload for the available teachers leading to poor results.



#### 4.5.4 Factors to Consider For Better Performance

The researcher interviewed head teachers to seek their opinion on factors to consider for better performance. Table 4.2.7 summarizes their views.

**Table 4.2.7: Head teachers Views on Factors to Consider for Better Performance**

Head Teachers' Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
Add teachers, expansion of facilities	1	6.7
Availability of textbooks	3	20.0
Enough teaching and learning materials	3	20.0
Motivation of teachers	2	13.4
Proper staffing, students to work hard	2	13.3
Devotion of teachers	1	6.7
Sufficient human and learning resources	2	13.3
Syllabus completion in good time	1	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

As reported in Table 4.2.7, 6.7% of the head teachers considered expansion of school facilities to be instrumental for better achievement. Another 20% of the head teachers considered availability of textbooks to be vital in enhancing students' achievement. A further 20% considered enough teaching and learning materials as crucial in promoting high students' achievement. Some of the interviewed head teachers were of the opinion that hard work leads to high students' achievement. They constituted

13.3%. There were 6.7% of them who regarded devotion of teachers to be the prerequisite for better students' achievement.

#### 4.5.5 : Suggestions on How to Improve Performance

The researcher also sought to seek head teachers' suggestions on possible ways to improve performance. Their suggestions were as summarized on Table 4.2.8.

**Table 4.2.8: Head Teachers' Suggestions on How to Improve Performance.**

<b>Head Teachers' Suggestions</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Add teachers	4	26.7
Avail course books, technological advancement	1	6.7
Enough teaching/Learning materials	1	6.7
Expansion of facilities, motivation through rewards	2	13.3
In-service for teachers	1	6.7
Increase personnel	1	6.7
Proper time management	2	13.3
Remedial Teaching	1	6.7
Syllabus coverage, regular assessment	2	13.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the study, as shown in Table 4.2.8, 26.7% of the head teachers suggest that employing more teachers was a remedy to improving students' achievement. Some of the interviewed head teachers were of the opinion that teacher motivation through rewards was fundamental to high student achievement. Head teachers who felt that

teachers should be motivated to boost their teaching morale to produce better results comprised 13.3%.

There were 6.7% of the head teachers who recommended technological advancement such as the use of mass media and teaching machines such as audio video and computer assisted instruction to improve performance. Their argument was that audio-visual machines enable students to visualize and internalize what they learn. This would make it easy for them to recall during exams what they had already learnt thus attaining good grades. It was also possible to reach many students in far-flung areas through mass media and e-learning. This method is significant especially in the teaching and learning of English and literature.

In order to improve performance 6.7% of the head teachers were of the opinion that teachers should be encouraged to go for in- service courses to improve on their service delivery and efficiency. During the interview 6.7% of the head teachers suggested that the government should increase personnel in the teaching fraternity in order to ease the work load that the teachers were facing and improve their delivery of content. It would also reduce the teacher- pupil ratio to enable teachers pay close attention to individual students. This would lead to improved performance.

There were 13.3% of the head teachers who suggested that in order to ensure that teachers perform their duties as expected of them, there should be regular assessment of teachers by the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards Officials (DQASO). The reason for this, they suggested was to ensure efficient syllabus coverage. Whenever it would be established that teachers were not performing their

duties as expected; they would be advised to do so by DQASO officials. This will help reduce laxity and inefficiency among the teachers leading to higher educational standards in the district.

#### **4.6 Explaining Variation in Students' Achievement in English**

The study also calculated a multiple regression analysis to determine factors that caused differences in student scores. In multiple linear regression analysis, the assumption is that variation in dependent variable is jointly caused by independent variables. The researcher collected data from both students and teachers using questionnaires.

The views of head teacher in the district were also sought through interview schedules. The significance and the strength of the relationships between school inputs and students' achievement were investigated by multiple linear regression analysis. The ordinary least squares regression was done.

The following model was used:

$$A = \alpha + \beta_1 T + \beta_2 I + \beta_3 F + \mu$$

Where A is students achievement

$\alpha$  is a constant that indicates effects not measured by the factor under investigation.

$\beta_1 \beta_2 \beta_3$  are estimated coefficients of regression that indicates effects of independent variables on the dependent variable.

T is a vector of teacher of factors.

I is a vector of institutional factors

F is a vector of facility related factors

$\mu$  is the error of regression.

Table 4.2.9 illustrates the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variables in students' achievement.

**Table 4.2.9 Students' Achievement Function.**

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		sig
	B	Std. error	
I (constant)	32.08	15.704	.042
Gender	.586	1.701	.731
School category	1.856	1.975	.348
Type of school	4.337	1.022	.000
Average class size	-.052	.075	.489
Who do you live with	.359	.664	.590
How will you classify your fathers highest education	.070	-.774	.927
How will you classify your mothers highest education	.546	172	.002
Rate your interest in English	4.867	1.576	.002
Want to get best result in English	-.286	-.151	.059
Rate ability in English	2.416	1.060	.024
Did you complete form 2 work in time last year	-3.584	2.097	.089
Class text books are adequate for English	1.336	1.035	.198
We have revision books for English	1.376	822	.096
School has adequate no. of English readers	2.561	701	.000
I copy notes a teacher gives	1.152	1.373	.403
I write compositions	-.281	1.254	.823
have opportunities to explain my ideas	1.358	738	.068
read English set books	-5.19	1.525	.001
We do assignments	-3.381	1423	.018
We have class discussion	1.132	945	.233
We have discussion groups	2.246	918	.015
We have class debates	-2.369	873	.007
Tell me how to improve my work	1.136	1.045	.278
Give us quizzes	.289	781	.712
Talks to me how am getting on in English	.848	737	.251
Marks our work and gives it back quickly	.273	852	.749
Makes it clear what we have to do to get good marks	-1.932	854	.025
Uses language that is easy to understand	4.919	1.551	.002
Shows how new work relates to what have already been done	-2.186	1.095	.047
Is relevant to my future career choices	4.351	1.117	.000
Is useful in every day life	-1.783	1.506	.238
Deals with issues am concerned about	1.090	1.245	.383
Helps me understand current affairs	-1.806	1.051	.087
I get excited about what we do	-1.285	617	.039
We have enough time	2.611	699	.000
I am curious about the English we do	1.298	655	.049
I am bored during English lessons	1.293	756	.089
I don't understand the English we do	1.112	661	.094
I find English too easy	379	716	.597
I find English challenging	1.229	676	.071
Show respect for all students	427	880	.628
Are open and accommodative to ideas from students	-3.457	1.076	.002
Show sensitive to individual differences	1.468	837	.081
Are punctual for English lesson	1.793	972	.067
Are current in the developments in the field	-.792	1.006	.432
Communicate clearly	353	1.343	.793
Have advanced my knowledge of the subject	1.914	1.465	.193
Show enthusiasm toward the subject	2.879	1.307	.029
Use helpful example and references	-1.032	1.531	.501
Encourage students interaction	-2.392	1.011	.019

R Square is 0.542

The variables in Table 4.2.9 are significant at  $r = 0.05$ .

Table 4.2.9 reports the results of the regression analysis; the ordinary least square regression of student achievement function. According to Table 4.2.9 various factors are important in explaining students, achievement coefficients.

The students' marks in English were coded and assigned values as follows:

Marks scored in English	Values
23-33	1
34-43	2
44-53	3
54-63	4
64-73	5
74-83	6

The lowest marks were given the value of 1 while the highest marks were given the value of 6

The constant has a positive effect. This is an indication that other factors other than those captured by the model may explain part of this relationship. The variables that have a significant level of less than 0.05 are significant while those with a significant level of .000 are strongly significant. The type of school has a positive effect on students' achievement. It has a significant level of .000 indicating that it is strongly significant. Girls' schools were rated to be high achievers followed by boys' schools, mixed boarding, day, boarding and mixed day.

Maternal education is significant in determining the students' achievement. It showed a positive correlation with student achievement. This is so because as reported in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, A Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research parents with low levels of education are least concerned with their

children's academic achievement and do not even value taking them to school. It is however evident from the study that maternal level of education rather than paternal education is critical in determining students' achievement. Glewwe (2004) reviewed a number of studies which provide evidence that link maternal education to their children's achievement in school. One of the studies was by Beherman (1990) which shows that children whose mothers are educated will be healthy and will be regular in school attendance which will increase their achievement.

In his studies on determinants of primary education outcomes in developing countries Boissiere (2004) argues that socio-economic status variables, such as education of the parents and income level of the family accounts for more of the variation in achievement than does school inputs.

Students' rating of their interest in English showed a positive correlation with their achievement. This means that when students highly rate their interest in English, it gives them encouragement to work hard in their studies and eventually attain higher scores in English in national examinations.

Adequacy of English class readers showed a positive correlation with achievement. It was significant at .000 significance level. This shows that the higher the percentage of English class readers in a school, the higher the performance. The importance of English class readers is that they help students improve their reading skills as well as improve their ability in creative writing, sentence structures and enhance their vocabulary.

The reading of English set books showed a negative correlation with achievement. This was a surprising result. It is because the reading of English set books per se could not guarantee students a good grade in English due to the integration of English and Literature as outlined by KNEC (2006). Apart from Literature which entails reading of set books and answering questions in English paper 2 and 3 based on set texts, students have to excel in other areas of English such as oral literature, poetry, comprehension and grammar. However the reading of set books was significant at .001.

Doing assignments by students showed a negative correlation with achievement. Eshiwani (1988) conducted a study of the determinants of school achievement in Kajiado District Kenya where he found out that frequent exposure of students to tests improved exam performance. This coefficient though negative in the current study was found to be significant at .018 level of significance. This study findings are therefore not different from those of Eshiwani (1988).

Although the coefficient for correlation of having discussion groups was  $- 2.246$ , they were found to be significant. This is so because discussion groups provide an opportunity for students to interact and share ideas. With appropriate skills, students know how to help one another and even how to disagree constructively. (Chemwei and Nyndusi, 2008). This goes a long way in developing their communication skills as well as help them learn from each other. Very challenging academic issues can be solved during group discussions and the teacher only clarifies or adds on what was left out during the discussions. Although having class debates had a negative correlation with achievement, class debates are so critical to students' achievement.



What matters is the quality of the debates and the time and frequency of debates in class. The study found class debates to be significant in determining students' achievement.

It is also clear from the study that when teachers make it clear what students have to do to get better results the students' achievement will be high. Sometimes students may not be in a position to know what to do in order to obtain good grades. It therefore becomes the prerogative of their teachers to guide them in this area. The results of the study indicated that making it clear what students have to do to get good marks was significant.

The teachers' use of language that is easy to understand showed a positive correlation with achievement. This shows that a teacher who uses the language of instruction which is at the level of the learners is likely to produce better grades than the one who does not. English being a language of instruction in secondary schools in Kenya, Broughton et al (1993), it is imperative that teachers use the language that is at the level of the learners in order to enhance effective teaching and learning hence high quality output in terms of graduates from a school system.

Teachers showing how new work relates to what students have already done though indicating a negative correlation with achievement was found to be significant. Mutema (1992) argues that curriculum content may be organized from known facts to new facts.

Students' view of English as being relevant to their future career choices had positive relationship with achievement.

It was significant at .000. This is a very strong relationship implying that students strive to achieve better grades in English because they believe it will help shape their future career choices. This underscores the importance of English. It is in agreement with Broughton et al (1993) who described English as the language of the mass media, of official instructions and of law courts. English is also the language of local and central government and of education.

Students' excitement about what they do though having a negative correlation with achievement was found to be significant. Bishop (1985) is of the view that teachers should identify the needs of the learner when planning the content to be taught. He therefore concurs with the findings of this study because subject content will only interest the learners when it is tailored according to their needs. Bishop further argues that one must be able to give an account of why one is teaching this to that class at this particular time in this particular school.

There was a strong positive relationship with students' having enough time to think about what they are doing and achievement. This also encompasses the teaching / learning contact hour which involves the learning time of the student. The actual instructional time on task matters for educational outcomes to be realized. Studies by Fuller (1994) show that classroom instruction time and homework frequencies have the highest educational outcomes. Benavot (2003) also reviewed literature on factors affecting actual instructional time on task versus curriculum documents and concluded that in developed countries, especially for schools in impoverished environments, increasing instructional time would improve learning achievement. However his review on developing countries shows that there is a large difference

between official and actual instructional time in the classroom. There was overall reduction on time on task by 30-50% especially because of absenteeism occasioned by illnesses such as HIV/AIDS.

There was a positive relationship between students' curiosity on the English that they do and achievement. This means that students who are eager to know and learn English will score higher marks than those who are not. Students' curiosity on the English that they do had a significant relationship with achievement.

Teachers' openness and accommodative to ideas from students showed a positive relationship with achievement. This concurs with education theory and philosophy which suggests that teachers who are skilled in active – child centered methods of teaching produce better learning results, especially when it comes to the capacity of pupils to apply knowledge as opposed to memorizing facts and names of concepts. Pandey (2000) cite the use of “Joyful learning” methods as an example of child centered approach. Such methods make a difference in pupils' retention in school. The variable being open and accommodative to idea from students showed a strong significant relationship with achievement at .002.

Teachers' show of enthusiasm towards English had a positive relationship with achievement. This means that teachers who are interested with the teaching of English will produce better results in terms of better grades obtained by students than those who are not interested. A study in Brazil by Harbison and Hanushek (1992) on quality teaching revealed that some teachers were significantly more effective at producing better learning results.

Teachers' encouragement of students' interaction showed a negative correlation with achievement. This could be because students' interaction would not necessarily improve their performance. What matters is whether their interaction is for the purpose of learning. Unless students are encouraged to have meaningful interaction in class, any other form of interaction may not achieve the desired results. This means that other factors such as teacher motivation and students' socio-economic background may affect their achievement.

The adequacy of English class textbooks was surprisingly not significant. The study confirms Boissiere (2004) study findings. He points out that in Africa even when textbooks are available, they are not used because they do not get to the classroom for a variety of reasons or teachers are not trained in how to use new textbooks. This leads to poor academic performance of students.

This result was contrary to that of Eshwani (1988). In his study of Kenyan schools, it was revealed that non - availability of textbooks had an effect on achievement. This is in tandem with Hanushek (1995) who says that textbooks lead to efficiency.

The government of Kenya also recognizes the need for textbooks in schools. That is why it subsidized secondary education in the financial year 2008/2009 by Kshs. 10,265 per student which includes tuition fee of Kshs 3600. Tuition expenditure items as per the MOE (2008) include classroom teaching and learning materials such as textbooks excluding literature set books. It clearly demonstrates the Government of Kenya' commitment to provide funds that will enable schools to purchase adequate

textbooks. This apparently is due to the Government's realization of the importance of textbooks and will go a long way in improving educational standards in Kenya.

It was surprising that the writing of compositions was not significant in student achievement. This is despite the assumption that students who practice writing compositions do perform well. The reason for this discrepancy may result from teachers who ask students to write compositions for its own sake. They rarely mark those compositions and give students proper guidelines on how to write good compositions. The integration of English and Literature also demands that students write essays based on set texts (KNEC, 2006). Consequently students who do not have thorough knowledge and understanding of the set texts will end up writing poor essays.

Whereas class discussion was expected to be significant, this was not the case. This may have been caused by limited time and frequency of class discussions. The choice of relevant topics for discussion may also be an issue. If students discuss on topics that are not relevant with the class syllabus, the results of such discussions will not be significant.

The teachers' marking and giving work back quickly was surprisingly not significant. It does not appear to matter. Fuller (1985) points out that the frequency of homework and teachers' correction of pupil's exercise books are quality variables of premise.

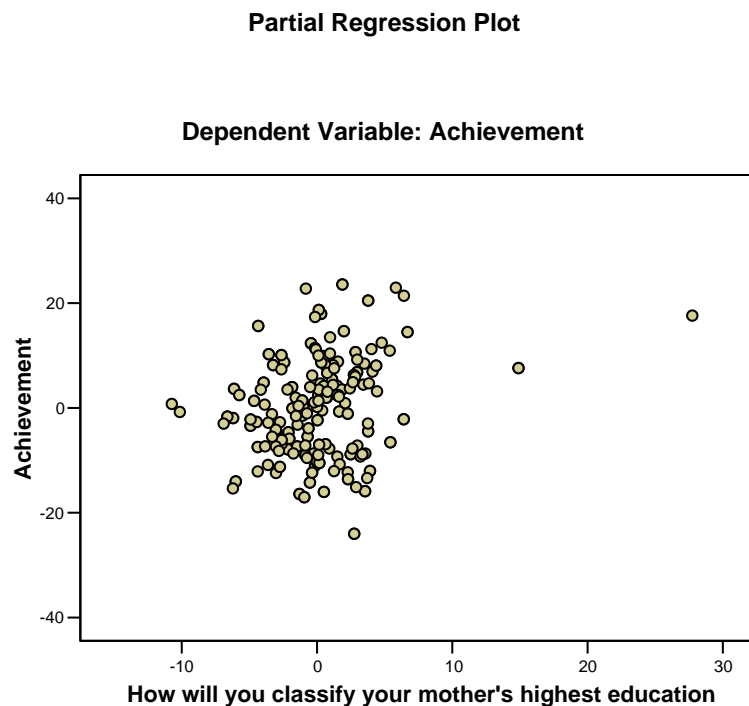
These results indicate that marking student's work may be discouragingly boring especially when students do not answer most of the questions correctly.

It is also apparent that apart from marking students' work there are other activities to make learning more important and interesting.

#### 4.7 Partial Regression Plots

Scatter diagrams were drawn to test whether the variables showed any linear pattern. The wider scattering indicated a lower degree of association between the dependent and independent variables while those that were not widely scattered indicated that independent variables under investigation were significant. There were very few scatter diagrams that varied. This was as expected.

#### Mothers' Highest Education



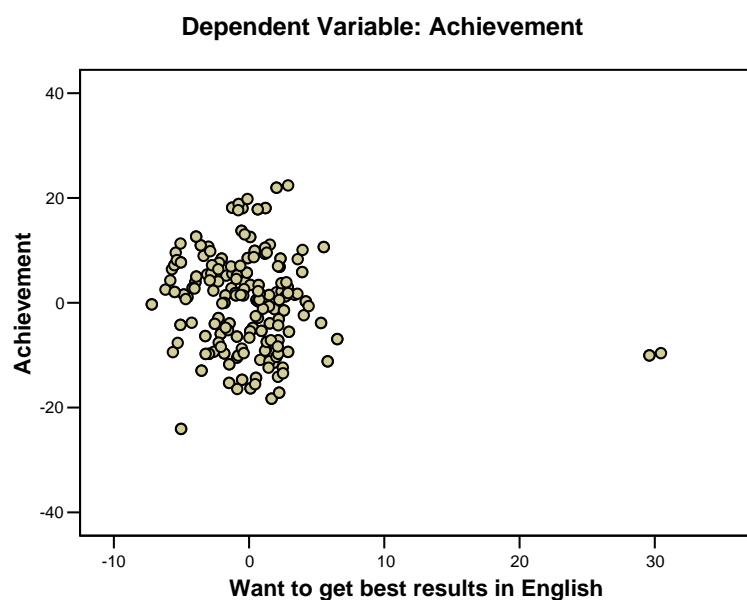
The partial regression plot was not widely distributed. This is a clear indication that maternal education is significant in influencing students' achievement. An important link has been found between parental education, particularly the level of a mother's education and a child's health.

Studies of the impact of parental education on child mortality and on child nutrition in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East show a significant positive association between a mother's educational level and her child's nutrition. (Pscharopoulos and Woodhall, 1985). The studies indicate that healthy children learn more effectively than hungry ones.

With respect to health and nutrition outcomes of schooling Glewwe (2002) reviews a number of studies that present strong evidence that mother's education can influence the health and nutrition status of children. One such study is that by Beherman (1990). This shows that children whose mothers are educated will be healthy and will be regular in school attendance thus increase their achievement.

### Wanting to Get Best Results in English

#### Partial Regression Plot



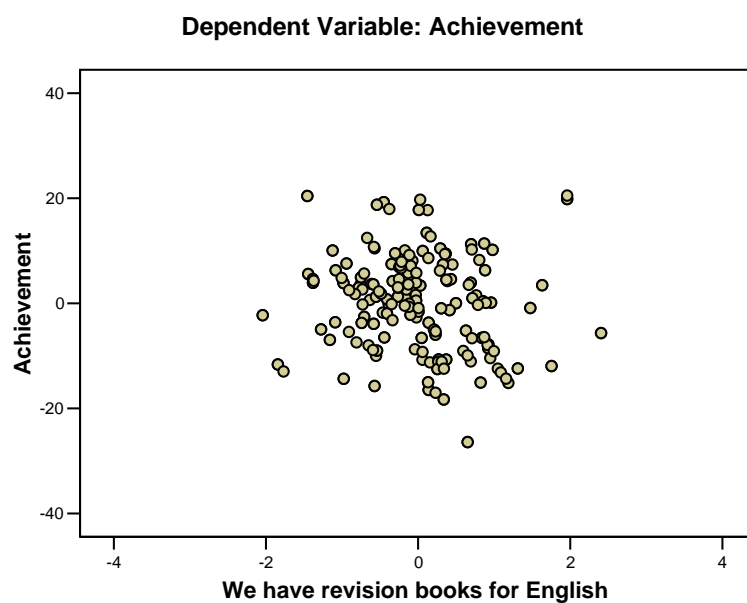
The partial regression plot was not widely distributed for students who want to get best results in English. This is an indication that this variable was significant. It means that students who want to get better grades in English will work hard to achieve their set targets.

Such students develop an interest in the subject that motivates them to work hard for better grades. Those who don't have set targets will have no motivation to work hard hence low achievement.

A number of studies show that background characteristics of students such as career aspirations and expectations influence their academic performance. Heynman (1979) in particular conducted studies whose findings agree with this study findings.

### **Having Revision Books for English**

**Partial Regression Plot**

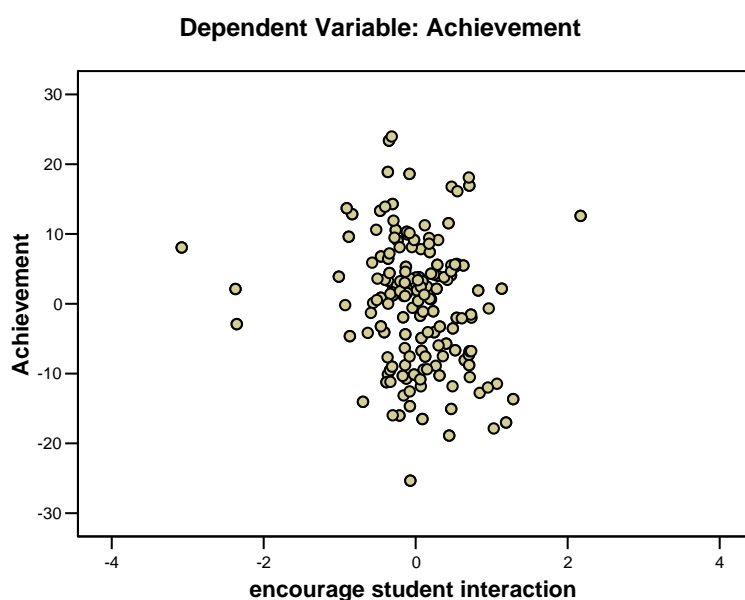




Availability of revision books for English did not show a wider scattering. This means that revision books for English were significant in determining students' achievement. These findings agree with those of Hanushek (1995) that textbooks lead to efficiency. The same views were postulated by Eshiwani (1988) study in Kajiado District Kenya where he found out that there was a significant relationship between the availability of textbooks and pupils achievement.

### Encouraging Students Interaction

#### Partial Regression Plot



There was a linear pattern with the variable student interaction and achievement. This means that student interaction has a strong significant relationship with achievement. The reason for this is that when students interact, they are able to learn positive aspects of language from each other thus improving their performance (Chemwei and Nyandusi, 2008). It therefore means that students who learn from and with each other will end up with high achievement as compared to those who do not.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

The study set out to establish the factors influencing students' achievement in English in secondary schools in Kenya.

The summary of the study findings as per the objectives is as follows: The study established that at the secondary school level there is inadequate teaching and learning facilities. Among the teachers, 31.6 reported that the student-textbook ratio was 4:1. This is an indication that a vast majority of students in the study area had no access to vital textbooks.

The study also established that recommended oral literature books were not available in most schools whereby 57.9% of the teachers strongly disagreed with the view that recommended oral literature books were available. With regard to the adequacy of English class readers 32.8% of the students agreed with the view that schools had adequate number of English class readers while only 10.5 % of the teachers agreed with the view. It was also established from the study that availability of textbooks contributed in part to high students' achievement.

This view was advanced by 20 % of the head teachers. Another 20% of the head teachers considered enough teaching and learning materials as being critical for students' better performance in national examinations. A further 6.7% of the head teachers were of the view that devotion of teachers enhanced students' achievement.

It was evident from the study that 42.1% of the teachers had more than 10 years teaching experience while the same percentage of teachers had a teaching experience of between 2 – 5 years. Those teachers with a teaching experience of between 5 -10 years constituted 15.8%. The study also established that a higher percentage of teachers (78.5%) qualified with B.Ed degree whilst only 10.5% of the teachers had a diploma as their highest professional qualification. Those who were pursuing their masters degree comprised 10.5%.

Another finding of the study was that a good number of teachers did give assignments to students at least every lesson since they appreciated the importance of giving assignments to students. Of the teachers involved 84.2 % gave assignments to students every lesson as reported by teachers. Among the students 77.2% reported that they were given assignments every lesson. The study further found out that 15.8% of the teachers supervise students' reading of set books once a month. Another 26.3% of the teachers did so once a week while 57.9% did so nearly every lesson.

Some teachers could not supervise students' reading of set books because they were ill prepared in handling the integrated English curriculum. Another reason was due to inadequacy of set books in schools leading to a high student-textbook ratio. The study established that 47.4 5% of teachers as reported by the teachers themselves let students choose topics for discussion about once a week while 46.8% of the students reported that teachers let them choose topics for discussion once a week. However those teachers who let students choose topics for discussion every lesson were very few. According to teachers views 21.1% of the teachers let students choose topics for

discussion every lesson. Only 22.2% of the students were of the view that teachers let them choose topics for discussion every lesson.

The study also revealed that there were teachers who did not mark students' work every lesson. Those teachers who marked students' work every lesson constituted 57.9% while 26.3% of teachers did so once a week. There were 10.5% of the teachers who marked students work once a term or less. The study found out that 68.4% of the teachers took note of students' ideas. This figure implies that students' views on how they would want English lessons to be organized to enable them learn efficiently was taken into account. Only 26.3% and 5.3% of the teachers took note of students' ideas once a week and once a month respectively. It was also established by the study that 42.1% of the teachers showed sensitivity to individual differences. These teachers strongly agreed with the view on whether they showed sensitivity to individual differences and use helpful examples.

Teachers who agreed with the view were 47.4% while 10.5% of the teachers disagreed. Another finding of the study was that most teachers in the district had a manageable number of English lessons. It was found out that 36.9% of the teachers taught 21-25 lessons a week. It was expected that a majority of teachers could have 27 lessons a week which are recommended by the MOE but this was not the case. There were 26.8% of the teachers who had 26-30 lessons a week, but they were not the majority. Only 5.3% of the teachers had above 30 lessons a week.

According to the study findings 52.6% of the teachers agreed with the statements as to whether they were satisfied with the school support. Those who disagreed comprised

42.1%. This means that many schools in the district endeavour to support the teachers' teaching and learning activities in school. It was established that some subjects such as English did not have enough teachers because the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) had not deployed enough teachers to all schools in the district to teach those subjects. A number of teachers were found to have moved out of the teaching profession for different reasons. One reason was due to lack of motivation in form of rewards for high achievers and poor remuneration. The study established that a higher percentage of head teachers (80%) were of the view that teachers were inadequate

The study established that teacher motivation is a critical factor in students' achievement. Among the head teachers 13.3% were of the view that teachers should be motivated to boost their teaching morale in order to produce better results. The other critical factor for better students' achievement as was established by the study is organization of teaching activities in line with the current technological advancement. The use of mass media, teaching machines such as audio video and computer assisted instruction was recommended by 6.7 % of the head teachers.

In order to improve teaching and learning in schools thus produce better results, 6.7% of the head teachers were of the view that teachers should go for in-service courses. This would enable them gain knowledge and skills that would enable them implement with competence the current revised secondary school syllabus. The study established that regular assessment of teachers may also improve their efficiency in service delivery. This was a view of 13.3% of the head teachers involved in the study.

DQASO should play a central role in assessing teachers and giving them suggestions on how to handle their lessons if better grades should be attained.

It was established from the study that the type of school had a positive effect on students' achievement. It had a significant level of .000 indicating that it is strongly significant. The study also established that maternal education is significant in determining the students' achievement. It showed a positive correlation with students' achievement. This means that parents with low levels of education especially maternal education are least concerned with about their children's achievement. They do not even value taking them to school. Another finding of the study was that adequacy of English readers had a positive relationship with achievement. It was significant at .000 level of significance.

It was also established that teachers' use of language that is easy to understand was significant. It had a positive correlation with students' achievement in English. The study also established that teachers' show of enthusiasm towards English had a positive relationship with achievement. This was an indication that teachers who were interested with the teaching of English produced better results in terms of better grades scored by students.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

It is clear from the study that students' academic achievement is a function of several school related factors. Therefore poor academic achievement in Kisii South District is accounted for by inadequacy of these factors. These factors include unavailability of

textbooks, type of school, maternal education, relevance, time, teachers' showing sensitivity to individual differences, students' interaction, teaching aids and teachers.

Policy should aim at intervening at the level of reversing the unavailability of school inputs in schools in Kisii South District. These include providing adequate number of teachers, improved textbook supply and ensuring that these resources are properly utilized. At present the spiral of low achievement is likely to get worse rather than improve owing to policies that do not harmonize the supply of such resources. These will seriously compromise the primary goal of providing education in Kenya which is to utilize education for national development.

The economic losses of such decline will have severe implications to the country both in the short term and in the long term. Therefore the need to change economic and/or Government policies towards providing school inputs to secondary schools is urgent especially in endemic poor students' achievement areas such as Kisii South District.

Whereas the government's subsidizing of secondary education is commendable, the tuition money allocated for the purchase of textbooks and the other teaching and learning aids is very little. Tuition fee should ideally be increased from Ksh. 3,600 per student especially in lowly economically endowed areas such as Kisii South District if students' achievement is to be improved.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

1. Teachers should be given opportunities to further their education and be motivated upon graduation through promotion and higher salaries. TSC should review some unfavourable rules on teachers who are given study leave. That such teachers only qualify for a study leave without pay and are bonded to work with TSC for a period equivalent to the one granted for study leave before they can quit teaching.
2. In order to enable schools attain optimal enrollment which is 160 students according to the MOE (2008), the Government should strengthen the policy on compulsory and Free Primary Education as well as subsidized Secondary Education.
3. The Government through the MOE should employ affirmative action to ensure high Enrolment of the girl child in schools. This is due to the revelation by this study that maternal education has an influence on their children's achievement in school.
4. The Government of Kenya should strive to promote equitable distribution of educational resources to all schools in the country. This will go a long way in eradicating the existing inequalities. It will also improve educational standards in endemic poor students' achievement areas.

### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Research**

In view of the findings of this study, the researcher wishes to suggest further studies related to this study as follows:

- Teacher competence in the use of integrated approaches and students' achievement.



- The influence of teacher qualifications on students' achievement.
- The influence of class discussions on students' achievement.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

This is **NOT** an examination. The purpose of these questions are to explore what you think about English performance in school. The information given will assist in improving the performance of English in South Kisii District .On the following pages are some questions that require your response. There are no right or wrong answers, all that is required is your personal opinion. Please answer these questions as honestly as you can. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and please be assured that your teachers will not victimize you for anything written here.

**PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. I am (*Please tick one*) Male   Female  
Admission Number\_\_\_\_\_ Name\_\_\_\_\_
2. School Category District  Provincial
3. Type of school Girls'  Boys'  Mixed Boarding   
Day Boarding  Mixed Day  Mixed Day& Boarding.
4. What is the average class size in your stream \_\_\_\_\_(*Number of students in class*)
5. Whom do you live with at home? (*Please tick all that apply*)
  - *both parents*   *grandparentsonly*
  - *father only*   *brothers and sisters only*
  - *mother only*

**6 a) How would you classify your Father's /Guardian's highest educational level?***(Please tick one)*

Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never went to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	College Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	University Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>

**6. b) How would you classify your Mother's/ Guardian's educational level**

Not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/>	Secondary school	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never went to school	<input type="checkbox"/>	College Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>	University Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>

**PART II: INTERESTS AND ABILITY**

The next set of questions ask how often certain things happen during your English lessons at school, or how often certain things are true. There are no right or wrong answers. Please read each sentence carefully then say what you think by putting a circle around the number that is right for you.



**7. How would you rate your interest in English at this time?(please**

<i>Not interested at all</i>	<i>Slightly Interested</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Interested</i>	<i>Extremely interested</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

**8. How strongly do you want to get the best results in English?**

<i>Not strongly at all</i>	<i>Slightly Interested</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Very Strongly</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

**9. How would you rate your ability in English?**

<i>Very low</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Extremely high</i>
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>

**10(a) Did you complete the Form Two work in time last year? Yes      No**

**(b) If No to 13(a) above, which topics were left out of the Form 2 work in English?**

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### PART III: AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

11. For each of the following statements please circle a choice that corresponds to your view on the availability of resources in your school for learning English

Key SD=Strongly Disagree, D=Disagree, U=undecided, A=Agree, SA= Strongly Agree					
Availability of Resources	SD	D	U	A	SA
Class textbooks are adequate for English	1	2	3	4	5
We have access to revision books in English	1	2	3	4	5
The school has adequate no. of English readers	1	2	3	4	5

### QUALITY OF TEACHING

12. With general regard to English, how often do these things happen in your English lessons?

In my English lessons	Never	Once	About	About	Nearly
		a	once a	once	every
		term	month a		lesson
		or		week	
		less			
1. I copy notes the teacher gives me.	1	2	3	4	5

2. I write compositions	1	2	3	4	5
3. I have opportunities to explain my ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I read English set books.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>In my English class</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once</b>	<b>About</b>	<b>About</b>	<b>Nearly</b>
		<b>a</b>	<b>once a</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>every</b>
		<b>term</b>	<b>month a</b>	<b>lesson</b>	
		<b>or</b>	<b>week</b>		
		<b>less</b>			
5. we do assignments	1	2	3	4	5
6. we have class discussions.	1	2	3	4	5
7. we do have discussion groups.	1	2	3	4	5
8. We do have class debates	1	2	3	4	5
<b>My English teacher(s).....</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Once</b>	<b>About</b>	<b>About</b>	<b>Nearly</b>
		<b>a</b>	<b>once a</b>	<b>once</b>	<b>every</b>
		<b>term</b>	<b>month a</b>	<b>lesson</b>	
		<b>or</b>	<b>week</b>		
		<b>less</b>			
9. tell me how to improve my work.	1	2	3	4	5
10. give us quizzes.	1	2	3	4	5

11. talks to me about how I am getting on in English.	1	2	3	4	5
12. lets us choose our own topics to discuss.	1	2	3	4	5
13. marks our work and gives it back quickly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. makes it clear what we have to do to get good marks.	1	2	3	4	5
15. uses language that is easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
16. takes note of students' ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
17. shows us how new work relates to what we have already done.	1	2	3	4	5

### IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

**13. What is your opinion about the following views on the importance of English?**

<b>The English we learn at school</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
18. is relevant to my future career choices	1	2	3	4	5
19. is useful in every day life.	1	2	3	4	5
20. deals with issues I am concerned about.	1	2	3	4	5
21. helps me understand current affairs issues.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>During English lessons</b>	<b>Almo</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Very</b>	<b>Almost</b>
	<b>st</b>	<b>times</b>		<b>often</b>	<b>always</b>

never					
22. I get excited about what we do.	1	2	3	4	5
23. we have enough time to think about what we are doing.	1	2	3	4	5
24. I am curious about the English we do.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I am bored during English lessons	1	2	3	4	5
26. I don't understand the English we do.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I find English too easy.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I find English challenging.	1	2	3	4	5

**14. Please place a tick against the statement which best describes your views on the following items regarding your English teachers?**

*Key SD=Strongly Disagree , D=Disagree, U=undecided, A=Agree, SA= Strongly Agree*

	My English teacher(s) .....	SD	D	U	A	SA
a)	Show respect for all students	1	2	3	4	5
b)	Are open and accommodative to ideas from students	1	2	3	4	5
c)	Show sensitivity to individual differences	1	2	3	4	5
d)	Are punctual for English lessons	1	2	3	4	5
e)	Show expertise in the subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
f)	Are current with developments in the field	1	2	3	4	5
g)	Communicate clearly	1	2	3	4	5
h)	Have advanced my knowledge of the subject	1	2	3	4	5
i)	Show enthusiasm toward the subject	1	2	3	4	5
j)	Use helpful examples and references	1	2	3	4	5
k)	Encourage student interaction	1	2	3	4	5

**15. Please place a mark to correspond to your view with regard to the statement highlighted below on the teaching of English.**

Overall I find the learning of English to be.....

<b>1</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Good	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>2</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither		Somewhat	Extremely
<b>3</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Dull	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>4</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Useful	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>5</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither		Somewhat	Extremely

**16. Please write answers to these questions in the spaces provided.**

How could your English lessons be improved so that you could learn more?

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In your view what should be done to improve the students' performance in English?

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*Thank you very much for taking your time to fill this questionnaire*

## APPENDIX II

### TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is for collecting data on the factors affecting the performance of English language in secondary schools in Kenya. All the information given shall be treated as confidential. To enhance confidentiality, do not enter your name or that of your school in the questionnaire.

#### PART I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Indicate your gender Male  Female

2. Teaching experience

*Less than 2 years*  *2-5 years*  *5-10 years*

*More than 10 years*

3. What is your Highest Professional qualification

*Diploma*  *Bachelors*  *Working on Masters*  *Masters*

4. How many English lessons do you teach in a week? \_\_\_\_\_

5. On average how many students are in the classes that you teach? \_\_\_\_\_

### PART III: AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

6. For each of the following statements please circle a choice that corresponds to your views on the availability of resources in your school for learning English

Key **SD**=Strongly Disagree, **D**=Disagree, **U**=undecided, **A**=Agree, **SA**= Strongly Agree

	Availability of Resources	SD	D	U	A	SA
<b>a.</b>	Class textbooks are adequate for English	1	2	3	4	5
<b>b.</b>	There are enough teaching and learning aids.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>c.</b>	The school has adequate no. of English readers	1	2	3	4	5
<b>d.</b>	The recommended oral literature books are <b>available</b> for each student.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>e.</b>	The recommended oral literature books are <b>adequate</b> for each student.	1	2	3	4	5
<b>f.</b>	I am satisfied with the school's support in the teaching and learning of English	1	2	3	4	5

7. On average, what is the student -text book ratio in your subject \_\_\_\_\_

8. How often do you give students assignments?

Daily  Weekly  Fortnightly

Others (specify) \_\_\_\_\_



## QUALITY OF TEACHING

9. With general regard to English, how often do these things happen in your English lessons?

In my English lessons I....	Never	Once a term or less	About once a month	About once a week	Nearly every lesson
1.....give notes to the students	1	2	3	4	5
2. ....ask students to write compositions	1	2	3	4	5
3.....supervise students reading of English set books.	1	2	3	4	5
I am of the view that during the English lessons I do.....	Never	Once a term or less	About once a month	About once a week	Nearly every lesson
4. ...tell students how to improve their work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. ...give them quizzes to do	1	2	3	4	5
6.... talk to them about how they are getting on in English.	1	2	3	4	5
7..... let them choose topics for discussion.	1	2	3	4	5
8.... mark their work and gives it back quickly.	1	2	3	4	5

9. ....make it clear what they have to do to get good marks.	1	2	3	4	5
10. ...use language that is easy to understand.	1	2	3	4	5
11. ...take note of students' ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
12. ....show them how new work relates to what we they have already done.	1	2	3	4	5

### IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH

10. What is your opinion about the following views on the importance of English to your students ?

<b>The English the students learn at SD school.....</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>	
18. ...is relevant to their future career choices	1	2	3	4 5	
19. ...is useful in every day life.	1	2	3	4 5	
20. ...deals with issues they are concerned about.	1	2	3	4 5	
21. ...helps them understand current affairs issues.	1	2	3	4 5	
<b>During English lessons students .....</b>	<b>Almost never</b>	<b>Someti mes</b>	<b>Oft en</b>	<b>Ver y ofte n</b>	<b>Almo st always</b>

22. ....get excited about what they do.	1	2	3	4	5
23. have enough time to think about what they do	1	2	3	4	5
24. ...are curious about the English lessons.	1	2	3	4	5
25...are bored during English lessons	1	2	3	4	5
26. .... don't understand the English they do.	1	2	3	4	5
27. ....find English too easy.	1	2	3	4	5
28. .... find English challenging.	1	2	3	4	5

**11.. Please place a tick against the statement which best describes your views on the following items regarding you as a teacher of English?**

*Key SD=Strongly Disagree , D=Disagree, U=undecided, A=Agree, SA= Strongly Agree*

<b>I consider that in my teaching I ....</b>						
l)	.....show respect for all students	1	2	3	4	5
m	... am open and accommodative to ideas	1	2	3	4	5
n)	.....show sensitivity to individual differences	1	2	3	4	5
o)	...am punctual for English lessons	1	2	3	4	5
p)	.....show expertise in the subject matter	1	2	3	4	5
q)	...am current with developments in the field	1	2	3	4	5
r)	.....Communicate clearly	1	2	3	4	5
s)	.....have advanced my knowledge of the	1	2	3	4	5
t)	.....Show enthusiasm toward the subject	1	2	3	4	5
u)	.....use helpful examples and references	1	2	3	4	5
v)	.....encourage student interaction	1	2	3	4	5

**12. Please place a mark to correspond to your view with regard to the statement highlighted below on the teaching of English.**

Overall I find the teaching of English to be.....

<b>1</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Good	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>2</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither		Somewhat	Extremely
<b>3</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Dull	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>4</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither	Useful	Somewhat	Extremely
<b>5</b>	Extremely	Somewhat	Neither		Somewhat	Extremely

What suggestions can you give on how English lessons can be improved so that students could learn more?

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*Thank you very much for taking your time to fill this questionnaire*

