

**EFFECTS OF LEARNERS' ATTITUDE, GENDER AND SCHOOL TYPE ON ENGLISH
LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THIKA WEST DISTRICT.**

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DEDICATION

To my husband Theuri, my son Gikunju, my daughters Nyaruai and Wanjiku who have given me time when they needed me most.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESL	English as Second Language
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
L2	Second Language
L1	First Language
LOI	Language of Instruction
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Attitude:** What an individual believes / perceives or feels about an object in the environment. In this study it refers to an opinion about English language.
- English language performance:** Refers to the score a student gets in a standardized test of English language. The test will cover material of up to the end of form two in the syllabus.
- Lingua franca:** Is a language systematically used to make communication possible between people not sharing a mother tongue.
- Gender:** This is a socially constructed category based on sex. Gender therefore refers to those differences between men and women that are socially constructed.

ABSTRACT

Education is the key to unlocking human potential. The acquisition of communication skills and language enables people to share their ideas and knowledge effectively. Studies done in Kenya have observed that very few secondary school leavers are effectively able to speak, read and write in English language. The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitude the learners have toward English language, the effect of attitude, gender and school type on English language performance. The motivation for the study was the continued poor performance in K.C.S.E English language paper. Two theories were used in the study, the tricomponent theory by Breckler (1964) and Smith, (19470) and interlanguage theory by Selinker (1972) . The study targeted students from public day secondary schools in Thika West District. Forty students from four public day schools were randomly selected. A Five point Likert Scale questionnaire was used to find out the kind of attitude students have towards English language. An English language test was constructed and used to determine the students' performance in English language. The data was sorted and organized by use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and R Statistical Software was used to analyze data. Specifically, the study focused on differences in learner's performance in English language in relation to the following variables: Attitude towards English language: Positive and negative attitudes, gender of the learner: Boys and Girls. School type: Mixed and single schools. This was followed by a comprehensive presentation of the analyzed data where description, tables, pie charts and bar graphs were used. The performance was statistically significant predictor at 95% confidence level of one's attitude towards English language. This was so because its p-value=0.001 which is less than the critical value (0.05%) of the study. Therefore the study concludes that the English language performance can better be explained by the attitude the learner has towards English language. Learners with positive attitude towards English language had significantly better performance than learners with negative attitude. However, gender and school type were non-significant factors in determining the performance level in English language.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Language is a fundamental instrument in teaching and learning in all societies. It is used to convey substantive subject matter and instruction to learners. Learners use language to listen, speak, read, write and think. They also use language to demonstrate that learning has taken place. Their academic performance depends on their mastery of the language of instruction. In Kenya, English language the declared language of instruction (LoI), is readily recognizable as part and parcel of modern economy. It is an essential tool in accessing content skills in other subjects, except other languages, at all levels of education from primary class four upwards. (Gachathi 1976, Koech 1999).

In Kenya, English and Kiswahili languages are the official languages of government. It is the language used predominantly in the national assembly for debates and deliberations. It is to some extent a means of communication between speakers of different languages and a lingua franca among the elite. It is also a means of international communication used by Kenyan representatives in international conferences. It is a major world language, which Kenyans use to disseminate information to other parts of the world.

It is the medium of instruction from standard four onwards, a service language across the entire curriculum. English is therefore a very important language not only in Kenya but also in other parts of the world where it is mother-tongue for so many millions of people and an official language of more than a dozen African countries (Katzner, 1986).

According to Gardner and Macktyre (1991), learning a language does not require any special skills or innate abilities which can be acquired by a few people. With a positive attitude, anyone can learn a language. Furthermore, the status of and importance of a language in society and within an individual derives largely from adopted or learnt attitude and a learnt attitude can be changed by exposure to language and motivation. Attitude consists of three components, the cognitive, affective and conative. The cognitive component refers to an individual belief structure, the affective to emotional reactions and conative component to the tendency to

behave in a certain way towards the situation, event or object. (Gardner, 1985). In this sense all these components must be addressed in a bid to affect students' attitudes towards English language.

Learner's lack of competence in the four language skills has been attributed to lack of enough teaching materials and resources, teachers' approaches and teaching methods. According to Crookes & Schmidt (1991) attitudes of students towards learning of English language is crucial in language acquisition and learning which in the long run determines their competence. Ellis, (1991) defines attitudes as learned predispositions not inherited and are relatively stable; they have tendency to persist. However, attitudes are affected by experiences, thus attitude change is important notion in bilingualism.

Around the world, English Language has become the dominant language in many areas of life, including business, finance, banking, science and technology, popular culture, media and international relations. Fluency in the English Language, in short, is a key to success in life. A student's attitude towards learning the language is a leading predictor of success in performance in English language.

Students' attitude towards second language, gender and school type might be major contributing factors to the performance in the language. This study has investigated the effect of attitudes, gender and school type on performance in English language.

It is from this background that the study established the effect of students' attitude towards English language, gender and school type on performance. The falling standards of performance in English language in Kenya and particularly in secondary schools has raised the need to investigate the effect of attitude, gender and school type on performance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya English language is second to most people. It is a compulsory subject taught both in primary and secondary schools where most learners have local vernacular or Kiswahili as their first language. Since most learners do not use the language effectively and efficiently, there is need to investigate some of the factors that have an influence on the learner's performance in English language.

Jones(1950) found out that attainment in second language was greatly related to learner's attitude towards the second language.Ellis,(1994)stated that failure to acquire a second language may be associated with the negative attitude towards the target language.It is also expected that learner's perception of the status of second language relative to the other languages in the society influences performance in the language.

From the literature that has been reviewed in this study,it is clear that the attitude towards second language,gender and school type are significant factors in second language performance.These have not been researched for their influence on performance of English language in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the study.

- i. To investigate attitudes the secondary school students have towards English language.
- ii. To establish the relationship between the students' attitude and performance in English language.
- iii. To determine the effect of gender and school type on performance in English language.

1.4 Research questions.

- i. What are the learners attitude toward English language?
- ii. What is the relationship between learner's attitude and English language performance?
- iii. How do learners in single sex schools differ in performance in English language from learners in mixed schools?

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

- i. Secondary school students have certain attitudes towards the learning of English language.
- ii. Learners with positive attitude perform better than learners with negative attitude.
- iii. There is relationship between the gender and school type on English language performance.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study.

English has increasingly become an international language and many non-native English-speaking countries have come to put it into wide use. Kroll,(2003) observes that students at institutions around the world are expected to submit high quality written work in English, a language that they did not acquire as native speakers. This makes the effect of attitude, gender and school type a viable area of research.

The researcher believes that among several factors which affect performance attitude towards English language, gender and school type has its role to play. It is important for the teacher of English language to determine to what extent attitudes, gender and school type influence performance in English language, so that during his teaching, the concern for the attitudes, gender and school type and provision of the knowledge could be given their rightful emphasis. The findings of this study will be useful to him.

The importance of attitudes, gender and school type towards learning of English language should be instructive to educators, who should take these factors into consideration when designing English language instruction or training courses. This study point to the need for instructions that help students function effectively in occupational settings, as well as society as a whole. It has contributed toward learners' developing positive attitudes toward English language in secondary schools in order to perform better in the language.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

For the purpose of this study, the research confined itself to investigation of the effect of students' attitude, gender and school type on their performance in English language. This study did not investigate the student's attitudes, effect of gender and school types towards other languages used in the schools since this require another study. The study focused on high school students' learning English language in form three. The class was chosen because it was assumed that at this level the learners have long been in school and have formed relatively stable attitudes towards English language.

Four public day schools were chosen. The choice of public day schools was deliberate because it controlled extraneous variables such as teacher the training. All teachers in public school are qualified to teach.

There are numerous variables involved in learning a second language. This study deals with the variables mentioned in section 1.2 that are related to learning English as a second language in Kenya. There are many variables in second language learning that have been left out in this study due to financial and time limitations.

This chapter has presented a comprehensive background to the study and statement of the problem. It has also introduced study's research questions, objectives and assumptions. Finally, the rationale of the study as well as the scope and limitations of the study have been presented. In the next chapter, the relevant literature that was reviewed will be presented followed by theoretical framework on which the study was based.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has dealt with the preliminary sections of the study. This chapter on the other hand, presents the reviewed literature, and theoretical framework. First is literature on concept of attitude, followed by studies on attitude towards second language. There is also literature on gender and school- type performance in second language. This chapter ends with theoretical framework on which this study was based.

2.2.1 Concept of Attitude

One objective of this study was to determine the attitude of learners towards English language and its effect on performance. It was therefore, important to discuss briefly this concept of attitude. Worthman, (1981) points out that the concept of attitude itself is rather difficult to define. Many psychologists use different words but referring to the same idea. Attitudes are crucial in language growth or decay, restoration or destruction: the status and importance of language in society and within an individual derives largely from adopted or learnt attitudes. An attitude is individual, but it has its origin in collective behaviour. Attitude is something an individual has that promotes certain behaviour. Although an attitude is a hypothetical psychological construct, it touches the reality of language life. Baker, (1988) stresses the importance of attitude in the discussion of bilingualism. Attitudes are learned predispositions, not inherited, and are likely to be relatively stable; they have a tendency to persist. However, attitudes are affected by experience; thus, attitude change is an important notion in bilingualism. Attitudes vary from favourable to unfavourable. Attitudes are complex constructs: for example there may be both positive and negative feelings attached to a language situation. (Baker1998; 112-115).

Attitudes are considered to be very important in relation to schooling and to life in general. They determine one's behaviour either in actions or words. They provide cues to personality and to one's needs which are important in understanding the formation of relationships. (Evans, 1972). Attitudes possessed by individuals will determine one's behaviour tendencies and help him/her to excel or not to excel in his/her daily tasks. The attitudes will influence one's social

interactions and degree of social adjustments. Attitudes are defined in various ways. For example Johada and Warren, (1966 p.76) defined attitude as “mental dispositions of the human individual to act for or against a definite object”.

Scamp (1977 p.97) defines attitude as “learned predispositions to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object.” An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represent an individual’s degree of favourable or unfavorable situation. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of persons, place, thing, or event. People can also be conflicted or ambivalent toward an object, meaning that they simultaneously possess both positive and negative attitudes toward the item in question.

Attitudes are judgments. They develop on the ABC model (affects, behaviour, and cognition). The affective response is an emotional response that expresses an individual’s degree of preference for an entity. The behavioral intention is a verbal indication or typical behavioral tendency of an individual. The cognitive response is a cognitive evaluation of the entity that constitutes individual’s beliefs about the object. Most attitudes are the results of either direct experience or observational learning from the environment.

Fontana, (1995, p.225) observes that “psychologists define attitudes as the relatively enduring orientations that individuals develop towards the various objects and issues they encounter during their lives and which they express verbally as opinions”. Learners will express their likes and dislikes by speaking out of the attitude they have developed. Dawes, (1970) defines attitude as “The predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol of object or aspects of this world in favourable or unfavourable manner. They include the affective or feeling core of liking or disliking and the cognition of that belief that describes the effects of the attitudes, its characteristics and its relation to the objects”.

Thurstone, (1947) defines attitude as the degree of positive or negative effect associated with some psychological objects. The concept ‘attitude’ according to him denotes the ‘sum total of a man’s inclinations and feelings, prejudice or bias, pre-conceived notions, ideas, fears, threats and convictions about a specific topic. The attitude is a personal disposition that impels an individual to react to an object, situation or predisposition in favourable or unfavourable ways. For any

attitude, there is an attitude continuum extending from favourableness through neutral to unfavourableness (Koul, 1984).

Bell, (1980, p.80) illustrates further that attitudes is “a state of mental or neutral state of readiness organized through experience exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon individual response to all objects which are related to”. Learners will express certain kind of attitudes as far as they are interacting using a language. Second and Beckman, (1964, p.54) stated that attitudes refer to “certain regularities of an individual’s feelings thoughts and predisposition to act towards some aspect of the environment”. Evans, (1965) pointed out that attitudes also determine one’s reaction to events and direction of responses. There are many factors that hinder second language learning and acquisition for example, institution, teacher, first language, course materials, and methodology. Among all the factors, the psychological factors like attitude greatly influence second language learning. Students ’attitudinal change directly influences their performance both oral and written. Once they are psychologically prepared to receive language learning, becomes easy (Kavitha, 2009).

Attitudes are formed through:

- i. Direct experience-To a great extent attitudes that human beings hold are the results of direct experience to the object. This attitude leads to beliefs which then influence the extent of liking or disliking the object.
- ii. Classical conditioning-Pavlov (1972) defined classical conditioning as the process through which a reflex response becomes associated with a stimulus which would not naturally activate that behavior.
- iii. Instrumental/Operant conditioning-This is the conditioning of voluntary behavior through the process of reinforcement and punishment (Thorndike,1913)
- iv. Observational learning and modeling-This is learning by imitating the behaviour of a model (Bandura, 1963).

Attitudes are considered to be very important in relation to schooling and to life in general. They determine ones behaviour in action and in words (Evans, 1972).

2.2.2 Attitudes towards the second language

Individual's attitude is a significant variable in learning English language. Motivation and attitude are similar in that they refer to the direction of behaviour. The main difference between motives and attitudes is that motives are goal specific and attitudes may be considered object specific. Shaw and Wright, (1967). Triandis, (1971) stated that attitudes have a dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all the objects and situations with which it is related. Although positive attitudes towards objects or event may imply approach and negative attitudes imply avoidance, Baker, (1988) cautioned that one might have positive thoughts and yet behave in a negative way. Triandis, (1971) also indicated that research findings have shown absence of strong relationships between attitudes and actual behaviour.

Lambert (1974), stated that balanced bilingualism will occur when the learner has a positive view of own language and the target second language. Ellis, (1974), stated that failure to acquire second language may be associated with negative attitude towards the target language culture. These assumptions are geared towards the culture of the second language speakers and the second language itself.

In a study done in primary schools in Britain on learners learning French, Burstall (1975), found an association between attitudes towards learning second language and achievement in language. Ellis (1994), concluded that generally positive attitudes towards a language can be expected to enhance learning and negative attitudes to impede learning.

Jones (1950) did a study on Welsh learners' attitude towards Welsh as a second language. Results showed that achievement was positively correlated to the learners' attitude towards the language. A number of studies have shown that attitudes towards second language are based on the learners experience with the language. Carroll and Stern (1967) stated that attitude towards a language can be an intrinsic motivation, depending on the learner's views on the advantages and disadvantages found in learning the second language. Norwich and Jaegar (1989), reported that learners with positive attitudes showed intention for future learning behaviour. Tarome and Yule (1989), pointed out that learners develop more positive attitudes when they experience success in the study of the target language. The above studies indicate that attitudes have some influence on

the individual's behaviour in learning second language and success in learning the language has influence on learner's attitudes.

In summary, literature on second language learning acknowledges learners' attitudes towards the language as an important factor in learning. According to Carrol, (1967) learners' performance in second language depends on the perceived status of the target language relative to the first language. Derville, (1966) states that learners, who accord high status to the second language, have positive attitudes towards it are more likely to have a better performance than learners with low status, or negative attitudes towards second language.

Although many studies indicate some relationship between attitudes and performance in second language, some have shown an opposite direction of the expected behavior. For example Biggs (1959) quoting results from National Foundation for Educational Research in UK, suggested that attitude may be more closely related to success in arithmetic than to success in English language.

2.2.3 Gender and performance in second language

The gender of the learner was identified by Lambert and Gardner (1972) and Burstall (1975) as another factor that is related to performance in second language. Studies show that gender differences in performance depend on the social environment (Preston 1962; Jonhson, 1972). Thus, in some societies girls have a better performance in the second language than boys, while in other societies the results have been the opposite.

Some studies have shown that there are gender differences in levels of education achievement and societal expectations. Davision (1993) reported that in Kenya all parents want their children, regardless of sex to go to university. (Cammish and Brock 1994), in a study done in Cameroon, found that factors affecting education for girls included parental economic ability and willingness to enroll their daughters in school. In Malawi, two third of the parents think that their daughters should go to secondary school, two third of them aspired for their sons to go to university. The majority of boys in Malawi want to go to university while the majority of girls are satisfied with secondary education. These studies show the influence of society as regards gender and education.

Brophy and Good (1974) cited research by Johnson (1972) which indicated that in the aspect of reading achievement, girls in U.S.A and Canada did better than boys, while in Nigeria and England boys did better than girls in reading skill. Preston (1962) got the same results in studies done in Germany and U.S.A and explained that the German culture regards reading and learning activities related to male culture. Boyle (1987) found out that female students in Hong Kong had a higher mean test score than male students in second language mastery. Slaalvik (1990) in a study found that girls had better performance than boys in Norwegian and English languages. Also, in another study by Skaalvik and Rankin (1994) had the results that supported the hypothesis that there are small gender differences in verbal achievements in primary and middle schools in favour of girls.

Some studies have suggested that there are some gender differences in levels of attitude to learn second language. Gardner and Lambert (1972) found out that in Canada female learners of a second language had a positive attitude than male learners. Burstall (1975) found that in primary schools in England boys tended to drop French in a significantly greater number than girls; and girls tend to have more positive attitude than boys learning second language. Clark (1987) on a review of a number of studies stated that girls did better and had positive attitudes than boys towards a foreign language. However, Ludwig (1983) found that among students of French, German and Spanish in U.S.A colleges' male learners were more instrumental and motivated than female learners. Thus, the findings of the studies have produced contradicting results on learners' performance on second language and other factors related to learning.

Studies have shown some gender differences in motivation to learn a second language depending on where the study was done. With exception of Nigeria, most of these studies were done in Western world and in some cases on the first language. It was imperative to do a study in English language learning, where the researcher believed the situation favours either girls or boys.

2.2.4 School-type and performance

Dale (1974) in a study done in London schools found out that boys in single sex schools had lower average performance in "o" level General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) in English language Examination than boys in mixed schools. It also found out that girls in single sex schools were slightly superior to girls in mixed secondary schools. According to Thuo, (1983) in

a study on relationship between performance of single and mixed schools in Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) Examination found out that when schools are classified as single sex and mixed, the former were found to perform better than the latter in KCE examination.

2.3 Theoretical framework

This study was informed by Tricomponent theory by Breckler (1984) and Smith (1947) and interlanguage theory by Selinker (1972).

2.3.1 Tricomponent theory

Emotion is our attitudes, the feeling of liking or disliking that causes us to evaluate an object as good or bad. These emotional reactions make up the affective components of an attitude which can be positive (liking, love, desire, wanting admiration) negative (disliking, hatred, abhorrence, uncertainty, disinterest.) Many theorists feel that the affective component distinguishes an attitude from other psychological processes. This means that it is possible for the affective component to change and cognitive component to remain relatively stable. Thus, a person who dislikes a language is most likely to regard it as useless Ogula, (1994). This component was realized by finding out whether students like or dislike listening, speaking, reading and writing in English language.

The cognition component of attitude includes various assumptions and beliefs about aspects of our social world. Although our beliefs can be inaccurate they are supported by objectives, facts and behaviour. Affective is a component that may include in the evaluation of the object along some dimensions such as favourable or unfavourable, desired or undesired good or bad. For example Kenyan students may believe that to learn English language will lead to increased employment opportunities. This component was realized by finding out how students' think about English language in its usefulness in future, its use in daily life and whether they are satisfied with their English language results or not.

Most social psychologists believe that our attitudes also encompass a behavioural component. A sexist man, for example, may quit his job when he is transferred to a department managed by a woman. A prejudicial woman may discriminate against blacks by treating them unfairly. In the two cases, individuals' overt actions are guided by their attitudes.

The behavioural component of an attitude includes not only overt actions but predispositions to respond in certain general ways. (Forsyth, 1986).Lippa, (1990) asserts that attitudes may serve instrumental, ego defensive, knowledge and value expressive functions. He further explains that learning theories hold that attitudes are learned through the process of classical conditioning and modeling.

A study by Staats and Staats, (1958) demonstrated significant conditioning of attitudes. In classical conditioning stimulus (such as bell) comes to elicit a response. Some attitudes might be learned (acquired) in a similar way, if the object of the attitude (originally a neutral stimulus) is paired with a stimulus that naturally elicits a certain response.

The behavioural component of an attitude includes all the actions and/or tendencies associated with that object. For instance if a learner has some positive attitude towards the object, he/she is likely to approach that object by supporting, protecting or rewarding it. If one has negative attitude, he/she is likely to attack, oppose, avoid or destroy the object. This component was realized by finding out whether the learners look forward to listen to, speak, and write in English language or they look forward to attending or not attending English language lessons.

The three components that is cognition (knowledge) an affective (feeling) behavioral (conative) are interrelated and integrated to form an attitude of a person towards an object, situation (scenario).Therefore when a learner has a positive or a negative attitude towards English language this will have an effect in his/her performance in language.

2.3.2 Interlanguage Theory

This term was coined by Selinker (1972) to describe the learner's language. McLaughlin (1987), points out that interlanguage has come to characterize a major approach to second language research and theory. The main argument of this theory is that the learner at any given stage is in the process of learning second language will have a language that is somewhere between their first language and the target language.

According to Selinker (1972) an interlanguage is a separate linguistic system resulting from the learner's attempted production of the target language norm. The features in interlanguage are neither first language nor second language. The interlanguage is constantly evolving towards the

target language system. As such the interlanguage is envisaged as a continuum with the learner moving gradually from one part to the next as he progresses towards target language. The interlanguage is said to have three principal features: permeability, dynamism and systematicity. It is said the interlanguage is permeable in that the rules in the system are not fixed but are open to amendment as more language is acquired. The principle of dynamism relates into permeability in that interlanguage is said to be constantly changing as the learner accommodates new hypotheses about the target language. In addition to this the interlanguage is said to be systematic in the sense that the rule-based nature of the learner's use of the target language can be detected.

An important notion related to interlanguage is fossilization. This is a state of affairs that exists when the learner ceases to elaborate the interlanguage no matter how long there is exposure to new data or new teaching. When this happens wrong forms in the interlanguage fossilize as errors. Fossilization may result from language transfer or strategies of accommodation according to Selinker. Related to fossilization is the notion of backsliding. Sometimes, when not careful about his language, the learner can backslide to wrong forms, but when monitored, he produces the correct forms. These two notions, fossilization and backsliding could explain some of the errors found in second language learners' language. However, in the interlanguage, errors are seen as evidence of an evolving system and not unwanted forms. They are therefore viewed positively. The concept of interlanguage can be seen to relate to performance of four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) that develops over time. At any time the learner can be said to perform towards the target language samples.

Fossilization and backsliding could explain some of the errors found in learners' performance in second language. However this study does not concern itself with a detailed analysis and explanation of the learner errors therefore the interlanguage theory is not directly applied to our data.

In this chapter the study has presented the literature relevant to this study. It ends with the theoretical framework on which this study was based. In the following chapter comprehensive information on the methodology that was employed in this study is presented.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter a review of literature was done to situate and rationalize the present study in the area of effect of attitude, gender and school type on performance of English language. This chapter explains the methodology used in conducting the present study. Specifically, the chapter describes the instruments, the study population, the sampling procedures, data collection procedures and data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

This study used both survey and descriptive research designs. Fraenkel and Wallen, (2000) describe survey as a method whereby information is gathered from a sample of population through carefully administered questions. Generalizations are based on the sample inferences. This design was preferred because it was possible to obtain information from a representative selection of the population and from that sample the researcher was able to present the findings as being representative of the population as a whole. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Descriptive research design was used because some of the data was obtained from a written test.

3.3 Area of Study

The study was conducted in Thika West District of Kiambu County in Kenya. Thika West district is a new district established in the year 2008. The district is situated twenty five kilometres (25) North of Nairobi the capital city of Kenya. The reason for selecting this district was because it had enough public day schools and it is accessible to the researcher.

3.4 Study Population

The study took place in four public day schools. The study population consisted of 160 students drawn from form three classes of the selected schools. The selection of form three learners as the sample group was due to the belief that they have been sufficiently exposed to the English language and had formed relatively stable attitudes towards the language. The form four students were not targeted because majority of the students might have had the phobia for the final

examination and in this case they could tend to put more effort in English language regardless of whether they like it or not. The classes provided enough population from which a representative sample could be drawn. Private schools were deliberately left out since in most cases their learners are more exposed to English learning resources like story books, magazines, they watch and listen to English language programmes both on radio and television.

3.5 Sample size

A sample size of 40 students (20 boys and 20 girls) which is 20 percent of the target population of 160 students in Thika West was used. According to Remenyi et al (2003), a sample size of 10% to 30% of the accessible population is sufficient enough in descriptive research.

Table 3 .1 Sample Size

School type	Sample size
Boys	10
Girls	10
Mixed	20 (10 boys/10 girls)

3.6 Sampling procedure

This study used systematic simple random sampling. This technique required that each member of the population had a definite and equal chance of being selected. In systematic sampling, every k^{th} case in the population frame is selected for inclusion in the sample to obtain a random sample , the list of all members in the sampling frame must be randomized (Mugenda & Mugenda , 2003) This was done using the following formula.

$$K = N/n$$

Where n is the sample and N is the population size,

In this study $n= 40$ while $N=160$

The k^{th} element will be $N/n = 160/4 = 4$

Therefore 3 is the k^{th} element in this study.

In the randomized list of students every 3rd student will be picked to participate in the study until the desired sample size is attained.

3.7 Research Instruments

Two research instruments (a questionnaire and an English language test) were used to collect data.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

A five point Likert scale questionnaire was used to find out the kind of attitude the learners' had towards learning English language. The Likert scale (Likert 1932) asked the individual to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they 'strongly agree' (SA), 'Agree' (A), 'undecided' (U) 'disagree' (D) and 'strongly disagree' (SD) with each statement. (Strongly agree may be assigned a weight of 5 points, while strongly disagree may get a score of 1 point. Thus, in an attitude questionnaire, for example favourable attitude are reflected in higher scores). The advantages of the questionnaires are that it requires minimum expenses in money and efforts. It has a greater reliability because it allows the selection of a large representative sample (Muoly, 1963). It also assures confidentiality and thus elicits more candid and objective replies.

3.7.2 English Language Test

A two hours English language test was used to determine the learners' performance.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected by use of a one hour attitude questionnaire and two hours English language test. First learners' gave their responses to the attitude questionnaire then wrote the English language test.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation.

The collected data was edited and coded following the variables in the study which are attitude, gender and school type. Likert scale measured attitudes towards the English language. This was done by assigning points to the levels of agreement with the statements in the likert questionnaire that is 5- strongly agree, 4 -agree, 3- undecided, 2 -disagree, and 1- strongly disagree. Negative

attitudes related to having negative opinion and unfavourable statements about English language. Positive attitudes related to having positive opinion and favorable statements about English language.

The test items were scored manually, each correct response was awarded two points and incorrect answer or blank space was awarded zero. Three language skills (speaking, reading and writing) were tested. To check on scoring validity the test was marked by different scorers. For a better document analysis of the test the learners' previous two term scores on the written test was considered. The scores were analyzed by use of statistical tests Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Linear logistic regression.

3.9.1 Logistic Regression and ANOVA

Logistic regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were performed, which could simultaneously compare the means of three or more populations.

3.9.2 ANOVA

Anova (Analysis of Variance) compares the between-group variance (which is how different your groups are from each other) to the within-group variance (which is how different members of the same group are from each other). If the between-group variance is much larger than the within-group variance then a conclusion on whether the means are significantly different is determined.

An ANOVA will test the hypotheses

$$H_0: \mu = \dots = \mu$$

H_a: at least two means are different

Where n is the number of different groups we want to compare. In this study different groups were established based on gender, schools and attitude which were used as independent (predictor) variables to dependent variable (Performance). Attitude had two levels or groups those with negative attitude and those with positive attitude towards English language.

To measure the within- and between-group variability sums of squares were calculated.

The between-groups sum of squares was calculated as

$$SSG = (-)$$

While the within-groups sum of squares was calculated as

$$SSE = -1).$$

Taking the performance as the dependent variable against the respondents' attitude, school type and gender as independent variables, the linear regression and anova were carried out to find out if there was any significant relationship between the dependent variable and the fitted regressors.

3.9.3 Logistic Regression

Regression Analysis is concerned with the study of the dependence of one variable (*The Dependent Variable*), on one or more other variable(s) (*The Explanatory Variable*), with a view to estimating and or predicting the population parameters. Logistic regression was used to test the impacts of; gender, school type and attitude towards English language performance in Thika West District of Kiambu County. The respondents' performance was cauterized into two levels, fail or pass. The dependent variable being the dichotomous (binary) variable of whether the respondent failed the English language (1) or not (0), Logistic regressions allow one to have more than one predictor in a model. However the typical advice is to interpret each coefficient "with all the other predictors held constant".

The central mathematical concept that underlies logistic regression is the logit-the natural logarithm of an odds ratio. Logistic regression describes the relationship between a dichotomous response variable and a set of explanatory variables. The explanatory variables may be continuous or discrete. Taking, y as random variable that can take the values 1 and 0.

The simple logistic model has the form

$$\text{logit}(y) = \text{Natural log (odds)} = \left(\frac{p}{1-p} \right)$$

whereby

$$\ln\left(\frac{P}{1-P}\right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n$$

whereby

β_i denotes a vector of parameters,

X_i is often called the design matrix and

X_{ii} is the linear component of the model.

In this study;

Represents the likelihood of having a negative attitude towards English language

It is an independent variable of the study.

X_i Represents the predictor variables of the study that is performance, gender and school type.

These are the independent variables of the study.

ANOVA was used to show the different scores in attitude while logistic regression was used to show change in performance in relation to attitude, gender and school type. This coded data was then classified and tabulated for efficient analysis. Data editing was done to detect errors and omissions for correction to ensure accuracy and consistency. In order to establish the effect of attitude, gender and school type on performance in English language, the researcher analyzed statistics in terms of mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage of the variables in the objectives.

Descriptive analysis in terms of mean, standard deviation, mode, frequency and percentages was applied to measure and determine the relationship that exists among the collected data. The data was coded by use of SPSS and analyzed by use of R to generate statistics about the variables.

This chapter has presented the methodology adopted in this study. The chapter that follows presents the data analysis, interpretation and presentation.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers data analysis, interpretation and presentation. It presents the analysis of the data collected. The purpose of the study was to find out the learners' attitude towards English language, effect of attitude, gender and school type on English language performance in public secondary schools from Thika West District of Kiambu County.

4.2 Instrument Return Rate

The questionnaire response rate is the proportion of the sample that participated in the study as intended in all research procedures. The questionnaires were administered to a sample of 40 respondents who filled and returned the questionnaires. The return rate was therefore far much above average thus making research effective.

Table 4. 1 Instrument Return Rate

Sampled	Returned	Percent
40	40	100

The return rate was 40(100%) making the research most effective.

Table 4.2 Attitude (positive or negative)

	Frequency	Percentage
Positive	21	52.5 %
Negative	19	47.5 %
Total	40	100

Students filled an attitude questionnaire to fix their attitude towards English language. The number of students with positive attitude was higher 21(52.5 %) than the students with negative attitude 19 (47.5 %).

4.3 Gender

The respondents were asked to state their gender on the English language test paper and the findings are summarized in table 4.3 and figure 4.1. There were 20 female respondents 50% and 20 male respondents 50%.

Table 4.3 Gender

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	20	50
Female	20	50
Total	40	100

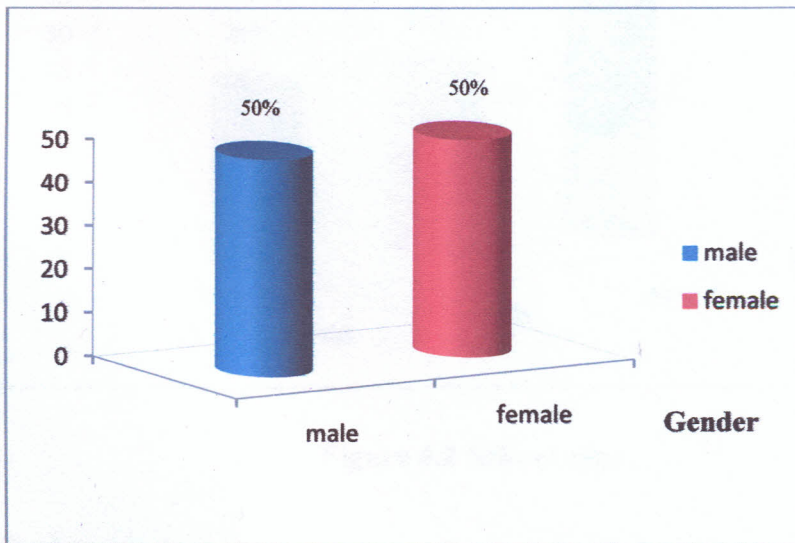


Figure 4.1 Gender

4.4 School Type

The respondents were asked to state the type of their school, that is whether purely boys, girls or a mixed school. Table 4.4 and figure 4.2 shows the distribution of the respondents from each particular type.

Table 4.4 School Type

School type	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	10	25
Girls	10	25
Mixed	20	50
Total	40	100

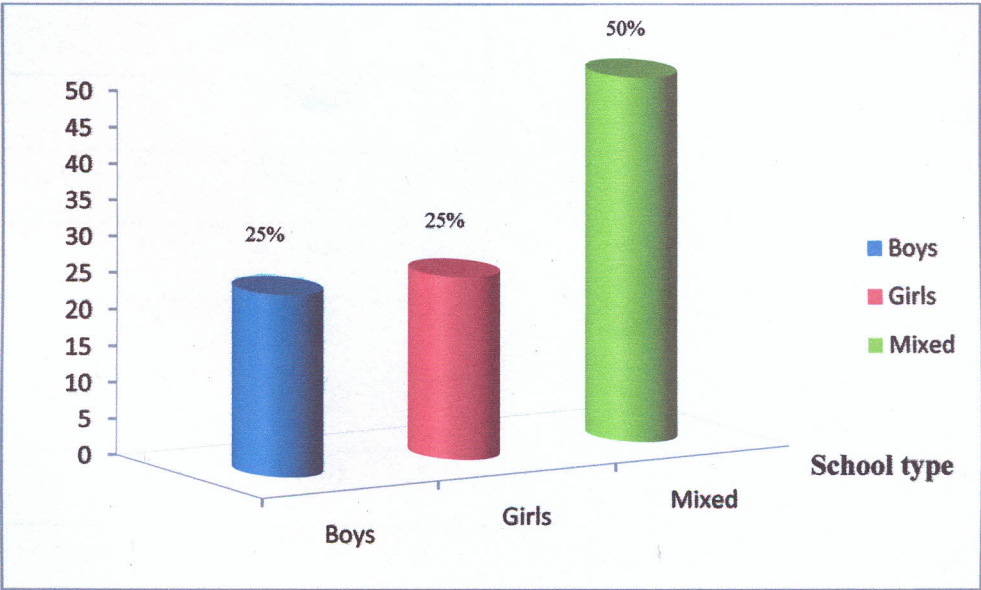


Figure 4.2 School type

4.5 Attitude and Performance

The respondents were tested through a formal testing to fix their performance in English language; the test was out of seventy (70) marks. They also filled an attitude questionnaire whose entries enabled the researcher to categorize them as either having a positive or negative attitude towards English language. Tables 4.5, 4.6 and figure 4.3 summarize the findings.

Table 4.5 Performance Attitude towards English

Performance	negative	%	positive	%
(00.00)	16	2	(10.52)	0
(00.00)	20	3	(15.78)	0
(00.00)	22	4	(21.05)	0
(00.00)	24	1	(05.26)	0
(00.00)	26	4	(21.05)	0
(04.76)	28	1	(05.26)	1
(00.00)	30	2	(10.52)	0
(28.57)	32	1	(05.26)	6
(19.05)	34	1	(05.26)	4
(14.28)	36	0	(00.00)	3
(23.81)	38	0	(00.00)	5
(04.76)	40	0	(00.00)	1
(04.76)	42	0	(00.00)	1
(100.00)	Total	19	(100.00)	21

According to the study there were 19(47.5%) and 21(52.5%) respondents with negative and positive attitude respectively towards English language, as shown in table 4.2

Table 4.6: Performance statistics

Observation (n)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Minimum	Maximum
General, n=40	29.95	6.86	30	16	42
Negative, n ₁ =19	25.20	5.08	26	16	34
Positive, n ₂ =21	32.90	6.00	34	22	42

The respondents with positive attitude performed better compared to their counterparts with negative attitude. As shown in table 4.6 those with negative attitude had a mean score of 25.20 and standard deviation of 5.08 while those with positive attitude had a mean score of 32.90 and a standard deviation of 6.00.

Table 4.7: Attitude and Performance summary

Attitude	Performance		Total
	Failed	Passed	
Negative	17(94.4%)	02(09.1%)	19(47.5%)
Positive	01(05.6%)	20(90.9%)	21(52.5%)
Total	18(100.0%)	22(100.0%)	40(100.0%)

Scores

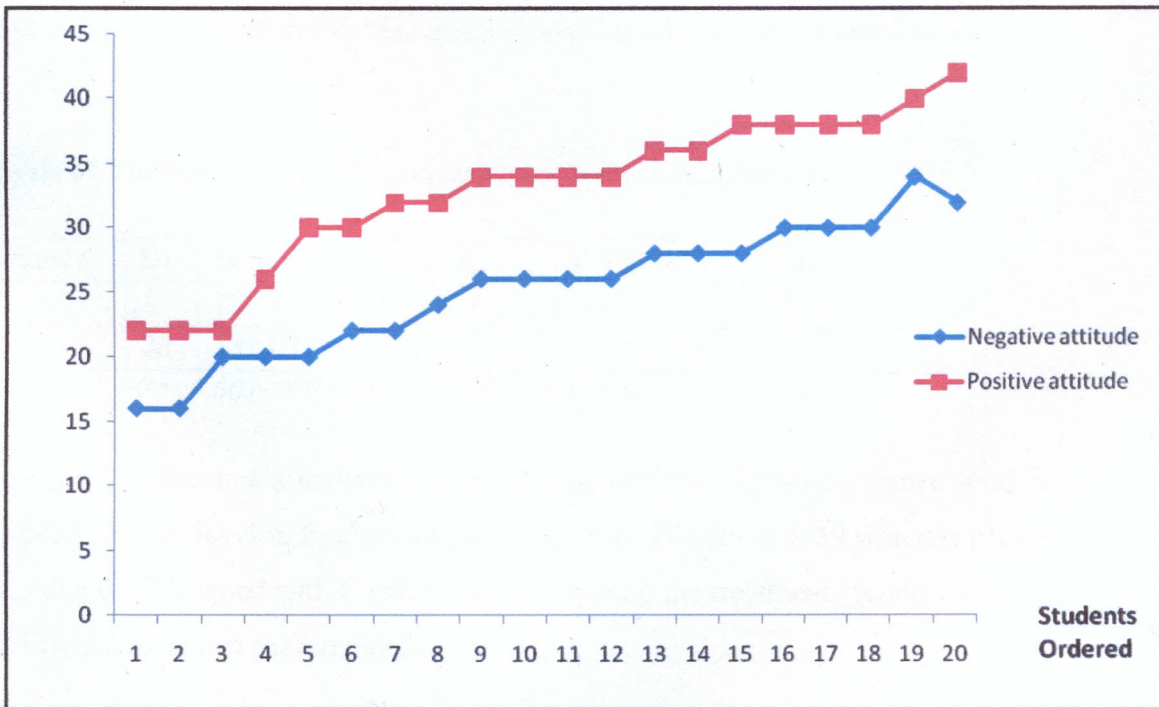


Figure 4.3 Performance score for students with different attitudes

At 95% confidence level attitude was statistically a significant factor in determining the student's performance in English language in Thika West District and therefore the findings can be generalized to the whole population where the sample was drawn.

4.6 Gender and Performance

Twenty girls and twenty boys were tested on three English language skills (speaking, reading and writing). Tables 4.8 and 4.9 summarize their performances.

Table 4.8 Performance per gender

Gender	Performance		Total
	Failed	Passed	
Female	12(55.5%)	8(45.5%)	20(50%)
Male	8(44.4%)	12(54.5%)	20(50%)
Total	20(100%)	20(100%)	40(100%)

Females constituted bigger proportion (55.5%) of those who failed compared to their counterpart males (44.4%).

Table 4.9 Analysis of Variance Table (Response: score, treatment; gender)

Source of Variance	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F Value	Pr(> F)
<i>Gender</i>	1	22.56	22.56	0.4728	0.4959
<i>Residual</i>	38	1813.34	47.72		

Significance Codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1

As shown above gender was not a statistically significant factor at 95% confidence level in determining the performance level in English language since the P-value 0.4959 which is greater than the critical value 0.05 coupled with F value 0.4728 implying the treatment (gender) imposes little impact on English language performance.

4.7 School type and Performance

Students from three categories of schools were tested on three English language skills (speaking, reading and writing) and the findings are summarized in tables 4.10 and 4.11.

Table 4.10 Performance per school

School type	Performance		Total
	Failed	Passed	
Boys	4(22.2%)	6(27.3%)	10(25%)
Girls	6(33.3%)	4(18.2%)	10(25%)
Mixed	8(44.4%)	12(54.5%)	20(50%)
Total	18(100%)	22(100%)	40(100%)

Mixed schools constituted the highest number of those who failed 8(44.4%), however girls' schools performed poorest out of the three categories as shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.11 Analysis of Variance Table (Response: score, treatment; school)

Source of Variance	Df	Sum Sq	Mean Sq	F Value	Pr(> F)
<i>school</i>	2	48.81	24.41	0.5053	0.6074
<i>Residual</i>	37	1787.09	48.30		

Significance Codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 '' 1

The findings in table 4.11 show that school type was not a statically significant factor at 95% confidence level in determining the performance level in English language since the P-value 0.6074 which is greater than the critical value 0.05 coupled with F value 0.5053 implying the treatment (school type) imposes little impact on English language performance.

4.8 The R Script Results for Univariate Logistic Regression.

Univariate logistic regression involves testing of the impact of attitude, gender and school type on performance that is, taking each independent variable at a time while holding other variables constant as summarized in table 4.12. R is statistical analysis software just like SPSS, STATA, SAS and CSprou. Since R is free, easy to use and very powerful in giving precise and accurate results it was given preference in analyzing the data for this study (Robert G. 2004).

Table 4.12: logistic regression, predicting exam; Pass Vs Fail

Variable	Estimate	Std. Error	Z Value	OR(95%CI)	Pr(> Z)
Gender: Ref=female male vs female	- 0.6931	- 0.6571	- 1.055	- 2 (0.55,7.25)	- 0.287
School: Ref.=Boys Girls Mixed	- -0.3159 0.4055	- 0.7966 0.8233	- -0.397 0.493	- 0.73 (0.15,3.47) 1.5 (0.3,7.53)	- 0.692
Attitude: Ref=Negative Positive vs Negative	- 5.1358	- 1.2683	- 4.049	- 17 (14.15,204.2)	- 0.001

According to the findings in table 4.12, results in the first row and using females as reference the odds ratio (OR) or likelihood of male passing the English language test is 2 times compared to their counterparts females. Using Boys' school as reference the odds ratio of a girls' and a mixed school passing the English language test is 0.73 and 1.5 times for girls and mixed schools respectively. Those with positive attitude towards English language were 17 times likely to pass the English language test compared to those who had negative attitude towards the language. Attitude was the only statistically significant predictor at 95% confidence level of one's performance in English language. This was so because its p-value=0.001 which is less than the critical value (0.05%) of the study.

4.9 The R Script Results for Multiple Regression

Multiple regression involves testing the impact of all the independent variables (attitude, gender and school type) against the dependent variable (performance) at the same time.

Table 4.13 Multivariate logistic regression, predicting test performance

Variable	Betas
Gender	0.1240
School	0.0220
Attitude	0.8666

Hence the odds ratio of a student performance in English language from Thika West District can be predicted using the regression equation given as;

$$\frac{\text{Exp}(\alpha + \beta x)}{1 + \text{Exp}(\alpha + \beta x)} = 5.3187 + (0.8666 \pm 1.2683)\textit{Attitude} + (0.1240 \pm 0.5372)\textit{gender}$$

$$+(0.0220 \pm 0.7418)\textit{school type} + \textit{error term}$$

whereby the value of betas or the coefficient of the predictors shows the magnitude of the change of performance (dependent variable) when the given regressor changes by a unit, for instance a change in attitude towards the language will affect his or her performance by 0.8666 ± 1.2683 as indicated in the above equation.

4.10 Discussion of the findings

4.10.1 Learners' Attitude towards English Language and Performance

One objective of this study was to find out the learners' attitude towards English language. The study found out that learners from selected schools in Thika West District had both positive and negative attitude towards English language. Attitude was found to be a statistically significant factor in determining the learner performance in English language. It agrees with Ellis (1974) who stated that failure to acquire second language may be associated with negative attitudes towards the target language. Ellis (1974) concluded that generally positive attitude towards a language can be expected to enhance learning and negative attitudes to impede learning a language.

Derville (1966) state that learners who accord high status to the second language, have positive attitude towards it are more likely to have better performance than learners with low status, or negative attitudes towards second language.

As Title (1986 p.127) points out, negative attitudes usually emerge either from false stereotyping or from undue ethnocentrism and that: "The negative attitudes can be changed often by exposure to reality; teachers can aid in dispelling what are often myths about cultures and replace those myths with a realistic understanding". Schueller (1977 p.48) emphasis the power of parental influences on their second language learning when he points out that: "Particularly interesting is the fact that the attitudes of children are almost always the same attitudes of their parents also, so that it could be said that the parents do much to determine the lack of success of their children in learning a language". Through the awareness that the study might hopefully create, parents might use their influence with renewed sense of purpose. Title (1987 p. 127) Says "It seems intuitively clear that second language learners benefit from positive attitude and that negatives may lead to decreased motivation and in all likelihood, because of the decreased input and interaction, to unsuccessful attainment of proficiency". A factor to be kept in mind by policy makers, teachers and school staff, is that opportunities for learners to practice the second language.

The present study was also to establish the relationship between the learners' attitude found (positive or negative) and learners' performance in English language. The study has found out that learners with positive attitude performed better compared to their counterparts with negative attitudes. It agrees with other studies, for example. Burstall (1975) in study done in primary schools in Britain on learners learning French, found an association between attitudes towards learning second language and achievement in language.

Jones (1950) did a study in Welsh learners' attitude towards Welsh as a second language. Results showed that achievement was positively correlated to the learners' attitude towards the language.

Norwich and Jaegar (1989) reported that learners with positive attitudes showed intention for future learning behaviour. Tarome and Yule (1989) pointed out that learners develop more positive attitudes when they experience success in the study of the target language.

The above studies imply that positive attitudes towards language have positive effect on performance. One assumption in the present study was that learners with positive attitudes will perform better than learners with negative attitudes. The study found out that there was statistically significant difference in English language performance between the learners with positive and negative attitudes. The learners with positive attitude towards English language had a higher mean test score than learners with negative attitudes. Thus, the assumption as stated is accepted.

Given the limitations in this study, we conclude that attitude is a statistically a significant factor in determining the learners' performance in English language.

4.10.2 Gender and Learner Performance

The second objective of this study was to find out the effect of gender on English language performance. The study has found out that gender is a non-significant factor in determining the performance level in English language.

However, some observations have shown that girls have better performance than boys in second language.(Burstall,1975 Boyle,1987;Clark,1987;Skaalvik,1990).Others studies have found that boys have a better performance than girls (Boyle,1987;Johnson,1972).Therefore the general

results of this study are in conflict with those studies which found that either girls or boys had a better performance.

The “myth” of female outshining males is not the full picture of beliefs on gender and language learning. In reality, opinions are divided about which side of the gender divide outperforms the other in second language learning. Three main views have emerged over time. The first holds that females outperforms males (Baker,2000;Schueller,2000).The sociolinguistic finding that women use a higher frequency of the incoming forms in linguistic changes than men seems to have been used as a starting theory for second language acquisition research .The second view states that males outperform females in various SLA activities and /or skills (Hassan, 2001; Kasanga, 1996).The third view can be said to be a middle-ground position: authors on this group suggest that no significant difference exists between the performance of males and females in the SLA (Watt 2000).

The differing views among researchers have to do with: whether boys and girls differ in the way they approach ,learn and perform in second language ;the nature and extent of gender differences, if any, in L2 learning and performance; the impact of these differences in instructed SLA; and practical and pedagogical measures to deal with them.

Study by (Gorman 1987) have reported that girls tend to outperform boys in reading and writing presumably because girls tend to have more positive feelings about reading and writing than boys. However, it seems that by age of 15 years, girls lose confidence in their abilities as writers. The state of knowledge on gender differentiation in SLA in Kenya is not much brighter than the insights available elsewhere in the world. On the contrary there has been very little research on gender as mediating factor in ESL learning in Kenya. Some authors elsewhere have, however, reported that boys perform better than girls in their studies for example (Hassan and MacKay 2001).

MacKay (2001) for example, in reviewing the relevant literature to identify factors that may affect the degree of foreign/second language attainment, reported that most of these studies reviewed gender, length of residence in an L2 –speaking country and self- estimated L1 ability were not found to have a significant, independent effect on overall L2 pronunciation accuracy.

Hassan, (2001) reported that male students who participated in his study in Egypt outperformed females on a pronunciation accuracy test. Title (1986) reported in a study conducted in the US that males outperformed females on special language tasks.

Contrary to above findings, this study has agreed with some studies which have found out that there is no significant difference between girls and boys. For example, Jegede (1994) carried out a survey among high school students in Nigeria and reported that there was no significant gender difference in English language academic achievement and motivation among the participants; but the students' English language performance could be reliably inferred from their level of achievement and motivation. The author therefore suggested that both boys and girls at the secondary school level were equally capable of mastering English language. As the author commented the equal levels of achievement and motivation in English language is borne out by a changing trend in Nigeria in which women are moving out of so-called "domestic" professional jobs and compete favorably with men. Hey (1990) also studied the effect of gender, age and cognitive task on three types of reading recall among school children in the US. He found no main effect due to gender differences. In conclusion, the above review of studies on the performance of girls and boys illustrate the lack of consensus on the possible effect of gender on SLA. It may be summarized that the culture, context, tasks and other research variables may explain the variety of findings.

The present study shows that among students, who participated in the study, there was no significant difference between the performance of girls and that of the boys in English language. This finding disagrees with many reported studies that hold that there is a significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in English language. For example (Daly, 1999; Hey, 1997; Schueller, 2000; Watt, 2000). It contrasts with the view of those who suggest that, that girls often outperforms boys in English language tests for example (Daly,1999, Gambell ;Gorman, Hey,1997;Schueller,2000). It however agrees with the views that there is no difference in the performance of boys and girls in English language tests (Jegede, 1994).

The underlying assumption is that girls and boys learn in the same way. Besides, different treatment of girls and boys might be perceived as discriminatory practice in an era of gender sensitivity. Yet, observation of social practice suggests that girls and boys grow and are raised

differently and that this gender differences in growing may affect the way they perceive studying second language, among others.

Therefore, the results of this study and others imply that in different locations one should expect different results in regard to boys and girls, and other underlying factors like attitude towards the language, age and first language may have influenced the performance of boys and girls in a particular location.

4.10.3 School type and performance

The third objective of the present study was to find out the effect of school type (single or mixed) on English language performance. The study found out that school type is non-significant factor in determining the performance level in English language.

This finding disagrees with many reported studies that hold that there is a significant difference between the performance in English language in single and mixed schools. For example Dale (1974) in a study done in London schools found out that, boys in single sex schools had lower average performance in “o” level General Certificate of Education (G.C.E) in English language Examination than boys in mixed schools. It also found out that girls in single sex schools were slightly superior to girls in mixed secondary schools. According to Thuo (1983) in a study on relationship between performance of single and mixed schools in Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE) Examination found out that when schools are classified as single sex or mixed, the former were found to perform better than the latter in KCE examination.

The assumption of the present study was that there is a relationship between school type and performance in English language. The findings found out that school type was a non significant factor on learners’ performance in English language. The result supports the establishment of single and mixed schools based on the principle that there should be no differentiation in the way girls and boys are taught.

Given the limitations of this study, we conclude that there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls whether in single or mixed secondary schools with respect to English language performance. Therefore, the results of this study support the establishment of

single and mixed schools, which is based on the principle that there should be no differentiation in the way girls and boys are taught. One therefore assumes that boys and girls learn languages in the same way. Different treatment of girls and boys might be perceived as discriminatory practice in an era of gender sensitivity.

The present study has contributed to filling the gap in knowledge on differentiation in the English language classroom among boys and girls.

4.11 Conclusion

In this chapter we have presented analysis of students' performance in English language in relation to their attitude (either positive or negative) gender and school type (single or mixed) and discussion of the findings.

The findings of this study have agreed with other studies, that the English language performance can better be explained by the attitude learner has towards English language.

The findings on effect of gender and school type, the study have found out that they are non significant factors on English language performance. The study agrees with some studies and disagrees with others. It may be summarized other research variables may explain the variety of findings.

In the next chapter the research present the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggests related areas for further study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the summary of findings is presented followed by conclusions and then recommendations. There are also suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of Findings.

The crosstabs using performance of English language of a respondent as the dependent variable against respondents' attitude, gender and school type as independent variables showed that there exists association in all of them; however it was observed that attitude was statistically significant at 95% confidence but the others were not. According to the study there were 20(50%) respondents with negative attitude towards English language in which 70% of those with negative attitude were females compared to their counterpart males 30%. The respondents with positive attitude scored better than those with negative attitude. Those with negative attitude had a mean score of 25.20 and standard deviation of 5.08 while those with positive attitude had a mean score of 32.90 and a standard deviation of 6.00.

According to the study girls' schools had the highest number of respondents with negative attitude towards English language (45%) and the least number is from boys' schools 5(25%).

Attitudes are not genetically endowed but are learnt by the individual and reflect a particular situation in which he/she finds himself/herself. The results of the study indicate that most learners have positive attitude towards English language. It was beyond the scope of the study to determine how learner attitudes towards the language were developed, but it is worth noting that having a majority of learners with positive attitudes one would have expected to some degree a corresponding number of learners in Thika West District to perform better in English language. The implication might be that many learners have developed positive attitudes towards the language but the environment is not conducive to learning the language for the majority of these learners with positive attitudes. Triandis (1971), in assessing a number of studies, found an absence of strong relationship between attitude and actual behaviour. Also, Baker (1988) in

discussing characteristics of attitudes pointed out that although attitudes predispose a person to act in a certain way, the relationship between the attitudes and action is not a strong one.

The results show that attitude has some impact in the individual learning the language and the subsequent performance. Supportive studies show that positive attitudes towards second language can be expected to enhance learning and negative attitudes tend to impede second language learning (Jonas, 1950; Biggs, 1959; Lambert, 1972; Burstall, 1975; Ajzen 1988). Derville, (1966) found out that learners with positive attitude towards English language tend to enjoy the lesson and are also prepared to work hard on it. Positive attitudes, therefore, may have a motivating effect on learning and consequently on performance.

Although the above observations may imply that negative attitudes towards the English language have negative effect on performance, Lanome (1991) found that negative attitudes towards the second language have a positive effect on learning the second language when there was a strong motivation. These two observations may explain why most learners in Thika West District have positive attitude and yet the overall performance in English language is poor. It seems that attitudes can either be a cause or effect. The relationship between learning second language and attitudes is, therefore, very complex.

5.3 Gender , School type and learners performance

Data was collected from both boys and girls .The data obtained was used to determine the differences between sexes and performance in English language. An analysis of the data obtained showed that there was non-significant difference in performance between boys and girls in single and mixed schools. Some observations have shown that girls have better performance than boys in second language (Burstall, 1975 Boyle, 1987; Clark, 1987; Skaalvik, 1990). Others studies have found that boys have a better performance than girls (Boyle, 1987; Johnson, 1972). Therefore the general results of this study are in conflict with those studies which found that either girls or boys had a better performance.

Therefore, the results of this study and others imply that in different locations one should expect different results in regard to boys and girls, and other underlying factors like attitude towards the language may have influenced the performance of boys and girls in a particular location.

5.4 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of learner's attitude, gender and school type on English language performance. Therefore the conclusions of the study were made within the framework of its scope as follows:

- i. The performance was statistically significant predictor at 95% confidence level of one's attitude towards English language. This was so because its p-value=0.001 which is less than the critical value (0.05%) of the study. Therefore the English language performance can better be explained by the attitude the learner has towards the language.
- ii. According to the study, most of those with negative attitude were females (70%) compared to their counterpart males (30%). Therefore, there is need for more affirmative action to change the attitude and uplift their performing standards.
- iii. The findings show that gender and school type cannot account for differences in performance. This calls for further investigations into the factors involved in the performance of boys and girls in public schools.

5.5 Recommendations

Some specific recommendations can be made to teachers and researchers on the basis of the results obtained.

Some learners had negative attitudes towards English language and their performance was significantly lower than that of learners with positive attitudes. The teachers should aim to reduce or eliminate negative conditions such as pain, anxiety and frustrations. They should do everything possible to help pupils do well and create positive conditions.

Based on the above findings, we recommend that there should be no differentiation in the way girls and boys are taught. Equal treatment of boys and girls should also be factored in language pedagogy, curriculum development and school policy formulation. More studies should be conducted in the area of sex and second language learning. Future studies, however, should take into consideration the limitations of this study.

5.6 Suggestions for further study

Based on the findings of the study the researcher makes the following suggestions for further research.

Relocate study in other counties to ascertain reliability of these findings.

- i. Further research is needed to identify other factors that may influence English language performance in secondary schools.
- ii. This chapter has presented a summary of the findings and conclusions drawn with regard to the objectives of the current study. The chapter has also presented various implications of the findings of the study on effect of attitude, gender and school type on English language performance. The chapter concludes with a presentation of other possible related areas of research.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: The students' questionnaire (SQ)

Respondents Background

SECTION A

Sex _____

School _____

Date _____

SECTION B

Put a tick in the right column to indicate whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), strongly disagree (SD)

No.	Item	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	I like listening, speaking, reading and writing in English language					
2	I look forward to English language lessons					
3	English is useful in my daily communication					
4	I usually finish my English language assignment first before writing other assignments.					
5	English language leads to increased job opportunities					
6	I regularly listen, speak, read and write in English language					
7	I think everyone should learn to read and write English language.					
8	English language is useful because it helps me in					

	everyday life.					
9	English language lessons are always interesting.					
10	I recommend for English language to be used in all areas of communication (meeting, conversations, writings)					
11	I usually speak English language at home, school and when am with my friends.					
12	Learning how to listen, speak, read and write in English language is not useful at all.					
13	English language helps me understand things in the environment.					
14	Listening, speaking, reading and writing in English language will not help me in future.					
15	I rarely speak, read and write in English language.					

Appendix II: English Language Test

Name.....

School.....

Date.....

Answer all questions

Question	Maximum Marks	Candidate's Score
1. Pronunciation	15	
2. Comprehension	15	
3. Cloze test	10	
4. Grammar	10	
5. Writing	20	
Total	70	

1. Provide words that mean the same as the following words:

a) Sew-

b) Ate-

c) Paws-

d) Profit-

2. Identify the silent letters in the following words:

a) Parliament-

b) Debt-

c) Receipt-

d) Comb -

3. Provide words that have the following silent letters:

a) b -

b) r -

c) t-

d) g- (e.g. gnat, gnu)

e) k-(know)

Comprehension (15Marks)

Hare, Elephant and Hippo

One day Hare, popularly known as Ogila Nyakarondo, met Elephant on his way to the forest. As Hare is a cunning and clever animal, he wanted to fool Elephant on some issue. He started talking to Elephant: 'Elephant my brother, good morning. What is the matter? Why are you walking all alone like that my friend? Why don't you ask me to walk along with you through the forest?'

After they had walked together for some time Hare said, 'Elephant my brother, I want to go on a rope-pulling contest with you. I know that I can defeat you miserably, for I am stronger than you.' Elephant replied, 'liiii! Ogila Nyakarondo, you are too small to contest with me. You are playing about, my brother. Think twice.'

They then planned to go on a contest next day in the forest, but Elephant went laughing, thinking that Ogila could do nothing to him.

The same day, Ogila met with Hippo and started talking to him saying, 'Hippo my brother, I want you to contest with me one of these days. We shall pull a rope across the forest and see who will be the winner.' Hippo said, 'don't play with me, Hare my brother. You are too small to contest with me.' He made the same plan, just as he had planned with Elephant to pull the rope in the contest across the forest. The next morning, Hippo and Elephant went to each side of the forest thinking that they were going to contest with Hare. They started pulling the rope. Meanwhile, Hare was sitting on a high hill looking at what was happening below. He sang a song to taunt Elephant and Hippo. As he sang, Hippo and Elephant pulled even harder. They pulled and pulled and got very tired. At dusk, they almost fainted and stopped pulling.

Hare immediately ran to Elephant and asked, 'Am I not great?' Elephant told Hare. 'Oh Hare my brother, I have agreed that you are really great. I have had it tough the whole day.'

Hare then ran to Hippo and told him the same thing he had told Elephant. Hippo wondered at the strength of Hare and said, 'Hare my brother; I have just realized that you are very strong. In fact you should be made the King of the jungle.' Hare went away merrily playing his guitar.

(Adapted from *African Oral Literature for Schools* by Jane Nandwa and Austin Bukenya, Longman Kenya).

Questions

- (a) What kind of a narrative is this? (2mks)
- (b) Write down two sentences from the passage, where the word contest is used as a verb and two sentences where it is used as a noun. (4mks)
- (c) Identify two character traits of:
 - i) Hare
 - ii) Elephant
- (d) How does Hare entice Elephant and Hippo to participate in the contest? (2mks)

Cloze Test (10 mks)

Fill each blank space with the most appropriate word.

Every single individual celebrating his or her hundredth birthday in German _____ personal letter of _____ from the federal president. In 1965, one hundred and fifty eight centenarians _____ Federal Republic were _____ many returns by the head of the state. By 2004, their number had swelled to four thousand two hundred. _____ the successors of president Horst Kohler will be more busy. Demographic researcher's _____ that by 2050, the life expectancy of newborns will be some six years higher than it is today. Men will _____ and average age might be one and women eighty

seven. The _____ that people are getting older is nothing new. In 1990, the average lifespan _____ German man was just forty five. What is, however, relatively new is the fact that while older people are living longer, fewer _____ are being born.

Grammar

Write the following sentences in the passive

- i) The students bought new books
- ii) The college is still considering your application.

Use an auxiliary verb to complete the sentences below

- a) We _____ learnt a lot that day.
- b) Children _____ obey their parents
- c) Help him; he.....not be able to use the computer.
- d) If nothing happens to you.....grown old one day.
- e) Paul.....younger than Peter.

Complete using the progressive aspect.

Jane and Koki..... (sing) in the choir then.

The woman ...always..... (spit) on the floor.

I (eat) in the hotel these days.

WRITING

Write a letter of apologizing for your misbehavior in class.

Appendix III: R Script used in Chapter four

```
data1=data.frame(Gender,School,Attitude,Performance)
data1
tableStack(vars=c(Gender,School,Performance),by=Attitude)
tabpct(Gender,Attitude)
tabpct(School,Attitude)
tabpct(Performance,Attitude)
tableStack(School,by=Attitude)
\#test of relationship
Gender=as.factor(Gender)

fit=glm(Attitude~Gender,family=binomial(link='logit'),data1)
summary(fit)
logistic.display(fit)
fit1=glm(Attitude~School,family=binomial(link='logit'),data1)
summary(fit1)
logistic.display(fit1)

fit2=glm(Attitude~Performance,family=binomial(link='logit'),data1)
summary(fit2)
logistic.display(fit2)
fit3=glm(Attitude~Gender+School+Performance,family=binomial(link=logit),data1)
anova(fit3)
step(fit3,method=both)
summary(fit3)
logistic.Display(fit3)

\#fit4 is the best after running step(fit4,method=both)
\#it has the lowest AIC(47.146) and no variables; school and gender
\#when in the model i.e doesn't make it better.
fit4=glm(Attitude~Performance,family=binomial(link=logit),data1)
anova(fit4)
summary(fit4)
logistic.display(fit4)

y<-as.numeric(Attitude)
Gender=as.factor(Gender)
School=as.factor(School)
X<-cbind(Gender,School,Performance)
A=t(X)%*%X
B=solve(A)
D=t(X)%*%y
Betas=B%*%D
Betas
```

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