# Context Matters
## — RESEARCH GRANTS —

**Influence of Integrated Girl Literacy Education Programme on Student Achievement in English Language among Ogiek Secondary School Girls Njoro-Sub-County Kenya.**

**Lead Researcher:** Professor Mwangi Ndirangu, Department of Curriculum, Instruction & Educational Management, Egerton University, Kneya

**Co-Researcher:** Dr. John Bett, Male, Egerton University, Curriculum, Instruction & Educational Management Rael Ruto, Female, Principal, Ogiek Secondary School.

**Research Dates:** 2018-2020

## Abstract

Education is an important intangible social capital, possession of which provides an important path-way out of poverty. For women and girls especially, it makes them such a potent force for social economic transformation. However, millions of girls all over the world, and especially among the indigenous marginalized peoples, do not have access to secondary school education despite the acknowledged contribution they could make to society. This is especially so of the Ogiek community girls in Njoro sub-county, Kenya. This study investigated the influence of an English language literacy programme on girls' performance in selected competencies of writing, reading and comprehension as well as internal and external factors that impede their progress in education. The study was guided by social exclusion theory, which is used to explain the prevailing political and educational contexts of the community. The study was carried out in Ogiek Secondary School. The study adopted a descriptive research design. Fifteen Form Two girls, the school principal and a community leader were purposively selected to participate in the study. Some K10 sample tests adopted from the International Reading Association were used as both pre- and posttests in selected competencies. A written composition was also administered before and after the administration of the intervention. Two open-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from the students; Students' Home Environment and Perceptions on the Integrated Girl Empowerment Literacy Programme (IGLEP) questionnaires. Two interview schedules, one for the principal and the other for the community leader were also used to collect data on the influence of internal and external school environments on students' literacy. The instruments were validated through expert judgement and triangulation. Triangulation was also used to

enhance the reliability of the instruments. The results indicated that the Integrated Girl Empowerment Literacy Programme intervention resulted into a higher achievement in written composition skills, fluency and reading speed and reading comprehension. The findings also indicated a negative influence of internal and external environments on the development of literacy among girl students in the community studied. The findings are important both to County and National governments and other stakeholders interested in lifting the literacy standards marginalized community girls, like the Ogiek.

**Influence of Integrated Girl Literacy Education Programme on Student Achievement in English Language among Ogiek Secondary School Girls Njoro-Sub-County Kenya.**

**1.1 Background of the study**

Globally the difference in literacy levels is gendered, with more girls missing opportunities for secondary and higher education than boys, due to discriminative and retrogressive cultural practices, pregnancies, early marriages, violence around schools, and gender insensitive learning content and institutions (Wetheridge, 2016). This missed opportunity is a huge loss to society when such a significant proportion of human capital is left undeveloped, and to women and girls themselves, who are denied an opportunity to realize their potential. Better educated women means increased economic productivity of labour and better family health and well-being. It has also been argued to create powerful poverty reducing synergies that provide inter-generational gains (Shawiza, 2016). In Kenya, there is a high correlation between gender and opportunity and especially among the poor and indigenous communities. Consequently, where resources and opportunities are limited, boys are more likely to receive preferential treatment with regard to access to secondary school education than girls. Participation in secondary education enhances the chances of girls avoiding early pregnancies and provides opportunities for acquisition of skills for economic self-sufficiency and creates a critical bridge out of poverty without which, girls have no hope of escaping it (Daraja Academy, 2018). Wamahiu, Opondo and Nyaga (2017) argue that the patriarchal social organization of many Kenyan communities contributes to negative female self-image, lower self-esteem, poorer access, survival and performance in education which must be tackled if girls' education were to improve.

The main aim of this project was to design and implement an Integrated Girls Literacy Empowerment Programme to improve the quality of reading and writing among selected Ogiek secondary school girls. The Ogiek of Njoro Sub-county who live in the Mau Forest, are a group of hunter-gatherers, who in the last 30 years have been facing a progressive process of habitat loss and climate change which obliged them to settle down and leave their semi-nomadic way of life. The community is among the indigenous peoples in Kenya and number about 76,681 (http://blog.jaluo.com/?p=8772). They are among the poorest communities in Kenya, with 95 % living in poverty. Women head 37 % of the households of which, 87% are either poor or very poor, at least due to lack of land ownership (United Nations Human Settlement Program, 2015). There are very few university graduates in the community with unemployment being rife even among those who have gone to school because they receive relatively lower quality education because of lack good educational facilities in their area.

A pre-study visit to Ogiek public secondary school in the community found that the school that should have had a minimum of 180 students (schools in Kenya should ideally have 45 students in a class), had 109. Surprisingly, 51 of these were in Form 1. Form 2, 3 and 4 had 20, 20 and 18 students respectively. This was a result of massive school dropout, an indication of an unidentified educational problem in the community. Since 2012, when this particular school was started, no girl student had obtained the minimum university entry qualification.

**2.1 Methodology**

2.2 *Research Questions*

The study aimed at addressing the following objectives:

**Objective 1**: To determine the influence Integrated Girl Literacy Empowerment Programme on achievement in literacy among selected Ogiek secondary school girls.

**Objective 2**: To determine the influence of the internal and external school factors on the development of literacy among Ogiek secondary school girls.

2.3 *Participants*

The participants of the study were 15 girls from Ogiek Secondary school. The school mostly serves the Ogiek, a marginalized minority in Kenya. The girls aged about 14, had learned English as a second language for at least nine years, eight of which were at primary school.

2.4 *Instruments*

To obtain the information regarding the influence of the intervention on the students' literacy achievement, some K10 test sample tests from the International Reading Association were administered. This was important in order to determine the entry behavior of the students on language skills that were the focus of the study. K10 is the equivalent level for the Form Two class students in Kenya. At end of the implementation, the following instruments were employed: exit sample tests on the skills tested before onset of the study, students' home environment and perceptions on IGLEP questionnaires, the principal's interview schedule and another for the community leader.

The instruments were validated through expert judgement. Triangulation was used through application of a variety data sources to provide a more holistic and reliable picture than one

or two instruments could provide (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Triangulation is argued to increase validity, reliability and legitimization of research findings (Moon, 2018).

## 2.4.1: The Integrated Girl Literacy Education Programme

This was an English language literacy program modelled on Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) requirements for Form 1 and 2, which was developed as an intervention measure. It was dubbed Integrated Girl Literacy Empowerment Programme and was based on a club culture, to create a safe and friendly learning environment. The program emphasized play and praise rather than criticism. It had a less authoritarian teaching style than that employed by their teachers. The approach used a variety of active learning strategies such as reflective questions, bonding activities and reading aloud exercises. Interaction among learners was encouraged, where they shared their experiences to encourage self-expression and build friendships among themselves in a non-threatening environment. Each lesson avoided negative and critical reactions to learner responses in order to build their' self-confidence and empathy as they worked together. A total of 12 lessons per term in the three school terms in there were implemented. This came a total of 36 lessons.

## 2.5 Data Collection

The following three stages were followed in the data collection: *Stage 1:* administration of a written composition, reading comprehension, a reading-aloud exercise in which reading speed and other aspects such as fluency and confidence were measured. This was before the administration of the intervention. The results from this were used in informing the suitability of the literacy curriculum developed.

*Stage 2:* Participants were exposed to a literacy curriculum of 36 sessions for about one year. The curriculum contained diverse aspects of English language, such as written composition, sentence construction, vocabulary and use, grammar and spelling.

*Stage 3*: Administration of exit tests on composition writing, reading comprehension, reading speed and other aspects such as fluency and reading confidence for those who completed the program. The school principals, students' home environment questionnaires, the two students' interview schedules and one for the community leader were also administered.

The information obtained from entry and exit tests was later analyzed to determine influence of IGLEP program and the context and the impact of the on the participants.

2.6 Data Analysis

 The data analysis procedure included error counts in marked compositions, analysis of responses to reading comprehension items, and computations for timed reading. Data collected from the School Principal's and the community leader's interview schedules were analyzed thematically.

## 3. 1 Results and Discussion

The first objective of the study investigated the influence of the Integrated Girls Literacy Empowerment Programme on achievement in English language among selected Ogiek Secondary School girls. The competencies tested were writing, reading speed, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and reading confidence. A comparison was carried out between the entry scores and exit scores on these literacy competencies.

### 3.1.2 Composition Writing Analysis

The first aspect of the analysis focused on the results of the written composition. The results were based on the five remaining students. The rest had dropped out of the programme before it came to an end. The respondents were asked to write a composition with specific instructions given for the task. At entry and exit of the programme, the individual respondent's compositions were then examined for errors of lexis, grammar, syntax, and spelling. Table 1 summarizes the errors of lexis and grammar documented before and after the study.

**Entry and Exit Error Count**

|  | Error category | Entry No. of Errors | Exit No. of Errors |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Lexical Errors** |  | 26 | 17 |
| Grammar | Misuse of Prepositions | 15 | 5 |
|  | Misuse of Pronouns, compound nouns  and Adverbs | 11 | 0 |
|  | Punctuation errors | 17 | 18 |
|  | Errors of number | 22 | 3 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Tense Errors | 43 | 12 |
| Improper Conjugation | 5 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **113** | **38** |

From Table 1, it can be seen that there was an overall reduction of both categories of errors from a count of 113 to 38 by comparing the entry and exit scores. The most frequent errors committed by the subjects were in the broad category of grammar (73%) while the rest were lexical. This may imply that the respondents had not mastered grammatical concepts due to late exposure to English, poor readership or inadequate teaching in school. At the same time, with only one English language teacher in the school, the workload may not have allowed effective teaching on his part. The Table further indicates that misuse of pronouns, compound nouns, adverbs and improper conjugation were eliminated altogether after the intervention.

 A lexical error occurs when some respondents use the wrong form of a word under the impression that it is the right one, such as *carefully* instead of *careful*, *obedience* instead of *obedient* and *comfortable* instead of *comfort*. Other lexical errors committed included use of *live* instead of *life*, *search* instead of *searching*, leave instead of *leaf*, and *student* instead *child*.

In other instances, a respondent would use a word similar in pronunciation to an otherwise correct word. For example, *curtain* instead of certain, *had* instead of *heard*, *fast* instead of *first*, *sow* instead of *saw*. Therefore, some students made sentences such as:

    (i)     There was things going *own (on)*.
    (ii)    I work (woke) up early.
    (iii)   I was already to cook.
    (iv)    The wall (whole) school.
    (v)     All over us. (All of us)

Other errors occurred due to the respondents' inability to differentiate between such words as whenever/wherever, discipline/disciplined, wore/were, console/consult, feable/feeble and, firstfore/first of all .

Andre (n.d) studied English descriptive writings produced by the tenth grade students of SMA Negeri 9 Surabaya. The study found that almost all of the students had a considerable difficulty in determining the correct form of words just as in this study, where wrong forms of words

were used often times. Wrong selection of lexical items leads to misunderstanding of concepts and interpretation of texts. In fact, Ridha and Al-Riyahi (2011) argue that lexical errors might hinder effective communication between the writer and the reader. Naba'h (2011) contends that lexical errors also make the ESL / EFL learners unable to convey their ideas as clearly as possible through their text. However, lexical errors can be an important quality predictor of the learners' writing, and vocabulary progress, lexical proficiency, and general academic achievement (Llach, 2007.3).

In grammar, the respondents showed a lack of competence in proper usage of adverbs and limited knowledge of word functions at the pretest. However, the result on Table1 indicate that they seemed to have improved considerably on the word functions in English after the program. Thus, the zero misuse of adverbs and improper conjugation and the overall reduction of grammatical error count from 87 to only 11 would an important indicator of the efficacy of the intervention. Some of these types of errors were mostly due to the respondents' inadequate knowledge of gender and language as well as spelling words as heard and not as conventionally spelt. The English verbs have several forms which tend to confuse students.

Halliday (1994) observes that if the learners of English as a second language do not understand the concept of tenses, they cannot advance their mastery of the English language to higher levels. Kantho and Narrot (2013) studied grammatical errors among Thai students by only focusing on use of tenses. The study similarly found that students had not mastered the seven tenses very well. They explained that learners did poorly in tense use since content was very difficult to them and the other reason was the influence of their mother language. This is also true in the case of respondents in this study where influence of the  mother tongue was observed in their writing. For academic purposes as well as for social interaction, mastery of grammar is essential.

### 3.1.3 Syntactic and Spelling Errors

Students' syntactic and spelling errors were categorized into the subcategories indicated in Table 2.


Syntactic and Spelling Entry and Exit Error Count

| Syntactic errors | Entry count | Exit count |
|---|---|---|
| Coordination in sentences | 25 | 9 |
| Language Transfer | 19 | 5 |
| Omission of words in sentences | 11 | 0 |
| Unnecessary deletion/addition of Articles | 9 | 0 |
| Sentence Fragments | 7 | 2 |
| Hanging Sentences | 7 | 0 |
| Incoherent Sentences | 6 | 3 |
| Omitted Subject | 3 | 0 |
| Redundancy | 8 | 1 |
| Spelling errors | 25 | 10 |
| **Total** | **120** | **30** |

Table 2 shows that on the whole, there was a great reduction in error categories from 120 to only 30 after the intervention. Error categories such as omission of words in sentences, unnecessary deletion/additions of articles, hanging sentences and omitted subject disappeared altogether at the end of the IGLEP. Specifically, the sentence construction errors identified during pretest resulted such as poor coordination in sentences, errors due to language transfer, omission of words in sentences, unnecessary deletion/addition of articles, sentence fragments, hanging sentences, redundancies, and mutilated words, had been reduced significantly by the intervention.

Generally, ESL learners have various language deficiencies in their composition writings. A study by Lin (2002) examined 26 essays of Taiwanese EFL students and observed that the four highest error frequencies were sentence structures (30.43 per cent) wrong verb forms (21.01 per cent), sentence fragments (15.99 per cent), and wrong use of words (15.94 per cent) respectively. From findings in this study, it can be noted that on syntax, second language

learners' writings are rife with errors of coordination, tense, verb formation, articles, number, prepositions, language use (grammar) and punctuation.

Sermsook, Liamnimitr and Pochakorn (2017) studied the errors in English sentences by Thai EFL students and found seventeen types of errors comprising punctuation, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, fragments, tenses, word order, articles, nouns, pronouns, verbs, prepositions, adjectives, literal translation, parts of speech, word choices, spelling, and transition words. It was found that punctuation errors ranked highest followed by articles. Hafiz, Omar, and Gul Sher's (2018) study on syntactic errors among Arabic speaking learners in Preparatory Year at Jazan University found that most common syntactic errors made by the learners were in sentence structure; subject verb agreement, tense, auxiliary verb, number, use of conjunction, preposition, article, transfer of mother tongue and over generalization. The researchers suggested that teachers should always create interest about writing skills in the minds of the learners in order for the desired results to be achieved. This sentiment agrees with the objective of the IGLEP.


In this study there were 25 spelling errors observed in the students' writing before entry into the programme as indicated on Table 2. These reduced to 10 at the end of the intervention. This was about 60% drop, implying that the program had a positive impact on spelling among the participants. The errors were manifested diversely as for example, spelling words as heard when pronounced, inability to distinguish between pronouns with similar pronunciation such as *their /there*, dropping the silent sound in a word – *moning/morning, got/goat*, etc.

Spelling English words properly has proven to be a tricky skill to many English language learners. According to Asudo and Marsh (1998), English is a language with many rules, oddities and exceptions in its spelling. Secondly, English language spelling is so irregular that even the native speakers have problems with it. Thirdly, many English words are not pronounced the way they are spelt and certain words sound alike in English language and this can lead to errors while learners are writing them. Dada (2015) provides examples of such words as Seize/cease, scene/sin, right/write, suit/soot, among others. In her study, Dada (2015), identified the following manifestations of spelling errors: (in descending order) omission of letters, addition of letters, reduplication of letters, incorrect/non-use of apostrophe, simplification/wrong abbreviation, wrong prefixes and suffixes, homophonic errors, one/two faulty grapheme per word, three/four faulty grapheme per word and order errors. Thus, it can

be concluded from this study that the errors from written compositions analyzed revealed that language transfer, misuse of tenses, poor coordination in sentences, sentence fragment, inadequate grammatical knowledge, wrong word choice and developmental errors were those that generally afflict ESL learners.

### 3.1.4 Reading speed, fluency and confidence

In order to test reading speed, fluency and reading confidence, the learners were engaged in a read-aloud of a K10 passage of 206 words. The reading was timed for the purposes of determining the reading speed of each respondent. The results on reading speed were as indicated on Table 3:

Reading speed in minutes

| Competence | Respondent | Entry score | Exit score | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading Speed | A | 2.0 | 1.18 | 0.42 |
| | B | 1.5 | 1.13 | 0.37 |
| | C | 2.0 | 1.20 | 0.40 |
| | D | 2.4 | 1.45 | 0.59 |
| | E | 1.54 | 1.29 | 0.25 |

Reading is an important skill if a student is to perform well in school. Reading faster has been argued to help a learner cover more material in a shorter time. It as well improves concentration resulting into better comprehension, leading further to better grades (Browning, 2005). The author classifies slow readers as those having a reading speed of 150 words per minute. An examination of the reading speeds at the onset of the intervention on Table 3, indicates that the fastest reader read 206 words in 1.5 minutes. Compared with slowest speed of 150 words, 206 words in 1.5 minutes is equivalent to covering 150 words in 1.1 minutes. Comparing this with the exit reading speed, the speed increased to less than a minute to 0.8 minutes for 150 words. The Table shows that there was an improved reading speed for all students. On the relationships

between reading speed and comprehension, Shanahan (2019) argues that speeding up reading was possible, however it negatively affects comprehension to a corresponding degree.

**3.1.5** The second category of reading competence was fluency and reading confidence. The results were as indicated on Table 4.

Reading fluency and reading confidence

| Competency | Respondent | Entry score | Exit score | Variance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Reading fluency | A | 1 | 4 | 3 |
| | B | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| | C | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| | D | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| | E | 3 | 4 | 1 |
| **Total** | | **11** | **19** | **8** |
| Reading confidence | A | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| | B | 3 | 5 | 2 |
| | C | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| | D | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| | E | 1 | 5 | 4 |
| **Total** | | **15** | **25** | **10** |

Fluency is described as the ability to speak a language very well (Mayor, 2015). This is argued to increase the accuracy with which learners retain information with expression, speed and accuracy. Table 4 shows that there was an overall improvement in reading fluency among the students with the difference between the entry and exit scores showing an improvement of over 70 %. Fluency reduces the time students take in decoding meaning of words, while using more

time considering what the message is intended to communicate. It improves with practice and helps learners to respond to information with insight (Hart, 2020). This implies that fluent readers are more likely to be better at comprehending what they read. Antony (2020), observes that read-alouds and dialogue are excellent strategies for modeling fluent reading for students. The author further argues that to create an overall fluent reader, repeated reading of passages are important ways of improving fluency.

In the case of reading confidence, Table 4 shows a marked improvement in this for all students, with a 66.7% rise in exit compared to entry scores. Despite all students scoring at the maximum level on a 5point rating scale, those that had scored poorly managed to equal those who had done well initially. In the study, reading confidence appeared to have been promoted by a safe environment that ensured praise and recognition regardless of the nature of a respondent's contribution.

Reading confidence is important because of its ability to develop students' proficiency, which is critical to future success in school work (www.blog.readingeggs.com). Further, the blog observes that it is important to nurture students' self-confidence and build their love for reading The classroom environment is argued to have a great influence on students' learning competences, particularly in the way it is conducted. Creating a safe learning environment for those who lack self-confidence and need to be supported to read at their own pace is important (www.lizardlearning.com/strategies). The blog further argues that the presence of sufficient reading resources such as books and other materials makes it possible to develop a reading culture.

### 3.1.6 Reading Comprehension

The third language skill investigated by the study was reading comprehension. This involved reading a K10 story, 'the Upside-down mice' and answering the questions that followed. The story had been presented to the candidates at start of the intervention one year down the road. They were left with no copies of the same, no discussion was held regarding the story or their performance in the comprehension. Only the five students who remained in the programme to end took the final comprehension test. The results were as indicated on Table 5:

Reading comprehension

| S/N | Entry score | Exit Score | variance | % |
|-----|-------------|------------|----------|------|
| A | 7 | 8 | 1 | 14.3 |
| B | 2 | 8 | 6 | 300 |
| C | 4 | 10 | 6 | 300 |
| D | 5 | 6.5 | 1.5 | 30 |
| E | 4.5 | 10 | 5.5 | 122.2 |
| **Total** | **22.5** | **42.5** | **20** | **88.9** |

The Table shows that all the students improved in their reading comprehension performance but in varying degrees. The most improved candidates were number B, C, E and the least improved was A. This improvement is an indication of the efficacy of the intervention in improving the students' comprehension. Lin (2010) defines comprehension as the ability to receive information, analyze the same into its various segments and understand it in a cohesive and accurate manner. The results on the Table imply that the students had benefited from explicit teaching of comprehension and other learning skills in the intervention. The acquisition of English language comprehension skills is likely to improve the students' performance in other school subjects such as math and science, because it makes it easier for them to comprehend their reading of concepts taught in these and others subjects (**www.colorincolorado.org/article/**).

**3.1.7 Students Perceptions on the IGLEP Program**

The last item investigated by the study, was the students' perceived benefits of the intervention. This was investigated through five item open-ended questions. The students were asked to explain the reason why they participated in the programme from the beginning to the end, how they benefited from it, the difference between the way they were taught in their regular classes and the approach employed in the programme and whether they would be willing to participate in a similar programme in future. The results were as indicated on Table 6:

Perceived benefits of the programme to the participants

| | To improve my English language | Can read, write and understand better | Improved my self-confidence | We have never been taught this way class | I enjoyed the lessons | I would attend |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| B | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| C | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| D | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| E | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

All the students indicated that they attended the classes faithfully until the end, because they wanted to acquire mastery of the English language in order to improve their academic work. Mastery in English is important considering that it is the medium of instruction in all Kenyan secondary school subjects with the exception of other languages. Buhere (2019) argues that English language occupies a unique place in the Kenyan school curriculum both as the subject of the curriculum as a well as being compulsory for all students. The author argues that learners' ability to access knowledge, thinking habits and other potentially useful skills in school, is predicated on their mastery of the English language.

On the next question on the perceived benefits from the programme, some students felt that they could now read, write and understand the language better. They observed that their spoken English, their vocabulary, fluency and ability to answer comprehension questions had improved. Others observed that participating in intervention had improved their self-confidence

On the third question regarding the difference between the approach employed in the programme and how they were taught in their regular classes, the students observed that they had never been taught that way before. They indicated that the activities such as bonding, singing, the way vocabulary was taught, and the friendly atmosphere created by the mentors made the lessons very interesting. The less authoritarian teaching approach made it easier for

them to ask questions, which was different from the regular approach used by their teachers. This implies that authoritarian teaching approach by the teachers in the school affects students' enjoyment of learning and performance. Christa and Kikas (2012) argue that progressive teaching methods such as applied in this intervention relate positively to students' cognitive development in areas such as critical thinking and understanding, as well as improving their social skills since they relate with issues that students interact with in their daily lives.

All the students indicated that they enjoyed the learning sessions in the intervention. Some observed that the exercises especially reading aloud sessions, class discussions and learning vocabulary; learning games and the bonding activities made the lessons enjoyable. This implies that the way lesson presentation is done, may hinder or promote learning. Learning should be fun. Fun is argued to have a motivational effect and influences how much students learn and retain (https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/).

## 4.1 Influence of the Internal and External School Factors on the Development of Literacy among Ogiek Secondary School Girls.

The second objective was to determine the influence of the internal and external school factors on the development of literacy among Ogiek secondary school girls. This objective was investigated through interviews with the school principal to unravel the internal school environment while external school factors comprising of home and community perspectives were obtained from the students' questionnaire and an interview schedule for the community leaders respectively.

The study investigated whether there were certain student behaviors that could be construed as indicators of negative attitude towards school. The principal noted that there was frequent absenteeism, missing school during exams or dropping out of school altogether to seek manual employment or get married.  The principal attributed this to fear of exams and lack of parental encouragement because the parents did not appear to value education. Mutai (2014:3) observed that despite government providing tuition waiver at primary and secondary school levels, the Ogiek community lagged behind in providing their daughters with opportunities to realize their potential. Grant and Hallman (2006) explain this scenario by arguing that since the mothers themselves did not attend school, they may not appreciate the value of education.

The study further noted that the school did not have a library. The school library is a critical resource that promotes academic excellence by enhancing teaching and learning as well as

supporting social activities of the community. Its absence in a school would severely limit academic pursuits of both students and teachers, as well as attainment of the broad and specific objectives of a secondary school (Kayonde, 2017.3). The library is important in improving students' outcomes because it brings people and information together as well as helping in closing the educational gap for disadvantaged students. It also provides access to the stories, information and technology the students need (https://natlib.govt.nz/schools/school-libraries/). However, the school had sufficient course books because they were supplied by the government.

The biggest challenge however, according to the principal was parental inability to meet their fees obligations. According to the Kenya Free Secondary Education policy, the government was expected to meet the tuition fees of Kes 10,265 per student together with teachers' salaries. The parents were required to meet other requirements like lunch, transport, development projects and boarding fees for those in boarding schools (Shiundu, 2017).When parents failed to pay fees, the school was forced to send the students home albeit on temporary basis because of the government policy that no child should be sent home for non-payment of school fees.

Being a day school, Ogiek secondary school girls experienced challenges in doing homework because their homes were not connected to electricity. The principal further observed that many of them came from families living in one or two roomed houses where availability of study-space was problematic.

On adequacy and competence of teaching staff in the school, the principal observed that the school had an approved establishment of 9 teachers but had 10, half of whom were women, who were not from the community. All the teachers were trained. However, there was only one English language teacher for the whole school. The principal further observed that there was a notable lack of self-confidence among the learners due to their poor mastery of the English language. To assist the learners to develop their self-confidence and use of the English language in school, they organize debates on issues of student interest. This is a good start as recommended by Tessa India (http://www.tess-india.edu.in/). They recommend activity based teaching whose focus would be to promote fluency rather than accuracy by helping learners to express their own ideas freely. The school may also include telling stories, role plays, interviews and discussions in their repertoire for improving students' self-confidence.

The study further investigated the use of educational tours by the school. The principal observed that although educational trips were an important strategy for exposing learners to a

different world view from that which they were familiar, the school could not afford them. However, with the appointment of the new principal, the school has started a mentorship programme through the use of guest speakers from outside the community. However, the school does not have a program on academic advising.

According to the principal, over 30% of the girls drop out of school every year, with the retention rate standing at 68.5 in 2019 (6 out of 19 girls left school due to early marriages and or teen pregnancies). Some of the causes of this were a social culture that encourages 'village mentality' and rampant illiteracy. The illiteracy levels are so high among the community that the principal indicated that the school has recently found it difficult to find suitable candidates to recruit for its Board of Management. It was reported that illiterate men married school girls and it was hardly possible to prosecute them since some affected girls were over 18 years old and thus considered adults. In order to encourage girls still interested in school after rescue from early marriages or unplanned pregnancies, they were allowed back in school to complete their studies, if they can make arrangements with their parents on the care of their babies while at school. Macharia and Kession (2015) argue that this in line with the Government policy to re-admit student-mothers into secondary school to reduce the impact of resource wastage arising from drop-out from teenage pregnancies. There are over-age learners, some between 19-23 years still in school at Ogiek secondary school.

### 4.1.2 The Situation of the Girl child

The interview with the community leaders took place with chief and a former member of County Assembly (MCA) of the area at the chief's office at Nessuit centre. The chief indicated that he had been a leader in the area for 28 years. He observed that out of the many children who did not attend school in the area, 60 % were girls. Minority Right International (2013) concurs with by arguing that the Ogiek girls have few work and educational opportunities and cannot afford to attend secondary school because it is expensive. They also observe that where financial based scholarships were available, they were not awarded on merit, to the detriment of the community's girls. Another rights group urges the government to ensure the protection of the community girls by ensuring that they remain in school. It expresses concern over existing hurdles including teen pregnancies, dropping out of school and walking long distances to school as challenges that conspire against girls' acquisition of quality education (https://www.ogiekpeoples.org/index).

On specific challenges facing girl education, the chief and the MCA observed that some girls join school when they are over-age which hinders their progress later on. They observed that early marriages, retrogressive culture and high levels of poverty affect girls continued participation in school. They added that girl drop out of school due to early pregnancy and early marriages has resulted in their being grossly under-represented at the higher levels of academic ladder. Mutai (2014: v) observes that despite the girl child education being an important pathway towards realization of improved political, social and economic transformation all over the world, girls' participation in secondary and post-secondary level school is low among the Ogiek community. Diwakar and Shepherd (2018.5) agree with this by arguing that despite education being an important intangible asset, inequalities prevail in Kenya with the gender gap widening at education levels beyond primary school.  This is true of the Ogiek community women and girls. This is because the community lives in a remote area which reduces their exposure to what is happening in the wider society, denies them role models and exposes them to high poverty levels. This enhances the 'village mentality' as argued by the school principal. It was observed that many schools are day secondary schools making girls vulnerable to sexual overtures at an early age as they commute from home to school daily. The community leaders observed that plans of creating girls-only schools and making them boarding are being considered in order to give the students a better chance.

### 4.1.3 The Learners' Home Environment

The study investigated the learner home environment to determine how it may have impacted their study. All the students, even those who dropped out of the programme filled the questionnaire. The first question focused on family size, and children in these families attending school. The results were as indicated on Table 7:

Children in families vs those attending school

| Range | Children in families | | in school | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| No of children | f | % | f | % |
| 6 – 7 | 39 | 35.1 | 29 | 44.6 |
| 8 – 9 | 41 | 37.0 | 15 | 23.1 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 - 11 | 31 | 27.9 | 21 | 32.3 |
| **Total** | **111** | **100.0** | **65** | **100.0** |

The Table shows that the average number of children was 7.4 children among the families of students who participated in this study. This was a comparatively large family-size by overall Kenyan standards. The Kenyan national average house-hold size has been declining steadily as indicated by the recent population census, from 4.2 in 1999 to 3.9 children in 2019 (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The Ogiek number of children per family is a reflection of high fertility rate among the community. High fertility rate has been argued to have a negative effect on socio-economic development because it imposes costly burdens on the countries. It reduces access to education, nutrition and employment, resulting in a reduced quality of life among the citizens (DaVanzo, & Adamson.1). Holding other things constant, Krishnaji, (1980) argues that large families are most likely to be poor where a big number of dependants exist as a result of high fertility. DaVanzo and Adamson (1998) cited above further argued a case for reducing dependency because it increases the amount of disposable income that can be invested in education to improve the quality of future labour force. The authors cite the case of South Korea where the household size fell from over four to less than two children per family between 1970 and 1990. Consequently, net secondary school enrolment rose astronomically from 38 to 84 %, while expenditure per pupil more than tripled.

Table 6 further shows that only 58.5% of the children attend school. World Bank Report (2003) identified the Ogiek among the economically marginalized community. This is likely to predispose girls to dropping out of school due to poverty and early marriages.

The study also investigated the rate of repetition and its causes as well as parental level of education and occupation. . The results showed that out of the 15 families represented in the study, there were 12 students who had dropped out of school majorly due lack of fees, and 10 due to teenage pregnancy.

On parental level of education and kind of occupations they were involved in, the results were as indicated on Table 8:

Parental educational Level and Occupation

| Scale | Characteristic | f | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education | primary | 12 | 80 |
| | secondary | 3 | 20 |
| | Tertiary | - | - |
| | University | - | - |
| | Total | 15 | 100.0 |
| Occupation | Subsistent farmers | 9 | 64.3 |
| | Motorcycle taxi | 1 | 7.1 |
| | Mechanics | 2 | 14.3 |
| | Security | 2 | 14.3 |
| | **Total** | **14** | **100.0** |

The results indicated that 80% of the parents were primary school graduates or drop outs and only the rest 20% had joined secondary school. None had further education in the form of tertiary or a university degree. This might explain the big size of households in the community. Women's Rights (https://populationmatters.org/) argues that the number children a woman can bear in her life-time is usually inversely related to the number of years spent in school. The group further points out that empowering women through education is critical in ensuring a sustainable population due to its ability to reduce fertility. This low level of education predisposes them to low ranking jobs such as subsistence farming which fuel poverty. Subsistence farmers are smallholders who mainly depend on family labour. They are defined as subsistence or food deficit farmers because they cannot risk entering into commercial farming without endangering family existence. Subsistence farming could only helpful if it allows them to enter into another types of businesses (Sibhatu, & Qaim, 2017).

The study also investigated other home environment issues, such as whether they have ever been sent away from school due none payment of school fees, been involved in doing any paid farm work or whether their homes were connected to electricity. Those who have missed school

one time or another during their two years of secondary education accounted for 93 % of the respondents. On the issue of being involved in farm labour to earn an income, 80% of the girls indicated that they hired themselves out to do farm work. The study further found that only 26.7 % of the respondents whose homes were connected to electricity. This paints a picture of a very needy community that requirements assistance to extricate itself from the web of poverty and ignorance.

A study by the World Bank (2003) indicates millions of girls do not have access to education despite the great efforts made in highlighting their plight. The Ogiek community has been singled out as among people languishing in abject poverty which has affected girl education in the community. A number of factors such as poverty, child labour and bereavement were cited in this study as hindering students' access to education.

## 5.1 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

## 5.2 Summary of Major Findings

The study, in its first objective, investigated the influence of a literacy intervention, 'the Integrated Girls Literacy Empowerment Programme' on their achievement in key aspects of English language literacy of writing, reading and comprehension. The findings indicated that:

(i) the students showed a marked improvement in their writing skills when the entry and exit error counts were compared. The results showed that there was a reduction by as much as 35% and 73% respectively, in lexical and grammatical errors observed before the intervention. Similarly, there was a 75% improvement in syntax and spelling. There was also an improvement in reading speed, with the fastest speed being 150 words in 0.8 minutes. However, this comes to almost 200 w.p.m which is still far below 350 w.p.m by fast readers.

On fluency and reading speed, the findings showed an improvement of over 70 and 60% respectively. On reading comprehension, there was an 88.9 improvement when entry and exit scores were compared. The learners perceived the intervention as beneficial to their academic achievement in literacy and would be ready to participate if a similar programme was available in the future.

ii) on the internal school factors, parental support in terms of meeting fees obligation was limited. Consequently, the school could not afford to have a key resource such as a library. Due to lack of funds, the school is unable to provide educational trips to widen the learners' perspectives. The school has only one English language teacher which may be a constraint to effective teaching of the language.

iii) on the influence of external factors, there was a high level of illiteracy in the community. The household size was over 7 children which is higher than an average Kenyan household of 3.5. All the participants have one time or another been sent out of school due to non-payment of school fees, an indication of endemic poverty in the community.

iv) teen pregnancies, early marriages and school dropout are rife because of 'village mentality' condoned in the community.

**5.3 Conclusions and Recommendations**

The intervention seems to have positively influenced student performance and their motivation in all elements of language learned. A progressive learning approach involving learner interactions, supportive learning environment, seemed to produce better results than the authoritarian teaching approach generally employed by teachers in the school.  This approach would make an important difference in this and other schools if employed. The internal and external environments work against student learning and there is need for government intervention to help the community break of out poverty and illiteracy.

On the last item on whether they could be willing to attend another such a programme in the future were it to be organized, all the students indicated that they would. This implied that they found the programme useful.

**References**
Andera, YÕldÕrÕma , O. (2010).  'Lexical errors in elementary level EFL learners' compositions', *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2 (2010) 5299–5303

Anthony, Alicia. 'Reading Rate Vs. Fluency'.Retrieved from https://education.seattlepi.com/reading-rate-vs-fluency-1742.html-2020. Accessed 23rd March 2020.
Asudo, Marsh. *Forty Lessons and Exercises in Grammar and Language*. Nigeria, Spectrum,1998.

Augustin, Llach. 'A critical review of the terminology and taxonomies used in the literature on lexical errors'. *Miscelanea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, vol.31, 2005b , pp.11-24.

Augustin, Llach. 'The relationship of lexical error and their types to the quality of ESL composition: An empirical study'. *Porta Linguarum*, vol.3, 2005a, pp 45-47.

Botley, Dillah. 'Investigating Spelling Errors in a Malaysian Learners Corpus'. *Malaysian Journal of English Language Teaching (ELT)*. Vol. 3, 2007, 74-93.

Browning, Jeremy. 'Why Teachers Should Use Timed Reading in ESL Classes'. Retrieved from http://iteslj.org/ - 2005. Accessed 24th March 2020.

Buhere, K. **'**Why mastery of English is crucial: Knowledge of English—spoken and written is the sine qua non of lifelong learning'. Retrieved from https://www.the-starstar.co.ke/opinion/columnists/2019-11-11-why-mastery-of-english-is-crucial/-2019.

Canadian Center of Science and Education. 'English Language Teaching'; Vol. 10, No. 3; ISSN1916-4742,E-ISSN1916-4750.                    Retrieved                    from http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt- 2017. Accessed 19th March 2020.

Dada, Esther. 'Spelling Errors: Causes, Influence on Students' Performance in English Language Essay Writing and Strategies for Correcting Them'. *Case Studies Journal*, ISSN (2305-509X) – Volume 4, Issue 8, 2015 pp 66. Retrieved from http://www.casestudiesjournal.com on 23/3/2020

Daraja Academy. 'Educate and empower girls from poverty to become community leaders'. https://www.daraja-academy.org/-2018. Accessed 24th March 2020.

DaVanzo, Adamson. 'The Effects of Education, Poverty, and Resources on Family Planning in Developing Countries' *Sultan, Clinics Mother Child Health* 2018, 1998,15:1 DOI: 10.4172/2090-7214.1000289

Diwakar, Shepherd. 'Understanding Poverty in Kenya: A multidimensional analysis'. Available at www.chronicpovertynetwork.or -2018. Accessed 20th March 2020.

Grant, Hallman. 'Pregnancy Related School Dropout and Prior School Performance in South Africa'. *Policy Research Division Working Paper* No 212. New York: Population Council, 2006.

Hafiz, Omar, et al. 'Analysis of Syntactic Errors in English Writing: A Case Study of Jazan University Preparatory Year Students'. Retrieved from https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Analysis-of-Syntactic-Errors-in-English-Writing%3A-A-Hafiz-Omar/caaeba5f230488c79038075db03b9298b03dd248 on 20/03/2020

Hart, L. 'Cognitive Factors That Affect Reading Comprehension'. Retrieved from
Heale, Forbes. 'Understanding triangulation in research Evidence-Based Nursing'. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23943076- 2013. Accessed 20th March 2020.

James, Carl. *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. London, Longman, 1998.

Kayonde, A.A. 'An Evaluative Study of the Roles of School Libraries in Learning Activities of Senior Secondary School Students in Ondo State'. Retrieved from http:digitalcommons.unl.edu?-2017. Accessed 26th March 2020.

Kenya Bureau of statistics. '2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Results'. Available at https://www.knbs.or.ke/?p=5621-2019. Accessed 20th March 2020.

Khansir, A. A. 'Error analysis and second language writing. Theory and Practice in Language Studies'. Vol. 3(2), 2013 pp363-370. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.2.363-370. Accessed 19th March 2020.

Krishnaji, N. 'Poverty and Family Size'. *Social Scientist*, vol. 9, no. 4, 1980, pp. 22–35. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3520371. Accessed 24 Mar. 2020.

Krista, Kikas. 'Authoritative and authoritarian-inconsistent teachers' preferences for teaching methods and instructional goals'. *Education* 3-13, do 1080/03004279.201.618808.

Lin, L. 'The impact of the retelling technique on Chinese students' English reading Comprehension'. *Asian EFL Journal*, 12(2), 2010 163-191.

Macharia, Kessio. 'Investigation of Re-Entry of Student Mothers in Secondary Schools in Kenya'. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE) Volume 2, Issue 12, December 2015, PP 46-50 ISSN 2349-0373 (Print) & ISSN 2349-0381 (Online) www.arcjournals.org*

Mayor, M. 'What does it mean to be fluent in English?. Retrieved from https://education.seattlepi.com/-2020. Accessed 19th March 2020.
https://www.english.com/blog/mean-fluent-english/-2015. Accessed 20th March 2020

Minority Rights Group International. 'State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples-Case study: Ogiek in Kenya. available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/526fb70911.html-2013. Accessed 24 March 2020.

Moon, D.M. 'Triangulation: A Method to Increase Validity, Reliability, and Legitimation in Clinical Research'. Retrieved from https//doi.org/10.106/jen -2018. Accessed 18th March 2020.

Penny, W. K. (2001). 'An analysis of student error patterns in written English: Suggested teaching procedure to help'. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Birmingham, Birmingham, England

Rattanadilok, Othman. 'Understanding EFL students' errors in writing'. *Journal of Education and Practice*, vol. 6(32), 2015, 99-106.

Sermsook, Liamnimitr, et al. 'An Analysis of Errors in Written English Sentences: A Case Study of Thai EFL Students'. (2017). Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1130033.pdf on 19/03/2020

Shanahan, T. 'How Important Is Reading Rate?'. Retrieved from https://www.readingrockets.org/blogs/-2019. Accessed 17th March 2020.

Shawiza, Vera. 'Gender Parity in Girl Child Education in Kenya Narrows'. Retrieved from https://sokodirectory.com/2016/11/gender-parity-girl-child-education-kenya-narrows/-2016. Accessed 10th March 2020.

Shiundu, Alphonse. 'FACTSHEET: Cost of providing 'truly' free secondary education in Kenya. Retrieved from https://africacheck.org/factsheets/factsheet-cost-providing-free-secondary-education-kenya/ . Accessed 30th March 2020.

Sibhatu, Kibrom, et al. "Rural food security, subsistence agriculture, and seasonality." *PloS one* vol. 12,10 e0186406. 19 Oct. 2017, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0186406

Sukasame, Kantho, et al. 'A study of errors in learning English Grammatical structures on Tenses of MatthayomSuksa 4 Students of The Demonstration School'. 5th World Conference on Educational Sciences –WCES, KhonKaen University a Faculty Of Education,Khon Kaen University Khon Kaen 40002,Thailand, 2013.

United Nations Human Settlements Programme. 'Indigenous Peoples' Right to Adequate Housing: A Global Overview: United Nations Housing Right Programme Report No 7: Nairobi, 2005.

Wamahiu, Opondo, et al. 'Educational Situation of the Kenyan Girl Child'. *The Educational Research Network in Kenya* (ERNIKE). Nairobi: UNICEF/ERNESA Collaborative, 2017.

Watcharapunyawong, Usaha. 'Thai EFL students' writing errors in different text types: The interference of the first language'. *English Language Teaching*, 6(1), 2013, 67-78. http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n1p67

Wetheridge, Louise. 'Girls' and women's literacy with a lifelong learning perspective: issues, trends and implications for the Sustainable Development Goals: Retrieved from WWW.UNESCO.ORG-2016. Accessed 23rd March 2020.

Zheng, Park. 'An analysis of errors in English writing made by Chinese and Korean university students'. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, vol. 3(8), 2013, 1342-1351. https://doi.org/10.4304/tpls.3.8.1342-1351