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# EVALUATING THE EFFICACY OF CONTROLLED EXTENSIVE READING TASKS ON ESL LEARNING OUTCOMES

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## Abstract
This study sought to establish whether students who are exposed to Controlled Extensive Reading Tasks (CERTs) will have higher learning outcomes during English as a Second Language (ESL) lessons. A 3-month intervention pilot of Controlled Extensive Reading (CER) instruction, was implemented in two secondary schools in Kakamega County, Western Kenya, from February to May 2023. We compared the impacts of the CERTs treatment group in ESL lessons in the pilot school with those of the control group that did not use the intervention but utilized the same instructional components. The findings revealed that assignment to the CERTs pilot group had additional improvement in the target language skills while the control group had somewhat constant learning outcomes. The study is useful to curriculum stakeholders who should consider such results alongside existing implementation strategies in ESL policies and program designs.

**Keywords**: controlled extensive reading tasks, English as a second language, Kenya, learning outcomes, secondary schools

## Introduction
Despite the significant role of English as a taught subject and as the Language of instruction in Kenyan Secondary schools, language scholars, policymakers, and other stakeholders argue that there is a worrying trend in the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL). This is evidenced annually by poor performance by learners in the subject in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) national examinations (KNEC 2019; 2020; 2021). This is partly attributed to the learner's lack of word recognition and comprehension skills which affects fluency thus resulting in low achievement in reading and comprehension skills (Kabita, 2015; Piper et al., 2016; Whalley, 2017). The concern raises a question about the challenges that this trend presents to an education system that relies heavily on the use of English to facilitate learning.

There is a convergence among language scholars who observe that maximum exposure to extensive reading (ER) activities plays a critical role in improving the learners' reading comprehension in the target language (Kim et al., 2014; Kuhn et al., 2010; Rasinski, 2004; Silverman et al., 2013). Students who lack appropriate reading skills experience difficulties in decoding the meaning of the target texts and



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have limited outcomes due to poor mastery of the language skills (Samuels, 2006). In the Kenya ESL context for instance, there was an introduction of the 8.4.4 system of education, (eight years in primary, four years in secondary, and four years in university) by the Ministry of Education in merged English language and literature in what is known as the integrated approach. Scholars have argued that this system made it difficult for teachers to cover the syllabus in time and they therefore abandoned learner-centered teaching strategies in favor of those that could expressly meet the purpose of covering the syllabus (Athiemoolam & Kibui, 2012). Given this, complaints have been raised about the declining standards of the English language, (Athiemoolam & Kibui, 2012). While ER is known to produce positive learning outcomes in ESL classrooms, its practical implementation has received scant attention, with limited empirical research on how it can be utilized to facilitate the acquisition of specific language skills in ESL classrooms (Kirkebæk, 2012; Bao and Du, 2015; Chua, 2019).

We seek to find out whether CERTs can be utilized in the teaching of ESL skills to enhance fluency and comprehension of the subject. It extends the existing body of knowledge regarding ER in ESL contexts to pilot CERTs as an intervention. There is a shortage of evidence on the efficacy of ER strategies on the acquisition of specific language skills among learners of ESL. We, therefore, seek to pilot a CERT model based on tailor-made controlled tasks that combine the expertise of linguists in multiple subfields and also involve teachers of the English language and their learners in ESL lessons. These collaborations are aimed at supporting existing reading strategies.

Furthermore, in an ESL multilingual context such as Kenya, learners' opportunities to interact with the target language community are lacking. To gain further access to the language, learners are forced to rely on written texts as sources of input. Therefore, an empirical study that proposes how ESL teachers can maximize the potential of reading to further aid learners as a rich, accessible source of input is important. However, research indicates that this written input is meaningless if the teaching is not learner-centered, (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003). As such, increasing learners' involvement in the learning process achieved through the use of learner-centered language tasks which can be utilized to support ER-related strategies is critical.

### *Efficacy of ER on ESL learning outcomes*

As research into Second Language Acquisition (SLA) continues to grow, the multi-faceted nature of developing alternative and effective ER strategies in second language learning has become increasingly clear. The role that ER plays in ESL learning has been investigated and empirical results indicate that there is a strong relationship between ER and learning of SLA (Edy, 2014; Lee & Hsu, 2009; Mermelstein, 2014). The relationship is in terms of acquiring vocabulary and grammar that develop the learners' language competency due to a large amount of repeated exposure to interesting and meaningful second language (SL) reading materials (Asraf & Ahmad, 2003; Mason & Krashen, 1997). However, as noted by Clegg and Simpson (2016) most policy recommendations in sub-Saharan Africa are never implemented as attested by the disconnect between the existing theory and practice in education practices. This calls to attention the ER strategies utilized by teachers in ESL classrooms and ESL language pedagogies based on empirical

evidence. In this view, it is argued that ER plays various roles in language learning such as providing comprehensible input, enhancing the learner's general competence, increasing the learner's exposure to language, and increasing the learner's knowledge of vocabulary (Bell 1998).

Using Extensive Reading Tasks (ERTs) is an approach that aims to facilitate SLA by engaging learners in the performance of specific language tasks (Ellis, 2021). The teaching approach engages learners to perform a series of tasks in an interactional authentic language environment by using the target language for communication (Motallebzadeh & Defaei, 2013). This is informed by the fact that the activities in the task should relate to daily work or in other words, the task is focused on a real-life situation with a process-oriented teaching approach, to maximize the learner's exposure to the target language. Yet, during the process of learning, ER tasks aim not only to enable learners to acquire new linguistic knowledge but also to enhance their existing knowledge.

The utilization of ERTs in foreign language context has been found to have a positive impact on learning outcomes as researchers discovered that ERTs could increase learners' motivation and increases their listening skills (Chua, 2019; Bao & Du, 2015; Ellis, 2021). This is because several researches have been done in the context of applying ERTs in second and foreign-language classrooms and shown similar results. For instance, Kirkebæk (2012), and Bao and Du, (2015) found that the use of ERTs among secondary language learners assisted in increasing their participation spurred their interest in the learning process, and helped them to develop appropriate listening and speaking skills. In the same vein, Hitosugi and Day (2004) established improvements in their participants' reading ability through a study in which they observed two classes, one with extensive reading and another is a regular class. The study showed that the extensive reading group outperformed the traditional group on a reading ability test (Hitosugi & Day, 2004). However, according to Chan (2020), ER is not necessarily a solution to all reading challenges and is appropriate for all students in every context. For this reason, Chan argues that teachers are advised to adopt proper ER instruction depending on various students' backgrounds, needs, proficiency, and perceptions. Furthermore, teachers ought to take into consideration factors such as material selection, text difficulty, autonomy, peer cooperation, teacher roles, implementation, and classroom activities (Chan, 2020). In this perspective, Day (2015) suggests that depending on the students and contextual factors, it is possible to implement ER flexibly as a process from pure ER to fringe ER and other approaches including supervised (or instructed) ER in which ER is the main focus of a reading course combined with a variety of follow-up activities, independent (non-instructed) ER whereby ER is an extracurricular activity where the teacher guides and encourages students whose fondness of reading has been developed and who regularly meet to discuss them.

CERT program is thus viewed as part of a student-centered learning equation, which is an extension of using ER to focus on the development of learners' reading input. Moreover, since, studies have demonstrated gains in aspects such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and teaching other language skills such as speaking and listening through ER (Chua, 2019; Bao & Du, 2015) we hope to extend this theorization and practice to CERTs in the teaching of reading skills. We hope that our interventions will lead to learners' improved exposure to ESL.

### *Challenges of implementing ER in ESL classrooms in the Kenyan context*

It has been established that many learners in Kenya transit from primary to secondary schools without having acquired the expected proficiency in English as a subject and language of instruction (Gathumbi, et al., 2014: Dhillon & Wanjiru, 2013: Kioko, et al., 2014). It was also revealed that teachers rely on ineffective instructional approaches when delivering the ESL content, (Dhillon & Wanjiru, 2013; Muthwii,2004).

Despite the significant role played by reading in the learning of ESL in multilingual contexts, language researchers and stakeholders report a worrying trend of poor reading culture among ESL learners in Kenya (Gathumbi & Masembe 2005; Kim et al., 2020; Nandiemo, 2017; Obunga, 2017). For instance, a study by Obunga (2017) revealed that students of ESL in Kenya secondary schools only resort to reading class notes and handouts whenever examination schedules are released.

Further, Nandiemo (2017) argues that teachers are handling students who have no interest in reading and would rather Tweet, Facebook, watch movies, listen to music, and/ or bet. These revelations attest to the fact that existing ER strategies have not been effective in reversing the poor reading culture in Kenya secondary schools. As observed by Muthwii (2002), attitudes in readers towards information use are crucial in developing the reading culture. For instance, a study by Muthwii (2002) reveals that English is rarely used by Kenyan ESL learners outside of their classrooms. The study argues further that even ESL teachers use their first language or Kiswahili to explain some English concepts while teaching the subject. Further, when the learners of ESL communicate amongst themselves inside or outside classrooms, outside instructional times, they rarely use the English language. However, Ikerenge (2013) notes that the Kenyan education system is squarely to blame for the alarming decline in reading interest among school-going youth.

### *Theoretical grounding*

Theoretical support for ER in the field of Second Language (L2) research comes from the Input Hypothesis (IH) which focuses on the context in understanding the language system that learners have not known, (Krashen,1982). The IH indicates that we acquire by going for meaning first, and as a result, we acquire structure. Krashen (1985) points out that second languages are acquired by receiving comprehensible input; language that is heard/ read and that is slightly ahead of a learner's grammatical knowledge. In perceiving the meaning of the IH, Gass and Selinker (1994) claim that input refers to what is available to learners.

It can be in spoken and written form to which the learners are exposed. Native speakers make adjustments to their speech and the areas of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon. Kenyan ESL learners who are not in an environment in which English is used orally may be involved in the context in which the language can be acquired through reading the use of the language aspects in the reading materials.

## Methods

The study was an intervention pilot program conducted in Kakamega County from February to May 2023. The program focused on improving ESL based on evidence-based instructional components of CERTs in the following English five language skills; reading comprehension, vocabulary testing, sentence-building

skills, note making summary writing, and character development. Two secondary schools were used in the study, one as the pilot and the other as the control. Students in the pilot school were subjected to the CERTs for three months, and teachers received professional capacity training on ER pedagogy and assessment of student learning during the pilot program. However, the students in the control group did not use the intervention but utilized the same instructional components. This project mobilized various stakeholders to assist in implementing the CERTS in the pilot school as well as carrying out the ERT tasks in the control school. Table 1 shows the resources that were mobilized for this project.

Table 1. Data resources

| Name of stakeholder and resources needed | Specific request made to the stakeholder | Person that made request to the stakeholder | Period when request was made | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal, | Institutional permission | PI and co PI | Feb, 2023 | granted |
| Subject teachers, Expertise | Giving of CER tasks, marking | Head of Subject English | Feb, 2021 | tasks given |
| Students, | Carry out ERT Writing material | Subject teacher tasks | Feb, 2023 | work done |
| Typist, photocopier | Producing excerpts | Head of Subject English | Feb-May 2023 | done |

### *Participants*

Participants in the present study formed 2 students, as defined by Kenya's 8-4-4 curriculum, from a subset of the CERTs group selected from the pilot and control schools. At baseline, the samples consisted of 373 students (in 6 streams) in the base pilot group and 120 students (in two streams) in the control group, making a total of 493 students in all 8 streams. We also utilized 8 teachers of ESL (one teacher per each of the 8 streams) who administered the CERTs. Within each of the eight streams, simple random sampling was used to select a sample of the data from 9 students per stream for analysis. The teachers and students were initially briefed about the goals of the program and the administration of the CERTs. The methodology was also explained to them so that they could benefit from the program as much as possible.

### *Evaluation matrix*

The assessment of the learners was based on the instructional components that were in line with the ESL skills examined at the national level in KCSE English examination Paper 2. The paper has four sections which test comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, note making and summary, and character building. The project focused on these areas since the KNEC report (2019; 2020; 2021) showed that there was a dismal performance in the national exams in these sections. There was a need to establish the extent to which CERTS could be used as an intervention strategy to steer the performance of the ERTs. We assumed that CERTs would increase the learners' interaction with ESL and eventually lead to improved learning outcomes. A table was designed to show the tasks undertaken, the learning

activities, and the expected learning outcomes for three months' pilot duration. The learning outcomes formulated were in line with the goals each CERT was meant to achieve in the target ESL skills.

Table 2. Summary of target language skills

| No. | Language skills | Learning/teaching tasks | Expected learning outcomes |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Comprehension | Reading the passage aloud<br><br>Doing assignments on the selected passages | Read comprehension passage loudly without difficulties<br><br>Giving correct answers to the given passages |
| 2. | Vocabulary Testing | Identifying meanings and contextual usage of new words | Identify specific new words and provide their appropriate meanings as used in the text |
| 3. | Building Sentence Skills | Constructing different sentence patterns | Construct correct sentence patterns by stating or explaining |
| 4. | Note making and Summary | Making notes<br>Writing summaries | Makes notes and presents them in the correct form, that is, in point form. |
| 5. | Developing Characters | Identifying characters<br>Describing characters | Identify characters from different excerpts and describe their traits using appropriate vocabulary |

Table 2 shows a summary of language skills that students were supposed to acquire in the 3 months, as per the national curriculum specification. The language skills were accompanied by specific tasks. Each task was performed during the normal class hours but there were additional CERTs for the learners' after each lesson. The normal lessons lasted 40 minutes as provided on the learning and teaching timetable. The evaluation was measured for each of the five skills weighted at 20 marks, making a total of 100 marks for a full paper. The marks were measured on an assessment rubric shown in Table 3 below;

Table 3. Assessment rubrics for the CERTs

| **Task**<br><br>**Indicator** | **Exceeds Expectations (EE)**<br>**5 (16-20 marks)** | **Meets Expectations (ME)**<br>**4 (10-15 marks)** | **Approaches Expectations (AE)**<br>**3 (5-9 marks)** | **Below Expectations (BE)**<br><br>**2 (Below 4 marks)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Task 1**<br>Ability to do comprehension exercises without | Tackles a variety of comprehension exercises without | Average tackling of comprehension passage without many | Has some difficulties tackling comprehension passages | Does comprehension passage with difficulties |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| difficulty | difficulties | difficulties | | |
| **Task 2** Responds to ER tasks targeting specific vocabularies | Respond to tasks targeting specific vocabulary and correctly use the target vocabulary in sentences | Responds to tasks targeting specific vocabularies | Responds to some tasks targeting specific vocabularies with some difficulties | Responds to tasks targeting specific vocabularies with difficulties even with prompts |
| **Task 3** Ability to construct sentence patterns from selected extracts to reflect different meanings. | Constructs a variety of sentence patterns from selected extracts by stating, explaining, or describing to reflect different meanings. | Constructs sentence patterns from selected extracts to reflect different meaning. | Has some difficulties constructing sentence patterns from selected extracts to reflect different meanings. | Constructs some sentence patterns from selected extracts with errors and difficulties. |
| **Task 4** Ability to make notes and write summaries from different texts. | Makes notes from extracts and presents them in the correct form then uses the points to write a summary with ease. | Makes notes from extracts and presents them in the correct form | Makes notes from extracts and presents them with some difficulties | Makes notes from extracts but presents them in the wrong form and with difficulties |
| **Task 5** Responds to questions targeting characters from different excerpts | Identifies characters from different excerpts and describes them correctly with ease. | Identifies characters from different excerpts and describes them | Identifies characters from different excerpts and describes some | Identifies characters from different excerpts but finds difficulties in describing them even with scaffolding |

***Research design***

Students in the pilot group received the CERTs intervention which had the following four central activities:

1. Teachers were required to make lessons targeting the 5 skills for the 3 months intervention period. Teachers were supposed to teach the normal lesson and give assignments using the approved course books. However, after each, supplementary ERTs were given to the learners for home reading.

2. The supplementary ERT materials were made by the teachers and checked by the head of the department for appropriateness. ERTs for home reading focused on the five language skills: reading comprehension, vocabulary building, sentence construction, note-making summary writing, and character building. Students were encouraged to consult with their teachers when they encountered difficulties with the supplementary activities.
3. Teachers were expected to check the progress of the learners in both the normal lesson and the home reading ERTs. Necessary instructional interventions were to be given to individual learners depending on their level of content mastery.
4. Teachers received 3 days of training on the development of CERTs for the learners. Two refresher trainings were held at the end of the first and the second month of the project. The program was monitored by the research team at the end of every week.

## Findings and Discussion

### *Findings*

*The pre-test*

We administered a pretest to the two groups of learners to establish the entry behavior before administering the CERTs. The pretest involved question tasks on the six language skills (See Table 2). In the pilot school, the results of 54 learners were randomly selected for analysis. The results are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 4. Summary of the pilot school pretest results

| CERTs | EE | ME | AP | BE | Total number of Learners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | 0 | 3 | 28 | 23 | 54 |
| Vocabulary | 0 | 2 | 6 | 46 | 54 |
| Note Making | 0 | 12 | 36 | 6 | 54 |
| Sentence Skills | 0 | 2 | 15 | 37 | 54 |
| Characterization | 0 | 2 | 20 | 32 | 54 |

The findings in the pilot school revealed that the results in comprehension, vocabulary, building sentence skills, and character development were below expectations (BE) with few learners approaching (AE) and meeting expectations (ME). The feedback on the note-making and summary-writing component showed that most learners were approaching expectations (AE). Given this, learners required more tasks to improve competencies in these areas. Table 5 presents a summary of the pretest results for the control school. A similar test in the control school produced the results shown in Table 5 below;

Table 5. Summary of the control school pretest results

| CERTs | EE | ME | AP | BE | Total number of Learners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | 0 | 4 | 8 | 6 | 18 |
| Vocabulary | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 18 |
| Note Making | 0 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 18 |
| Sentence Skills | 0 | 8 | 4 | 6 | 18 |
| Characterization | 0 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 18 |

The pretest results on vocabulary showed that many of them were BE. Note-making and sentence skills had most learners ME, while comprehension and characterization had the majority of the learners below expectations. The entry behavior of the learners affirmed the reports that there was poor performance of secondary school students in the ESL examinations (KNEC, 2020; 2021; 2022). This calls for the urgent need for interventions to bridge the gaps.

*Post-test*

The post-test involved assessing the learners at the end of each month during the project. In total, three assessments were given to the learners to get feedback on the learning outcomes in the CERTs during the intervention period, and a combined average summary of the results was computed as shown in Table 6 below. The test items were formulated by the teachers and were based on the five targeted ESL skills. The specific goals in the assessment included; a) responding correctly to a comprehension question b) giving the meaning of words as used in a passage c) responding to a question in note form d) responding to a question by stating, explaining, or describing e) describing character traits f) describing attitude. Table 7 below shows the average score of the sampled learners in the post-test assessments by the two groups of learners.

Table 6. Post-test summary of the pilot school learner performance in CERTs assessment

| CERTs | EE | ME | AP | BE | Total number of Learners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | 15 | 18 | 0 | 21 | 54 |
| Vocabulary | 12 | 3 | 0 | 39 | 54 |
| Note Making | 42 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 54 |
| Sentence Skills | 27 | 10 | 5 | 12 | 54 |
| Characterization | 14 | 20 | 12 | 8 | 54 |

The findings showed that in the sample of 54 learners, CERTs in note-making had the highest number (42) EE while vocabulary tasks had the highest number of learners (39) scoring BE. Despite this, it was established that at the end of the three months learners' mastery of vocabulary skills registered an improvement in the performance of the CERTS where the number of learners in the BE category reduced. For instance, the findings revealed that the number of learners whose results were BE in the note-making pretest assessment was 49. However, after administering the post-test assessment the number had dropped to 36. In the same vein, it was observed that no learner exceeded expectations in the note-making component at the pretest level. Nevertheless, the post-test results showed that out of 54 students, 42 exceeded expectations.

The post-test assessment for the control group involved a sample of 18 students who were subjected to ER tasks using the same instructional components as the pilot group and the results are shown in Table 7 below;

Table 7. Post-test summary of the pilot school learner performance in CERTs assessment

| CERTs | EE | ME | AP | BE | Total number of Learners |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | 0 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 18 |
| Vocabulary | 0 | 0 | 4 | 14 | 18 |
| Note Making | 0 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 18 |
| Sentence Skills | 0 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 18 |
| Characterization | 0 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 18 |

The findings established that the learners did not post much improvement from the baseline entry behavior performance. Although learners met expectations in the note making, and building sentence skills tasks the findings showed that the items on vocabulary were below expectations. Further, the results revealed that there was no consistent pattern in value addition, and where the scores appeared to have a slight improvement in one component the trend was not predictable.

***Discussion***

The findings in the pilot group revealed that in the initial stages of the tasks, most of the learners were AE. For instance, the data reveals that learners demonstrated their ability to read without difficulties. It was also observed that a few learners read with difficulties and were not confident in responding to the comprehension tasks. It was revealed that whereas learners need to cultivate the habit of reading on their own, many of the reading difficulties were discovered using the CERT as a tool. Gathumbi et al., (2014) recommend that it is incumbent upon the teacher to use interesting teaching techniques that would help learners to develop the requisite skills. For instance, there is a need to enhance learner's ability to read fluently and comprehend by encouraging a reading culture. This can be done by providing reading materials for learners to read for pleasure thereby facilitating the learning of many other language skills like the use of vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling, punctuation, and paragraphing.

Most of the learners met the expectations in the note-making task. Nevertheless, the findings showed that at the early stage of this component, there were notable difficulties in giving responses in point form. Learners were not adequately equipped on how to present responses in point form. It was revealed some learners presented the answers in prose or used complete statements. Vocabulary learning occurred at several levels which included word form recognition, multiple-choice meaning recognition, and receptive recall of the meaning. Learners were invited to identify and explain the meaning of new words as used in a given passage or excerpt. Students were allowed to demonstrate their understanding of such words by themselves or discuss them with their desk mates without relying on the dictionary meanings. However, it was established that most learners either did not get the correct meanings as used in the passage or ended up giving a wrong meaning. Most of the responses were BE of the aims in the learning outcomes. For instance, learners were supposed to give the correct meanings of the new words but ensure they maintained the correct tense as given in the excerpt.

The baseline survey revealed that building sentence skills was initially performed dismally. Whereas learners were expected to construct different sentence patterns from a given excerpt either by stating or explaining, most of the responses were BE. Although there were attempts by a few learners who were approaching

expectations and very few meeting expectations, many of them constructed the sentences with difficulties and errors thus indicating they were inadequately equipped to meet the expected learning outcomes in this component.

During the second month, the goal of building sentence skills as a CERT was to respond to specific questions from a given passage by explaining, stating, or describing as the question would demand. It was found that most learners met the expectations and the responses given reflected the learners' knowledge and skills of constructing sentences. Whereas this component had initially registered poor responses, it was revealed that through controlled extensive reading learners showed remarked improvement. However, the findings observed that there were notable difficulties for the learners to adhere to the application of basic mechanics of writing such as capitalization and punctuation.

Another area of attention was where learners were required to identify or mention characters contained in a given excerpt and describe the characters using the correct traits. The findings showed that the learners met the expectations, however, the task of describing characters posed challenges whereby learners could not use the appropriate traits to describe a character. The findings established that the learners had limited vocabulary and ended up explaining what the characters do and not the specific words to describe them. It was thus observed that although learners could identify the characters in a piece of writing, other aspects of the character like their traits would only be handled when the teacher guides the learner through prompts and suggestions of possible responses.

In the third month, the study repeated the CERTs of the first month to establish the progress made by administering the CERTs as a tool in the ER. The findings showed that there was remarkable improvement in the learner responses to comprehension and note-making. It was observed that most learners met expectations and, in some cases, exceeded the expectations, especially in note-making tasks. Nevertheless, the vocabulary testing task still posed challenges and most learners were either below expectations or were approaching expectations.

The results in the control group show a somewhat constant trend in the performance of learners with very minimal improvement. The findings deduced that in the absence of the CERTs, learner potential, and weaknesses were not realized.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that CERTS can be preferred as a better intervention tool in ER for learners of ESL. The student's performance in the instructional components of ER materials was observed to improve in the process of applying the tool. Particular aspects such as note-making, sentence skills, and comprehension registered an improvement in the process of implementing the CERTs. The study concluded that the performance in English could be improved further if teachers of English can enhance their ER sessions during ESL teaching using CERTS.

The findings that emerge from the present study reveal that CERTs have a positive influence on the learning of ESL skills. The results have implications for literacy policymakers where English is taught as a second language such as in Kenya. There is a need for a policy shift in the teaching of ESL skills to reverse the trend of poor performance in the subject.

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