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Assessing the speakig skill in learning and teaching english in Songa commune : case of fourth form

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

ASSESSING THE SPEAKING SKILL IN LEARNING AND TEACHING ENGLISH IN SONGA COMMUNE: Case of Fourth Form

By

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "**Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises**"

Bujumbura, November 2015

DEDICATION

To my Parents,

To my husband,

To my brother, Egide and my aunt, Marie Thérèse,

who never lived long enough to see my work completed,

To my brothers and sisters,

To the family of Niyonkuru Désiré,

To my cousins and relatives,

I dedicate this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this work owes deep gratitude to many people for their enormous support. First of all, my sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Julius Suh Ayancho, lecturer at the University of Burundi, who despite his many other academic and personal commitments, supervised and assisted this work from the draft to its final copy.

Sincere thanks are addressed to all the teachers who contributed to my training from primary school to the University level especially those of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences/ Department of English Language and Literature for the academic instruction and moral education they gave me. I am also thankful to the school authorities, the teachers and students for their good cooperation during my visit to their schools. Without their collaboration, this work could not have been completed.

I highly appreciate the encouragement I got from my family; I particularly express my whole heartfelt thanks to my parents for the care and understanding they showed me during my studies. I cannot forget to express my sincere gratitude to the families of Désiré Niyonkuru and Cassien Nitunga who have been what parents should be to their children. May they find here my profound gratitude. I would also like to thank my former classmates for the mutual assistance. May God, the Almighty bless you all who contributed in one way or the other to my studies.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

AU	: African Union
BEPES	: Bureau d'Etudes des Programmes d'Enseignement Secondaire (Office of Programmes for Secondary Teaching)
COMESA	: Common Market for Eastern South Africa
DRC	: Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC	: East African Community
ELS	: English as a Second Language
ETS	: Ecole Technique Secondaire (Technical Secondary School)
FL	: Foreign Language
UN	: The United Nations
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

ABSTRACT

This study set out to assess the causes of the lack of fluency in the speaking skill, the problems that students and teachers come across in the process of teaching and learning the speaking skill. It also sought to suggest the strategies that could be used to improve the speaking skill. This study found out that the limited time allotted to the speaking skill, the lack of opportunities to practice the language, and the inadequate teaching materials are among the problems faced when teachers are executing their duties. This study also found out that the large number of students in the target class, the limited knowledge in grammar; pronunciation, vocabulary and the shyness of the students were the problems that teachers encountered in the process of teaching and learning the speaking skill. In the light of my findings a number of recommendations are addressed to various stakeholders in the education sector in Burundi.

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CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I.0. Introduction

Since the creation of man, language has been the most useful tool in communication. Human beings communicate among themselves by using various methods such as speaking, writing and gestures.

It is worth noting that the use and teaching of the English language in Burundi is justified by the importance of English and the role it plays in the modern world. Nowadays, the English language in Burundi is a tool of communication in the modern world. Due to these reasons, by the introduction of English from the primary school to the university and the creation of various English centres and clubs where people attend evening classes, we note that Burundians are learning English to improve their knowledge in communication because English is the most influential and the present day language all over the world.

I.1. Background to the Study

Language is the most direct way for mankind to communicate information and exchange ideas. In any given community, people express their thoughts and needs by using a language. Indeed, the preponderant role of any language is to enable people to communicate among themselves. Then, when people come together with other people of different cultures, they feel the need to communicate. Thus, there is a necessity to learn a second or a foreign language. Due to this reason, the latter becomes an important tool which makes life easy among different communities.

In Burundi, the need to teach and to learn English may find its justification primarily in the geographical location of the country and the salient place occupied by English language all over the world. Except the Democratic Republic of the

Congo (DRC) which is a French speaking country, Burundi is surrounded by English speaking countries, namely: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Rwanda. In addition, the recent integration of Burundi in EAC and other different organizations such as the UN, AU, COMESA, and the UNESCO; to name but a few, stimulates Burundians to learn English because these organizations discuss in English in their daily activities namely: conferences related to security, administration, trade and commercial affairs, politics, and meetings.

In addition, communicating in one's native language seems easy and natural. Nevertheless, this case becomes challenging when someone needs to communicate in his/her second language. It becomes more difficult when he/she is obliged to use his/her foreign language. Here, the speaking skill must be involved in order to achieve a smooth and effective communication.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

It is true that in a country where English is taught as a second or foreign language, students have problems of oral production. Their speaking skill seems to be poor. If students want to be fluent in English, they must have a mastery of some expressions and vocabulary items. Indeed, I have looked at the various course books designed for the Seventh, Sixth, Fifth and Fourth Form classes, and I have noticed that all the grammatical structures are taught at these levels. As a matter of fact, the students of the fourth form level were expected to know how to express themselves in different circumstances such as greetings, compliments, suggestions, apologizing and requesting.

However, I have come to realize that the oral skill of the students of the Fourth Form Level is very low. That is, they are characteristically hesitant, inaccurate, shy and incoherent. Therefore, they cannot express themselves effectively and fluently

during the English lessons or outside the curriculum, and they cannot stand for a long conversation. Hence, there is a need for an investigation into the causes of the low communicative performance and the lack of fluency in the English of the 4th Form level despite their mastery in English.

I.3. Motivation of the Study

The motivation of the choice of this topic resulted from my observation during classroom interactions and out of the classroom, when I was doing the teaching practice. Students had problems in the oral skill when they were expressing their ideas, thoughts, feelings or even when they were asked to present a dialogue orally in English. They sometimes showed an avoidance behavior. The above-mentioned reasons pushed me to carry out this investigation so as to shed light on how the speaking skill can be improved in Songa commune.

I.4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of the lack of fluency in the English oral skill and describe some problems that the students come across when they are learning the speaking skill. The next purpose of this study is to determine the strategies to improve the speaking skill of the students of the 4th Form class.

I.5. Research Questions

This study is an attempt to assess the causes of the lack of fluency in English and the strategies to improve the spoken English in the Fourth Form class. The following are questions that I asked myself and which guided me:

1. Why are students of the Fourth Form class not fluent in the English Language?

2. What strategies should be used to improve the learning and the teaching of the speaking skill in the 4th Form class?

I.6. Hypotheses of the Study

The research hypotheses, being the possible answers or tentative solutions to the research questions, I have attempted to put out the following:

1. The lack of fluency by students of the 4th Form class in the English language is due to the insufficient time allotted to the speaking skill.

2. The following strategies should be used to improve the learning and the teaching of the speaking skill: creating many speaking activities and providing the opportunity to speak.

I.7. Importance of the Study

The findings from this study will hopefully help teachers and students of the 4th Form class in Songa commune to become aware of the causes and the problems which may prevent them from speaking effectively and fluently in English. In addition, I hope that the findings from this study will help students of Songa commune to know what should be done in order to improve their spoken language. This means that they are required to practice outside the classroom what they have learned in the classroom in order to develop their oral communication performance. This is because, participating in conversations, discussions or debate help students to be fluent in a language.

I.8. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study was conducted in the 4th Form class in selected secondary schools located in Songa commune. Indeed, the study dealt with the speaking skill of the

students of the 4th Form class in the English language. As I could not tackle all the problems of the speaking skill in the English language, I specifically focused on the causes of the lack of fluency in the oral skill. I identified the problems that the students and their teachers come across during the learning and the teaching of the speaking skill; and finally proposed the strategies to improve the students' fluency.

I.9. Definitions of Key Terms

A number of terms need to be defined since they are recurrent and important in this study: assessment, speaking, skill, ability.

I.9.1. Assessment

In terms of the English language, Okello and Ocheng (1986:79) define assessment as

> *the process of gathering information about teaching techniques and procedures by teachers about the process of the learners and the curriculum. The teacher assesses the ability to translate the materials presented into a more meaningful form, so that it can be interpreted and comprehended.*

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2010), the verb to assess is to make a judgment about the nature or quality of somebody or something. In that context, the same dictionary defines the term "Assessor" as the person who judges how well somebody has done in an exam, a competition, etc.

I.9.2. Skill/Ability

Widdowson (1978:13), on his part, says: "*Skills which are defined with reference to medium (speaking, hearing, composing and comprehending) are linguistic*

skills." These skills refer to the way in which a language is manifested, or organized as usage or to be manifested. On the one hand, this implies that, skills are mainly the components of English, that is, speaking, listening, writing and reading. Then, the English language is manifested in four terms; we listen, speak, write and read. On the other hand, "skill" can be compared with "ability".

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, skill is defined as "*an ability to do something well, especially, because you have learnt and practiced*". In the same context, the Webster's Third New International Dictionary of English Language defines skill as "*a developed power of doing a thing competently; a developed or acquired aptitude or ability*". As far as learning is concerned, the same dictionary defines "skill" as knowledge.

This chapter briefly introduces this work. It exposes the problem of the present study, the motivation of this work, the research questions and hypotheses; the importance of the study as well as its scope. It also deals with the definitions of the key terms. The next chapter is mainly concerned with discovering what other researchers have done in related topics.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II.0. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with what other researchers have done on the speaking skill. Indeed, the speaking skill is an important stimulus for effective communication. Thus, a considerable number of researchers are involved in the process of teaching and assessing the speaking skill. Their purpose is to determine the causes and the difficulties encountered by users of the English language during their speech production. Those researchers go on to suggest some strategies which could improve the oral production during the teaching of the speaking skill.

Previous researchers at the University of Burundi found out that after studying English for a good number of years, most of the students still lack fluency in their spoken English. For instance, Nkurunziza (2001) evaluated the English skills for the Fourth Form pupils and found out that despite their good performance in written examinations, students are poor at using the oral skill at interaction. In the same way, Kwizera (2009:2) argues: "*Students of the Fourth Form do not know how to ask direction, how to apologize, how to introduce themselves to a foreigner, how to compliment and others*". In addition, Nkurunziza (2006:6) has carried his study in the Third Form Modern Arts and found that after three years of training in English, too many people remain deficient in the ability to express themselves orally. They all justified that situation in these words; the objectives set by the course designers were not clearly stated.

II.1.1. Some Writers' Views about Evaluation

Richards (1985:98) defines evaluation in these words:

> *Evaluation is related to the decision to be made about the quality of the program itself, and decisions about individuals in the program. The evaluation of programs may involve the study of curriculum, objectives, materials and tests or grading systems. The evaluation of individuals involves decisions about entrances to programs, placement, progress and achievement.*

Okello and Ocheng (1986:79) on their part define evaluation as,

> *a process that includes measurement and sometimes testing. It contains the notion of value judgment. For example, if a teacher administers a test to a class and computes the percentages of correct responses, measurement and testing have taken place. When the scores are interpreted by, say, converting them to excellent (A), good (B), fair (C), or poor, judgment has been achieved.*

Indeed, Harmer (1983:47) bases his evaluation on materials and students' needs. He indicates that, before trying to evaluate materials, the teacher must take into consideration the students and their needs. In this perspective of evaluation, formative and summative evaluations are differentiated. Formative evaluation will be more concerned with effectiveness and the latter with efficiency; both are of the working of the curriculum, to ensure that what is done is worthwhile, necessary and sufficient.

Formative evaluation is more likely to be sensitive to promoting development. It requires a more open positive spirit of cooperation, and the potential involvement of all the groups concerned becomes of more evident benefit. Summative evaluation is often realized as assessment of learners' performance that can produce results open to interpretation as dealing with something fixed. The four skills are taken into consideration.

Indeed, Williams (1982:54) provides a clear aim about the evaluation principle for language teaching. He proposes a list of four basic assumptions linked to the second or foreign language teaching evaluation. These are:

- *The socio-cultural environment of the class,*
- *The needs of second language learners,*
- *Clear guidance for non-native teachers,*
- *An up-to-date methodology.*

Due to the importance of evaluation, Cunningsworth (1984:78) completes Williams' view and suggests the following criteria to be applied during evaluation.

- Relating the teaching materials to one's aims and objectives.
- Selecting the teaching materials to help the students use the language effectively for their own purposes.
- Keeping teaching materials that relate the learning process to the learners.

Henning (1987:143), on his part, views a good evaluation as,

> *a highly creative activity which may be either formal or structured, or informal or unstructured. Whatever it takes, good evaluation will provide reliable and relevant information about*

the quality of the instructional program and how it may be improved.

II.1.2. The Communicative Teaching Approach

Many linguists and ESL teachers agree on the fact that students learn to speak in the second language by interacting. Communicative language teaching serves best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. In that perspective, the communicative teaching approach appears to be the most important in teaching the second or foreign language. Then, it allows foreign or second language learners to use their own knowledge of the language.

This approach makes sure that the interactions which take place in the classroom constitute a necessary precondition for a communicative operation. On this view, Johnson and Morrow (1981:71) assert:

> *The focus changes from the accurate production of isolated utterances to fluent selection of appropriate utterances in communication. The learner is now concerned with using language, not English usages. In order to do this, learners take on roles and interact with other learners who also have roles. What they say is determined by the role they have, their communicative intentions and the contribution of the other learners.*

In fact, their intention is to show that the communicative approach to teaching the speaking skill can be organized to teach the whole operations as Johnson and Morrow (1981:77) suggests:

> *The communicative approach has to provide input in the form of language appropriate for the operation, carefully contextualized with regard to the roles of speakers, their attitudes, ages and intentions. Practice takes the form of rapid transfer to further applications of the target operation, thereby putting language to use as soon as possible.*

The same authors continue saying that it is only by using language under the conditions which communicative approach tries to create and in the way this approach advocates that one can develop as a learner, one's ability to use a language outside the institution where it is being learnt. Harmer (1983:27) supports the idea that students should be able to communicate efficiently with what they have got, even if the level of this language is fairly low. In particular he criticized the idea that students should speak like southern Englishmen (for example) without a trace of foreign accent. He said that, on the contrary, it might not be desirable for them to speak like Englishmen and it certainly isn't necessary.

Indeed, in order to achieve a smooth communication of learners, there must be a clear set of learning objectives guided by an effective communication as Widdowson (1984:218) suggests:

> *We would agree I think that our teaching should be directed towards developing in learners the capacity to achieve their learning objectives and these objectives have to do with the use of the language for effective communication.*

In everyday life, people need to communicate and to express themselves according to different situations which occur. In that case, they should know how to speak to various individuals in a polite and adequate way. This is in conformity with Johnson (1981:63) when he suggests: "*In real life, one person speaks to another*

because he wishes, for example, to reassure him and this aim will be in his mind all the time he is speaking". Johnson's view is sustained by Yule and Brown (1983:37) where they agree that most of the people spend a good deal of their lives holding friendly conversations; people typically tell each other about experiences, what happened on the way to work this morning, what happened on their holidays, or what film they saw last night.

Finally, I can state that communicative language teaching is chosen in the sense that it gives opportunities to express one's feelings while interacting with others. It also involves the speaking skill.

II.1.3. The Speaking Skill Teaching

The speaking skill is a crucial part of second language learning and teaching. Apart from its importance, for many years, teaching the speaking skill in the world at large has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach the speaking skill just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching the speaking skill should improve the students' communicative performance. This is because it is the only way that students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

It is also worth mentioning that the speaking skill seems to be the most important among the four skills of a language. This is because, if a language is not spoken, it will not exist. According to Corson (1990:123) spoken language is "*the basis of all other languages. Out of oral activities comes practice in reading and writing.*"

In addition to the place that the speaking skill occupies in language communication, Halliday (1970:21) shows the relation between intonation and meaning. Since intonation is in linked with speaking, this is what he says:

> *Naturally, in speaking English, it is an advantage to be able to produce the various pitch contours accurately and correctly. But, this is not simply a matter of making oneself understood, or of sounding less foreign to an English speaker. The importance of intonation is not so much that it is part of good accent, or the right way of speaking, although, it is true of course, that a good pronunciation always includes correct intonation as well as correct articulation and rhythm. The importance of intonation is also that it is a means of saying different things.*

Indeed, speaking involves equally a good pronunciation of words and a good intonation. According to Morris (1959:15-16), "*speech production calls for the correct reproduction of sounds, pronunciation of words, intonation, rhythm, stress; it calls above all for fluency.*"

The oral production allows speakers to perform certain acts. With regard to the importance of the speaking skill, Corson (1990:118) says:

> *Oral work not only leads to new learning as a technique of revision, it also reinforces the initial learning and prevents it from slipping away. Oral work can be used as an evaluation of pupil progress when* teachers *intervene in group, they talk and become consultants.*

Then, through the oral activities, the learners can improve their mastery of the language. It serves as the best strategy that provides more input in the language communication. Still with regard to the importance of speaking, Rivers (1968:162) states:

> *To teach the speaking skill, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the process involved. Through speech, man expresses his emotions, communicates his intentions, reacts to other persons and situations; influences other human beings. Spoken language is, then, a tool for man.*

As mentioned earlier, the teaching of the speaking skill requires being good at using a certain language. Then, it is through the language that a person feels the need to communicate.

Harris (1969:45), on his part, mentions:

> *We have many obstacles to contend the size of the class, the arrangements of the classroom (which rarely favors communication), the number of hours available for teaching the language (which cannot be devoted to oral work), and perhaps even syllabus itself, which may discourage us from giving adequate attention to the spoken language.*

According to the same author, it is not easy to give effective oral practice under these conditions, especially in large classes. This is why it is important to have clear understanding and firm grasp of the wide range of techniques and procedures through which the spoken language can be practiced.

In addition, Brumfit and Johnson (1979:117) complete Harris's view and say:

> *Students, especially in developing countries, who have received several years of formal English teaching, frequently remain deficient in the ability to actually use the language, and to understand its use, in normal communication, whether in the spoken or the written language.*

The same authors concluded that it seems generally to be assumed that the reason for the state of affairs is that secondary school teachers do not do their job properly. They do not follow the training colleges and in-service courses, and what is embodied in the prescribed textbooks.

Thus, the process of teaching the speaking skill requires some strategies to improve the proficiency in oral production. According to Johnson and Morrow (1981:77):

> *Language games and role plays are very important in the development of oral fluency because they present learners with the opportunity to practice speaking under conditions that are close as possible to those of normal communication involving information gap and* feedback*; given the language he or she has at his disposal.*

Indeed, Byrne (1976:56) agrees with Johnson and Morrow's view and completes them by saying: "*Dramatic activities which involve role-play, simulation and mine provide yet another range of opportunities for learners to develop fluency skills.*" The same author continues by saying that through these activities, learners are involved in using the language freely, purposefully and creatively. By dramatization, learners not only gain understanding of the language structure but also experience of the dynamic use of the language in a real life situation.

Moreover, in that perspective, Corson (1990:124) proposes: "*public speaking, debate, poetry reading, the telling and retelling stories, barrier games, and information gap activities, as the best techniques which could extend the speaking skill ability*". The same author continues by saying that all subject teachers should provide students with the opportunity to express themselves in speech. That is, small group and pair work create an appropriate method for encouraging constructive language development.

Lastly, before teaching a language, it is good to determine the students' needs. This is because, taking into account their needs, the teacher knows where to pay a particular attention. Harmer (1983:27) says:

> *We have said that what the student should learn depends to a large extent upon his needs. Where these are clearly defined, such as in the case of a student studying medicine who needs to read textbooks in English; we may design a special syllabus which restricts the amount of language and the language skills being taught. However, he realizes that a great number of students do not have such clearly defined needs, and so we will attempt to teach them general English.*

Widdowson (1979:25) points out, however:

> *The interpretation of needs underlying such approaches has been narrowed as follows: the expression "learner needs" is open to two interpretations. On the one hand, it can refer to what the learner tries to do with the language once he has learned it. This is a goal oriented definition of needs and relates to terminal behavior, the ends of learning. On the other*

> *hand, the expression can refer to what the learner needs to do in order to actually acquire the language. This is a process-oriented definition of needs and relates to transitional behavior, the means of learning.*

In addition, Brown and Yule (1983:19-20) say: "*Most language teaching is concerned with developing skills in short, interactional exchanges in which the learner is only required to make one or two utterances at a time*". They go further to state:

> *...the teacher should realize that simply training the student to produce short turns is currently fashionable in language teaching, paying particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns. It must surely be clear that students who are only capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language.*

Harmer (1983:21) agrees with the fact that when we teach, we need to be sure that our students can be understood when they speak. The same author continues saying that those students need to be able to say what they want to say. This means that their pronunciation should be at least adequate for that purpose.

In short, the main goal of teaching the speaking skill is oral fluency. The ability to express oneself intelligibly, reasonably, accurately and without undue hesitation; otherwise communication may break down because the listener may lose interest or get impatient. The ability to communicate in the second language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the student in school and success later in every phase of life.

II.2. Language Learning Vs Language Teaching

This section is concerned with determining differences between language learning and language teaching according to some researchers.

II.2.1. Language Learning

Learning a language is learning to communicate through that language. According to Byrne (1976:3-4), "*learning is generally regarded as a step-by-step mastery of the system, especially the grammatical structures, through which is eventually developed the ability to use language for any purpose*". Indeed, Kimble and Garmezy (1963:133) view learning as a relatively permanent change in behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practice. In order words, learning is acquiring, getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study.

II.2.2. Language Teaching

According to Kimble and Garmezy (1963:133), teaching is showing or helping someone how to do something, giving instruction, guiding the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand. Byrne (1976:3-4) views teaching as enabling the learner to behave in such a way that he can participate to some degree and for certain purposes as a member of a community other than his own.

II.3. Speaking Skill with Other Skills

This section is concerned with determining the relationship between the speaking skill and other skills of language; that is, speaking skill with listening skill, speaking skill with writing skill and speaking skill with reading skill.

II.3.1. Speaking Skill and Listening Skill

These skills of language are somehow related and they are quite useful in language teaching as Widdowson (1978:57) points out: "*Speaking and listening are said to relate to language expressed through the oral medium*". Valdez (1989:89) stresses on their importance and difficulties to teach the students. He further mentions that most teachers would agree that listening comprehension and speaking are two of the most important and perhaps the most difficult skills to teach students of English in a country where English is a foreign language. The same author continues, suggesting that opportunities for practicing listening and speaking in English in an authentic communicative setting do not exist in great quantity in an EFL situation, particularly since students do not generally hear English spoken outside the classroom.

Conversation, for instance, involves speaking and listening skills, not independent of each other but in very close combinations. Then, this practice involves two persons; that is, the speaker and the listener as Byrne (1976:8) suggests: "*Oral communication is a two way process between the speaker and the listener (or listeners), involving the productive skill of speaking*".

Byrne's view is supported by Widdowson (1979:25) when he suggests: "*in the production of speech, however, each speaker needs to speak. He needs to speak individually and ideally, he needs someone to listen to him speaking and to respond to him*". In addition, the speaking skill is dependent on the listening skill as Freeman (1986:123) states:

> *Since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to simply have knowledge for target language forms, meanings and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge*

> *in negotiating. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener that meaning becomes clear.*

Clive (1981:48) assumes that in some contexts, talking may be more important than listening. Clive's view seems to be true in the sense that if a language is not spoken, there is no way to listen to it. First, it must be spoken and after listened to it. Rwasa (2012:18) in his view after his study says that despite the fact that the listening and speaking skills seem to be given a much neglected share, they are the foundation of others. As a matter of fact, before a language is read or written, it is primarily spoken.

II.3.2. Speaking Skill and Writing Skill

These skills are the most important in language teaching. They have some characteristics in common and some differences. Harmer (1983:53) on the one hand realizes its differences and he says:

> *Perhaps the single most important difference between writing and speaking, however, concerns the need for accuracy. Native speakers constantly make mistakes when they are speaking. They hesitate and say the same thing in different ways and they often change the subject of what they are saying in mid-sentence. Except in extremely formal situation, this is considered normal and acceptable behavior. A piece of writing, however, with mistakes and half-finished sentences, etc, would be judged by many native speakers as illiterate since it is expected that writing should be correct.*

On the other hand, as far as relation is concerned, Harmer (op.cit) asserts that speaking and writing are productive skills. Harmer's view is shared by Widdowson (1978:57) when he assumes: "*the writing and speaking skills are said to be active or productive skills*". The same author continues saying that speaking as instance of use, therefore, is part of a reciprocal exchange in which both reception and production play part. In this sense the skill of speaking involves both receptive and productive participation.

It is quite clear that speaking and writing themselves are the encoding processes whereby we communicate our ideas, thoughts, or feelings through one or the other form of language. Brown and Yule (1983:45) begin their discussion on the nature of the spoken language by distinguishing between spoken and written language. They point out that for most of its history; language teaching has been concerned with the teaching of the written language. This language is characterized by well-formed sentences which are integrated into highly structured paragraphs. Spoken language, on the other hand, consists of short, often fragmentary utterances, in a range of pronunciations.

II.3.3. Speaking Skill and Reading Skill

Examples of relationships between the speaking and reading skills are found in everyday life activities; for instance, reading letters, books, and newspapers entails speaking. Speaking and reading work together because you cannot read in a language you have never heard spoken in the curriculum. Then, a good articulation of sounds or pronunciation of words involves a good and smooth reading. Then, it is rarely difficult to hear someone reading a textbook in the language he/she has never spoken.

From these examples, I realize that the speaking and reading skills are mutually inclusive. Their relatedness is considered here at the level of complementary performance. It is quite clear that speaking comes before reading because nobody can read a language he/she has never spoken.

II.4. Testing the Speaking Skill

I have realized that, while people are speaking the English language, some are fluent and accurate, whereas others are not. Therefore, when the speaker is communicating his/her feelings, he/she may be judged or assessed differently due to his/her ability to produce a language. Then, the testing method seems to be successful when judging the speakers' fluency and accuracy.

However, to test the speaking skill is not an easy task as Harris (1969:81) states: "*No language skill is so difficult to assess with precision as speaking ability, and for this reason it seemed wise to defer our consideration of oral production tests until last*". The same author continues suggesting that speaking is a complex skill, requiring the simultaneous use of a number of different abilities which often develop at different rates. He proposes some points on which we should pay a particular attention:

> *In our tests of speaking ability, we are primarily, if not solely, interested in the foreign language student's control of the signaling systems of English-his pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary – and not with the idea content or formal organization of the message he conveys.*

As far as the method used to test the oral production is concerned, Harris (1969:83) states three methods:

1. Relatively unstructured interviews, rated on a carefully constructed scale

2. *Highly structured speech samples (generally recorded), rated according to very specific criteria.*
3. *Paper-and-pencil objective tests of pronunciation, presumably providing indirect evidence of speaking ability.*

According to Harris (op. cit.), among the three methods, the rated interview is undoubtedly the most commonly used technique, and the one with the longest history. Indeed, Maybin (1985:75) reproduces the steps below as general purposes that are being used as a basis for assessing student proficiency in oral language use. Those are:

- *Describing and specifying*
- *Information/expounding*
- *Instructing/directing*
- *Reporting/narrating*
- *Arguing/persuading*
- *Structured discussion/collaboration*

The testing of the oral production is to identify where the problem rises and judge there as Lado (1961:243) suggests: "*the general technique is simply to give the student sufficient clues to produce certain utterances that contain the problems we wish to test.*"

According to Brown and Yule (1983:103),

> *There will continue to be a requirement that students be assessed on their command of the grammar and vocabulary that they have been taught. Teachers may also wish to make*

informed judgments on the pronunciation and fluency on their students' speech.

They continue saying: "*the teacher should continue to assess these features, not in isolation, but as part of his assessment of the students' ability to communicate effectively in spoken mode.*"

Alderson (1985:5) suggests: "*It should perhaps be self-evident that the process of evaluation in language teaching is closely related to objectives*". The same author continues suggesting: "*We test a learner's language skill in order both to establish what he knows or what he can do and to assess how successful we have been in our teaching, in addition to linguistic achievement*". Indeed, Harrison (1983:1) sees a test as, "*a natural extension of classroom work, providing the teacher and student with useful information that serves as a basis for improvement.*"

In conclusion, this chapter deals with the different views about evaluation, and the approach which seems to be the most appropriate one in teaching the speaking skill. It also tackles the relatedness between the speaking skill and other skills of the English language. It ends with an examination of the way the speaking skill should be tested. The next chapter describes the different procedures used to collect the data, the population and the sample survey techniques to carry out the study.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.0. Introduction

In this study, an attempt has been made to find out the causes of the lack of fluency in English language and the strategies to improve the spoken English in the Fourth Form class. This chapter describes the area of the study, the population and presents the methods and procedures of investigation that are used to seek answers to the research questions. This chapter has also stated the instruments that I have used to collect my data.

III.1. Area of the Study

This study was conducted in Songa commune located in Bururi province. The main reason of choosing that commune is that, it could facilitate the researcher to conduct the study since she is accustomed to the people of this milieu (she is native of this commune). Moreover, according to the researcher's knowledge, no such study has been conducted in that commune. In this case, to be objective, the schools were selected by a simple random sampling criterion. In fact, all the schools' names were written on separate small pieces of paper and, then, put in a box. After shaking the box, I selected randomly eight pieces on which were the names of the schools that I had to use in the study.

III.2. Research Population

As stated earlier in the purpose of this study, its major concerned is to assess the speaking skill of the students of the Fourth Form Class. It is, thus, quite apparent that the population is constituted by the students of the Fourth Form class. The reason why I chose the Fourth Form class is explained by the fact that they study in the same system in the whole country. Then, I hope that all the grammatical

structures are taught until that level at the secondary education of Burundi. Thus, I noticed grammatical mistakes while I was doing the teaching training in 4th Form at Rohero Municipal Lycee and then decided to conduct this research. In fact, the Songa commune holds eleven schools, then; eight schools out of eleven were selected in the research in order to get reliable results from this study since all the eleven schools have 4th Form classes.

III.3. Sample Survey Techniques

When carrying out a survey, it is better to decide which technique is the most acceptable in order to get a clear description of the field of the survey. As this study is conducted in selected schools which hold a large number of students, that is, between 50 and 90 in the Fourth Form class, then, I would not be able to collect data with all the students of the target class; thus, a small number of students were chosen in order to have the significant number of students who participated in the survey. In order to get this limited number of students, I used the method which was proposed by Mucchielli (1973:17). It stipulates: « *échantillonner consiste à limiter l'enquête à un petit nombre de personnes:1/10,1/50,1/200,1/2000 qui formera l'échantillon à l'intérieur de la population d'enquête* ». This can be translated as follows: "*Sampling consists of limiting the survey to a small number of persons: 1/10, 1/50, 1/200, 1/2000 who make up the survey population.*" Then, in order to have a significant number of students, I chose to use 1/5 of students.

A total number of one hundred students were obtained from a total number of 500 students. I thought, then, that such a number of students were representative and reliable enough for the expected results. They participated in both the oral test and the questionnaire investigation.

Table 1: The schools selected and the number of students investigated in each school

	Schools investigated	Total population	Sample
	Lycée de Rumeza	40	8
	Lycée communal de Kiryama	65	13
	E.T.S Kiryama	35	7
	Collège communal de Manyoni	60	12
	Collège communal de Muheka	55	11
	Collège communal de Nyakigongwe	75	15
	Lycée communal de Ruvumvu	85	17
	Collège Communal de Karambi	85	17
Total	8	500	100

In addition, the questionnaire had been distributed at the beginning of the first term of the school year 2013-2014. Let me mention here that copies were given to the students by using the simple random sampling technique. In fact, all the students' order numbers of the class were written on separate small pieces of paper and, then, put in a box. After shaking the box, I selected randomly 1/5 of the total number of each class until I got 100 small sheets. In addition, eight teachers of those schools surveyed out of eleven teachers of the Fourth Form class were used in the sample.

III.4. Data Collection Procedure

To collect data, a classroom observation was made, together with an oral test and questionnaires.

III.4.1. Research Test

The selected students were given a topic on which they made a conversation. Then, the purpose of this oral test was to assess the students' ability to use the English language in different situations. Each respondent was given 5 minutes to say something on the given topic and I registered the data in my mobile telephone.

III.4.2. Classroom Observation

The classroom observation is concerned with the way students respond to their teachers' questions and how they exchange ideas among themselves using the English language. I did this observation after administering the copies of the questionnaire. In support of classroom observation, Wallace (1982:53) states:

> *The spectator sees most of the game. Through the statement, he wants to incite all the people who do research through mere guessing or general interview to complete their mission through direct observation where and if possible. In this way, they are able to make objective judgments since they assess what they have seen, not only on what they have heard or read about.*

To cover the selected schools was not easy for me since schools are separated by a long distance, that is why my observation was done once for each selected class of the 4th Form.

III.4.3. Research Questionnaire

It is composed of two types of questionnaire; that is, students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire. On the one hand, a number of questionnaire copies were distributed to the students. The questions asked were based on the speaking skill.

The purpose of this questionnaire was, first of all, to know the students' motivation for the English language and their attitude towards it. Secondly, the questionnaire had to examine the frequency of the speaking of English after English lessons, the students' problems during the learning of the speaking skill and the strategies to improve their fluency.

On the other hand, regarding their contribution, a number of questionnaire copies were distributed to their teachers of the Fourth Form class in order to know the time they reserve to the speaking skill. The questionnaire also sought to find out the difficulties they face when they are teaching the speaking skill. It also verified the components they test in the speaking skill, and the suggestions to improve the students' fluency.

III.5. Data Analysis Procedure

This section is concerned with describing the different steps used during the analysis and interpretation of data. This includes the answers from the questionnaire, the scores from the oral test, and the elements from the classroom observation.

The analysis of the data from the oral test consists of determining the difficulties that students come across during the oral communication situations. I admit that an oral test is not an easy activity, for many criteria like vocabulary; pronunciation and grammar are entailed in the process of scoring the oral test.

As far as the data from the classroom observation is concerned, its analysis determines whether activities are organized in a sufficient way by the teacher to truly care for the speaking skill. Indeed, I assess if students' needs and their learning difficulties are taken into account during the speaking-teaching lessons.

Finally, after teachers' and students' responses are collected, then, they are analyzed for particular reasons. Tables are used to show the data in a way that facilitates the reader's opportunity to the statistical data contributed by the informants. As could be expected, each table is followed by a general and personal commentary which symbolizes my interpretation. In addition, the results from the teachers' and students' answers provide me with an understanding of the students' level of oral performance and the strategies to improve their fluency, if need be.

III.6. Problems Encountered

Throughout this study, a number of problems were encountered even if they did not stop conducting my research. The constraint is the distance between the schools under study. So, it was difficult to make very long distances moving from one school to another with the limited financial means.

This chapter has presented the methodology that was used in carrying out this study. It shows not only the procedures that were used in order to collect the data, but also the difficulties that were faced while carrying out the research particularly in the collection of the data. The following chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and findings.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

IV.0. Introduction

As far as this section is concerned, I try to analyze and to interpret the results from the classroom observation, the students' test and the questionnaire.

IV.1. Data Presentation

This section dealt with the presentation of data from questionnaires, data from classroom observation, and students' test.

IV.1.1. Presentation of Data from the Classroom Observation

From the classroom observation, I paid attention to the problems faced by the students while speaking English and the problems faced by teachers while teaching the speaking skill.

IV.1.1.1. Students' Problems

As a result of the classroom observation, it was noticed that the majority of the students of the Fourth Form class have many problems when they are learning the speaking skill. Those are problems of fluency. Even the answers got to question 8 prove that most of the respondents (55%) deny to be well prepared to hold a conversation in English. As far as the communication in speaking is concerned, I practically observed that topic among students show their difficulties in conversation. As a result, they were not able to uphold a coherent conversation on any topic given to discuss. They tended to utter incomplete meaningless sentences, and also they used unconnected vocabulary to the context because they have a limited knowledge of vocabulary and grammar.

In this way, the classroom observation reveals that the students of the Fourth Form class have problems of fluency in English. They had many ideas, feelings and thoughts to express, but they lacked fluency because they were not experienced in the exercise.

The lack of enough opportunities to oral English in our country is the major cause of the deficiency in fluency for many students of the Fourth Form classes. A great number of students were afraid, ashamed and too shy when they were asked to discuss about any topic or to sustain a long conversation among themselves. In addition, the classroom observation also showed that students made many pauses when they were speaking or sometimes stammered when the teacher asked them to answer questions.

Therefore, the majority of students made long pauses while they were thinking about what to say next. Others preferred to keep quiet rather than to run the risk of speaking. Only a few number of students answered correctly and fluently to the questions asked by their teacher. All those elements illustrate the problem of fluency encountered by students.

In conclusion, the lack of enough opportunities in the surrounding environment which provides more input to the students made them to be embarrassed and give incoherent ideas in front of any topic of conversation. The more the students are exposed to language, the more they master its vocabulary and its rules.

IV.1.1.2. Teachers' Problems

Language is taught for the purpose of communication. That is why; teachers have the vital mission to teach the language to the students in order to help them to communicate effectively and efficiently both in and out of the school. It was observed that teachers of the Fourth Form classes come across many problems that

handicap the improvement of the speaking skill. Those are: lack of the time, the size of the class, and lack of appropriate materials.

IV.1.1.2.1. Lack of Time

The six periods of 45 minutes allocated to the English course per week are not sufficient to teach the four skills at the same level. It was noticed that as most of the teachers claimed that the time allotted to the English course does not allow them to give the students effective knowledge in the speaking skill because it takes too much time. Indeed, the speaking skill seems to be ignored. Teachers do not pay a particular attention to the way that students articulate sounds and words. They rather want to finish the program of the course.

Moreover, the course itself is so vast that teachers could not teach the speaking skill as it was expected with the limited time. Indeed, from the classroom observation during lessons, it was noticed that teachers spent much time on drills where students were supposed to answer questions in sentences. There was no significant time for discussion or dialogue. Only a few number of students who were more brilliant than others worked with the teacher because the 45 minutes per lesson did not allow the teacher to cover all the skills. In this case, the purpose of teaching a language is passing examination rather than the purpose of teaching a language as a means of communication. Therefore, the question of time is the major problem of improvement of the speaking skill.

IV.1.1.2.2. The Size of the Class

The classroom observation brings us to notice that 6 out of 8 classes hold a large number of students and only 2 classes (ETS Kiryama and Rumeza Lycee) hold a meaningful number of pupils (35 to 40 pupils). These large classes make teachers

unable to create opportunities to the students to express themselves freely. The problem of the number of the students in each class is clearly connected with the previous one. This is because, a teacher may wish to create room for the language practice, but soon notices that he can only do so with a limited number of students.

Then, most of the teachers will only complete their lesson tasks; so that they could finish the designed programmes on time.

IV.1.1.2.3. Lack of Appropriate Materials

It was generally observed that 6 out of 8 classes do not possess authentic materials that can guide teachers to teach the speaking skill and only 2 classes of 8 have a better situation in the use of English learning materials. In addition, it was noticed that the deficiency of materials caused many problems in the teaching of the speaking skill. In fact, ten or more students shared one book. I also found out that there were some classes which did not have books. We knew that materials such as videos and cassettes play an important role in the teaching of the speaking skill. However, no school possessed such materials. Books only could not lead students to the good pronunciation of the language. Yet, they work in collaboration with audio-visual materials for a better development of fluency.

IV.1.2. Presentation of Data from the Test

The analysis of the data from the test consists of scoring of how students speak English. In addition, it helped me to determine the difficulties they encountered in oral communication. However, scoring an oral test is not an easy task; it involves many criteria such as pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar.

IV.1.2.1. Pronunciation

To mark the students' oral test, I first of all took into consideration the way they pronounced words and sentences and the mistakes they made. The following table illustrates students' scores in pronunciation based on the stress and accent. See the table below.

Table 2: Presentation Data of the Students' Scores in Pronunciation

Scores intervals %	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	Total
Number of cases	15	10	10	22	19	19	4	1	0	0	100
Percentages	15%	10%	10%	22%	19%	19%	4%	1%	0%	0%	100%

The table above shows that the students have many problems of pronunciation. Therefore, more than a half, 5 schools out of 8 (76% of the respondents) got a bad result (under 50%). The others (3 schools out of 8, that is, 24% of the respondents) scored more than a half. These schools are: ETS Kiryama, Lycée Rumeza and Collège Communal Muheka. The mispronunciation of words is the major cause of this issue. In addition, accent and stress problems were also noticed during the students' discussions.

IV.1.2.1.1. Stress

The misuse of stress during the students' pronunciation is a considerable issue in this analysis. 76% of the students put the stress on the wrong syllable or they did not put it, at all.

Instead of pronouncing:

-Politician / pɒlə'tiʃn/ they pronounced *|'pɒlətiʃn|

-Politics |'pɒlətiks| they pronounced *|pɒlə'tiks|

-leader |'li:də(r)| they pronounced *|li:də(r)|

-president |'prezidənt| they pronounced * |pre'zidənt|

Yet, I cannot have a list of all words mispronounced by most of students in their discussions because they were too many. But all the 76% of the students were noticed to badly pronounce those words.

IV.1.2.1.2. Accent

Listening to the way the 76% of the students under the oral test pronounced the English language, I may be confused whether they were speaking a mixture of languages. That is, their accent was very far different from that of the native English. Their accent sounded like French when they were uttering words and sentences. In addition, to get what they wanted to say required much attention to the listener. Very few students (24% of the respondents) tried to imitate the native one when they were speaking.

IV.1.2.2. Grammar

This section involves the use of words and sentences in the correct way. The main purpose consists to examine the students' performance based on word formation and its arrangement in the sentence. The table below and its comment illustrate that (Table 3).

Table 3: Presentation of Data from Students' Scores in Grammar

Scores intervals	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	Total
Number of cases	11	12	13	7	25	25	4	2	1	0	100
Percentage	11%	12%	13%	7%	25%	25%	4%	2%	1%	0%	100%

The results from the table above show the students' ability to use words in the sentence. Only 32% of the students at ETS Kiryama, Lycée Rumeza and Collège

Communal Muheka were able to use words in the correct way. Their speeches were incomplete and meaningless. In addition, 68% of students were under the half. This is due to the fact that their mastery in grammar is not sufficient.

Examples: - The politician come and say to people, "he will hold a meeting next Sunday."

- His party members applaud at the arrival of their leader a week before.

In the first example, the students forgot to put 's' which shows the third person singular while in the second example, they used the simple present in the place of the simple past.

IV.1.2.3. Accurate Word Choice

Vocabulary is another important feature in assessing the speaking skill. Vocabulary involves the use of correct and precise words in the discussion raised. The purpose of this point is to determine the students' performance with regard to the quality of vocabulary words they use in the discussion. The table below illustrates the students' scores. Schools which scored well in the choice of words represent 22%. These are: ETS Kiryama, Lycée Rumeza and Collège Communal Muheka.

Examples of errors in word choice: - The population chose a bad leader.

- The leader said a speech to his party members.

In the first example, the students used the verb 'choose' instead of 'vote' whereas in the second example, they should say to hold a speech' instead of 'say a speech.'

Table 4: Presentation of Data from the Students' Scores in Vocabulary

Scores intervals	0-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90-99	Total
Number of cases	25	16	10	20	7	15	4	2	1	0	100
Percentage	25%	16%	10%	20%	7%	15%	4%	2%	1%	0%	100%

In this section, I expected students to utter some vocabulary words related to politics as the topic was about: *Politics in Burundi*. Discuss. I chose that topic because it is an up-to-date and an interesting topic in our country.

IV.1.3. Presentation of Data from the Questionnaire

I presented the results which were obtained from the answers that were given by both the students and teachers.

IV.1.3.1. Presentation of Data from the Students' Questionnaire

In this section, I deal with the presentation of students' answers to the questionnaire. Students' responses are presented in tables and interpreted afterwards. I recall that the number of students surveyed is one hundred (100).

Question 1: Do you like to speak the English language?

Table 5: Presentation of data from question 1:

Answers	Frequency	%
A lot	75	75
Somewhat	15	15
Not at all	10	10
Other(s) specify.....	0	0
Total	100	100

The first question was helpful in determining if students were really involved in speaking the English language at ease. The table above shows that 75% of the students I surveyed like to speak English a lot; whereas, 25% are not really involved in speaking it.

Question 2: How often do you speak the English language outside English lessons?

Table 6: Presentation data from the question 2

Answers	Frequency	%
Rarely	32	32
Sometimes	18	18
Never	50	50
Other(s) specify	0	0
Total	100	100

The frequency of speaking the English language outside English lessons is very low as the table above illustrates. 50% of the students never speak the English language after English lessons; only 32% of the students rarely speak the English language, and 18% of the students sometimes speak it. Then, the situation is justified by the fact that the environment does not provide opportunities to practice themselves the English language. On the contrary, everything is spoken in Kirundi.

Question 3: How do you feel when you speak English in the classroom?

Table 7: Presentation of data from question 3

Answers	Frequency	%
Happy	61	61
Bad	0	0
Afraid	30	30
Shy	9	9
Other(s) specify…	0	0
Total	100	100

The attitude of students of the Fourth Form class towards the English language is important in this study. This is because, the results from the table above show that 61% of the students of the Fourth Form class are happy when they are speaking the English language. 30% of the students surveyed are afraid of speaking the English language. This is because they avoid risk-taking. They fear to make mistakes; this is also due to the fact that they are poor in vocabulary. Therefore, instead of running into mistakes, they prefer to keep quiet.

Another category of the students surveyed, that is, 9% feel shy when it is their turn to speak the English language. They fear to lose their personal identity and are not confident with the language. It is also worth noting that none of the informants feel bad when they are speaking the English language, which shows that speaking is very important.

Question 4: During the teaching of the speaking lessons, are you interested?

Table 8: Presentation of data from question 4

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	61	61
No	39	39
Total	100	100

From the table above, I notice that 61% of the students surveyed are interested during the speaking lessons. 39% of the students surveyed certify that they are not interested because they began to study English language too late. They said that when it was time to study the English course, they were embarrassed. They did not like it. They rather preferred the sciences course. Therefore, this group of students lacked motivation and later developed the bias towards the English language.

Question 5: Does your English teacher encourage you to express yourself in English?

Table 9: Presentation of data from question 5

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	36	36
No	64	64
Total	100	100

The table above shows that 36% of the students are encouraged to speak the English language. In fact, they agree that their teachers do their best to motivate them to improve their knowledge. That is, the floor to speak English is given many times to them and they are happy with that. 64% of the students see that their teachers do nothing to create an authentic practice environment which could attract students to speak English.

Question 6: Are you evaluated orally?

Table 10: Presentation of data from question 6

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	17	17
No	73	73
Total	100	100

From the table above, I learn that the majority of students (73%) assume that their teachers do not test them orally; rather, they are evaluated in the written form. The minority of the informants agree that their teachers do their examinations in the oral form.

Question 7: Is the time devoted to the teaching of the speaking skill enough to get sufficient knowledge to speak English?

Table11: Presentation data from question 7

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	12	12
No	88	88
Total	100	100

Let me recall that an English lesson lasts 45 minutes, and there are 6 lessons per week in the Fourth Form class. From the table above, I realize that most of the students, 88 out of 100; that is, 88% see that the time allotted to the speaking skill is not sufficient. Only 12 out of 100 that is12% see that the time provided to speaking skill is enough. So, this illustrates that students are not allowed enough opportunities for language practice through expressive or communicative activities.

Question 8: Do you think that you are well prepared to:

a) Communicate orally in English in any situation?

Table 12: Presentation of data from question 8

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	45	45
No	55	55
Total	100	100

From the table above we observe that 55 out of 100, that is, 55% accept their weaknesses in oral communication. They justify their situation by the fact that they do not have many vocabulary words in mind. When they are speaking, they make many pauses, thinking about what to say next. In addition, they do not know the

pronunciation of many words because they did not study the phonetics of words. 45 out of 100, that is, 45% have self-esteem of themselves because they accept that they can communicate easily without any difficulties.

Question 9: What difficulties do you encounter when you are speaking the English language?

The difficulties which students encounter when they are learning to speak the English language are various and many. Most of the students have problems of pronunciation and vocabulary words. I acknowledge that those elements are the important factors for the success in oral communication. Another important element is the lack of enough exposure to the English language because the persons, who surround the students, communicate most of them (persons) in Kirundi language. In addition, they also mentioned that the absence of suitable materials such as books, audio-visual materials with which they can practice themselves, made their fluency very low. Also, the lack of teachers who have been trained to teach the English course in the lower classes create a big problem to learn the speaking skill.

Question 10: What should be done to improve your oral fluency in the English language?

Most of the informants said:

- The speaking skill should be given the maximum of time because it is the basic aspect in language communication.
- The government should revise the English program from the lower classes to the First form classes and introduce new lessons that contain oral activities.
- The informal environment, that is, road signs, shop signs, newspapers, and TV programs should be in English because it provides more input to the students; yet,

the classroom environment cannot alone improve the students' proficiency in English language.

- Many creative activities that involve speaking should be increased.
- The government should check if schools have suitable materials that guide in the process and provide them with those which they do not possess.
- The government should employ teachers who are able to teach the course and who follow all the instructions.

In brief, the students in Fourth Form class in the eight schools we dealt with lacked fluency in the English language. They do not speak it as it was expected. The frequency of speaking English of the Fourth Form students is very low. This is an alarming situation for all the students who are at this level of studies.

IV.1.3.2. Presentation of Data from the Teachers' Questionnaire

This section deals with the presentation of data from the teachers' answers to the questionnaire. Teachers were asked 10 questions to give their opinions. Let's remind the hypotheses of the study.

1. The lack of fluency by students of the 4th Form class in English language is due to the insufficient time allotted to the speaking skill.
2. The following strategies should be used to improve the learning and the teaching of the speaking skill: creating many speaking activities, providing opportunity to speak ...

Those teachers provided the answers that are presented in the following tables.

Question 1: How long have you been teaching the Fourth Form class?

Table 13: Presentation of data from question 1

Answers	Frequency	%
One year	1	12.5
Two years	1	12.5
More than two years	5	62.5
Other(s) specify…	1	12.5
Total	8	100

From this table above, we notice that 12.5% have been teaching the Fourth Form for one year; 12.5% of the teachers, for two years; 62.5% of teachers, for more than two years and 12.5% of teachers specified that they have been teaching the Fourth Form for four months. Then, it is generally considered that two years with the same English program is reliable experience for a dynamic and creative teacher to provide good knowledge to their pupils.

Question 2: Does the English curriculum give the speaking skill its right place in the teaching and learning process?

Table 14: Presentation of data from question 2

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	2	25
No	6	75
Total	8	100

The table above shows that the majority of teachers, 6 out of 8; that is, 75% affirm that the English curriculum does not give the speaking skill its right place in the learning and teaching process. The minority of teachers, that is, 25% see that the time allotted to the speaking skill is enough.

Question 3(a): How much time do you devote to teaching the speaking skill compared to other skills?

Teachers were asked to evaluate the time they devote to the speaking skill while they are teaching. Their answers constitute the table below:

Table 15: Presentation of data from question 3(a)

Answers	Frequency	%
One period per two weeks	1	12.5
Two periods per one week	3	37.5
After each unit	1	12.5
1/4 of the time allotted to English course	2	25
1/5 of the time allotted to English course	1	12.5
Total	8	100

From the table above, I can deduce that teachers often devote a little time to the speaking skill. 37.5% of the teachers teach the speaking skill two hours per one week; 12.5% of the teachers devote one hour per two weeks, 25% of the teachers devote 25% of the time allotted to English course. This category of teachers teach the speaking skill at the same level; 12.5% of the teachers give 1/5 of the time allotted to English course, and lastly, 12.5% of the teachers teach the speaking skill after each unit.

With regard to those estimations, I realize that the time devoted to the speaking skill is little. This shows the less importance they pay to the speaking skill.

The small amount of time given to the speaking skill implies the less attention they pay to the speaking skill. However, teachers assume that the speaking skill should

be given more importance while teaching. According to them, the speaking skill is the key for the success in language communication.

Question 3(b): Is that time enough?

Table 16: Presentation of data from question 3.b

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	2	25
No	6	75
Total	8	100

From the table above, I find out that 6 teachers out of 8, that is, 75% confirm that the time they devote to the speaking skill is not enough whereas 2 teachers out 8, that is, 25% (ETS Kiryama, Lycée Rumeza). In fact, the insufficiency of time is due the bad organization of time done by teachers themselves. Then, the time given to each skill should be equal. However, teachers assume that the speaking skill should be given more importance while teaching.

In addition, according to them, speaking is a vehicle of communication since language is primarily spoken. Though, it helps to learn other skills; yet, it deserves priority. So, teachers wish that they could spend a considerable time on the speaking skill.

Question 4: What strategies do you use in the teaching of the speaking skill?

Teaching the speaking skill is a very important part of language learning. The ability to communicate in a language clearly and efficiently contributes to the success of the learner in school and success later in every phase of life. Therefore, most of the teachers (87.5%) mention that they use discussions, role-play, and storytelling, reporting and narrating as the best strategies to teach the speaking

skill. Another group of teachers (12.5%) sometimes use dialogues, topics, dramatization of units, reading texts as the best ways to teach the speaking skill. Yet, they affirmed that during the period of the teaching of the speaking skill, students had time to speak and therefore, the teachers had the opportunity to listen and to observe the common errors they commit during the speaking period.

Question 5: Do you evaluate orally your students in English?

Table 17: Presentation of data from question 5

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	1	12.5
No	7	87.5
Total	8	100

We learn through the table above that most of the teachers, 7 out of 8, that is, 87.5% do not evaluate their students in the speaking skill in the English language. Another category of teachers, 1 out of 8, that is, 12.5% evaluate their students in the speaking skill. Both of those cases; that is, teacher from Lycée Rumeza tests the speaking skill and those who do not test it, assume that the speaking skill is less frequently tested compared to other skills in English.

Question 6: What are the basic elements which could be taken into consideration during the evaluation of the speaking skill?

During the evaluation process of the speaking skill, some of the teachers take into account pronunciation, intonation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and content. It is worth noting that the use of any element by the teacher depends on the objective of his/her evaluation. For this reason, one should decide to evaluate content, another pronunciation and fluency and so on.

In addition, some of the informants mentioned also that they pay attention to the gestures and the control of the audience. This is important because if the audience is not motivated, there is no way to listen to someone who is not looking at you. Besides eye contact with the audience while practicing, the spoken language helps students to experiment and innovate with the language and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear or embarrassment. This will contribute to their self- confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

Question 7(a) Are your students fluent?

Table 18: Presentation of data from question 7(a)

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	2	25
No	6	75
Total	8	100

The respondents' data for this question as presented in the table above show that most of the teachers, 6 out of 8, that is, 75% agree that their students are not fluent. Indeed, only 2 teachers from Lycée Rumeza and ETS Kiryama, that is, 25% of the respondents, assume that their students are fluent.

Question 7(b): what are the causes of the lack of fluency of your students in English?

Table 19: Causes of the lack of fluency of the students in English

Answers	Frequency	%
Curriculum provides little importance to the speaking skill	6	75
Lack of enough exposure to English	8	100
Absence of appropriate teaching/learning materials	8	100

Actually, the causes of the lack of fluency by students are many. First of all, the English curriculum provides little importance to the speaking skill as 6 teachers out of 8 said it; most of the time, they read and write. Secondly, all the respondents answered that the lack of enough exposure to English in our country is the cause of the lack of fluency in English by students. Therefore, when they are out of English lessons, they don't speak English; rather, they speak Kirundi or sometimes French. Lastly, all my respondents evoked the absence of appropriate teaching materials reserved to the speaking skill such as tapes, audio-visuals, etc, contributes to the students' lack of fluency in English because they cannot find native speakers to imitate the good accent. The presence of enough exposure to a language also helps students to overcome shyness.

Question 8: Do you motivate your students to speak and to learn the English language? If 'yes', how?

Table 20: Presentation of data from question 8

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	8	100
No	0	0
Total	8	100

The table above shows that all the teachers, that is, 100% said that they motivate their students. Therefore, the students' motivation is a powerful element as far as foreign language teaching is concerned. Then, when students are not motivated, it is difficult for the teacher to success in this field. This can lead to failure since each time the teacher enters the class, the students who have no motivation will not follow during the English lessons.

As far as the activities to motivate students are concerned, all the teachers asserted that the first thing that students should know is that the goal of teaching a language is communication. Then, they ask them to tell stories, discuss in groups or pair, and recite poems, etc, because this helps students to overcome shyness.

Question 9: What problems do you come across in the teaching of the speaking skill?

Most of the activities for their achievement must have their problems. It is in that perspective; that teachers encounter some problems during the teaching of the speaking skill. Most of the teachers come across almost the same problems. The large number of students in the target class is the big problem that hinders the teacher to sacrifice him; to control all the students at the same level. The later is connected to the insufficiency of time. In addition, the lack of suitable teaching materials and the students' shyness contribute to the weakness in teaching the speaking skill.

Question 10: What suggestions would you make to improve the speaking skill teaching in the Fourth Form class?

The following are suggestions provided by teachers to improve the speaking skill while teaching it:

- provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the English language by providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and shared knowledge.
- try to involve each student in every speaking activity; for this purpose, practice different activities of student participation.
- reduce teacher's speaking time in class while increasing student speaking time. Stand at the back and observe students' movements.

- circulate around the classroom to ensure that students are on the right way and check whether they need your help while they work in groups or pairs.
- The government is required to review the English program and provide more speaking lessons; the time allotted to English should be increased.
- diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the English language and give them more opportunities to practice the spoken language.
- The government should increase the schools and put 45 students in each class.

IV.2. Data Analysis

This section consists of analyzing the results that have been provided by different types of procedures of this research. Then, it is the interpretation of what the questionnaires; the test and the classroom observation come out.

IV.2.1. Analysis of Data from Classroom Observation

As stated earlier, this section deals with the discussion of the results from the classroom observation made in eight schools. Those are Lycée Communal de Kiryama, ETS de Kiryama, Lycée de Rumeza, Lycée Communal de Ruvumvu, Collège Communal de Manyoni, Collège Communal de Muheka, Collège Communal de Nyakigongwe and Collège Communal de Karambi.

If I analyze the classroom observation results carefully, I see that students and teachers have many problems during the process of learning/teaching the speaking skill. On the one hand, students of the Fourth Form class have problems of communication and fluency. As far as problems of communication are concerned, students sometimes cannot hold a conversation. This is due to the fact that they have a limited knowledge of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

As far as problems of fluency are concerned, students of the Fourth Form class are embarrassed, shy and afraid when they are speaking English. This is because they are not confident in the English language and also they do not master the rules that govern the use of the English language. On the other hand, teachers of the Fourth Form class have many problems when they are teaching the speaking skill. Those problems are the lack of enough time, the size of the class and the lack of appropriate materials.

First of all, I know that the English course in the Fourth Form class has six periods per week and each lesson lasts 45 minutes. I notice that the time allotted to the lessons of speaking is important, some teachers spent much time on the written and reading form rather than the spoken form.

Secondly, the size of the class plays an important role in the process of teaching the speaking skill. Among the eight schools, only two have an appropriate number of students who perform better than in the remaining 6 schools. Those are Lycée de Rumeza (40 students), and ETS de Kiryama (35 students). The other 6 schools have a large number of students in the Fourth Form class. Then, in those schools, teachers are unable to provide many opportunities to the students to practice the English language. Thirdly, none of the eight schools surveyed possessed the teaching materials designed to the speaking skill.

IV.2.2. Analysis of Data from the Test

As already mentioned earlier; this section deals with the discussion of the results from the test. After presenting the results of the test, comments on those results are important as they give a vivid picture of the outcome of the research. If I try to analyze the test results carefully, I will see that students of the Fourth Form class have problems of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

As far as pronunciation is concerned, I noticed that 76 students out of 100, that is, 76% had problems of pronunciation. Their problems focused on stress and accent. Some lacked the English accent and others did not know where to place stress on words.

As far as grammar is concerned, I noticed that 68 students out of 100, that is, 68% had problems of grammar. Those problems focused more on tenses, sentence structures, and articles.

As far as vocabulary is concerned, regrettably, I observed that the students had difficulties to make good choice of related words or phrases in their discussion. Therefore, the greatest number of the tested students got bad results in this aspect of oral expression. The highest number was between (0-9), that is, 25%, another important number was between (30-39), that is, 20% and finally 16% was between (10-19). In addition, I noticed that only one of them got a high score; that is, 80%, while very few of them, 2%, got the score between 70 and 79. The main cause of the students' low mastery of the vocabulary words was due to the fact that the students misused some vocabulary words of the English language. For example, instead of using 'vote', they used 'choose'.

IV.2.3. Analysis of Data from the Students' Questionnaire

In this section, I analyze the students' answers to the questionnaire. The first four questions were much concerned about the students' attitude towards the English language, frequency of speaking the English language outside English lessons and motivation to speak the English language. As for the question of knowing if the students like to speak the English language, 75% of the students surveyed indicated that they liked a lot to speak the English language; while 25% of the students surveyed did not like to speak the English language.

As far as the frequency of speaking the English language is concerned, I noticed that the frequency of speaking the English language was very low. Thirty-two percent of the students surveyed rarely speak English language outside the English lessons; 18% of the students surveyed sometimes speak the English language and 50% of the students surveyed never speak the English language.

The attitude of the students towards the English language is analyzed as follows: 61% of the students surveyed are happy when they are speaking the English language; 30% of the students surveyed are afraid of speaking the English language and 9% of the students surveyed are shy when they are speaking the English language.

It is worth mentioning that none of the students surveyed feel bad when they are speaking the English language. I also noticed that 61% of the students surveyed are motivated to speak the English language and 39% of the students surveyed are not motivated to speak the English language.

The fifth, sixth and seventh questions were intended to know if teachers encourage students to speak the English language; test students orally and whether the time devoted to the speaking skill is enough. In fact, 64% of the students surveyed assume that their teachers encourage them to speak the English language by providing many opportunities to practice the English language. Thirty-six percent of the students surveyed revealed that their teachers do not encourage them to speak the English language. In addition, 73% of the students surveyed said that they are not tested orally. They indicated that most of the time, they are tested in the written form. Seventeen percent of the students surveyed assumed that they are tested orally.

As for the question of knowing if the time devoted to the speaking skill is enough, most of the informants, 88 students out of 100 surveyed, that is, 88% gave a 'No' answer while 12 students, that is, 12% gave a 'Yes' answer.

The eighth, ninth and the tenth questions were helpful to determine if students were confident in using the English language, the problems encountered and the strategies to improve the speaking skill. In fact, 55 students out of 100, that is, 55% gave a 'No' answer which means that they were not confident with the use of the English language. Forty-five students out 100, that is, 45% gave a 'Yes' answer; this means that they were not confident with the English language.

As far as the problems encountered in learning the speaking skill are concerned, most of the students have problems of pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, lack of materials and trained teachers. The strategies to improve the speaking skill are the presence of informal environment, review the English program, and the increase of the time for the speaking lessons.

IV.2.4. Analysis of Data from Teachers' Questionnaire

This section is dealing with the analysis of teachers' answers to the questionnaire. The first three questions were concerned with the experience of teachers, the place occupied by the speaking skill in the English program, and the time allotted to the speaking skill.

As far as the experience of teachers is concerned, 5 teachers out of 8 spent 5 years in the Fourth Form class; 2 teachers out of 8 spent 2 years; 1 teacher out of 8 has been teaching the Fourth Form for one year and 1 teacher out of 8 has been teaching the Fourth Form class for four months. The place occupied by the speaking skill in the teaching/learning process is critical, 6 teachers out of 8, that

is, 75% gave a 'No' answer while 2 teachers out of 8, that is, 25% gave a 'Yes' answer.

As far as the time allotted to the speaking skill is concerned, most of the teachers affirmed that it is not enough. 6 teachers out 8, that is, 75% gave a 'No' answer while 2 teachers out of 8, that is, 25% gave a 'Yes' answer.

The Fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh questions were helpful in determining the strategies used to teach the speaking skill, the elements based on testing the speaking skill, the state of students' fluency and the causes of the lack of fluency. In fact, most of the teachers (87.5%) use discussions, role-play, storytelling, reporting and narrating to teach the speaking skill while 12.5% of teachers use dialogues, topics and dramatization of units to teach the speaking skill. The elements taken in consideration during the process of evaluation of the speaking skill are pronunciation, intonation, grammar, fluency and content.

As far as the state of fluency of students is concerned, 6 teachers out of 8, that is, 75% of teachers of the Fourth Form class noticed that it is very low. Two teachers out of 8, that is, 25% noticed that the students of Fourth Form class are fluent. The causes of the lack of fluency are the lack of exposure to English language in our country, the lack of appropriate teaching materials and the little importance provided to the speaking skill.

The eighth, ninth and tenth questions were intended to determine if teachers motivate the students to speak the English language, problems encountered by teachers and suggestions to improve the speaking skill teaching. As for the question of knowing if teachers motivate students, 8 teachers out of 8, that is, 100% gave a 'Yes' answer. They assumed that they encouraged their students to speak the English language.

For the 9th question which sought to know the problems encountered by teachers, 6 teachers of the 8 surveyed, faced the same problems. Those are large number of students in the target class, insufficiency of the time, the lack of materials and the background of students.

As far as the last question (n°10) is concerned, teachers gave some suggestions of what should be done in order to improve the conditions of teaching the speaking skill. Such suggestions are, for instance, that the government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular should review the English program and provide more speaking lessons; the time allotted to English should be increased and should also increase the schools and put 45 students in each class.

It was suggested by all teachers that is 8 teachers). Also, 5 of 8 teachers suggested that they should provide maximum opportunity to students to speak the English language. By providing a rich environment that contains collaborative work, authentic materials and shared knowledge help students to speak the language. They also suggested that they should involve each student in every teaching activity. They should also diagnose problems faced by students who have difficulty in expressing themselves in the English language and give more opportunities to practice the spoken language.

In addition, 4 of the 8 teachers suggested that teachers should reduce the time of speaking in class and increase the time of speaking of students. They also suggested that they should be trained in teaching the speaking skill. They should involve speaking activities not only in class but also out of class. They proposed that contacts should be made with parents, relatives and other people who can help students in their oral language.

In short, the results from the two types of questionnaire, that is, the teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire show that the little time and the lack of strategies to teach the speaking skill are the causes of the lack of fluency in the spoken English.

IV.3. Findings

The findings are the results of the research. For the present study, they are provided by the questionnaires, the classroom observation and the test.

IV.3.1. Findings from the Classroom Observation

My investigations revealed that students and teachers have problems during the teaching/learning of the speaking skill. Students lack fluency in the speaking skill. This is due to many reasons. First of all, students are shy and not confident in the use of English language because their knowledge in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary is very limited. This limited knowledge stems from the fact that the environment which surrounds them does not provide enough opportunities to speak the English language.

Secondly, as far as teachers' problems are concerned, most of the teachers complained about the time designed to the English course. The 45 minutes per lesson does not permit them to cover all the skills in the same lesson. That problem is clearly connected with the size of the class. The number of students plays an important role in the teaching of the speaking skill. The management of the class is easy when the number of students is small and permits the teacher to feel at ease when he is teaching. The inadequate teaching materials are also unavailable.

IV.3.2. Findings from the Test

As mentioned earlier, the limited knowledge in grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary made most students unable to communicate orally in English. In my study, I realized that the lack of fluency in oral English is caused by the lack of mastery in pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. Students are required to know the rules that govern English grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Unfortunately, the results from the students' test showed that most students are not good at English pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

IV.3.3. Findings from the Students' Questionnaire

While learning a new language, it is better to know the attitude of the students towards the language. Even if the English language is taught as a foreign language in Burundi, it is given much importance in school curriculum. Then students are motivated a lot in it and feel at ease because the current situational English language is improving as far as communication is concerned. However, the English language is used in few occasions, that is, in news broadcasting, classroom activities and some clubs. That is why many students fail to speak the English language correctly and fluently.

As I mentioned earlier, students realized that the time allotted to the speaking lessons is not enough compared to the other skill lessons. They asked the government to increase the time allotted to oral lessons. According to them, the speaking skill should be an independent course because it has many branches; thus, their mastery requires much time. Indeed, the success of this field contributes to the success in oral communication. As far as testing the speaking skill is concerned, students recognize that, this skill seems to be ignored because they are most of the time tested in the written form.

Students tried to propose solutions to this issue. They asked the decision-makers to review the English course and state clearly lessons designed to oral form. They also proposed that the informal environment should be created because it helps them to practice more the English language.

IV.3.4. Findings from the Teachers' Questionnaire

In this study, I focused much on the causes of the lack of fluency in the speaking skill of the Fourth Form class, the problems encountered by teachers and strategies to overcome that situation. Firstly, as far as the causes are concerned, teachers realized that the lack of opportunities to practice the language pushed the students to have no confidence in the use of the language. It also increases the shyness of the students. In addition, the limited time did not allow teachers to satisfy the needs of the students. Teachers also raised the cause of lack of adequate teaching materials; this created a handicap for the success of the students in this field. This is because the students did not get the chance to listen to native speakers and imitate the correct accent. Secondly, as far as the problems are concerned, teachers encountered many problems such as the large number of students, the lack of suitable teaching materials and insufficient time.

Lastly, teachers suggested strategies which could improve the speaking skill of the students of the Fourth Form class. The provision of many opportunities that expose students to speak the English language could help to overcome that situation. The time allotted to the speaking skill is not enough. Looking at what have found out in my research, I realized that all my hypotheses were confirmed.

In conclusion, the fourth chapter has presented, analyzed and given a broad view about the results from the data that were collected. Thus, it brings out the findings from the students and teachers' questionnaires, the results from the students' test

and finally those from the classroom observation. The next chapter deals with the general conclusion of the study and recommendations.

CHAPTER V: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.1. General Conclusion

In carrying out this research, there was an element that attracted my attention; that is, the teaching of the speaking skill in Burundi secondary schools in general and in the Fourth Form class of selected schools of the Songa commune in particular. In fact, it was observed that students did not express themselves efficiently and fluently as it was expected. So, from this notice came the topic: ***Assessing the Speaking skill in Learning and Teaching English in Songa commune: Case of 4th Form.***

In choosing such a topic, the main objectives were to find out not only if or not the students lack fluency in the English oral skill and then find out the causes of this situation, but also describe some problems that the students and teachers encounter during the process of teaching/learning the speaking skill in the Fourth Form class, and the strategies to promote the speaking skill.

This study comprises five chapters. The first chapter provides the importance of the speaking English in Burundi. Moreover, the chapter deals with the research problem and hypotheses of the study, the motivation of the study, and also the significance of this study. To provide a better understanding of the study, the chapter also gives definitions of key terms and some related terms.

In the second chapter, some points of views of different researchers are raised. In addition, the chapter provides the approach which seems to be the most important in the teaching/learning process of the speaking skill. It also deals with the teaching of the speaking skill itself. Indeed, the chapter treats the relationship between the speaking skill and other skills of the English language. Finally, it

shows the different techniques used to test the speaking skill and the components that should be taken into account while testing the speaking skill.

As far as the third chapter is concerned, it handles the methodology used in order to collect data. Let me recall that the working area was Songa commune, where 8 schools (100 students), Fourth Form students as well as their English teachers were the population. During the data collection three instruments were used: classroom observation, research test and two questionnaires; that is, students' questionnaire and teachers' questionnaire.

The data for the study are analyzed and interpreted in the fourth chapter. This chapter can be considered as the center of this study in so far as it allowed me to identify the causes and solutions of the lack of fluency of the students of the Fourth Form class. In this chapter, students' and teachers' questionnaire are deeply analyzed to check whether their data confirm, modify or discard the hypotheses of the study. It is worth recalling that this work was meant to answer the following research questions:

1. Why are students of the Fourth Form class not fluent in the English Language?
2. What strategies should be used to improve the learning and the teaching of the speaking skill in the Fourth Form class?

The answers to all these research questions are found in the list of answers provided by the students and teachers on the questionnaires: To the first question, the answer was provided by the question from number one to nine, the second research question is found in the tenth question. It should be mentioned that the results provided by the classroom observation and the test scores answer the first research question.

The findings of this study helped me to answer all the research questions. Finally, I drew the following conclusion: the students of the Fourth Form class are not fluent in English language. This lack of fluency is caused by the lack of enough exposure to English language, the large number of students in the target class, the insufficient time allotted to the speaking skill and the lack of sufficient and adequate teaching materials.

In this analysis, it has been noticed that the large number of students, the insufficiency of time and the less frequency of speaking practice in English are the main factors behind the poor performance and the lack of fluency in speaking English by the students. It has been also noticed that teachers provide less time to the evaluation of the speaking skill due to the reason that it is much time consuming. It has also been revealed that the lack of appropriate materials is among the causes of the lack of fluency by the students.

In addition, informants on both sides proposed strategies to promote the speaking skill. The students and teachers also revealed the difficulties they encountered during the process of learning/teaching the speaking skill.

V.2. Recommendations

In the light of the findings, some recommendations are addressed to teachers, to students, to the government and to future researchers.

a) To Teachers of 4th Form class in Songa commune

Being the main partners of education, teachers should be aware of the problem when teaching the speaking skill. They should give much importance to the speaking skill because it is the vehicle for communication. In that perspective, teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life

communication, authentic activities, and meaningful tasks that promote the oral ability to use the English language.

In addition, teachers should devote themselves by organizing extra hours allocated to spoken English to challenge the problem of time and to increase the speaking opportunities inside and outside the classroom. With the help of the heads of schools, teachers should organize and award contests of eloquence to encourage students to speak the English language. By introducing some games, dramatization of poems, using minimal responses, students could overcome their shyness, complexity and risk-taking to use the language and gain confidence in the language.

b) To Students of 4th Form class in Songa commune

I recommend students to be conscious that they must exercise to express themselves in English and be creative. Students should know that the more they practice, the more they become competent in the language. Indeed, I can also recommend them to be cooperative and collaborative, because working together helps students to end shyness and encourage practice.

c) To the Government

The government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular should build new rooms and settle a supportable number of 45 students in each class as seen at Lycee Rumeza (40) and ETS Kiryama (35). This will allow the control of each student. It should also reform the English program from the low level and introduce new lessons that involve oral activities. It should also sponsor seminars in order to train teachers. This would allow them to be good at English in general

and the speaking skill in particular. They should sometimes give awards to teachers who merit.

In addition, the government in general and the Ministry of Education in particular should give the speaking skill an important place in English programs. As far as teaching materials are concerned, the Ministry of Education through the English Department staff at the BEPES should provide teachers with suitable teaching materials. Students of the 4th Form in Songa commune should also be provided with books on speaking. In this perspective, they would be good at their oral communication.

d) To Future Researchers

It is, therefore, difficult to confirm that our research has exhaustively dealt with the causes of the lack of fluency in the English language and the strategies to improve the speaking skill. Then, future researchers should know that much is still needed to be done as far as the teaching and learning of the speaking skill is concerned. Future researchers should know that our study was carried out with a small sample. I would like to invite them to continue to carry out the study on this topic so that it can be extended to a larger sample and to other communes of Burundi.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Exposé on a given topic

Make up groups of 5 students and debate on the following topic:

Politics in Burundi

After, choose a representative of each group to make an exposé summarizing your discussions.

Appendix B: Letter to students

University of Burundi
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of English Language
and Literature
Academic Year 2011-2012

Dear student,

I am a researcher student at the University of Burundi, and at the moment, I'm carrying out a research on teaching and learning the speaking skill.

In fact, the present questionnaire is aimed at collecting data that will help me to carry out successfully my research entitled: ASSESSING THE SPEAKING SKILL IN LEARNING AND TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SONGA COMMUNE.

The answers that I expect from you are essential to the realization of my work and I will be grateful if you answer as sincerely and clearly as possible. I guarantee and pledge that your answers will be treated with confidentiality and only for the completion of my research.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Espérance INAMARIZA

Appendix C: Students' Questionnaire

1. Do you like to speak English?

A. A lot ☐ B. Somewhat ☐ C. Not all ☐ D. Other(s), specify…

2. How often do you speak the English language outside English lessons?

A. Rarely ☐ B. Sometimes ☐ C. Never ☐ D. Other(s), specify…

3. How do you feel when you speak English in the classroom?

A. Happy ☐ B. Bad ☐ C. Afraid ☐ D. Shy ☐ E. Other(s), specify…

4. During the teaching of the speaking lessons, are you interested?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If not, Why?

5. Does your English teacher encourage you to express yourself in English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Are you evaluated orally?

Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Is the time devoted to the teaching of the speaking skill enough to get sufficient knowledge to speak English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

8. Do you think that you are well prepared to:

a) Communicate orally in English in any situation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Comment.

9. What difficulties do you encounter when you are learning to speak the English language?

10. What should be done to improve your oral fluency in the English language?

Appendix D: Letter to Teachers

University of Burundi
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of English Language
and Literature
Academic Year 2011-2012

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a researcher student at the University of Burundi, and at the moment, I'm carrying out a research on teaching and learning the speaking skill.

In fact, the present questionnaire is aimed at collecting data that will help me to carry out successfully my research entitled: ASSESSING THE SPEAKING SKILL IN LEARNING AND TEACHING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SONGA COMMUNE.

The answers that I expect from you are essential to the realization of my work and I will be grateful if you answer as sincerely and clearly as possible. I guarantee and pledge that your answers will be treated with confidentiality and only for the completion of my research.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Espérance INAMARIZA

Appendix E: Teachers' Questionnaire

1. How long have you been teaching the Fourth Form class?

A. One year ☐ B. Two years ☐ C. More than two years ☐ D. Other(s), specify...

2. Does the English curriculum give the speaking skill its right place in the teaching and learning process?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. a) How much time do you devote to teaching the speaking skill compared to other skills?

   b) Is that time enough?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

4. What strategies do you use in the teaching of the speaking skill?

5. Do you evaluate orally your students in English?

   Yes ☐ No ☐ If not, why?

6. What are the basic elements which could be taken into consideration during the evaluation process of the speaking skill?

7. a) Are your students fluent? Yes ☐ No ☐

   b) What are the causes of the lack of fluency your students in English?

8. Do you motivate your students to speak and to learn the English language?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, how?

9. What problems do you come across in the teaching of the speaking skill?

10. What suggestions would you make to improve the speaking skill teaching in the Fourth Form class?