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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

EVALUATION OF THE SPEAKING SKILL TEACHING IN BUJUMBURA PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS : THE CASE OF FIFTH YEAR PUPILS

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises

Bujumbura, January 2003

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DEDICATION

To my late parents,
who did not live long
to see this step of my life,
To my only uncle left,
To my brothers and sisters
for your moral support,
To my beloved children
Billy and Tania,
Whose existence brings me
courage, hope and happiness,
To my beloved husband,
To the Almighty God to whom,
I owe everything I have.

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Floride BAHENDA

CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

This Chapter is concerned with five main points. First, it deals with the background to the study which is followed by the statement of the problem. The third point is the purpose and the significance of the study. The fourth point is the motivation followed by the study delimitation.

1.1. Background to the Study

1.1.1. Importance of English as a Means of Communication

Nowadays, the English language has gained importance all over the world. It is the language widely used especially in communication and trade. For the best use of this language, the learners need to develop the four language skills, namely : listening, reading, speaking and writing. These skills allow the learners to communicate in and outside the classroom. This idea is shared by Harmer (1983) who recognizes communication as the main purpose of language teaching.

His approach is considered as the one whose main goal in language teaching is the acquisition of the four language skills.

Moreover, the knowledge of these skills will be the main tool for establishing and maintaining human contact. For this perspective, Brown and Yule (1983 : 23) state the language functions as follows :

> The primary function of spoken language is interactional to establish and maintain social relations. However, an important function of the spoken language is primarily transactional to convey information.

The implication is that, when teaching the English language, the speaking skill should be given more importance given its primacy over other skills as far as communication is concerned. Some people prefer to consider listening as the most important skill, arguing that, before speaking, the child listens to people. However, they forget that we listen to people who are speaking. Nevertheless, we should not lose sight of the fact that oral communication is a two -way process between the speaker and the listener. Therefore, the speaker does not always initiate the interaction, he also responds to what he has heard ; while the listener is not always silent : he is normally expected to make some sort of response (which may not always be verbal as, for example, when he carries out an instruction).

Henceforth, in the classroom, appropriate provision should be made to see that the two oral skills are integrated through situations which permit and encourage authentic communication.

1.1.2. Possible Reasons for Poor Oral Performance.

There are various reasons for poor oral performance. I can mention the lack of testing and examinations, the socio economic background, the interference from French,

the teacher and the size of the class. Let us deal with these reasons one by one.

(i) Lack of Testing and Examinations

The oral skills are rarely examined in most of the Bujumbura private primary schools. It is only the reading and writing aspects that are examined. Most of the testing and examinations are based on grammar drills and reading aloud activities which are often used in the English lessons. However, for effective mastery of any language, the learners should be able to listen, speak and understand the spoken language, read and write it as well.

This attitude on the part of the teachers explains why the learners are not proficient in speaking English. This results in poor performance because the learners tend to make little effort in learning something which will not be tested or examined.

This situation has been observed in Bujumbura private primary schools. The classroom teaching activities are dominated by written grammar exercises from the course book. There is hardly any speech activity that could be used to develop the pupils' oral communication skills. This is worsened by the fact that pupils have less opportunity to communicate in English outside the classroom where they mainly use their mother tongue.

However, all the language skills should be equally tested so as to check the achievement of the course

objectives on the one hand and the learners' success and failure on the other hand. Afterwards, this would contribute to the improvement of the teaching programme in accordance with the pupils' ability.

(ii) Socio-Economic Background

One of the problems faced by the pupils in Bujumbura private primary schools is the one of socio-economic background. This may promote or hinder the development of the oral performance of the learners. On the one hand, the learners from rich or/and educated families may have a better chance at school for a number of reasons. First, such families have means which allow them to provide their children with the necessary text books and other reading materials which can help their children to develop their language skills.

These children also have access to mass media communication such as radio, television, video and films. Henceforth, they enjoy and benefit from some English programmes on television.

In addition, some parents are able to pay for supplementary evening courses for their children and this may help them improve on what they learned in the classroom. On the other hand, the learners from poor families miss all these opportunities that learners from rich families enjoy.

In fact, the child exposure to films and television programmes provides him with new learning opportunities through meaningful messages. Thus, such a child is likely to develop his language skills faster than his poor counterpart.

(iii) Interference from French

Another reason for poor oral performance in Bujumbura private primary schools is the interference from French. In our country, the English language is taught after the French language which is more spoken by educated people.

Therefore, when the learners are speaking English, there are some French features which interfere especially in pronunciation as well as in the use of grammatical rules. Concerning pronunciation, some learners pronounce some English sounds as in French.

e.g : cousin : *[k u :z in] instead of [k∧zn]

Regarding the use of grammatical rules, most of the learners apply some French grammatical rules while speaking English.

e.g.* I have ten years instead of I am ten years old.

(iv) The Teacher

Nobody ignores that the teacher is supposed to serve as a good model for the learners who often imitate him. Henceforth, Gleason (1978) suggests that the oral skills

should be presented by an instructor who is thoroughly acquainted with the vowel system of English. The contrary would bring about negative results.

(v) The Size of the Class

When the teacher tries to develop the oral skills in his learners, he has many obstacles to contend with especially the size of the classroom which rarely favours communication. In addition to this, the number of hours allotted for the teaching of the English language is not enough and cannot be devoted exclusively to the oral work.

Byrne (1980 : 16) proposes a solution to this problem :

> As it is difficult to get enough time
> to teach oral English effectively especially
> in large classes, it is up to the teacher
> to find among methods he well knows, the one
> which can involve more pupils in the practice
> of the spoken language.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

We have mentioned earlier that in order to know a language one has to develop all the four skills. However, after studying English a good number of years, the pupils still remain inaccurate in their day-to-day communication. This indicates that the teaching of the oral skills has been neglected in favour of the reading and writing skills which are examined. Therefore, more

time is needed to teach aural-oral skills which are necessary for the development of the oral communication.

Furthermore , there are activities associated with the spoken language. In fact, an act of communication through speaking is commonly performed in a face-to-face interaction and occurs as part of a dialogue or other form of verbal exchange. What is said, therefore, is dependent on an understanding of what has been said in the interaction.

In this sense, the skill of speaking involves both receptive and productive participation. In addition, the act of speaking involves not only the production of sounds but also the use of the face and of the whole body. All of these non-vocal accompaniements of speaking as communicative ability are transmitted through the visual medium.

Nowadays, we notice that Burundian learners have problems to express themselves orally in English even at a high level of education. Some studies have been made in order to identify the possible causes of failure and thus try to find solutions.

Previous researchers have found that even though the Burundian government made available materials to develop the four skills already mentioned, the speaking skill is proven less stressed in secondary schools as well as at university. The same problem is found in Bujumbura private primary schools where the English language teaching was recently introduced in the educational

system. Therefore, the purpose of my study is to seek solutions to the problems of poor oral performance from the early level. As the Kirundi saying puts it "Igiti kigororwa kikiri gito" : meaning "It is better to overcome the problems from the early level".

Thus, I was guided by the following questions :

(i) What are the oral activities taught in Bujumbura private primary schools ?

(ii) How much time is allotted to the learners to practise the oral communication activities ?

(iii) What are the methods that are used in the teaching of oral communication skills ?

(iv) What are the possible causes of failure recorded in the speaking skill learning and teaching ?

(v) What improvements should be made and which strategies should be used to develop the learning of the speaking skill in primary schools ?

1.3. Purpose and Significance of the Study

First and foremost, this study aims at lending a hand in improving the English language teaching, with an emphasis on the speaking skill. Mention has been made that this skill is very important as far as effective communication is concerned.

Furthermore, this study purports to identify different problems encountered by pupils in Bujumbura private primary schools as far as the speaking skill is concerned. This was made possible thanks to the testing of their fluency, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

By means of a questionnaire and direct observations, I collected the data which helped me to identify the problems encountered by the teachers while teaching the speaking skill. I also looked at the methods used by the teachers in the teaching of this particular skill.

After identifying these problems, I give suggestions aiming at overcoming them.

As far as the significance of the study is concerned, to the best of my knowledge, no work has been done so far on the topic at the primary school level.

This may be due to the fact that English teaching has been introduced in primary schools recently. Thus, it is necessary to look into different problems which may handicap the mastery of the speaking skill so as to overcome them from the lower level.

In fact, the programme designed for high school is different from the one for primary school. Henceforth, like other researchers who have given suggestions to programme designers for secondary schools and university, I will make suggestions related to the primary school programme.

1.4. Motivation

The most important reason which has been at the basis of the choice of this topic is the eagerness to promote the English language teaching especially its speaking skill because of its primacy over the other language skills.

Another reason is that I realise that very few people are able to speak English without problems even at a high level of education. In addition, the English language should be given more importance bearing in mind that it is a language widely used all over the world.

A third reason is that I would like to identify problems encountered in the speaking skill learning and teaching from the primary level. Thus, I will be able to make suggestions aiming at overcoming them.

1.5. Delimitation

I have chosen to limit my study to the speaking skill because I find it very important as far as effective communication is concerned. However, nobody should ignore that oral communication implies the listening skill as well.

Concerning the level of study, I have preferred to limit my study to the primary school level. I did so because previous researchers have worked on the other levels.

Moreover, I have limited my study to Bujumbura private primary schools because the prevailing insecurity does not facilitate investigation up country. In addition, the system of teaching English in primary schools is not yet applied in public primary schools.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. Introduction

Mention has been made that knowledge of any language implies the mastery of the four language skills namely writing, speaking, listening and reading. However, considering that the spoken language has a great role as far as communication is concerned, many writers have dealt with teaching of the speaking skill. They have done so in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses found in the teaching of this particular skill so as to invite the curriculum designers to take wise decisions regarding the improvement in its teaching.

Ndikuriyo (1998) evaluated the teaching of the speaking skill and noticed that there is lack of suitable materials to teach the speaking skill. She found that the methodology used does not facilitate the practice of the speaking skill.

Kayonde (1998) looked into pronunciation errors and stressed the lack of supportive materials to teach pronunciation as well as the failure of some teachers to serve as good models as far as pronunciation is concerned. However, in Burundi, there are no studies made so far about the teaching of the speaking skill in primary school.

Brown and Yule (1983 : 19-20) dealt with the teaching of the speaking skill and stated the following :

> It is currently fashionable in language teaching to pay particular attention to the forms and functions of short turns... It must surely be clear that students who are capable of producing short turns are going to experience a lot of frustration when they try to speak the foreign language.

Byrne (1976) tackled the teaching of the speaking skill and proposed the dialogue as an instrument for teaching the spoken language. He said that since the main concern in early stages is normally to teach the spoken language, the type of test suitable to this purpose is "unquestionably" the dialogue.

Widdowson (1978 : 59) revealed that :

> The act of speaking involves not only the production of sounds but also the use of gestures, the movements of the muscles, of the face, and indeed of the whole body.

Harmer and Arnold (1978) said that the main concern of the speaking skill is appropriateness. That is, the choice of a way of saying something which expresses our attitudes appropriately, showing that we are "polite", "informal", and so on. This is to name but a few the writers who have dealt with the speaking skill.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This section deals with the speaking skill teaching (approaches). It also tackles its evaluation and testing.

2.2.1. The Speaking Skill Teaching

There are various approaches to language teaching. We can mention among others, the communicative approach, the structural approach and Audiolingual approach. There are also many factors affecting the teaching of the speaking skill.

2.2.1.1. The Communicative Approach

Many writers have dealt with the communicative approach to language Teaching. Among them, Keith and Keith (1981 : 71) support that :

> The communicative approach makes sure that the interactions which take place in the classroom are replications of, or necessary prerequisites for communicative operations.

This means that the focus changes from the accurate production of isolated utterances to the fluent selection of appropriate utterances in communication. Keith and Keith find this approach suitable to young pupils when they state (1981 : 31) :

> so far from being intrinsically unsuitable to young pupils, an approach which does not separate the teaching of a language from the communicative contexts can only be right for them.

The implication is that the communicative approach to language teaching will be the basis for my evaluation. In fact, the communicative aspect in language teaching should be stressed from the early level.

Cartledge (1964 : 1) compares the English language learner to a motorist as follows :

> Pour l'automobiliste, l'important est
> de savoir faire marcher la voiture.
> Les pièces de la machine n'ont d'importance
> pour lui qu'en tant qu'elles contribuent
> au bon fonctionnement de la voiture.
> De même pour l'étudiant d'anglais, le but
> est de savoir parler la langue.

Translated as :

> For a motorist, the important thing
> is knowing to drive the car. The pieces
> making the machine have no other
> importance for him except the one of
> contributing to the good fonctionning
> of the car. Similarly for the English
> language learner, the aim is knowing
> to speak the language.

The above assertion is related to my topic in that it supports the assumption that the main purpose in language learning is to be able to communicate orally in that language. The implication is that the communicative approach to language teaching can be applied to my study.

As far as Harmer (1983) is concerned, he contends that when two persons are engaged in talking, they do so for good reasons. This view means that when human beings are communicating orally they have precise intentions.

That is why the speaker needs to be understood by the listener and the latter has to pay attention to what is being said in order to make the communication effective. This idea is shared by Donn Byrne (1976 : 8) who says :

> Oral communication is a two way process between the speaker and listener (or listeners), involving the productive skill of speaking and the receptive skill of listening.

He adds that both the speaker and the listener have a positive function to perform. The speaker has to encode the message to be conveyed in an appropriate language, while the listener has to decode the message.

The communicative approach is also supported by Ray Tongue (1991 : 114) who states :

> Considerations of learner interest, enjoyment and successful use of language for communicative tasks should have priority over structural grading and other matters related to linguistic forms.

Therefore, when teaching a language, the communicative aspect should be stressed rather than the other aspects. In the same line of thoughts,

Widdowson (1978 : 2) supports the following :

> When we acquire a language, we do not only learn how to compose and comprehend sentences as isolated linguistic units of random occurrence. We also learn how to use sentences appropriately to achieve a communicative purpose.

Harmer and Arnold (1978) added that the aim of the speaking skill teaching is to be able to produce the language accurately and fluently. In addition, the learners should be able to vary the way they perform a certain language function appropriately according to the situation they find themselves in. This means that the speaking skill teaching should aim at training the learners to know how to express themselves appropriately depending on the situation.

2.2.1.2. The Structural Approach and the Communicative Approach

The reality reveals that in primary schools, the text books and the teachers methodology are based on the structural approach. However, this approach shows many weaknesses as compared to the communicative approach which, as it has been mentioned, is more appropriate in the development of the oral communication skills. According to Keith (1986 : 71),

> structural dialogues lack communicative intent and you cannot identify what communicative operations the learners can engage in as a result of practice. The result of purely structural practice is the ability to produce a range of usages, but not the ability to use forms appropriately.

Thus, this indicates that the kind of activity that goes on in the class-room where the structural approach is used is confined to the appraisal of utterances on structural criteria and in isolation from each other. For instance, the learners are taught question forms, imperative and conditional but they are not taught how to use these forms appropriately in a given situation. This is a hinderance on the part of the structural approach.

However, the communicative approach, on the other hand, makes sure that the interactions which take place in the classroom bring about the development of the oral ability. That is, the focus changes from accurate production of isolated utterances to the fluent selection of appropriate utterances in communication.

Despite the good intentions of the communicative approach, there is a lack of trained manpower to impliment the methodology. Therefore, from the discussion above, it is clear that the primary schools still lack appropriate methodology that could be used to develop the speaking skill among the pupils.

2.2.1.3. The Audiolingual Approach versus Communicative Approach

The communicative approach contrasts with the Audiolingual approach in that it stresses meaning while the latter emphasizes mastery of structures before meanings. Accordingly, Brumfit and Finacchiaro (1983) contrast the major distinctive features of the Audiolingual approach and the communicative approach. (see Appendix 1).

2.2.1.4. The Factors Affecting the Teaching of the Speaking Skill

1° The Teacher as a Model

The teacher should be in a good position to provide his learners with sufficient knowledge. That is, he should be qualified and experienced. He should also be equipped with appropriate methods and techniques to transmit his knowledge.

According to Brown and Yule (1983) :

> The teacher needs to be in confident position of possessing analytic tools which enable him to determine where the difficulty lies and to help the student with.

However, Wilkins (1977) and Byrne (1979) contend that teachers should be accurate models, instruments so that learning can take place. This is because pupils tend to imitate their teachers, considering them as good models.

Above all, a good teacher should be in continuous search for the best method which can help him to develop his pupils' knowledge. In the same line of thoughts, Weil (1992 :21) states the following :

> The growing, developing teacher can reach out and embrace more forms of experience, explore more aspects of his students, and find more ways of helping them to grow.

2° The Learner's Motivation and Needs

The goal of teaching a language has been defined by Byrne (1976 :3) as :

> The key to success in foreign language Learning lies in the adoption of an "integrative" orientation towards the foreign culture, as characterized by the student' s willingness to share certain attributes of the members of the other "linguistic community" and to regard himself as a potential member of that community.

The implication of the above view is that the foreign language learner is less likely to be successful if his underlying motivation is "instrumental" rather than "integrative". In other words, the learner has less chance to succeed in language learning if he places a utilitarian value on the achievement of proficiency in the foreign language without seeking active contact with the speakers of that language, nor further knowledge of their culture.

3° The Teaching Environment

It is up to the teacher to create a favourable environment which may encourage communication. He should also provide pupils with opportunities to communicate. In this perspective, Ur (1988) states that some activities as pair and group work help to erase inhibition because pupils feel freer when they talk to their associates.

Therefore, we assume that the pupil is more likely to produce the best that he is capable of in a foreign language under conditions where he is under least "communicative stress". According to Brown and Yule (1983), the conditions which relate to "communicative stress" include the features of context, the state of knowledge of the listener and the type of task.

Concerning the features of the context, it is easier for the speaker to talk to one listener than to many, preferably one of his peers, in familiar environment. Regarding the state of knowledge of the listener, it is helpful for the speaker if the listener knows as much of the target language as the speaker does and if the speaker has information that the listener needs. For the type of task, it is helpful for the speaker if he understands thoroughly the information that he has to convey and if he is familiar with the foreign language vocabulary which is essential to the completion of the task. Moreover, it is easier for the speaker to give an account of a series of events than is to provide an argument for why those events occured in that order.

4° Teaching Method

It has been mentioned above that a language teacher has to be equipped with enough methods and techniques required to transmit his knowledge. Thus, he has to be able to choose among those methods the one which is appropriate for his pupils' level.

Mackey (1965) states that the teacher of English should be able to tell a good method from a bad method. He adds that a good method is useless in hands of a teacher who does not know how to use it. It means that, after choosing the best method, the teacher has to know how to handle it efficiently in order to bring best results.

5° The Role of the Teacher

The teacher is a means to the end : an instrument to see that learning takes place. In addition to this general function, the teacher has specific roles to play at different stages of learning process. It is only by acknowledging these roles that we can begin to see why we must vary and adjust our techniques to suit the various stages of the learning process.

At the presentation stage, the teacher is considered as an informant. As he knows the language, he selects the new material to be learned and presents it in such a way that he makes its meaning as clear and as memorable as possible.

Then, comes the practice stage where we have the teacher as a conductor. Now, it is the turn of the learners to do most of talking, while the teacher's main function is to provide them with the maximum amount of practice.

The last stage is the production stage where we have the teacher as guide. The teacher provides his learners with activities for free expression and discretely watches over them. As the learners carry the activities out, the teacher takes on the role of guide or adviser.

6° The Teacher Pupil Interaction

The possibility that a pupil's level of achievement might to some extent be determined by the attitudes and expectations of his teacher has long been a matter of debate, but until recently, there has been little direct experimental evidence on which to base judgement. A large scale study of education of the disadvantaged children (U.S. office of Education,1970) also reported an extraordinarily consistent relationship between teacher expectations and pupils' achievement.

Dusek and O'Connel (1973) found that the teachers' estimates of their pupils' learning potential, formed at the beginning of the school year, were closely related to the pupils' scores on language and arithmetic tests, given at the end of the school year. In other

words, if the teacher expects the learners to succeed, they are likely to get better scores at the end of the school year.

Rist (1970), carrying out a study on a class of black children in an urban ghetto school, reported that the children judged by the teacher (apparently on the basic of social class criteria) to be potential fast learners received the majority of the available teaching time and the bulk of the teacher's supportive behaviour. As a matter of fact, such learners were likely to be successful. Therefore, the teacher should adopt an attitude which encourages all his learners in order to come up with best results.

2.2.2. Evaluation and Testing of the Speaking skill

2.2.2.1. Evaluation

2.2.2.1.1. Definitions of Evaluation

Collins' Dictionary of English Language defines evaluation as a decision about the significance, value, or quality of something based on careful study of its good and bad features.

For the Longman's Synonym Dictionary, evaluation is synonym of assessment which means review, consideration, examination, investigation, measurement etc.

U. B.

The definition which is more related to my research is the one given by Underson (1985) :

> Evaluation is about providing feedback,
> the gathering and provision of information
> on working of, and processes within,
> a curriculum in operation. Evaluation
> may provide ideas about what and how
> modification should be implemented.

Henceforth, various writers have different views about "evaluation" in teaching. Some of them take into consideration the materials, while others refer to the programme, its objectives and the students' needs.

2.2.2.1.2. Contributions of Evaluation

Historically, evaluation research has been viewed by its partisans as a way to increase rationality of policy making. With objective information on the implimentation and outcomes of programmes, wise decisions can be made on budget allocation and programme planning. The expectations have been that programmes which yield good results will be expanded ; those which make poor showings will be abandoned or modified.

2.2.1.3. Formative and Summative Evaluation

Scriven (1985) talked about the evaluation of educational curriculum. He made distinction between formative and summative evaluation.

Formative evaluation produces information that is fedback during the development of a curriculum to help improve it. It serves the needs of developers. Summative evaluation is done after the curriculum is finished. It provides information about the effectiveness of the curriculum to school decision makers who are considering adopting it in their schools.

Scriven (1991) exemplified the distinction saying that : when the cook tastes the soup, that's formative evaluation ; when the guest tastes it, that's summative evaluation. This distinction is not limited to curriculum development but can be applied to other types of programmes as well, with obvious advantages for the classification of purpose.

Formative evaluations are designed to assist those who are developing projects in the early phases. The emphasis is on feedback to developers with an eye on improving the final product. Summative evaluation is meant for decisions about whether to continue or end a programme, extend it to other locations or cut it back.

As far as my research is concerned, the findings aim at providing formative information. In fact it seeks information feedback to programme staff on how to improve the programme.

2.2.1.4. Scholars' Views about Evaluation

I have mentioned earlier that scholars have different views about "evaluation" in teaching. To begin with, Jack and Richards (1983) support that evaluation is

about whether the objectives of language teaching are being attained or not.

According to CunningsWorth (1984), evaluation is based on teaching materials and teaching aims. He contends that not only should the objectives be defined but also they have to be related to the pupils' needs. He suggests that the following principles be applied :

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

Valette (1967) asserts that the measuring of the progress the learners make towards the objectives is a crucial phase in evaluation. He supports that the language test for students is vital in the assessment of achievement.

For Harmer (1983), evaluation must be based on the teaching materials and the students' needs. He further distinguishes formative and summative evaluation.

The former determines the degree of the students' achievement whereas the latter refers to the effectiveness or success of the programme as a whole after it has been completed.

For Nunan (1988), evaluation allows the decision makers to determine if the goals, the teaching content and tasks need to be altered or not.

2.2.2.2. Speaking Skill Testing

Testing the speaking skill is not an easy task. Many researchers have expressed their various views about language testing.

To begin with, Hughes (1989 :6) argues that :

> Every testing problem can be expressed in the same general terms. We want to create a test or testing system which will :
>
> 1. Consistently provide accurate measures of Precisely the abilities in which we are interested ;
>
> 2. have a beneficial effect on teaching (in those cases where the tests are likely to influence learning) ;
>
> 3. be economical in terms of time and money.

According to Harrison (1983 : 1),

> a test is seen as a natural extension of classroom work, providing teacher and student with useful information that serves as a basis for improvement.

He distinguishes between four types of language test namely : placement, diagnostic, achievement and proficiency tests. Among the four types of test, the proficiency test is the most suitable vehicle for assessing the learner' s communicative ability especially in speaking.

In fact, the aim of a proficiency test is to assess the student's ability to apply in actual situations what he has learnt. Thus, an important element in proficiency testing is to assess in some way the student's ability to repair breakdowns in communication, by asking for repetition or an explanation, for example, or by apologising and rephrasing what he has just tried to say.

About the proficiency and achievement tests, Lee et al (1985 : 82) assert the following :

> An oral achievement test cannot be an open ended general conversation. It is necessary to formulate questions in such a way that discrete units of language are tested. This, of course, affects the naturalness and direct nature of the test. In oral proficiency test, the examiners can use the response of one question to lead to another. Only occasionally is it necessary to break the flow and move on to a different topic or level.

Concerning the evaluation criteria, Lee et al (1985 : 83) suggest that :

> the rating sheet used by the examiners be based entirely on such language factors as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Portal (1986 : 4) suggests the characteristics of tests of oral interaction at basic level as follows :

- Accuracy : Pronunciation may be heavily influenced by L1 and accented though generally intelligible. Any confusion caused by grammatical/lexical errors can be clarified by the candidate.

- Appropriacy : Use of language broadly appropriate to function though subtlety should be expected. The intention of the speaker can be perceived without excessive effort.

- Range : Severely limited range of expression is acceptable. May often have to search for a way to convey the desired meaning.

- **Flexibility**: Need not usually take the initiative in conversation. May take time to respond to a change of topic. Interlocutor may have to take considerable allowances and often adopt a supportive role.

- **Size** : Contributions generally limited to one or two simple utterances are acceptable.

According to Heaton (1975), successful communication in situations which similate real life is the best test of mastery of a language. I referred to the above assertions to choose the pupils oral test which was a proficiency one. I was able to check the pupils' ability to use the language learned through real situations.

CHAP.3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This Chapter is about the procedures used in collecting data. It also describes the research population as well as the sample survey techniques. Furthermore, this chapter deals with procedures used to seek answers to the research questions. Notice that the study was conducted in six private primary schools in Bujumbura namely, Ecole Primaire SOS, Ecole Primaire La Colombière, Ecole Primaire Indépendante, Ecole Primaire Internationale and Ecole Primaire de l'Horizon.

3.2. The Research Population

Since the Study is concerned with the teaching of the speaking skill, I was interested by the 5th year pupils because they had been studying English for at least two years. Such pupils are expected to be able to express themselves at least through simple dialogues.

However, the oral test could not be given to all the pupils in the six schools mentioned above. Thus, the researcher had to find a suitable method to allow for the needed sample. The target population of the

study also included 6 teachers of English in 5th year classes in the schools under study.

3.3. The Sample Survey Techniques

In order to come up with an objective description of my field of study, I had to choose from various methods proposed by previous researchers. Then, I combined two methods to get the needed sample.

The first one was proposed by Richterich and Chancerel (1977)and stated as "a sample based on probabilities used wherever the basis of sampling can be exhaustively defined". This technique consists of making a random selection to avoid a biased position towards the subjects.

The second technique was proposed by Mucchielly (1973:17) and stated as follows :

> échantilloner consiste à limiter l'enquête à un petit nombre de personnes,1/10, 1/50, 1/200, ou 1/2000 etc..., qui formera l'échantillon à l'intérieur de la population d'enquête.
>
> To sample is to limit the inquiry to a little number of people, i.e, 1/10,1/50,1/200, or 1/2000 and so on..., which will constitute the sample inside the population under study.

Henceforth, I used this method to determine the number of pupils to be submitted to the oral test.

The approach taken was the following :

I took 1/5 of 45 pupils from SOS primary school, i.e. 9 pupils ; 1/5 of 30 pupils from la Colombière Primary School, i.e. 6 pupils ; 1/5 of 50 pupils from Indépendante Primary School, i.e. 10 pupils ; 1/5 of 40 pupils from Himbaza Primary School, i.e. 8 pupils ; 1/5 of 45 pupils from International Primary School, i.e. 9 pupils and 1/5 of 40 pupils from Ecole de l'Horizon, i.e. 8 pupils, leading to a sample of 50 pupils.

I obtained the number of 50 pupils thanks to the Mucchielli's method. Then, I had to apply the method of Richterich and Chancerel (1977) which suggest a random selection.

3.4. Data Collection procedures

To collect data, I used classroom observation, an oral test and a questionnaire to the teachers of the classes under study.

3.4.1. Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was viewed as important because it helped to get reliable and direct information. I could not solely rely on information given by my informants because it could be misleading.

Furthermore, with classroom observation during a lesson, the observer may more objectively judge the

lesson. This idea is shared by Wallace (1991) when he states that : "The spectator sees most of the game".

The above two reasons led me to plan and execute classroom observation and to make it more objective, I set criteria for classroom observation. Thus, I was interested in activities related to the speaking skill, teaching methods, teaching materials and pupil's communication problems.

3.4.2. The Research Test

I have already mentioned in the literature review that the most suitable test for oral communicative ability is a proficiency test, i.e. a test designed to check one's ability to use the language in real situations. Therefore, I chose to use this type of test for the pupils.

As I found that the pupils to test were unable to hold a continuous speech in a topic discussion, I chose a simple dialogue between the researcher and a pupil. Thus I have decided to participate in the dialogue in order to guide the pupils because they were still limited in grammar as well as in vocabulary.

Furthermore, for the test to be valid, I chose to talk about a topic that the pupils had already covered.

I began by greetings followed by presentation. Then I dealt with family relations.

3.4.3. Research Questionnaire

As the 5th year pupils are not able to read, understand and answer a questionnaire, this one was addressed to the teachers only. The questionnaire was designed for 6 teachers of the classes under study.

Twenty one questions were prepared for the teachers of English in 5th year classes. 80% of the questions were closed questions because open questions are too demanding on the part of the informants. Closed questions have also advantages for the researcher in that they make it easy to analyse the results.

In open questions, the informants are allowed to express themselves freely. As far as the closed questions are concerned, they limit the informants freedom of expression.

To sum up, all the questions were intended to get information about the place devoted to the speaking skill in the English language teaching, the methods used, the teaching materials as well as the difficulties encountered while teaching the speaking skill.

In addition, the questionnaire was meant to get the teachers' suggestions for improvement as far as the speaking skill is concerned.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

This section gives an account of the analysis of the data from the classroom observation. It also deals

with the scores of the testees as well as the teachers' responses from the questionnaire.

3.5.1. Data from the Classroom Observation

The analysis of the data from the classroom observation consists of evaluating the activities related to the speaking skill in an English class. I also investigated on the teaching methods, the materials used as well as the pupils' main problems while they were speaking.

3.5.2. Data from the Oral Test

The analysis of these data consists of scoring how the testees speak English and their main difficulties as far as the oral communication is concerned. Just after each dialogue, I proceeded to the scoring. Notice that I had to set communicative abilities to be scored separately.

Nevertheless, I have noticed that it is not an easy task to test oral ability. So one has to find precise criteria on which he/she can base his/her testing. Thus, some scholars have proposed the criteria for language test and I preferred the ones proposed by Portal (1986:4) because they are suitable for the basic level.

The first criterion is accuracy. Here, the pronunciation may be heavily influenced by L1 and

accented though generally intelligible, i.e. can be understood.

The second is appropriacy where the learner uses a language broadly appropriate to function. In this case, the intention of the speaker can be perceived without excessive effort.

The third criterion is range where the learner uses a limited range of expressions but which are acceptable.

He manages to find a way to convey the desired meaning.

The fourth criterion is Flexibility where the learner does not need usually to take initiative in conversation. However, he may take time to respond to a change of topic. Here, the interlocutor may have to adapt a supportive role.

The last criterion is size where contributions limited to one or two simple utterances are acceptable.

3.5.3. Data from the Questionnaire

After collecting the teachers' responses, I analysed them. Then I proceeded to their interpretation and I compared them afterwards in order to draw a logical conclusion.

CHAP.4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Introduction

This Chapter deals with the analysis of the collected data from classroom observation, the pupils' oral test and the teachers'questionnaire. To present my data, I use tables when necessary in order to allow a smooth reading. After analysing the data, I will interprete them in order to draw a conclusion.

Moreover, this chapter will allow me to check the extent to which my data respond to my expectations with regards to my research questions.

4.1. Analysis from the classroom observation

From the classroom observation, I got information about activities related to the speaking skill, the teaching methods and the teaching materials. Furhermore, the classroom observation revealed me the teachers' problems and the pupils' problems.

4.1.1. Activities Related to the Speaking Skill

With regards to oral activities, I noticed that they are limited to reading aloud, answering comprehension questions, interpretation of images, acting out dialogues and naming some objects. The following table illustrates the above activities and the number of classes practising them.

Table 1 : Activities related to the speaking skill

Activities	Number of classes	%
Reading aloud	6	100
Answering the comprehension questions	3	50
Interpreting images	2	33,3
Acting out dialogues	1	16,6
Naming some objects	4	66,6

The above data reveal that the activity mostly used in Bujumbura private primary schools is "Reading aloud". This is practised by all the classes (i.e.100%).

However, I think this activity does not help much in developing the oral communicative ability. The reason is that one has to understand what he/she is saying, and yet there are many pupils who read aloud very well without understanding.

In second position, we have the activity of "Naming some objects" which is practised in 66,6% of the classes investigated. Once more, this activity is not suitable as

far as the communicative ability is concerned. Although it is necessary to know the objects'names, it would be better if this activity was integrated in conversation where two pupils exchange their ideas.

In third position, there is activity of "Answering comprehension questions". This is practised by 50% of the classes. This activity is very useful in developing the oral ability. I have already mentioned above that one has to understand what he/she communicates. Thus, when someone answers a comprehension question, he/she first tries to understand it and then he/she looks for a way to transmit his/her answer orally.

The fourth activity is "Interpretation of images" which is practised by 33,3% of the classes under study. I found this activity also useful in that the pupil is trained to associate images with meaning, which may help him/her in real life. In addition, when the learner is interpreting the image loudly, he/she develops his/her oral expression in that he/she uses his/her own words that he/she understands very well.

In last position, we have the oral activity "acting out dialogues" which is practised by 16,6% of the classes investigated. Although it is the least practised activity, it is the most useful one as far as the communicative ability is concerned. In fact, when learners are acting out dialogues, they are involved in a speaking activity which calls for many processes as Rivers (1968:162) puts it :

> Through speech, man expresses his emotions, communicates his intentions, reacts to other persons and situations, influences other human beings.

In short, after analysing the data about activities relating to the speaking skill, I found that the most useful oral activity, i.e. "acting out dialogues", is the least practised whereas the least useful ones are the most used in Bujumbura private primary schools.

4.1.2. The Teaching Methods.

I chose to investigate on the teaching methods because they may bring about success or failure in language teaching. I observed the teaching methods used in Bujumbura private primary schools as far as the speaking skill teaching is concerned and I found the following :

- Giving cues to pupils and asking them to utter the required sentence loudly.
- Offering a model of pronunciation and asking pupils to repeat.
- Showing images and asking pupils to interprete them.
- Showing objects and asking the pupils to name them.

- Proposing dialogues to be acted out.

The following table illustrates the above data.

Table 2 : The Teaching Methods Related to the Speaking Skill

Methods	Number of classes	%
Giving cues and asking pupils to utter the required sentence	6	100
Offering a model of pronunciation and asking pupils to repeat	6	100
Showing images and asking pupils to interprete them loudly	2	33,3
Showing objects and asking the pupils to name them	4	66,6
Proposing dialogues to be acted out	1	16,6

The two methods commonly used are "Giving cues and asking the pupils to utter the required sentence" and "offering a model of pronunciation and asking the pupils

to repeat". The two methods are applied in 100% of the classes under study. The former is more related to grammar whereas the latter is about pronunciation. In addition, the two methods are useful in developing the oral skill. It would be better if the two subskills were taught through activities which may help the pupils to use the language in real situations.

In second position, there is the method of "showing objects and asking the pupils to name them", which is applied in 66,6% of the classes observed. This activity is related to the subskill of vocabulary. Although knowing the names of objects is necessary, this is not enough because such an activity should be used in a real situation where the learners are engaged in a conversation, bringing in names of objects and the situation in which those objects are used.

In third position, we have the method of "showing images and asking the pupils to interprete them, which is applied in 33,3% of the classes investigated. This activity helps the learners to establish a relation between the images and their meaning. This method helps the learners to develop the subskill of comprehension.

The method rarely used is the one of "proposing dialogues to be acted out", which is used by 16,6% of the classes under study. Yet, this method is the most useful as far as the oral communication is concerned.

To sum up, the methods used by most of the teachers purports to develop the subskills of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation whereas the most useful method in developing the oral communication (i.e. the role play) is rarely used.

4.1.3. The Teaching Materials

With regards to the teaching materials, the main materials used were the blackboard and pieces of chalk, the teacher's guide, the pupil's book, the exercise book, the images to be interpreted and some audio cassets. The following table tells more about the details of the above materials and the number of classes using them.

Table 3. Teaching materials in Bujumbura Private Primary Schools

Teaching Materials	Number of classes	%
Blackboard	6	100
The teacher's guide	2	33,3
The pupil's book	3	50
The exercise book	3	50
Images to be interpreted	2	33,3
The audio-cassets	1	16,6

The above data reveal that all the classes investigated (i.e.100%) use the blackboard and pieces of chalk. The blackboard helps the teachers to write words and sentences to be uttered loudly. It is also used by the teachers to write grammar exercises on. As far as the development of the speaking skill is concerned, the blackboard does not play a significant role.

The pupil's book and the exercise book are used by 50% of the classes observed. They are useful in that they contain texts to be studied and exercises to be done by the pupils with the help of their teachers.

In third position, the materials used are the teacher's guide and images, used in 33,3% of the classes investigated. The teacher's guide is of a great importance in that it helps the teacher to give his/her lesson in an organised way. As far as the images are concerned, they are shown to the learners who have to interprete them orally. The two types of materials are very useful but they are used by a limited number of classes.

Audio-cassettes are seldom used. They are used in 16,6% of the classes. However, such materials are very useful as far as the development of the speaking skill is concerned because the learners get the opportunity to listen to the speech of native speakers of English. All in all, there is lack of suitable materials which would help in developing the speaking skill.

Another problem is that the textbooks are not common to all the classes. Each school has to look for its text books. As a matter of fact, some teachers are provided with useful books whereas others miss them.

4.1.4. The Problems Encountered by Teachers

The classroom observation revealed that the majority of the teachers in Bujumbura private primary schools have a lot of problems. Some are related to the lack of suitable materials, some are due to the lack of time and other to the size of the class. Let's analyse those problems one by one.

4.1.4.1. The Lack of Suitable Materials

If we consider the teaching materials available in Bujumbura private primary schools, we notice that the teachers still lack materials such as audio-visual ones, which are suitable for developing the pupil's oral ability. Yet, the importance of such materials has been stated by Byrne (1976:9) as follows :

> Audio-visual aids provide at all levels a powerful way of stimulating and developing oral ability without recourse to the written language. In addition, neither the course book nor the exercise book proposes enough activities which may involve pupils for a real communication in English.

4.1.4.2. Lack of Enough Time.

During my classroom observation, I have noticed that the teachers don't have enough time to teach the

speaking skill. In fact, most of the classes have 90 minutes per week deserved to the English lesson.

Furthermore, the teacher has to tackle all the four language skills namely, speaking, writing, reading and listening. Henceforth, the teacher cannot get enough time to train the pupils for oral communication In English.

4.1.4.3. The Size of the Class

I have noticed that the big number of learners is also a hindrance to the practice of the speaking skill. In fact, this problem is connected to the preceding one, i.e. lack of enough time. The teacher may wish to give opportunity to all the pupils to speak but he/she fails because they are too many whereas the time is limited.

In short, the English teacher encounters problems which do not allow him/her to develop the speaking skill in his/her learners. This idea is shared by Byrne (1976:1) when he says that :

> In order to develop the oral skills, we have many obstacles to contend for : the size of the class, the arrangement of the classroom, the number of hours available for teaching the language and perhaps the syllabus itself, which may discourage us from giving adequate attention to the spoken language.

4.1.5. The Pupils' Problems

The classroom observation has proved me that the pupils in Bujumbura private primary schools observed have more than one problems. I can mention the communication difficulties, the grammar difficulties and the problems related to vocabulary.

4.1.5.1. Communication Difficulties

I have mentioned earlier that the pupils in Bujumbura private primary schools observed are not trained enough for oral communication in English. Most of the classroom activities are about grammar exercises and sometimes reading aloud some sentences written on the blackboard or in the coursebook.

The pupils should be given opportunity to practise what they have learned in real situations, which is not the case. As a matter of fact, the pupils have problems to express their ideas because they are not trained for that end.

4.1.5.2. Grammar Difficulties

As far as grammar is concerned, it is not developed enough. Among other problems related to grammar, the pupils have the problems related to subject-verb agreement as well as the plural-noun formation. In addition to that, they are not acquainted to the use of the auxiliary "do". This is to mention but a few the

grammar difficulties encountered by the pupils in the classes under study.

4.1.5.3. Problems of Vocabulary

The pupils' vocabulary is limited to some words taught in class because they rarely read books and they are not yet able to use a dictionary. Thus, when they want to speak, they hesitate because they miss words to use in expressing themselves.

All in all, the classroom observation has shown me that the speaking skill is not given its right place. Some reasons are related to the lack of suitable materials, some to the lack of time and others to the size of the class.

4.2. Analysis from the Oral Test Results

This section deals with the analysis and interpretation of the pupils'scores from the oral test. Mention has been made earlier that the oral test suitable for the basic level has been proposed by Portal (1983) and it consists of testing the communicative abilities such as accuracy, appropriacy, range, flexibility and size. Henceforth, I have scored each communicative ability out of 10 i.e.100%.

4.2.1. Accuracy

This communicative ability has to do with exactness of what one needs to communicate without paying much attention to the pronunciation which may be heavily influenced by L1. The following table illustrates the pupils' scores in accuracy.

Table 4. Summary of the Pupils' scores in Accuracy

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	0	0	0	1	6	9	7	14	11	2	50
Percentage	0	0	0	2	12	18	14	28	22	4	100

(General rate of success : 86%)

The results in accuracy were satisfactory, i.e. 86% of the pupils have got over the average, i.e. 50% of the scores. The reason is that the oral test was chosen in accordance with what the pupils were supposed to have been taught. In addition, the examiner was not severe towards pronunciation because at the basic level, one should not be too demanding if the pronunciation is at least intelligible.

4.2.2. Appropriacy

When one is testing appropriacy, he/she is interested in the use of language broadly appropriate to the function though subtility should be expected. The most important thing in this is that the examiner is able to perceive the candidate's intention without excessive effort. See the table here under illustrating the pupils' scores in appropriacy.

Table 5. Summary of the Pupils' scores in Appropriacy

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	0	0	0	0	4	12	16	16	2	0	50
Percentage	0	0	0	0	8	24	32	32	4	0	100

(General rate of success : 92%)

If we analyse the above data, we find that the majority of the pupils have succeeded in appropriacy, i.e. 92% of the pupils have got over the average. The reason of this success is that the examiner has clarified the situation in advance and thus it was easy for the examinees to communicate their intentions.

4.2.3. Range

When one is testing this communicative ability, a severely limited range of expressions is acceptable if

the candidate succeeds to find a way of conveying his meaning (see table 6, about the pupils' scores in range).

Table 6 : Summary of the Pupils' score in Range

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	0	0	0	0	6	6	17	19	2	0	50
Percentage	0	0	0	0	12	12	34	38	4	0	100

(General rate of success :88%)

The pupils have succeeded in range as well, i.e. 88% of the pupils have got over the average. This success is due to the fact that while examining the pupils at the basic level, the examiner does not demands a lot about expressions to use. He/she just seeks to get the desired meaning even through a very limited range of expression.

4.2.4. Flexibility

When one is testing flexibility at basic level, the examinee is not required to take initiative in conversation. Sometimes, it happens to him/her to take time to respond to a change of topic and the interlocutor has to be patient and take a supportive role when necessary. The following table is about the pupils' scores in flexibility.

Table 7 : Summary of the Pupils' Scores in Flexibility

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	0	0	0	2	6	10	8	18	6	0	50
Percentage	0	0	0	4	12	20	16	36	12	0	100

(General rate of success : 84%)

As it is shown above, 84% of the pupils have got over the average. Once again, this is due to the tolerance of the examiner because she was testing the basic level learners. Besides, she was taking on a supportive role whenever it was needed.

4.2.5. Size

It has been said earlier that when one is testing size at the basic level, he/she can accept contributions limited to one or two utterances. The following table summarizes the pupils' scores in size.

Table 8 : Summary of the Pupils Scores in Size

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	0	0	0	0	0	11	10	22	6	1	50
Percentage	0	0	0	0	0	22	20	44	12	2	100

(General rate of success : 100%).

Nobody failed in size, i.e. 100% of the pupils have got over the average. The reason is clear because everybody managed to have at least one or two utterances to express his/her ideas, as it is required in that communicative ability.

All in all, the majority of the pupils succeeded in all the five communicative abilities required at the basic level. The rate of success was 100% in size, 92% in appropriacy, 88% in range, 86% in accuracy and 84% in flexibility. However, we should not rely on the oral test's data to conclude that the speaking skill is given its right place in Bujumbura private primary schools. Instead the success was simply due to the fact that the testing of the oral communicative abilities at the basic level is not too demanding.

4.3. Analysis of the Teachers' Answers

The researcher has found suitable to analyse the teachers' responses to the questionnaire by means of a table which will be interpreted afterwards. The presentation of data in a table allows a sooth reading.

Table 9 : Summary of the teachers' answers (in %) to the questionnaire.

Questions	Answers	%
1. When did the teaching of English begin at your school ?	- No precision but more than two years	50
	- Five years	16,6
	- Two years	16,6
	- Three years	16,6
2. How long have you been teaching the 5th year class ?	- Three years	33,3
	- One year	33,3
	- Two years	33,3
3. What is your opinion about the English programme for 5th year in general ?	- Very difficult	0
	- Difficult	16,6
	- Easy	66,6
	- Boring	0
	- Not suitable	16,6
4. The main objective of teaching the speaking skill is to train the pupils to be able to	- Speak English like native speakers	0
	- To communicate with other people in English	66,6
	- To overcome pronunciation problems	16,6
	- To speak English accurately	33,3
	- To speak English fluently	16,6

	fluently.	
5. Do you think the speaking skill is given its right place ?	- Yes - No - No answer	83,3 16,6 0
6. Do you think the course designers have taken into account the pupils' needs and language teaching purposes ?	- Yes - No - No answer	66,6 16,6 16,6
7. Do the topics tackled in the course book sufficiently involve the learners ?	- Yes - No - No answer	50 33,3 16,6
8. Is the cultural background of your course book appropriate to your learners ?	- Yes - No - No answer	33,3 50 16,6
9. To what extent your course book prepare your learners for a real communication in English ?	- It does not help enough the learners for a real communication in English. Thus, the teacher manages to find situations and materials which may involve more pupils in real communication.	16,6

	- It deals with texts which provide pupils with useful vocabulary and grammar which help them to construct sentences and communicate	16,6
	- There are some dialogues to be acted out.	16,6
	- The topics tackled help the pupils to speak and respond in different situations	16,6
	- No answer	33,3
10. 1) How much time(approximately) do you spend on teaching the speaking skill ?	- 2/3 of the time, i.e. 30 minutes out of 45 minutes.	33,3
	- 20 minutes out of 45 minutes	16,6
	- 15 minutes out of 45 min.	16,6
2) Do you think the time is enough ?	- Almost a half of the time	16,6
	- Not precised but enough	16,6
	- No	66,6

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>- Yes</td><td>33,3</td></tr>
<tr><td>11. Do you find it necessary to emphasize the teaching of the speaking skill ?</td><td>- Yes
- No</td><td>100
0</td></tr>
<tr><td>12. If the answer is no, please give your reasons</td><td>- The teaching of the skill is difficult
- There is lack of time
- There is lack of suitable materials
- My class is too large to handle
- Speaking is not essential
- Others</td><td>0
0
0
0
0
0</td></tr>
<tr><td>13.Classify the skills in terms of their importance. The skills to be classified are Listening, Reading Writing, Speaking.</td><td><table><tr><td>First</td><td>Second</td><td>Third</td><td>Fourth</td></tr><tr><td>Listening</td><td>Speaking</td><td>Reading</td><td>Writing</td></tr><tr><td>Speaking</td><td>Listening</td><td>Reading</td><td>Writing</td></tr><tr><td>Speaking</td><td>Reading</td><td>Writing</td><td>Listening</td></tr></table></td><td>50
33,3
16,6</td></tr>
<tr><td>14.What strategies do you use in the teaching of the speaking skill ?</td><td>- Uttering words and sentences and asking the pupils to repeat.
- Asking the pupils to read</td><td>83,3
16,6</td></tr>
</table>

	aloud the texts in their books or the sentences written on the black-board.	
	- Having the pupils acting out assigned dialogues.	33,3
	- Having the pupils interact in free conversation.	16,6
15.How do you deal with your pupils' speaking errors ?	- Ask pupils to repeat	33,3
	- Utter the correct form and ask the pupils to repeat	66,6
	- Just repeat the word or sentence correctly without asking the pupils to repeat	0
	- Ask another pupil to correct the error	33,3
	- Never get the time to correct all the errors.	0
16.What teaching materials are at your disposal while teaching the speaking skill	- Teacher's guide	33,3
	- Pupil's book	50
	- Some audio cassets	16,6
	- Classroom objects to name	33,3
	- Images to Interprete	33,3
	- Exercise book	50

17.Do you have problems related to the teaching of the speaking skill ?	- Yes - No	83,3 16,6
- If yes, are the problems related to : a) the materials ? b) The big number of pupils ? c) Lack of time ? d) The low level of the pupils in speaking ?	- The materials - The big number of pupils - Lack of time - Low level of the pupils in speaking.	66,6 50 66,6 0
18.From your experience as a teacher, what are the causes of the speaking skill weakness in your pupils' English ?	- Interference from Kirundi - Interference from French - Unfamiliar sounds - The pupils' education background.	0 50 50 0
19.How often do you test the speaking skill ?	- Always - Sometimes - Often - Very often - Seldom (rarely) - Never	33,3 33,3 16,6 16,6 0 0
20.What is the pupils' attitude towards :		

1) English teaching ?	- Not enthusiastic	0
	- Enthusiastic	16,6
	- Very enthusiastic	83,3
2) The speaking skill teaching	- Not enthusiastic	0
	- Enthusiastic	16,6
	- Very enthusiastic	83,3
21. What can you suggest to improve the teaching of the speaking skill ?	- As 5th year pupils are still young to learn much, images and role plays have to take much time.	50
	- All the classes should be provided with audio visual materials	50
	- Lessons should include many exercises related to dialogues and role plays	33,3
	- Teachers should oblige the pupils to speak only English at certain times	16,6
	- The speaking skill should be given priority as far as the time deserved for each skill is concerned.	16,6

The first question sought to know when the teaching of English began at each school understudy. This

question was relevant in that I mentioned that I was interested in pupils who have been studying English at least for two years. Thus, 50% of the teachers answered that the English began more than two years ago though no precision has been made. Other teachers, i.e. 50% answered respectively that English began at their school five years, two years and three years ago.

The second question was about how long the teachers of the classes understudy have been teaching in the 5th year classes. In fact, one's experience influences one's way of answering to questions.

I found that all the teachers have been teaching English in 5th year classes at least for one year and therefore, they were able to answer satisfactorily to my questions. Precisely, 33,3% of the teachers have been teaching English in 5th year class for 3years, 33,3% for one year and 33,3% for two years.

The third and fourth questions intended to know the teachers' opinion about the English programme for 5th year as well as the main objective of teaching the speaking skill. Henceforth, the majority of the teachers, i.e. 66,6 answered that the English programme for 5th year classes is easy whereas others find it difficult (16,6%) and not suitable (16,6%).

As far as the main objective of teaching the speaking skill is concerned, more than a half of the teachers, i.e. 66,6%, answered that the main objective is to train the pupils to be able to communicate with other

people in English. Therefore, they are in favour of the communicative approach to language teaching. In second position, 33,3% of the teachers answered that the speaking skill teaching aims at training the pupils to be able to speak English accurately. There are other teachers (16,6%) who answered that the speaking skill teaching purports to train the pupils to be able to overcome pronunciation problems whereas 16,6% of the teachers asserted that the main objective is to train the pupils to be able to speak English fluently.

The following set of questions, i.e. 5,6,7,8,9 are about the place deserved to the speaking skill teaching in the English curriculum. Thus, the majority of the teachers, i.e. 83,3% asserted that the speaking skill teaching is given its right place in the English curriculum whereas 16,6 of the teachers said that it is not because of the lack of audio-visual materials. Concerning the pupils' needs and language teaching purposes, 66,6% of the teachers said that the course designers have taken into account the pupils' needs and the language teaching purposes in that the programme is suitable to the pupils' level. In addition, the course book contains some exercises such as role plays, which are interesting as far as the oral communication is concerned . However, a half of the teachers complain about the cultural background of the course book which is not suitable to the learners.

The questions from 10 to 13 are about the place deserved to the speaking skill by the teachers. Here, we considered the amount of time devoted to the speaking skill, the necessity to emphasize that skill and its place, compared to the other language skills namely Listening, Reading and Writing.

Concerning the time devoted to the speaking skill teaching, I got five different answers. 33,3% of the teachers said that they devote 2/3 of the time, i.e. 30 minutes out of 45 minutes deserved to the English lesson. 16,6% of the teachers devote 15 minutes, 16,6% devote a half of the time and 16,6% devote a not précised but enough time to the speaking skill teaching.

As far as the necessity to emphasize the teaching of the speaking skill is concerned, all the teachers answered positively. They are conscient of the importance of the speaking skill but they contend for a number of obstacles which do not allow its development.

In classification of the language skills in terms of their importance, 50% of the teachers were in favour of the following classification : Listening-Speaking-Reading-Writing. 33,3% of the teachers classified the language as follows : Speaking-Listening-Reading-Writing.

Only 16,6% of the teachers preferred to classify them as: Speaking-Reading-Writing-Listening.

In fact, most of the teachers give priority to the oral skills, i.e. Listening-Speaking and vice versa because the oral communication is a two way process between the speaker and the listener. This idea is supported by Byrne (1976:9) who states that :

> In the classroom, appropriate provision has to be made to see that the two oral skills are integrated through situations which permit and encourage authentic communication.

The set of questions from 14 to 19 are about the speaking skill teaching itself. They take into account the strategies used, the materials, the problems encountered and the testing.

As far as strategies used are concerned, most of the teachers, i.e. 83,3%, utter words and sentences and ask the pupils to repeat. In second position, 33,3% of the teachers propose dialogues to be acted out by the pupils. 16,6% of the teachers ask the pupils to read aloud the texts in their books while others, i.e. 16,6%, propose the pupils to interact in free conversations.

When the pupils make the speaking errors, their teachers deal with those errors in different ways. The majority of the teachers, i.e. 66,6%, utter the correct form and ask the pupils to repeat. Two other ways used by teachers, i.e. 33,3%, are to ask a pupil to repeat the error and another pupil to correct it.

With regards to the teaching materials, a half of the teachers are provided with the pupil's book and the exercise book. 33,3% of the teachers have the teacher's guide, 33,3% have images to be interpreted, 33,3% have classroom objects to name and only 16,6% of the teachers are provided with some audio cassets.

Concerning the problems related to the speaking skill teaching, most of the teachers, i.e. 83,3%, said that they have many problems. 66,6 % of the teachers complain about lack of materials and lack of time whereas 50% of the teachers complain about the big number of pupils.

Furthermore, the teachers revealed some causes of the speaking skill weakness in their pupils.50% of the teachers find that their pupils' speaking errors are due to the interference from French whereas others, i.e. 50% talked of unfamiliar sounds.

As no teaching should not be done without testing, the teachers were asked a question about how often they test the speaking skill. Henceforth, 33,3% said that they always test the speaking skill, 33,3% of them said that they often test it and 16,6% of the teachers said that they test the speaking skill very often.

The 20th question was about the pupils' attitude towards the English teaching in general and the speaking skill teaching in particular. 83,3% of the teachers' answered that most of the pupils are very enthusiastic

towards the English teaching in general and the speaking skill teaching in particular. Only 16,6% of the teachers said that their pupils are enthusiastic. In fact, the pupils' attitude is very important as far as the language teaching is concerned because when the pupils are interested, they learn better.

The last question (21) was about suggestions made by the teachers to improve the teaching of the speaking skill. Henceforth, the teachers gave the following suggestions :

- As 5th year pupils are still too young to learn much, images or illustrations and role plays have to take much time than texts or grammatical rules.
- Classes should be provided with audio-visual materials.
- Lessons should include many exercises related to dialogues and role plays.
- Teachers should oblige pupils to speak only English at certain times.
- The speaking skill should be given priority as far as the time deserved for each skill is concerned.

CHAP.5. Conclusions and Recommendations

This Chapter will deal with conclusions from my data analysis. It also tackles recommendations.

5.1. Conclusions

I have mentioned earlier that to collect my data, I used three procedures, namely, classroom observation, oral test and teachers' questionnaire. All these procedures were chosen in order to seek answers to my research questions which deserve to be mentioned again :

(i) What are the oral activities taught in Bujumbura private primary school ?

(ii) How much time is given to the learners to practise oral communication activities ?

(iii) What are the methods that are used in the teaching of oral communication skills ?

(iv) What are the possible causes of failure recorded in the speaking skill learning and teaching ?

(v) What improvements should be made and which strategies should be used to develop the teaching of the speaking skill in primary schools ?

After collecting my data, I proceeded to their analysis and interpretation to see to what extent they respond to my expectations with regards to my research questions mentioned above. Henceforth, I was satisfied to

realise that all my questions have found suitable answers.

To begin with the first research question about the oral activities taught in Bujumbura private primary schools, I identified the activities commonly used. They are Reading aloud, Answering to comprehension questions loudly, Interpretation of images, naming some objects and acting out dialogues.

As far as the time devoted to the learners to practise the speaking skill is concerned, my observation and the teachers' responses revealed that it is not enough. In fact, I noticed that the time devoted to the English lesson is not enough and yet the speaking skill is not the only language skill to teach, there are also writing, reading and listening.

Concerning the methods used in the teaching of the speaking skill, the teachers commonly use the following :

- Giving cues and asking the pupils to utter the required sentence
- Offering a model of pronunciation and asking the pupils to interprete them.
- Showing objects and asking the pupils to name them.
- Showing images and asking the pupils to interprete them.

- Proposing dialogues to be acted out.

With regards to the possible causes of failure recorded in the speaking skill learning and teaching, I found that there are problems related to the lack of suitable materials, lack of time and the size of the class which makes it difficult to train all the pupils for a real communication in English. In addition, the pupils have problems due to the interference from French and unfamiliar sounds.

Finally, while answering to the last question of the questionnaire, the teachers provided me with useful suggestions as far as the improvement of the teaching of speaking skill is concerned. Therefore, my last research question got a response from the teachers' answers to the last question of the questionnaire.

5.2. Recommendations

By the end of my research, I would like to give recommendations. Some are addressed to the course designers, and others to the English teachers.

5.2.1. To the Course Designers

First and foremost, the course designers should take into account the pupils' needs and the language teaching purposes. Thus, they should consider the pupils' level

and their socio-cultural background. In so doing, they would come up with a programme suitable to the learners.

Furthermore, the course designers should provide all the teachers with enough materials. These should include teacher's guide, the pupil's book, the exercise book, images for illustration, audio-visual materials etc...

With regards to the exercise book, it should contain many exercises related to dialogues and role plays, bearing in mind the importance of such activities as far the oral communication is concerned.

After noticing the impact of the lack of time on the speaking skill teaching, the course designers should increase the time devoted to the English lesson per week. In so doing, they would allow the teachers to get enough time to train their learners for a real communication in English.

5.2.2. To the teachers

First of all, the teacher should bear in mind that he is a model for his pupils. Therefore, he has to check, in advance, whether he has a sufficient grasp of the knowledge he has to transmit to his learners.

Furthermore, a teacher of English should not rely on the materials provided in the classroom because they are not enough. Thus, he should be in continuous search for suitable materials which would help him to teach the speaking skill successfully.

Likewise, a teacher of English should look for various and suitable methods which would involve more learners in oral communication. Henceforth, it is up to the teacher to create a favourable environment as well as opportunities to communicate for his learners.

In addition, a teacher of English should be able to identify the pupils needs by means of regular testing. In doing, he would be able to adjust his methods accordingly.

Above all, an English teacher should be open minded, i.e. willing to consider new ideas. Thus, he should have the eagerness to read books and cooperate with colleagues and others in order to improve his knowledge.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

As a student in the Department of the English Language and Literature, I felt concerned by the Burundians' failure to express themselves orally in English, even at a high level of education. Thus, I decided to investigate in order to seek a solution to such a problem.

To begin with, I tried to look for the possible causes of oral communication weakness. I thought that the English teaching system itself may be at the basis of that failure. Thus, I evaluated the teaching of the speaking skill in looking at the activities related to that skill, the teaching methods and materials as well as the time devoted to the teaching of the speaking skill.

I collected data by means of classroom observation, oral test and teacher's questionnaire. The data analysis revealed me that the teachers in Bujumbura private primary schools encounter a number of problems which handicap the development of the oral communication ability. Some problems are related to the lack of suitable materials, others to the size of the class and others to the lack of time.

Therefore, I gave recommendations to the course designers and English teachers. The recommendations were intended to improve the English language teaching in

general and the speaking skill teaching in particular. This will help to overcome the oral communication problems from the basic level.

However, as my study was limited in time and space, I could not pretend to have tackled all the aspects of my topic. Henceforth, I would like to invite other researchers to deal with the remaining aspects.

In fact, I have focussed on the speaking skill and therefore, further research could be done on the other language skills. Furthermore, since I have been interested in the 5th year classes, other researchers could work on the other classes.

Another interesting field would be the English language teaching in a special school called "the King's School", settled in Kinindo Quarter. In that School, all the teaching, from the first Nursery class upwards, is conducted in English. Thus, by the 5th year, all the children have acquired a high competence in spoken English. Indeed, English is the medium of play and general conversation amongst the pupils.

Finally, there should be research intending to find out better methods. Such methods would bring about best results as far as the English Language teaching in general and the speaking skill teaching in particular are concerned.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Communicative Approach Vs Audiolingual approach	Audio Lingual Approach Communicative approach
1. Attends to structure and form more than meaning	Meaning is paramount
2. Demands memorization of structure-based dialogues	Dialogues, if used, center around communicative functions and are not normally memorized.
3. Language items are not necessary contextualized.	Contextualization is a basic premise.
4. Language learning is learning structure, sounds or words.	Language learning is learning to communicate.
5. Mastery, or "over-learning" is sought.	Effective communication is sought.

6. Drilling is a central technique.	Drilling may occur, but But peripherally.
7. Native speaker-like pronunciation is sought.	Comprehensive pronunciation is sought.
8. Grammatical explanation is avoided.	Any device which helps the learners is accepted- varying according to their age, interest, etc…
9. Communicative activities only come after a long process of rigid drills and exercises.	attempts to communicate may be encouraged from the very beginning.
10. The use of student's native language is forbidden.	judicious use of native language is acceptable Where feasible (possible).
11. Translation is forbidden at early levels	Translation may be used where students need students need or benefit from it.

12. Reading and writing are deferred (delayed) till speech is mastered.	Reading and writing ca start from the first day, if desired.
13. The target linguistic system will be learned through the overt teaching of the patterns	The target linguistic system will be learned best through the process of struggling to communicate.
14. Linguistic competence is desired goal.	Communicative competence is is the desired goal.(i.e.) the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately.
15. Varieties of language are recognized but not emphasized.	Linguistic variation is central concept in materials and methodology.
16. The sequence of units solely by principles of linguistic complexity.	sequencing is determined by consideration of the content, function, or Meaning which maintains interest.

17. The teacher controls the learners and prevents them from Anything that conflicts With theory.	Teachers help learners in any way that motivates them to work with the language.
18. "Language is habit" so errors must be avoided at all costs.	Language is created by the the individual often through trial and error.
19. Accuracy, in terms of formal correctness, is a primary goal.	Fluency and acceptable language is the primary is judged not in the abstract but in context.
20. Students are expected to interact with the language system, embodied in machines or controlled materials.	students are expected to interact with other people, either in the flesh, through pair and group work, or in their writings.
21. The teacher is expected to specify the language that students are to Use.	The teacher cannot know to exactly what language the students will use.

22. Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in the structure of the Language.	Intrinsic motivation will spring from an interest in what is being communicated by the language.

Appendix II

Items for classroom observation

- **Activities related to the speaking skill**
- **The teaching methods**
- **The teaching materials**
- **The teachers' problems**
- **The pupils' problems.**

Appendix III

The pupils' test

A dialogue related to family relations

Researcher : **Good morning.**

Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How are you ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **What is your name ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How old are you ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have parents ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have grand parents ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How many grand parents do you have ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have brothers ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How many brothers do you have ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have sisters ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How many sisters do you have ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have uncles ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **How many uncles do you have ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have aunts ?**
Pupils : .....
Researcher : **How many aunts do you have ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Do you have cousins ?**
Pupil : .....
Researcher : **Good bye.**
Pupil : .....

Appendix IV

The teacher's questionnaire

Dear sir/madam,

I am a student at the University of Burundi and, for the time being, I am carrying out a research on speaking skill teaching in primary school.

The following is a questionnaire designed for 5th year teachers of English. It aims at evaluating the speaking skill teaching at that level. It also aims at investigating the problems encountered while teaching the speaking skill.

If objectively answered, this questionnaire will be vital to the completion of the study whose title is "EVALUATION OF SPEAKING SKILL TEACHING IN BUJUMBURA PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS : THE CASE OF 5th YEAR PUPILS".

Henceforth, I would be very grateful if you could answer as sincerely as possible to the following questions.

Thank you for your cooperation.

BAHENDA Floride

Informant's particulars

Name	:
Surname	:
Experience(Number of years	:
Qualification	:
University attended	:
Sex	:
Native language	:
Second language	:
Third language	:
Age	:

1) When did the teaching of English begin at your school ?

2) How long have you been teaching the 5th year class ?

3) What is your opinion about the English program for 5th year in general ?

   a) very difficult ☐
   b) Difficult ☐
   c) Easy ☐
   d) Boring ☐
   e) Not suitable ☐

4) The main objective of teaching the speaking skill is to train the pupils to be able :

   a) To speak English like native speakers ☐
   b) To communicate with other people in English ☐
   c) To overcome pronunciation problems ☐
   d) To speak English accurately ☐
   e) Do you speak English fluently ☐

5) Do you think the speaking skill is given its right place in the English curriculum ?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

6) Do you think the course designers have taken into account the pupil's needs and the language teaching purposes.

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please give further comments.

7) Do the topics tackled in the coursebook Sufficiently involve learners ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Please give further comments.

8) Is the cultural background of your coursebook appropriate to your learners ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If no, what suggestions could you make for improvements ?

9) To what extent your course book prepare your learners for real communication in English ?

10) How much time (approximately) do you spend on
1. teaching the speaking skill ?
2. Do you think the time spent on teaching the speaking skill is enough to develop this skill in the learners ?

11) Do you find it necessary to emphasize the teaching of the speaking skill ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12) If the answer is no, please give your reasons.

a) The teaching of the speaking skill is difficult ☐

b) There is lack of time ☐

c) There is lack of suitable materials ☐

d) My class is large and therefore difficult to handle ☐

e) Speaking is not essential ☐

f) Other

13) Classify the skills in terms of their importance.
The skills to be classified are : Listening, Writing, Speaking and Reading.

Very important	Rather important	Important	Not important

Justify your classification.

14) What strategies do you use in the teaching of the speaking skill ?

a) Uttering words and sentences and asking the pupils to repeat after me ☐

b) Asking the pupils to read aloud the texts in their books or sentences written on the black board ☐

c) Having the pupils act out assigned dialogues ☐

d) Having the pupils interact in free conversations ☐

15) How do you deal with your pupils' speaking errors ?

a) Ask pupils to repeat ☐
b) Utter the correct form and ask the pupils to repeat ☐

c) Just repeat the word or sentence correctly without asking the pupils to repeat ☐
d) Ask another pupil to correct the error ☐
e) Never get the time to correct all the speaking errors. ☐

16) What teaching materials are at your disposal while teaching the speaking skill ?

17) Do you have any problems related to the teaching of the speaking skill ?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, are the problems related to :

a) The materials ? ☐
b) The big number of pupils ☐
c) Lack of time ☐
d) Low level of the pupils ☐

18) From your experience as a teacher, what are the causes of the speaking skill weakness in your pupils' English ?

a) Interference from Kirundi ☐
b) Interference from French ☐
c) Unfamilial sounds ☐
d) The pupils' educational background ☐
e) Previous teachers' speaking accent ☐

19) What is the pupils' attitude towards :

1) English teaching

a) Not enthusiastic ☐
b) Enthusiastic ☐
c) Very enthusiastic ☐

20) How often do you test the speaking skill ?

a) Always ☐
b) Sometimes ☐

c) Often ☐
d) Very often ☐
e) Seldom (rarely) ☐
f) Never ☐

21) What can you suggest to improve the teaching of the speaking skill.

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