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Factors affecting students' proficiency in english writing skills in second form arts. A comparative study in selected public and private schools of Bujumbura municipality

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH – KIRUNDI DEPARTMENT

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS'PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH WRITING SKILLS IN SECOND FORM ARTS. A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS OF BUJUMBURA MUNICIPALITY

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "**Licencié en Pédagogie Appliquée, Agrégé de l'Enseignement Secondaire en Anglais** "

Bujumbura, November 2017

DEDICATION

To my late father,

To my beloved mother,

To Paul Nditije and his family,

To Jean de Dieu Nizigiyimana and his family,

I warmly dedicate this work.

Jérôme Hitimana

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I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all those who have contributed in a way or another to the elaboration of this work. It is unfortunate, however that I cannot list them all here, but some of them deserve special attention.

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Profound gratitude goes to my parents who have done all their best to make me what I am.

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All my thanks are expressed to all teachers who contributed to my education from primary school to University with special regards to all lecturers of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy (IAP), English-Kirundi Department, for the instruction and knowledge I got from them. Last but not least, I owe more than I can express to a number of friends and relatives whose moral and material support greatly contributed to the achievement of this work.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B.A : Bachelor of Arts

BEPEPF : Bureau d'Etude des Programmes de l'Enseignement Post Fondamental

COMIBU : Communauté Islamique du Burundi

etc : et caetera (Latin): and the others, and so on

i.e : id est (Latin) : that is to say

I.S.P : Institut Secondaire Polyvalent

OUP : Oxford University Press

PUF : Presses Universitaires de France

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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ABSTRACT

This study aims at assessing some factors that affect students' proficiency in English writing skills. In order to assess factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills the work had to answer three research questions about methods used by teachers and how they are used, materials available and attitudes of students towards English and particularly the writing skill. This consisted in a comparative study of public secondary schools and private secondary schools. The data collected in those two kinds of educational institutions were put together, analysed, interpreted and compared. The analysis of data revealed that the factors are the same in public secondary schools as well as in private ones. The lack of teaching materials, the wrong use of chosen methods in teaching the writing skill and the attitude of students towards English and towards the writing skill in particular are some of the factors that negatively affect students' proficiency in writing in second form arts in public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura municipality. To find solutions to these problems, some recommendations were made to different partners in this process namely teachers, students, the Government through the Ministry of Education and future researchers.

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CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I. 1. Introduction

Nowadays, education plays a great role in the development of each part of the world. No country can pretend to be developed when its citizens are not educated. In order to facilitate education, many factors have to intervene if not education fails. Some of the factors that promote education are the availability of teaching materials student's attitudes and teaching methods

Hence, educational systems face a lot of problems especially in developing countries and our country cannot escape from those problems of getting sufficient teaching materials for all the children who are ready to attend school. This insufficiency of teaching aids joined with the lack of adequate teaching methodology are likely to affect students' proficiency in a negative way.

However, if there are problems that affect the teaching and learning of the writing skills, it is up to the government to play its role in order to solve those problems.

As far as this comparative study is concerned the main goals of a such study are to find out strengths and weaknesses with the intention of improvement because when a parent sends his child to school, this is not enough, ton know how he works during school activities is very important. This fact is shared by all partners involved in education namely the government, the educators and the parents.

In our country, parents who send their children to private schools pay a lot of money than those who send their children in public schools. This is why a comparative study is necessary in order to have a general idea about differences and similarities related to teaching and learning process in both types of educational institutions.

I. 2. Background to the study

Writing as a skill has been accorded little attention in Burundian education as Alimasi (2010:2) believes. In second form Arts, very little of the writing sub-skills such as letter writing and filling forms are emphasized taught or encouraged. The only types of writing that learners engage at this level is task-oriented, that is, answering questions, writing notes preparing and writing. All of which are neither original nor creative in nature.

Writing like speaking is a productive skill and praise a vital role in language learning and teaching process. The writing skill is a key factor in the functional use of language. For learners' academic needs, writing is central in the learning of all subjects. In this connection, Gakiza (2004:5) says that:

"Outside class and in the world of work, learners need writing skills to accomplish a variety of tasks like filling forms, taking minutes, writing reports, filling instructions, making requests and inquiries, letters of apology and explanation, letters of application and other numerous activities".

This is why the researcher chose to carry a study on writing and not the aspects of language. Moreover, at this level learners engage in many writing activities in the form of note-taking and note-making, writing essays in examinations and assignments. There is non formal endeavour to help learners at this level to produce reasonable and good writing.

I our country where English has been recently adopted as an official language special attention must be paid to the language more than ever in past because many reasons today continue to give it power and strengths.

I.3. Statement of the problem

English is important in the world of communication both in English and French speaking countries. Burundi, for example, where French is used as an official language, has recently adopted English as an official language.

Hence, secondary school students need to master all the language skills especially the techniques related to writing skill. Although English is taught in public and private secondary schools, students of second form arts section do not communicate efficiently through writing in English as Manirabarusha (2005:4) says. Yet, it is desirable that a student of second form arts section becomes a proficient communicator through writing in English. It is therefore necessary to discover factors behind the low level in writing which prevent students from becoming skilled in writing.

I.4. Aim of the study

This work aims at investigating factors that are likely to affect students' proficiency in writing in both public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura municipality. Factors that may hamper students' proficiency in English and especially in the writing skill are investigated and the expected results will show whether these factors are the same in these two types of educational institutions. The research focuses on methods used by teachers, materials that are available and students' attitudes towards English in general and the writing skill in particular.

I.5.Research questions

This work seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent is writing proficiency influenced by teachers' methodology in public and private schools?

2. How far does the lack of teaching materials affect the students' proficiency in both types of educational institutions?

3. What attitude do students in both public and private secondary schools have towards the English writing skills?

I.6.Research hypotheses

1. Teachers' methodology has an effect on students' proficiency in writing.

2. The lack of teaching materials is an obstacle to the development of the writing skill.

3. Students have a negative attitude towards the writing skill in English.

I.7. Scope and delimitation of the study

This study entitled "factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills intends to be carried out in some selected second form Arts classes of the public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura municipality. The class of second form arts was chosen because it is the one in which student are aligned to the orientation of the section. It would be better to conduct such a study in every public secondary school and in every private secondary school of Burundi. But, given the lack of time and financial facilities it would not be possible for the researcher to carry out this study in the whole country.

I.8.Definition of key terms

In this work, some words and expressions are used and have meanings which are particular to the context of this study. Some of this words and expressions are the following:

Public schools: we understand schools which are directly controlled by the Government. Those schools benefit from the financial support of the Government in

every domain. It is the government which pays the staff of public schools and buys equipments for those schools.

Private schools: Private education is that provided in institutions managed by private persons. Private schools are those educational institutions which are initiated by individual laymen or by religious bodies or other associations. Hence, the funding of a school is from sources other than the government and the funding is provided by individual students' parents or/and by benefactors.

Attitude: In general, it is the state of mind, a feeling of students with regards to English as a foreign language. It may be positive or negative. It reflects whether they like or dislike English.

I.9.Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, the readers are informed about the investigation of factors that may hamper students' proficiency in English writing skills in both public and private secondary schools. Then, I formulated hypotheses that may explain students' low proficiency in written English. This general introduction covers different sections namely the background to the student, the statement of the problem, the aim of the study the research question and hypotheses, the scope and delimitation of the study, and the definitions of key terms. The following chapter deals with a review of the related literature.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II.1. Introduction

The study of literature that is related to any research endeavour is very important because it allows one to be aware of the available writings about the subject under study. This gives the researcher the opportunity to determine the relationships between the available literature and the current investigation. Here, Borg, W. R § Gall M. D. (1983:60) are clear in this sense:

> *"In order for you to plan a research project that will contribute a new piece of the picture, you must carefully study and interpret the pieces other researchers have contributed. This process is called "Reviewing the literature".*

The sections of this chapter are set around the following major points: the meaning of writing, its importance, the relationships between writing and other skills as well as factors hampering students' proficiency in writing.

II.2. What is writing?

To give a clear and sharp definition of writing seems difficult because this idea involves many activities. According to Nunan (1989:85), its simplest form consists in putting down some utterances in conventional graphic symbols, which are letters and combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we make when we speak and those symbols make sense in the community that uses a certain system of communication. This form of writing is called "notation".

Lado (1961:103) argues that when the student must recognize some units, the process is called "spelling". Writing becomes then more complicated as it involves combination of words which might be spoken. Then, this is called "a writing practice". Finally, there

exists a most highly developed activity that consists of expressing ideas in a consecutive way. In this connection, Ndayishimiye (2000:15) who quoted Rivers (1968:20) puts that: "The ultimate aim of a writer at this stage is to be able to express himself in a polished literary form which requires utilization of special vocabulary, and a certain refinement of structures."

As a matter of fact, accurate and idiomatic writing is quite different from the mere gathering of language elements in some artificial way, as it must allow a given arrangement according to conventions to form words and words have to form sentences. Taking into account what we have already said above, many writers tried to define writing in their proper words. For Brumfit (1979:21), "*writing is not language but merely a way of recording language by visible marks*". *According to White (1989:259) "writing remains the commonest way of examining students' performance both in language and other subjects*".

In dealing with this work, therefore, writing has so many other definitions. When we take into account the authors, we can say that language is clearly much more than the production of sounds and symbols and sustain the following definition given by Araproff (1975:233) who states that: *"Writing is much more than an orthographic symbolization of speech. It is most importantly a purposeful selection and organization of experience".*

In fact, since writing requires much time and concentration to attain some purpose, I can say that it is quite a vital skill in the use of language that is for communication and that teaching and learning are the key factors in their use of language.

II.3. The usefulness of writing English

Writing is important in English as well as in other languages as writing is sometimes used to communicate with other people even from remote distances. It also helps people

to keep a record of what they say, think, plan and even learn. According to Baribarira (1993: 56), "writing is important because the world has been engaged in official affairs so that everything must be formal". This means that if you want to undertake an activity such as applying for a job, a scholarship or any other activity you need to write. Talking about teaching English as a second language, Scarcella and Oxford (1992:117) adopted a similar position. They say that *"In learning English as a second language program students quickly discover that their survival, in academic settings depends on their ability to write in that language."*

According to White (989:260), writing is used as a gate keeping function, which the learners have to use for a writing test or examination. This is true as much as in many universities all over the world, students are evaluated on the basis of their written work.

Students who acquire strong writing skills are likely to advance in academic pursuit with less problems than those who are not skilled in writing as Scarcella and Oxford (1992:117) believe.. For this reason, writing needs to be given priority for advancement in academic pursuit. But despite this importance of writing, it is not always easy to acquire or teach this skill. In this connection,

Nunan (1989:35) argues that: "*Learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the writing skill for all language users regardless of whether the language question is a first, second, or foreign language.*"

Writing is the most difficult of the four skills for t is joined to the thinking process. The process of learning to write is largely a process of learning to think more clearly.

Nunan (1989:30) also states that: *"Though writing is important, it remains difficult for learners in the sense that writing cannot be naturally learned whereas we know almost all children learn to comprehend and speak their native languages in a natural way."*

Then, if we want the learners to learn or perform well in their writing activities and use good writing in their everyday communication, that is, fluently and accurately, attention must be paid to the teaching and learning styles of the writing skill, a task which is not always easy as we may think.

Byrne (1984:15), Wilkins (1984:34), Brown and Yule (1984:52) believe that "writing is joined to the thinking process because as some of them argue, to listen does not demand a lot of thought but to write demands plenty of it". Allen and Campbell (1979:33) say that "the process of learning to write is largely a process of learning to think more clearly". We can understand that effective learning of the writing skill therefore implies effective thinking processes; this will help in answering the needs of secondary school students.

II.4. Relationships between writing and other language skills

There are four main skills that make up a language. When you know a language, this implies that you master them. Those are: speaking, writing, reading and listening. And the relationships between them is undeniable and this means that teaching one of them in isolation is excluding the others and this would not make much sense. Abbot and Wingard (1981:26) point out that *"If we analyse listening, speaking, reading and writing, we find a large overlap among the component skills involved in them. There are differences of course, but there are elements in common"*.

As far as writing is concerned, as earlier mentioned, it is related to other language skills. It is therefore necessary that should not be isolated from the other language skills, but should rather be integrated to them in the learning process; let us now have a look at the connection that is between writing and the other skills.

H .4.1 Writing and speaking

Writing and speaking are both means of communication using words; in speech one has the chance to explain his point of view in different ways, one can use gestures, repetition, intonation, until his interlocutor is satisfied. However, in writing, the audience is not present, the writer has to rely on the only language he processes. He uses the linguistic resources of a language. As far as the relationships between writing and speaking are concerned Harmer (1986:38), Tomlinson (1988:40) and Lado (1961:239) argue that speaking is the most important of the skills. They stress the importance of speech over writing.

II.4.2: Writing and reading

The relationships between writing and reading are that a given language must be written and read afterwards. No one can read a language unless it is written.

Frisby (1957:32) points out that; *"Reading widens our horizon and knowledge of our experience of language. When we copy down what we have read and what we have said or what we hear others say, we fix that piece of language."*

Reading what we have written and other people's writings help us to become more familiar with written symbols.

It is through reading that we acquire sufficient knowledge, which is necessary for writing. The purpose of analyzing any kind of literature is to increase and widen vocabulary items and their context of use. Kyeyune (1991:27) quoted by Nyamukenga (1983:11) states that: *"Enrichment of idea comes with enrichment of vocabulary gained from the experience of new words, new modifications of words and new ways of using them. This is an important factor in writing because the student who reads widely is*

involved in varied contexts of words and meanings and therefore varied contexts of real-life situations."

While reading, students discover different types of subjects which broaden the reader' variety of language and which further facilitate the composition activity. In this perspective, Nzikoruriho (1991: 7) believes that those who read much are those who are good writers and that poor writers are not good readers. Writing should thus be adequately taught via other writers' style. This makes students discover the styles and the language of sending messages.

The teacher's great role thus is that of encouraging students to read novels or any English writing, which should be done as outside activities for there is no room for reading during lessons. However, reading should be integrated into the activities such as discussions or exposés as it is usually practiced in the French language in many secondary schools.

Although reading is an activity that helps much writing performance, finding sufficient reading materials would cause much trouble in many Burundi secondary schools because many of these schools are not equipped with libraries. Editorials, journals and other writings are of much help in composition improvement.

Nonetheless, if reading different types of subjects is encouraged, students should know what they need from such or such other literature; that is they should pick up from those writings ways and manners to communicate their ideas and opinions and reach a certain purpose.

II.4.3 Writing and listening

A relationship also exists between listening and writing. We may, for instance, listen to a tape and write out sometimes what we hear learners may listen to the story and write a summary or simply the lecturer while giving a lecture; students take notes from what he/she is saying.

From the above, we notice that writing is very important like other skills in communication and when one reaches this stage, that is, when one knows well to write one is considered as someone who has mastered the language.

II.5. Factors hindering students' proficiency in writing

Teaching and learning English as a second or foreign language is not an easy task. As Manirabarusha (2005:13) believes. He sustains Brown and Yule (1984:5)' idea who state that writing is joined to the thinking process.

II.5.1. Teaching methods

Teachers have to familiarize students with the topics they are going to develop and this topic should be interesting for the students. Before involving students in free writing, teachers should divide them into groups and the teachers' role is to work with each group separately. Teachers are especially expected to help groups which encounter many difficulties in writing practice. To check students' attitudes should be given priority as motivation as one of the key factors which read to success in teaching/learning process. In this connection, Bakundukize (2003:18) states that: *"Factors like motivation, interest or in other words "the positive attitude" to a given subject influence to a high extent students' performance in language acquisition in general and in the learning of the writing skill in particular."*

Attitude is essential in learning a subject for it affects the performance in that subject. A positive attitude prompts the learner to be adequately equipped with a concentration, which helps to get a deep insight into the subject concerned. Therefore, as Bakundukize (2003:19) holds: *"The learner becomes as if endowed with a natural ability to discover what needs to be retained in the subject he is learning".*

Hence, the teachers' goal is to check students' motivation and put it at the central position because it is the key to success in the teaching and learning process of English in general and the writing skill in particular.

II. 5.1.1. The stages of composition

According to Pincas (1982:25), teaching good writing skills goes through four steps: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing and finally free writing.

a. Familiarization is a step where the learner acknowledges writing rules and norms. The teacher will prepare the learners to the actual writing tasks. Hence, what will be done and how, what to avoid or to take care of, but a few aspects which the lesson should rely on. Through this stage, students will identify and evaluate particular skills under study. Some other elements such as linking words, punctuation to name but a few are things that should not be left aside.

b. Controlled writing is a step where students are shown how to reduce errors. By this stage, teachers are also helped to point out aspects of language that are well mastered and the ones which are not, and by this, they will know where to focus their maximum attention. In Ellis and Thomilnson point of view (1988:27), controlled writing reduces the number of errors the students make. Controlled writing provides the students with both the context and expression making them capable of using all types of language knowledge they possess.

c. The guided writing lesson as Pincas (1982:79) believes, should provide the students from which to expand. Through variable tasks students, will show their ability to write a composition in a sequence of words and sentences, putting punctuation and using liking words in appropriate, good and well organized paragraphs.

Thus, students should be asked to write a composition individually after they have satisfactorily worked through the above steps.

d. Finally, there is a free writing step. At this stage, students are supposed to be mature enough.

Consequently students can work by themselves without any other teacher's special guidance. They write freely any given topic. A topic that has been practiced under teacher's control and teacher's guidance becomes easier to write on in this last step. Pincas (1982:81) is clear when he says that: *"At all levels, students must be taught what they have to write, rather than being allowed to swim to sink. This does not mean that all errors can be avoided but they will be considerably lessened after good preparation".*

Those are the main steps required for teaching good writing skills. Carelessness about any of these stages would make students unable to write an accurate composition work. These steps are of great importance. However, other approaches should be used so that students can put into practice these four steps mentioned above while learning writing skills. These are:

II.5.1.2. Working in groups

Many researchers believe that languages are easily learnt in groups rather than in isolation. As they maintain any writing is primarily speech, which is of course delivered in group. Writing activity starts in the spoken form of the language at which stage the

student's tell about their experiences before they give them form. Hence differences with regard to home environment in which elements like the family events, activities, experiences, relationships and parents' attitudes are included stand as both sources of inspiration and information for the group members. Group work methodology creates a brand new world where different ideas and experiences are naturally and autonomously exchanged, which brings students' enjoyment and success.

Grundy and Brookes (1995:69) believe that working in a group is more advantageous than individually. They maintain that group work encourages peer-correction in writing.

According to Byrne (1984:72) group work has many different advantages. Group work is a more efficient way of teaching subject matters. He strongly holds this point of view and thinks that it is "a democratic impulse which is based on a belief that authoritarian procedures inhibit learning. Hence, teachers are required to be watchful and to forget for a while their role as instructors: a mode of teaching which will inhibit learning. Instead, they should let learners work together and make some discoveries for themselves. In this connection, Grundy and Brookes (1995: 67-68) discredit the authoritarian method which is a method that makes a diving line between the teacher and his learners. They strongly hold that teachers should be equal to their students. They argue that: *"If the traditional classroom was one in which the encounter of unequals, these exercises offer the possibility of the teacher working as equal within a group which learners have formed."*

Working in group is one among other methods used in the teaching-learning process, especially in practice of writing skills. The teacher must deeply analyze how the practice of writing skills takes place for it is practice which helps students improve their skills.

II.5.1.3 Students' proofreading

According to Manirabarusha (2005:21), a paragraph or two can be sufficient which makes the marking easier. He argues that 10 assignments a term which makes 30 compositions every year are sufficient. In fact, it is only after students have had a lot of practice that they become able to write fluently and accurately. In this connection, Ingram and King (1980:2) quoted by Bakundukize (2003:9) writes that:

> *"In such activities as writing and composing students, need more exposure and practice rather than pure grammar lessons. That is why it is maintained that a preparatory stage that allows learners to make enough practice familiarity with the topic through multi drafting is the most appropriate."*

They continue to state that control of tenses and other grammar items through much exposure and practice should be done through composition activities rather than through explicit grammar lessons.

Learners should rely more on practice of composition and be taught how to manage self-correction before they hand over copies to teachers to be marked.

Proofreading is an activity, which consists of reading once, two times, three times one's copy in order to correct different kinds of errors found in one's work. In this perspective, Mbabazi (1991:28) believes that "The final draft should be regarded, except only in examination, as something to be read over, weighed up and worked on". Put differently, learners have to check their grammatical errors in their final draft. Hence, Mbabazi (1991:16) maintains that students should check another draft and redo the work after they have reread their copies and found some mistakes. This is known as the multi drafting system which in the above author's point of view consists of "drafting followed by revision on the basis of pointed feedback from the teacher and self-

reflection". In this point of view, this is one of many other factors contributing to the learners' writing skills improvement.

II.5.1.4. Learner's mind through his work

The teacher's deep analysis of the student's work reveals somehow the learner's mind and character. A well developed, understandable and easy to follow piece of writing reflects its author's minds' maturity and level of development.

Nzikoruriho (1991:7) holds that "Words are part of man's very nature and reach not his ears only but his very soul". Any teacher's purpose should be that of checking to know the student's mind and character and then root out all the possible errors

reflected in the work produced. This is achieved through a deep analysis of students' copies.

In the same perspective, Anthony (1988:84) indicates that: *"The key to a successful learning project is for the teacher to monitor the students' work regularly and frequently ... You will need to get together with each individual group, sorting out and resolving all the visual (....) reasons why students have been unable to make progress."*

In this same line of ideas, Nzikoruriho (1991:7) holds that writing is a thinking process. According to him, good writing reflects a clear way of thinking. He said: *"When writing the students must keep in mind this purpose. Think about the factors he will need to select in order to reach that purpose and think about how to organize them. Thus, we see that activity of learning to think clearly."*

In areas where English is learnt as a foreign language, students encounter problems for they are less exposed to the language as Wilkins (1984:38) believes. They are obliged to think in their mother language or second language and then translate into English.

This process brings bad results because students are not fully equipped with a package of knowledge that allows them to be good translators.

In this connection, Nzikoruriho (1991:9) believes that: *"Naturally, one of the biggest problems in teaching writing is that the student must have experienced some situations so that so that he can acquire ideas in order to write....but when he has to write about those experiences he has the tendency of thinking in the mother language then try to translate. This produces consequently a bad result. Learning to write is primarily learning how to think like an educated English speaker."*

Reaching the performance level in the writing skill is by far the most difficult of the four skills as Scarcella and Oxford (1992: 14) say. In fact, listening, reading and speaking skills do not really involve much concentration of the mind whereas accurately and clearly written work reveals its author's clarity in thinking. It is obvious then that writing in a foreign language where one has to think in that language involves much thinking, a high degree of education and enough knowledge in the target language. Difficulties that hamper the student's proficiency can be expected and are usually of different kinds. After the correction of students' copies, teachers should deeply analyze the work, which actually reflects the image of learner's state of mind in order to detect what sort of problems his learners have and point out their source and thus root them out.

The teacher's role should not be limited to the one of finding out the difficulties of each individual learner. Besides, it is useful to teachers to be open to learners whenever they are teaching or giving pieces of advice. Encouragement and helping them learn from their mistakes can contribute a lot to the students writing proficiency.

II.5.1.5 Learners' written work feedback

Correction of written work has to be done by both the teacher and the students when both correct and incorrect sides of the different works are shown to each individual student. In this perspective, Grundy and Brookes (1995:146) hold that: *"Correction of written work can be done by both teacher and student. If you are correcting a written work, remember to react to the content of the work showing the students where the work was effective and where it wasn't."*

The instructors' comments on the learners' composition should show the strengths and weaknesses of the students so that the latter know their strong and weak points. The problem that remains is to know if the teacher's correction deals with all the aspects of the composition work to help students' improvement.

Widdowson (1984:31) argues that the written work correction should rely on both internal and external errors.

- The internal corrections include:

→ Over all structure / lay out:

– Introduction
– Development
– Conclusion

→ Development of ideas:

– Paragraph formation
– Sentence length and variety
– Cohesion

→ Meaning:

Making clear arguments, narrations, discussions, appropriate language use.

- The external corrections include:
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Grammar

As the students need to knows, their strong and weak sides, teachers are asked to give a short comment which brings clarifications about what is wrong and why and how one can overcome such and such other problems.

II.5.2 Materials used in teaching English

The availability of materials and other resources to supplement the classroom activities of language teaching and learning do affect the ability of students to use the language themselves for communicative purposes. Rames (1983:109) says:

> *"Whatever other functions the material may have, providing interest, fun, cultural setting and so on the main objective is that of guiding the student to use his/her store of foreign language to communicate his/her ideas and opinions."*

Teachers should be careful in using materials. In the teaching of a language, the purpose of materials usage should be to facilitate inputs in the language learning process. If not, the result would be a total distraction and therefore rendering the teaching learning null. Rames (1983:113) reinforces his point of view arguing that: *"Reading materials will help students get exposed to variety in type for example, prose, poetry, grammar, both in oral and written form, both facts and fictions."*

Therefore, materials help learners improve the way of expressing their ideas and opinions trough language. Byrne (1984:30) maintains that:

"As with any branch of teaching, the preparation of materials offers scope for ingenuity, innovation and imagination. Materials can be used in affective and enjoyable ways for teaching or for supporting of almost every aspect of language."

Materials are not limited to books, but they include magazines, periodicals, newspapers, short stories, charts, poems, journals, articles, films, maps,... Materials are important and help to focus on understandable, relevant and interesting exchanges of information, rather than the presentation of grammatical forms. Materials enhance comprehension and communication, for example, pictures and other visual aids, are essential because they supply the content for communication. Materials facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary, within the classroom. They also provide opportunities for independent study, use and self-evaluation and progress in communication.

The advocates for the communication approach emphasize on the use of authentic or life materials in the classroom but unfortunately, plenty of secondary schools in Burundi are without novels or any good literature that reflect our culture, experiences and needs. We lack visual stimuli like tables, pictures, diagrams and maps. The materials are useful in situationalizing the language needs to express the experiences. The limited materials available are of foreign origin depicting foreign cultures and experiences that are of little if any relevance for the students. It can be said with certainty that one of the things one must have to teach English and especially the writing skill in secondary schools is plenty of books. Reading experiences avails the learners with the richest meaning of words and how they can be arranged for effective communication. Therefore, reading materials should be given priority in schools over other things because of their usefulness in supporting classroom teaching and enhancing the communication.

II.5.3 Students' attitudes towards English

Learning in general is affected by complex psychological factors and it is true for learners' attitudes for foreign language learning. Commenting on how attitudes affect communication in a foreign language, Little-Wood (1984:11) says that: "One of the factors influencing how we experience the process is our attitude towards the foreign culture itself."

If this attitude is negative, there may be strong internal barriers against learning and if learning has to take place because of the external compulsion, it may proceed only to the minimum level required by the external demand.

In spite of the teacher' efforts when teaching, attitudes have strong effects on success or failure in language communication. It indirectly affects the motivational drive within the learner for achievement and success. Positive attitudes reinforce the motivational drive which is very important if the teaching and learning of English is to be accomplished successfully. Richards, J.C (1991:21) sees that "language attitudes may reflect impressions of linguistic difficulty of learning, degree of importance, elegance, social status, etc."

From the above quotation, the role of the attitude of an individual in learning a foreign language is of paramount importance. It is evident that students try to learn only what seems to be easy. That is the reason why we have some who are much attracted to sciences and others to arts. Positive attitude towards subjects leads to efforts whereas negative one hampers learning.

Farrant J.C (1985:125) puts it: *"If for any reason his motivation is limited, he will not put as much energy and enthusiasm into his/her learning as when he/she is strongly motivated and the resulting learning will be slow and inefficient."*

Motivation, therefore, encourages one to put himself/herself in a course of action. Successful learning calls for positive motivation and attitudes to be formed. Harmer J.C (1986:94) further argues that: "learners who are motivated perceive goals of various types, both long and short term goals." He maintains that it seems possible to suggest that a teacher will find strongly motivated students with long terms goal easier to teach than a student who has to study the language because it is on the curriculum and who does not have such a goal. The attitude of a learner to a subject determines the degree to which the learner acquires knowledge or skills.

A learner's attitude towards the culture of the target language community affects the way one learns and communicates in the target language. A student who is attracted by the culture of the target language community learns the language as a means to an end.

In the same perspective, a number of writers agree that attitudes have an effect on achievement. For example, Wilkins (1982:117) says: "Success in learning a foreign language through instructions will vary from individual to individual...no matter how the language is taught".

It is commonly known that in many secondary schools, students are told that they will have to write a letter in French or in English while applying for a job for example. This may give an impression to the learners that mastering those languages is of paramount important and this partly influences the students' attitudes towards such languages. There are some languages which are privileged and this partly influences the students' attitudes towards such languages. It could explain why students are less motivated in writing matters are not efficient because they ask themselves why they are encouraged to write in their mother tongue while applying for a job.

When learners have developed an attitude or opinion about a subject it is so difficult to change or refine what is already in their mind. For this reason, teachers need to make

the subject attractive by emphasizing its communicative value especially through writing because it has a positive influence on their learners' attitude towards it.

II.6.Conclusion

This chapter deals with the review of related literature. It reviews the literature from research which has been conducted in the field of factors affecting students' proficiency in written English. The following chapter deals with the research methodology in different sections namely the area of the study, the population and sampling, data collection instruments, data collection procedure as well as difficulties encountered .

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

III. 1. Introduction

The concern of this chapter is to describe the methodology that is the procedure of the study followed by the researcher. This chapter is made of four main sections namely: area of the study, subject of the study, sampling as well as data collection procedure.

III.2. Area of the study

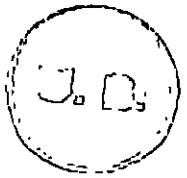
The study was carried out in six selected public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura Municipality precisely in two communes i.e, Muha and Mukaza. Concerning schools, Bujumbura city is a place which has the highest number of schools in the country. Three public secondary schools and three private secondary schools were randomly selected.

I wrote down as many schools as possible, each on a sheet of paper, I put them into two categories taking into account the variable "type of school". Then, I randomly picked up three schools from each category of schools.

However, technical or scientific schools were not included as subject to choice. Investigated schools are Lycée Municipal de Musaga (public), Lycée Municipal de Nyakabiga (Public), Lycée Municipal de Kibenga (public), Lycée de l'Humanité (private), ISP (Private), COMIBU (private). All the concerned schools are supposed to work under the same standard program and school year.

III.3. Population

Students of second form Arts in selected public and private schools with their teachers participated in this study. Students of Second form Arts were chosen because they are supposed to have already studied all the composition techniques, all rules and conventions related to composition. These students are thus supposed to be able to write a good composition.



III.4. Sampling

I have decided to base the investigation on six schools, i.e, three public secondary schools on one hand and three private secondary schools on the other hand with a representative sample of 112 students. Simple random sampling was then used to select those schools. Since every school had the chance to be chosen, I copied down the name of each school on a piece of paper and I put all the papers in boxes by taking into account the variable "*type of school*". Later, I chose one at time until I got the required number of schools in the sample. The Sample was based on the idea of Warwick D.P and Charles A. Lininger (1975: 73) they say that "a sample survey is a study in which information is gathered from a fraction of the population chosen to represent the whole". The implication of the above quotation is that the technique of sampling does not include the whole population, but a limited number of people. The choice can depend upon the population under study, its structure, the objectives of the researcher and lastly the means one has.

In the six classes, the researcher chose twenty (20) students in each class except the second form arts at the COMIBU where the researcher took all the students of the class because they were so few (12 students) which made a total of 112 students. In sampling, the researcher proceeded as follows: he got the list of students' names of each class, wrote numbers of all students on different but similar papers. Then, the researcher folded them and put them in a box to avoid losing any paper. Finally, the researcher mixed them and he chose papers one at a time until he got 20 papers. This process was used for each school selected. The papers chosen had numbers that corresponded to names of the students sampled. Thereafter, the researcher got 20 papers for each school except one school (COMIBU), where the researcher got 12 papers and a total of 112 papers which makes 112 students was obtained.

To this is added the total number of 6teachers involved in the study. The teacher is the first actor and witness of what happens in the classroom. Moreover, teachers know their students well. They know their weaknesses and their strengths. For this reason, each teacher was given a questionnaire to fill in.

The tables below show the number of teachers, the population and the sample students from the six selected schools.

Table1: The population, the number of teachers and the sampled students from three selected public secondary schools

Schools	Total number of students	Number teachers investigated	Number of students investigated
1. Lycée Municipal de Musaga	26	1	20
2.Lycée Municipal de Kibenga	40	1	20
3.Lycée Municipal de Nyakabiga	39	1	20
Total	105	3	60

Table2: The population, the number of teachers and the sampled students from three selected private secondary schools

Schools	Total number of students	Number of teachers investigated	Number of students investigated
1.Lycée de l'Humanité	45	1	20
2. ISP	42	1	20
3.COMIBU	12	1	12
Total	99	3	52

III.5. Data collection instruments

The collection of data was made using the following instruments namely questionnaires and classroom observation.

III.5.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were one of the tools used collected relevant data about the teaching/learning process. They are convenient for collecting information from a large population within a short period of time. The respondents feel free to give answers to sensitive questions especially if they are not expected to give their names.

As far as this study is concerned the data was collected by using two kinds of questionnaires (i.e, one designed for students and one for teachers). Both questionnaires include multiple choice items. The teachers' questionnaire also includes open ended questions and teachers were asked to make comments on a number of items. This helped the researcher to have access to wide information. The two questionnaires were different but they were designed in such a way that they would contribute to a unique goal.

The teachers' questionnaire was designed to find out the methods used, how they are used, materials' availability, the assessment procedures and how frequently the composition exercises are given without forgetting to check the students' attitude towards the writing skill.

The students' questionnaire on its part sought to know about the composition assignments given, advantages and disadvantages of their teachers' teaching methodology, the teachers' ways of assessment as well as students' attitude towards the writing skill.

III.5.2. Classroom observation

To carry out this study the researcher found it necessary to observe the informants in the classroom setting. This classroom observation was motivated by the fact that they give first hand information by a direct experience with the students and the teachers. Wallace (1991: 62) says:

"This kind of observation is also extremely valuable since certain aspects of the action will be clear to the observer in a way they cannot be to the teacher."

Classroom observation help the researcher to get more insights in students' attitudes, methods used by teachers and materials' availability. To teaching sessions, i.e, two hours were observed in each visited class.

III.6.Data collection procedure

III.6.1. Pilot study

In my research a pilot study was conducted. The researcher undertook a pilot study to prepare for the field study itself. The real importance of a pilot study is to verify the validity of the questionnaire to check if it is understandable or not to find out about its imperfections and correct them, to discover and to remove questions which are irrelevant and replace them by adequate ones. This is sustained by Daval, R. et Al. (1976: 185) when they say:

Une fois construit, le questionnaire n'est pas utilisé sous sa première forme, il est mis à l'essai, à l'épreuve sur terrain, il est testé.

Nzokirantevye (2005:35) says: Once it is made, the questionnaire is not used in its first form. It is put to the test, tried on field, it is tested.

The same view is shared by De Landsheere (1982:88):

"Tout questionnaire doit être essayé avant d'être répondu ». That is « Every questionnaire must be tested before being answered.»

In fact, a questionnaire needs to be tested first on a small group before it is given to the whole population. But the pilot study population and research population must have the same characteristics. The schools that were chosen for the pilot study were all schools that I made the investigation in. 18 students i.e, 9 students from each type of school

answered the students' questionnaire. As far as teachers are concerned four teachers i.e, 2 teachers from public and private secondary schools answered the teachers' questionnaire. Therefore, after analyzing data from the pilot study, I was obliged to remove some questions from the students' questionnaire and to make some modifications. For example, in the students' questionnaire, question n° 10 was: "List kinds of materials used while learning the writing skill." No one answered this question, that is the reason why I removed it and replaced it with another question. I put it into the students' questionnaire but with a modification which was "Could you suggest other materials which could be useful for teaching the writing skill?"

In brief, the results and analysis of the pilot study help the researcher to remove and modify some questions.

Table 3: Presentation of schools, students and teachers concerned by the pilot study

Schools	Number of students	Number of teachers
Lycée Municipal de Musaga (public)	3	1
Lycée Municipal de Kibenga(public)	3	1
Lycée Municipal de Nyakabiga (public)	3	0
Lycée de l'Humanité(private)	3	1
ISP (private)	3	1
Lycée de la COMIBU (private)	3	0
Total	18	4

III.6.2.The field study

In each school, I firstly contacted the headmaster and he sent me to the head teacher in charge of studies so as to give me a schedule and permission to contact the English teachers. I gave teachers their own questionnaires. A week was given to them to complete their questionnaires. After this, I selected the subjects who participated in the study and I wrote their names on papers. Then, I handled the students' questionnaires to

teachers so that they would distribute them for me to avoid the loss of the questionnaires because most of the time students always respect their teachers. The respondents were given one week in order to allow them to answer satisfactorily. The completed questionnaires were collected by their teachers themselves. Then, I went after a week to collect the teachers' and students' questionnaires.

III.7. Data analysis procedure

This section intends to show how the data collected were analyzed. The analysis was based on the data from three kinds of instruments namely the questionnaires answered by teachers and students, students' written test as well as classroom observation. The research questionnaires were centered on three themes: "lack of adequate teaching methodology, insufficiency of teaching aids and students' negative attitudes towards the writing skill."

Concerning the questionnaires, the data from teachers and students were represented in tables with frequencies and percentage theme by theme and question by question. With regards to students' written test, I discovered that students have problems related to grammar, making paragraphs, etc. As far as classroom observation is concerned, I reported the items observed aspect by aspect. The answers from the questionnaires, students' written test and classroom observation gave the researcher a clear understanding of the factors affecting students' proficiency and how to solve these problems.

III.8.Encountered Difficulties

While I was conducting the present research, I faced a number of difficulties. The first difficulty I encountered was the absence of the teachers on the first day of the visit to public secondary schools. Secondly, teachers in both types of schools were reluctant to take questionnaires; the arguments were that they have been answering questionnaires

and making suggestions on how teaching/learning of writing should be improved in secondary schools but there has been no change until now. Other teachers were busy with marking tests because the term was close to its end and students were shortly starting the period of examinations.

III.9.Conclusion

This chapter covers four major issues namely the area of the study, the subject of the study, the sampling, data collection and analysis procedure. Three types of instruments were used to collect data, i.e, written questionnaires addressed to teachers and students, students' written test, as well as classroom observation. After finishing with this detailed description of the research methodology used in the study, we shall then proceed with data presentation, analysis and findings, which is the chapter four of this study.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

IV.1.Introduction

The present chapter aims at presenting, analyzing and discussing the collected data. It also shows the extent to which the researcher's hypotheses on which the present study is based have been proven right or not. Note that the researcher hypotheses about the factors affecting students' hypotheses about the factors affecting students' proficiency in written English are as follows:

1. The teachers' methodology has an effect on students' proficiency in writing.
2. The lack of teaching materials is an obstacle to the development of the writing skill.
3. Students have a negative attitude towards the writing skill.

The collected data are presented, analysed and discussed under three headings as follows:

1. Analysis of data from teachers and students' questionnaires
2. Analysis of data from students' written test.
3. Analysis of data from classroom observation.

The first section intends to present and analyse data from both teachers and students' questionnaires. The second section presents the data from students' written test. The third section deals with analysis of the data from classroom observation.

IV.2. Data from teachers' questionnaire

In this section, answers from teachers' questionnaire are interpreted to draw a conclusion about the factors affecting students' proficiency in written English and thereafter the data from the two sorts of schools which are public and private secondary schools are compared.

Theme 1: Lack of adequate teaching methodology

Question 1: Have you ever made use of the group work methodology when you are teaching the writing skill? Yes ☐ No ☐

Data for this question were obtained from the teachers who teach English in the schools sampled. The main objective was to get information as to whether the approach used when conducting their writing lessons affects the students' proficiency.

The responses are indicated in tables below:

Presentation of Data

Table 4: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 1

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	67	2	67
No	1	33	1	33
Total	3	100	3	100

This table above contains data which need to be compared in order to know if group work is practiced in both sorts of schools. The data indicate that two out three public secondary school teachers (67%) responded by a "Yes" answer whereas one teacher out of three(33%) gave a negative answer. Similarly, two out of three private secondary school teachers (67%) responded by a "Yes" answer whereas one teacher out of three (33%) gave a negative answer.

It is clear from the above data that many teachers from both types of schools make use of the group work method when they are teaching the writing skill.

Question 2: If you make use of the group work method, are you a member of the group or just a supervisor?

Other (specify) .....

Table5: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 2

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
I am a member of the group	0	0	0	0
I am a controller	1	50	2	100
Other (I am both a controller and member of the group)	1	50	0	0
Total	2	100	2	100

Concerning this question, one out of two public secondary school teachers (50%) acknowledged that he is both a member of the group and a supervisor whereas another public secondary school teacher (50%) answered that he is a supervisor. Private secondary school teachers' responses reveal that two out of two teachers (100%) are just supervisors. From these data, I can say that few public secondary school teachers work with their students in groups and supervise them at the same time while private secondary school teachers just supervise the groups of students while they are doing composition work collectively.

Note that two teachers (one public secondary school teacher and one private secondary school teacher) have already said that they have never made use of the group work method.

Question 3: Do you think group work teaching strategies are?

Very good ☐ Good ☐ Not good at all ☐

Table6: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 3

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very good	2	100	0	0
Good	0	0	2	100
Not good at all	0	0	0	0
Total	2	100	2	100

As I was intending to know if group work teaching strategies are very good, good, not good at all, two out two public secondary school teachers (100%) acknowledged that group work teaching strategies are very good whereas two out of two private secondary school teachers (100%) answered that group work teaching techniques are good. What should be known is that two teachers (one from each type of school) have already acknowledged that they have never used group work methodology while teaching writing skill lessons. From these data, I can say that group work teaching strategies are found more efficient in investigated public secondary schools than in private ones.

Question 4: How often are composition assignments given to students?

Table 7: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 4

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Once a month	1	33	0	0
Twice a month	0	0	1	33
Once a term	2	67	2	67
Total	3	100	3	100

As I was trying to know how many composition assignments are given to students in class, two out three public secondary school teachers (67%) answered that they give a composition assignment once a term while one of them (33%) acknowledged that he gives a composition assignment once a month. Private secondary school teachers' data show that two teachers out of three (67%) responded that they give a composition work once a term whereas one of them (33%) said that he gives a composition work twice a month. From this, I can conclude that surveyed teachers in both public and private secondary schools give a composition assignment once a term.

Question 5: Have you ever given the same topic twice as subject of composition?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 8: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 5

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	33	0	0
No	2	67	3	100
Total	3	100	3	100

The answers to the question above reveal that two out of three public secondary school teachers (67%) acknowledged that they have never given the same topic twice for composition while one of them (33%) gave a "Yes" answer. All private secondary school teachers investigated, that is three teachers out of three (100%) acknowledged that they have never given a subject twice for composition. One can conclude that most of the teachers in both types of the schools do not give the same topic twice for composition. Note that this question was asked in order to know if students may have avoided their errors revealed on their previous assignment copies.

Question 6: Do you think students are able to avoid errors already committed during the previous work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 9: Public secondary school teachers' responses to question 6

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	100
No	0	0
Total	1	100

Knowing that two out three public secondary school teachers (67%) and three out three private secondary school teachers (100%) acknowledged they had not yet given the same topic twice, the remaining one public secondary school teacher (33%) who acknowledged that he sometimes gives the same topic twice for composition indicated that students avoid errors already committed in the previous work.

Theme 2: Insufficiency of teaching aids

Question 7: Are the teaching materials available at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 10: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question7

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	100	2	67
No	0	0	1	33
Total	3	100	3	100

The results from the above table reveal that three out of three public secondary school teachers (100%) answered by "Yes" to this question. Two out of three private secondary school teaching teachers (67%) responded by "Yes" while one third (33%)

gave a negative answer. It can be concluded that most of public and private secondary schools investigated have teaching materials.

Question 8: Are the teaching materials sufficient at school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table11:Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 8

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	0	0	0
No	3	100	3	100
Total	3	100	3	100

The data from the above table reveal that three out of three public and private secondary school teachers (100%) acknowledged that teaching materials are insufficient. In this respect, one can conclude that insufficiency of teaching materials is observed in both types of educational institutions.

Question 9: What are the materials which are available?

Textbooks and Dictionaries

Table 12: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 9

	Textbooks				**Dictionaries**			
	Public		Private		Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Yes	2	67	1	33	1	33	1	33
No	1	33	2	67	2	67	2	67
Total	3	100	3	100	3	100	3	100

The data from the above table show that two out of three public secondary school teachers (67%) acknowledged that textbooks are available at their schools while one third of them (33%) responded by a "No" answer. As far as private secondary school teachers (67%) are concerned, two out of three teachers answered by "No" whereas one third of them (33%) gave a "Yes" answer. From the data in the tables, I can assume that public secondary schools are more or less equipped with textbooks while investigated private secondary schools are short of them.

Gurrey P. (1960: 57) quoted by Nzokirantevye (2010: 9) says: "The textbook provides much materials and guidance in form of text, vocabulary, grammar and exercises"

Thus, the lack of enough textbooks in teaching/learning situation is unfavorable and consequently generates poor performance in any subject and particularly in writing.

On the question , to know whether dictionaries are available or not, two out three public and private secondary school teachers (67%)answered by "No" whereas one third of public and private secondary school teachers (33%) responded by "Yes". Hence, I can conclude that dictionaries are insufficient in both investigated types of schools.

Question 10: Could you suggest other kinds of materials which could be useful for teaching the writing skill?.....

Table 13: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 10

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Newspapers, journals,, magazines, periodicals	2	67	0	0
Films, TV, and radio programs English	1	33	1	100
Total	3	100	1	100

From the table above, it is obvious that two out of three public secondary school teachers (67%) suggested that school libraries should be equipped with periodicals, journals, newspapers and magazines. One out of three teachers (33%) on his side said that there is a need for films, TV, and radio programs in English. One out of three private secondary school teachers investigated suggested that there is a need for periodicals, films, TV, and radio programs in English.

What should be known is that among three private secondary school teachers surveyed only one teacher gave suggestions whereas two teachers gave no suggestions.

According to the observations made by Millis (1992:90), words alone are not quiet to convey an idea, a meaning. Visual aids would have simplified and clarified what is verbally expressed. He, however, cautions teachers to use teaching aids where they are appropriate, otherwise they distract students' attention.

In Mill's point of view, effective learning depends on good communication between the teacher and the learner:

> *"Visual aids are essentially aids to understanding and learning. The teacher must be able to evoke in the minds of learners his own mental images and thoughts."*

This quotation implies that effective communication between the teacher and the learner is facilitated by a wise use of instructional materials.

Theme 3: Students negative attitudes towards writing

Question11: What do you think your students' attitude towards the course of writing in English is?

Table 14 : Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 11

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very willing	0	0	0	0
Moderately willing	1	33	1	33
Not willing	2	67	2	67
Total	3	100	3	100

Asked to specify the degree of their learners' motivation or interest, no single teacher could mention that his students were ever "very willing", i.e had a positive attitude towards writing. Only one out of three teachers in both types of schools investigated said that students were moderately willing towards writing while two out of three teachers acknowledged that there was no positive attitude towards writing in English in their classrooms. The data got from both categories of schools are similar. Taking into consideration the data from the tables above, I can conclude that most of the investigated teachers from both educational institutions indicate that most of the students have a negative attitude towards writing in English.

In this sense, Candlin (1981: 45) claims that:

> *All the research and experimentation with which I am familiar indicate that the most highly correlated prerequisites for the variable of language performance is that of the attitudes taken by the learner to the subject, the country and the people who speak the language being learned and the language itself.*

Finally, one can say that the attitudes of students towards a subject determine the degree to which knowledge or skill is acquired by the learner.

Finocchiaro (1983:57) makes a link between attitude and motivation when he says:

> *"Learner' attitude towards the target language and its speakers will influence this motivation and show how attitude and motivation overlap each other".*

Thus, attitude and motivation are like twins as the two elements enhance language learning. Indeed, success in learning a language depends on many factors among which attitude and motivation are forces to reckon with. They play a major role since even if all good conditions are fulfilled for a better learning process, without them, failure is likely to be experienced.

Question 12: Do your students like learning and practicing English writing skills?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 15: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 12

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	33	1	33
No	2	67	2	67
Total	3	100	3	100

The data from the table indicate that two out three investigated public secondary school teachers (67%) acknowledged that most of their students did not like learning the writing skill, i.e, they had a negative attitude towards the writing skill while one third of

them (33%) responded that hi students felt at ease in the course of teaching/learning the writing skill.

Data from surveyed private secondary school teachers reveal that one out of three teachers (33%) acknowledged that his students liked at ease in the course of teaching /learning in the writing skill whereas two out of three teachers (67%) said that their students did not like during the writing skill practice. In this respect, I can conclude that students' negative attitudes towards the writing skill in both sorts of schools is evident.

Nzokirantevye, (2010:12) says:

> *"The attitude of student to a subject determines the degree to which knowledge or skill is acquired by the learner"*

The students negative attitude towards English and particularly the writing skill is the cause of students' inability to improve writing proficiency.

Question 13: As writing involves reading, do students enjoy reading English novels which are available?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 16: Public and private secondary school teachers' responses to question 13

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	67	1	33
No	1	33	2	67
Total	3	100	3	100

On the question, to know if second form Arts students enjoy reading novels at their disposal, two out of three public secondary school teachers (67%) acknowledged that their students enjoy reading available novels while one third of them (33%) responded that hi students do not enjoy reading novels. On the other hand, two out of three private

secondary school teachers (67%) responded that their students do not like reading novels whereas one third of them (33%) acknowledged that his students like reading novels. From this, it is obvious that surveyed public secondary school students enjoy reading novels contrary to private secondary school students.

In brief, many teachers fall short of their success in teaching activities because of so many different things. Hence, lack of sufficient composition assignments or teachers' comments on students' copies about students' strengths and weaknesses regarding their piece of work, are some of the elements hampering students' improvement in the writing skill.

IV.3. Data from the students' questionnaire

Theme 1: Lack of adequate teaching methodology

Question 1: Have you ever participated in group work while learning the writing skill?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 17: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 1

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	43	72	34	65
No	17	28	18	35
Total	60	100	52	100

The obtained results show that 43 out of 60 public secondary school students (72%) gave a "Yes" answer whereas 17 out of 60 (28%) gave a negative answer.

Private secondary school students' responses reveal that 34 out 52 (65%) gave a "Yes" answer while 18 out 52 students (35%) gave a negative answer. It is obvious from the

above that the majority of the students in both types of schools participate in group work while learning the writing skill.

Question 2: How often are you given writing assignments in the classroom?

Table 18: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 2

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Once a month	22	37	0	0
Twice a month	0	0	16	31
Once a term	38	63	36	69
Total	60	100	52	100

As far as the second question is concerned, 38 students out of 60 public secondary school students (63%) acknowledged that they are given a writing assignment once a term while 22 out of 60 students (37%) responded that they are given a writing assignment once a month.

Private secondary school students' responses reveal that 36 out of 52 students (69%) are given a writing assignment once a term while 16 out of 52 students (31%) answered that they are given English composition assignment twice a month.

With reference to the above data from the students, I can say the majority of students in both kinds of schools acknowledge that composition assignments are given to students once a term.

Question3: How is your teachers' help in the writing skill practice?

Table 19: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 3

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very satisfactory	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory	20	33	16	31
Not satisfactory	40	67	36	69
Total	60	100	52	100

I asked this question with the intention of knowing whether students are satisfied with the help they get from their teachers. 40 out of 60 public secondary school students (67%) said that they are not satisfied with their teachers' help in English composition practice whereas 20 out of 60 students (33%) acknowledged that they are satisfied with their teachers' help in writing practice.

Private secondary school students' responses indicate that 36 out of 52 (69%) are not satisfied with their teachers' help in English composition practice whereas 16 students out of 52 acknowledge that they are satisfied with their teachers' help. Taking into account the above data, I can say that most of the students from both types of schools are not satisfied with their teachers' help in the writing skill practice.

Question 4: When did you study the techniques of composition? (linking words, punctuation, etc)

Table20: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 4

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lower level	21	35	8	15
Upper level	34	57	12	23
Never	5	8	32	62
Total	60	100	52	100

The data from the above table show that 21 out of 60 public secondary school students (35%) responded that they studied the techniques of composition at the lower level whereas 34 out of 60 students (57%) answered that they studied the techniques of composition at the upper level. 5 out of 60 students (8%) revealed that they have never studied the techniques of composition.

Private secondary school students' data show that 8 out of 52 students (15%) studied the techniques related to composition at the lower level whereas 12 out of 52 students (23%) said that they studied those techniques at the upper level. 32 out of 52 students responded that they have never studied techniques related to composition. These data reveal that the vast majority of public secondary school students studied the techniques of composition at the upper level while most of the private secondary school students have never learned techniques related to composition.

Question 5: Do you read your copy once or twice before you give it to your teacher for marking?

Table 21: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 5

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	68	37	71
No	19	32	15	29
Total	60	100	52	100

The obtained data reveal that 41 out of 60 public secondary school students (68%) answered by "Yes" while 19 out of 60 (32%) responded by "No". 37 out of 52 private secondary school students (71%) gave a "Yes" answer whereas 15 out of 52 of students (29%) answered by "No". I can say the vast majority of students in both educational institutions reread their copies to find grammatical, lexical or misspelling errors, before giving them to teachers for marking.

Question 6: Does your teacher write comments on your corrected copies?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 22: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 6

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	30	15	29
No	42	70	37	71
Total	60	100	52	100

On the question to know if teachers write comments on students corrected copies, 42 out of 60 public secondary school students (70%) gave a negative answer while 18 out of 60 students (30%) responded by "Yes".

Private secondary school students' data reveal that 37 out of 52 (71%) gave a negative answer whereas 15 out of 52 students (29%) responded by "Yes". I can say that most of the teachers in both kinds of schools do not write comments on students corrected copies.

Theme 2: Insufficiency of teaching aids

Question 7: Do you have any library at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 23: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 7

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	47	78	39	75
No	13	22	13	25
Total	60	100	52	100

On the question to know if surveyed schools had libraries 47 out of 60 public secondary school students (78%) answered by "Yes" while 13 out of 60 (22%) gave a negative response. 39 out of 52 private secondary school students (75%) responded by "Yes" whereas 13 out of 52 students (25%) answered by "No". Taking into consideration the data from the tables above, I can conclude that both types of schools are equipped with libraries.

Question 8: Is your school library equipped with enough novels and other materials dealing with the writing skill?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 24: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 8

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	28	16	31
No	43	72	36	69
Total	60	100	52	100

I asked this question with the intention of knowing whether school libraries are equipped with enough materials. The data from the tables above show that 43 out of 60 public secondary school students (72%) gave a negative answer whereas 17 out of 60 students (28%) responded by a "Yes" answer.

Private secondary school students' results reveal that 36 out of 52 students (69%) responded by a "No" answer while 16 students out of 52 (31%) answered by "Yes". From these data, I can say that both public and private secondary school libraries do not have enough materials dealing with writing skill.

Wittich and Schuller (1962:103) claim that:

> *"Visual aids highly contribute to successful teaching and learning. Instructional materials can arouse interest, stimulate discussion, raise questions and supply information and ideas"*

In the same perspective, Strevens (1993:43) says that:

> *"It is a practical requirements of the language learning/teaching process that learners should have available to them an extensive range of materials because the bigger the choices, the more effective they are".*

No one can ignore that poor materials and the lack of other resources to supplement the classroom experience of teaching and learning contribute to the inaccessibility of a good performance in English especially in writing

Question 9: Do you have enough course books in your class?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 25: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 9

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	52	12	23
No	29	48	40	77
Total	60	100	52	100

This question was asked to enquire about the teaching learning course books that deal with the writing skill. Here, 31 out of 60 public secondary school students (52%) responded by a "Yes" answer while 29 out of 60 students (48%) gave a negative answer. 40 out of 52 private secondary school students (77%) responded by "No"

whereas 12 students out of 52 (23%) responded by "Yes". Taking into account these results from the tables, it is obvious that course books are more or less sufficient in surveyed public secondary schools while a serious lack of them is observed in surveyed private secondary schools.

Theme 3: Students negative attitude towards the writing skill

Question 10: Do you like English writing skills lessons?

Yes ☐ No☐

Table 26: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 10

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	28	14	27
No	43	72	38	73
Total	60	100	52	100

As to the question of whether students like English lessons and writing skill lessons in particular, 17 out of 60 public secondary school students (28%) responded by "Yes" while 43 out of 60 (73%) responded "No".14 out of 52 private secondary school students (27%) responded by "Yes" whereas 38 out of 52 students answered by "No". From the above data, I can say that most of the respondents in both public and private secondary schools do not like the writing skill lessons.

Question 11: If you were to study reading, writing, speaking and listening, what skill would you choose?

Reading ☐ writing ☐ speaking ☐ writing ☐

Table 27: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 11

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Reading	42	73	38	73
Writing	18	27	14	27
Speaking	0	0	0	0
Listening	0	0	0	0
Total	60	100	52	100

As far as this question is concerned, 42 out of 60 public secondary school students (70%) responded that they would choose reading whereas a number of 18 out of 60 (30%) said they would choose writing. Data from private secondary school students reveal that 38 out of 52 students (73%) would choose reading while 14 out of 52 students (27%) said they would study writing. With reference to these data, I can say that the vast majority of both public and private secondary school students would not like to study writing. This shows that they have a negative attitude towards writing in English.

Question 12: Is the English language and particularly the writing skill difficult for you?

Table 28: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 12

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	68	41	79
No	19	32	11	21
Total	60	100	52	100

The data from the table reveal that 41 out of 60 public secondary school students (68%) answered by "Yes" while 19 out of 60 students (32%) responded by "No". 41 out of 52 public secondary school students (79%) responded by "Yes" while 11 out of 52 students (21%) gave a negative answer. Concerning the above data, I can say that the majority of both categories of students acknowledged that the writing skill is difficult for them. However, it should be noted that the percentage of private secondary school students who acknowledged that the writing skill is difficult for them is higher than the one of public secondary school students. The explanation of this difference is that the investigated secondary school students did not study techniques of composition.

Question 13: Is the English language and particularly the writing skill important for you?

Why……?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table 29: Public and private secondary school students' responses to question 13

	Public		Private	
Answers	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	47	23	44
No	32	53	29	56
Total	60	100	52	100

The obtained data from the table above show that 28 out of 60 public secondary school students (47%) answered by "Yes" while 32 out of 60 students (53%) gave a negative answer. 23 out of 52 private secondary school students (44%) answered by "Yes" whereas 29 out of 52 (56%) responded by a negative answer. Most of public and private secondary school students argue that English is not important in the country as it is not the official language. A few number of them mentioned that English is important as it is

used as a medium of communication in many developed countries. From these data presented in the tables above, I can conclude that students from both educational institutions find the writing skill more or less important for them.

All in all, students unknowingly contribute to their own low proficiency in writing. In fact, some students do not care about the importance of the writing skill. This flows from their lack of motivation with regard to learning the writing skill. This is so dangerous for the learners for there is no effective learning without motivation.

IV.4.Data from classroom observation

In the classroom observation that the researcher did he discovered that the teaching methodology was not good enough for teaching English writing skills. In public schools visited namely Lycée Municipal de Musaga, Lycée Municipal de Kibenga, Lycée Municipal de Nyakabiga, teachers investigated indicated that they made use of group work teaching techniques while teaching the English writing skills. However, the classroom observation that the researcher made helped him to discover how this methodology was applied by public secondary schools teachers. He found that teachers do not integrate groups formed by students while practicing writing but only supervise them. The obtained data in private schools namely COMIBU, ISP and Lycée de l'Humanité revealed the same case. The researcher found that teachers circulated in the classroom to ensure that students were working but did not move from group to group to ask about difficulties students were incountering while working in group. The researcher equally discovered that the teachers and students in both types of schools had problems related to teaching/learning materials. Libraries were not sufficiently equipped with reading materials such as journals, magazines, periodicals, etc. teachers' and students' books were also insufficiently.

Another problem that the researcher identified was the fact that most of the students in both types of schools visited had a negative attitude towards the English writing skills as data from teachers' and students' questionnaires revealed.

IV.5 Findings

This subchapter deals with a general analysis of the results about the factors affecting students' proficiency in written English in selected public and private secondary schools in general and particularly at second form arts section level. The researcher attempted to find the main factors affecting students' writing proficiency in selected public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura Municipality as it is proved by the results from teachers' and students' questionnaires and from classroom observation.

After analysing the results from teachers' and students' questionnaires and from the classroom observation, I can say that low writing proficiency among public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura Municipality is due to different factors. Firstly, looking for instance at questions n°2, 4, 5 of the teachers' questionnaire and at questions n°2, 3, 6 of the students' questionnaire, respectively related to the lack of adequate teaching methodology, answers from both teachers' and students' questionnaires illustrate that teaching methodology is not adequately applied while teaching the writing skill and consequently students are not satisfied with their teachers' help in writing practice. Then, the results from the analysis showed that the stated hypothesis n°1 which said that: "Teachers' methodology has an effect on students' proficiency in writing." was confirmed.

Secondly, public and private secondary school teachers' and students' answers respectively to questions 8,9, and 10 of the teachers' questionnaire and to questions 8,9 of the students' questionnaire as well as the results from the classroom observation illustrate that teaching/learning materials are not enough. All teachers and students from

both types of schools investigated answered that instructional materials are not enough. They indicated that school libraries are not equipped with periodicals, journals, magazines, etc. they confirmed that students' proficiency in written English is affected by the lack of teaching and learning materials as well as the lack of well- equipped school libraries. The analysis of data showed that the hypothesis n°2 which said that: "The lack of teaching materials is an obstacle to the development of the writing skill" was validated. Another factor affecting students' proficiency in written English is students' attitudes towards the writing skill as showed by both teachers' and students' answers to the questionnaires.

Looking at question n°11 up to question n° 13 of teachers' questionnaire and question n°10 up to question 13 of the students' questionnaire, it is obvious that teachers' and students' answers in both types of schools confirm that students have a negative attitude vis-à-vis the English writing skills. The analysis of the data from both public and private secondary school teachers and students' questionnaires showed that the hypothesis n°3 which said that "Students have a negative attitude towards the writing skill in English" was validated.

The researcher noticed that teaching methodology, materials available as well as students' attitude towards the writing skill in English are factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills.

IV.6. Conclusion

The main concern of this chapter was the interpretation of the data collected by means of three main tools i.e. questionnaire, written test and classroom observation. Having collected all the necessary information using the above instruments to make my research as accurate as complete, I finally found after interpretation of the data, the main negative factors that affect the students' proficiency in written English.

The factors are the following:

a. Teachers use group work methodology inappropriately;
b. Teachers and students encounter problems in the teaching-learning process of the writing skill due to the lack of sufficient teaching-learning materials;
c. Students have a negative attitude towards the writing skill lessons.

From the findings of this work, the researcher has succeeded in answering the research questions formulated at the beginning of this work. The said questions are stated below:

a. To what extent is writing proficiency influenced by teachers methodology in public and private secondary schools?
b. How far does the lack of teaching materials affect the proficiency in English writing skills in both types of educational institutions?
c. What attitude do students of both public and private secondary schools have towards the English writing skills?

From data collected and analyzed in all selected public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura municipality, it is clear that students could not be proficient in composition work due to the following reasons:

a. Teachers do not use appropriately the methods they have chosen when teaching the writing skill. Teachers have to make sure that the methods they have chosen are being used accurately otherwise this makes the learning null. This finding answers the first research question which is: "To what extent is writing proficiency influenced by teachers' methodology?''
b. The schools do not have sufficient materials to supplement teachers' efforts in English teaching. Students cannot learn English and the writing skill in particular from the teacher's knowledge only. They have no sufficient books, no periodicals, no journals... For this reason, students cannot be proficient. This answers the second

research question " How far does the lack of teaching materials affect the proficiency in English writing?"

c. Students have a negative attitude towards the writing skill lessons. Students think that writing English is a difficult task. In addition, they do not see its importance for them. For this, the third research question "What attitude do students have towards the writing skill?" was answered. We now proceed with the general conclusion with some recommendations.

CHAPTER V. GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.1. Introduction

This chapter intends to draw a conclusion on what was dealt with throughout the whole work and give recommendations that will serve as guidance for other researchers in the field of teaching and learning the writing skill. This work will also be useful to learners, but especially to teachers who wish to improve the students' writing proficiency.

In this work "factors affecting students' proficiency in written English in second form arts: a comparative study in selected public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura municipality" I dealt with the factors that negatively affect students' writing proficiency. Hence, teachers' teaching methodology, lack of sufficient and various teaching/ learning materials as well as students' attitudes towards writing are but a few elements that may hinder students' writing proficiency.

V.2. General Conclusion

This study attempted to find out the main factors affecting students' proficiency in written English in selected public and private secondary schools in Bujumbura Municipality. Though there are many factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills only three major ones were subjects to interest for this present research which are teaching methodology teaching materials as well as students' attitudes towards the English language in general and the writing skill in particular. I have then carried this research out to know to what extent each of these elements mentioned above affect students' proficiency in composition writing.

This study was structured into five chapters:

The first chapter is the general introduction of the whole study. This chapter consisted of showing the meaning of writing as well as its importance. Since there was a problem

to which the researcher wanted to find an answer, its statement is given in this chapter. It contains also the aim of the study. As the researcher could not cover all the country, this chapter contains the scope and delimitation of the study.

The second chapter is about the literature review. This chapter contains the literature related to this area of study. The third chapter presents and describes the techniques used to collect and analyse the data. The researcher distributed questionnaires to selected teachers and students in order to collect the data. Written test and classroom observation were also used.

The fourth chapter contains the data presentation, analysis, interpretation and findings in relation to the aim of the study.

Through this work, the researcher was satisfied because all the research questions got answers

Concerning the teaching methodology, the results showed that most of the teaching methods used in teaching the writing skill are not appropriately applied. From the theoretical in practical point of view, teachers must avoid to teach writing skill theories to the detriments of practices. Besides, authoritarian methods that are used in many public and private secondary schools investigated must be crossed out and substituted by the learner-centred system.

Concerning the didactic materials, the data revealed a shortage of textbooks especially in private secondary schools. Again, school libraries are not equipped with novels, periodicals, tapes, journals, magazines... To students who find reading more interesting this shortage stands as a barrier of the students' reading activities, which is another way that prevents learners' improvement in the writing skill as it is from reading that students draw some knowledge related to grammar, language structure and organisation.

Through this investigation, another important factor was revealed. Proficiency in written English is negatively affected by students' negative attitude towards writing English as the data from both teachers' and students' questionnaires revealed.

V.3. Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this work, the researcher wishes to put forward the following recommendations:

To teachers:

As far as teachers are concerned, they should focus much attention on writing skill norms and conventions without forgetting to avail enough time for practice. Teachers should choose topics that fit the students' interests.

Moreover, teachers should remember that much help need to be given to their students especially during the writing practice stage. Prior to any collection and correction of the students' work, the teacher needs to make sure his students have reread and corrected their copies. Teachers should not forget to write some comments on each student's sheet. These comments should acknowledge each student's strong and weak side. This is very helpful for the future writing assignments.

To students:

Students on their side should make some effort to deeply learn the writing skill in the English language and pay attention to comments that they find on their corrected papers. They should also develop both proof-reading and self-correction systems while carrying out their compositions. In fact proof-reading together with self-correction are activities that should follow each other respectively and which lead to improvement in the writing skill knowing that learning through ones mistakes is one way of deeper learning.

To the government through the Ministry of Education:

As the findings revealed, there are good methods that were used in teaching the writing skill. However, they were not appropriately applied, consequently students have developed hostility vis-à-vis the writing skill lessons. Hence, the Ministry of Education together with its agencies, i.e. the B.E.P.E.P.F, English Department, should organize refresher courses and workshops so that teachers can know the updated ways of teaching composition. It should avail necessarily students' teaching materials such as up-to-date books, films, journals, magazines,... It is worth mentioning that if the Ministry needs its teachers to work well, it should listen to them so that they can jointly find solutions to all the problems that may arise. This is what can enhance the teachers' efficiency together with their students.

To future researchers:

My recommendations are directed to future researchers. It would be useful for future researchers to carry out a similar study in other parts of the country so that the findings could be much more consistant.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I : Letter to teachers

UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH-KIRUNDI DEPARTMENT

Dear Teacher,

I am a student at the University of Burundi and I am carrying out research on handicaps in writing skill- teaching-learning in secondary schools.

Attached to this letter is a questionnaire designed for second form Arts teachers, and my aim is to gather data that would help me carry out successfully my research entitled "**Factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills in second form arts. A comparative study in selected public and private schools of Bujumbura Municipality**".

Your answers are vital to the realization of my work. Therefore, I would be extremely grateful if you could answer as sincerely as possible to the following.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely Yours

Jérôme Hitimana

APPENDIX II: Teachers' Questionnaire

A.General information

- Name of school.....
- Type of school .....
- Level of qualification.....

B.Answer the following questions by putting a tik(√) in the box provided or by writing an answer in the space provided

Theme 1: Lack of adequate teaching methodology

Question 1: Have you ever made use of group work methodology when you are teaching the writing skill?

Yes☐ No☐

Question 2: If you make use of group work method, are you a member of the group or just a controller?

I am a member of the group ☐

I am just a controller ☐

Question 3: What do you think group work teaching strategies are?

Very good ☐

Good ☐

Not good at all ☐

Question 4: How often are composition assignments given to students?

Once a month ☐

Twice a month ☐

Once a term ☐

Other (Specify) .....

Question 5: Have you ever given the same topic twice as subject of composition?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 6: Do you think students are able to avoid errors already committed during the previous work?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Theme 2: **Insufficiency of teaching aids**

Question 7: Are teaching materials available at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 8: Are teaching materials sufficient at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 9: What are the materials which are available?

The books Yes ☐

Dictionaries No ☐

Question 10: Could you suggest other materials which could be useful for teaching the writing skill?

.....
.....
.....

Theme 3: Students' negative attitude towards writing

Question 11: What do you think your students' attitude towards the course of writing in English is ?

Very willing ☐

Moderately willing ☐

Not willing ☐

Question 12:Do your students feel at ease when learning and practising writing in the English language?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 13: As writing involves reading, do students enjoy reading English novels which are available?

Yes ☐ No ☐

APPENDIX III: Letter to the Students

UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY

ENGLISH-KIRUNDI DEPARTMENT

Dear Student,

I am a student at the University of Burundi and I am carrying out research on handicaps in writing skill- teaching-learning in secondary schools.

Attached to this letter is a questionnaire designed for second form Arts students, and my aim is to gather data that would help me carry out successfully my research entitled "**Factors affecting students' proficiency in English writing skills in second form arts. A comparative study in selected public and private schools of Bujumbura Municipality**".

Your answers are vital to the realization of my work. Therefore, I would be extremely grateful if you could answer as sincerely as possible to the following.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely Yours

Jérôme Hitimana

Question5: Do you read your copy once or twice before you give it to your teacher for marking?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 6: Does your teacher write comments on your corrected copy?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Theme2: Insufficiency of teaching aids

Question7: Do you have any library at your school?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question8: Is your school library equipped with enough novels and materials that deal with the writing skill? Yes ☐ No ☐

Question9: Do you have enough course books in your class? Yes ☐ No ☐

Theme3: Students' negative attitude towards the writing skill

Question10: Do you like English writing skills lessons?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Question 11: If you were to study writing, reading; speaking and listening, which skill would you choose to study?

Question12: Is the English language and particularly the writing skill difficult for you?

Question 13: Is the English language and the writing skill in particular important for you?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Why? Explain……

APPENDIX V: CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHART

The following points were taken into account during the classroom observation:

1. The adequacy of teaching methodology while teaching the writing skill
2. Teaching learning materials:
   - Textbooks
   - Dictionaries
   - Journals
   - Newspapers
   - Magazines
3. The students' attitudes towards the writing skill

ems observed		Public				Private			
		Lycée Municipal Musaga	Lycée Municipal Kibenga	Lycée Municipal Nyakabiga	%	Lycée de la COMIBU	ISP	Lycée de l'Humanité	%
braries	Well equipped	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
	Not equipped	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
aterials	Sufficient textbooks	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
	Some textbooks	X	X	X	100	X	X	X	100
	Sufficient Dictionaries	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
	Some dictionaries	X	X	X	100	X	X	X	100
	Journals	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
	Newspapers	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
	Magazines	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	0
lequacy aching ethodolgy		X	X	50	0	-	-	-	0
udents' titudes	Are interested	-	-	X	32	-	X	-	21
	Are not interested	X	X	-	68	X	X	-	79