UNIVERSITÉ DU BURUNDI
GRENIER DU SAVOIR DU BURUNDI
Dépôt institutionnel officiel
https://repository.ub.edu.bi

The contribution of communicative tests to the learning of english in second form arts of Burundi high schools : cases of the cloze and dictation tests

Maniratunga, Adelin; Supervisor: Marie Immaculée Ndayimirije

2006-12
UB, IPA
https://repository.ub.edu.bi/handle/123456789/903

Document téléchargé depuis le **Grenier du Savoir du Burundi** — https://repository.ub.edu.bi

UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI
INSTITUTE FOR APPLIED PEDAGOGY
ENGLISH-KIRUNDI DEPARTMENT

THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATIVE TESTS TO THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN SECOND FORM ARTS OF BURUNDI HIGH SCHOOLS: CASES OF THE CLOZE AND DICTATION TESTS

BY

Adelin MANIRATUNGA

Supervisor:
Marie Immaculée NDAYIMIRIJE

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree 'Lincencié en Pédagogie Appliquée, Agrégé d'Enseignement Secondaire en Anglais'

BUJUMBURA, DECEMBER 2006

DEDICATION

In memory of my late father

To my mother

To my brothers and sisters

To my classmates

I warmly dedicate this thesis

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed to the realisation of this work.

First and foremost, our sincere thanks go straight to Mrs Marie Immaculée Ndayimirije, lecturer at the English-Kirundi Department, University of Burundi for her extensive and most helpful supervision of this work. Her comments and suggestions have been important to us.

Next, we owe gratitude to all the lecturers of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, who contributed to our intellectual training. We are also indebted to Aloysius Kwitonda, head of the English Department, Makerere University for his pieces of advice.

We are grateful to all the staffs of the primary school of Musenyi and Mureke Seminary for their contributions to my moral and intellectual personality.

Special thanks are directed to my brothers, Father Déogratias Makobero, Mrs Thérèse Nahimana, family Jean Bosco Nkurunziza and his family for their most appreciated support.

Last but not least, we would like to extend our thanks to the English Section of B.E.P.E.S, to teachers and students who kindly gave us the data.

To our beloved parents, brothers, sisters and all our friends whose moral and financial support have been useful to us, we say thank you.

Adelin MANIRATUNGA

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

B.E.P.E.S: Bureau d'Etude des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire

C.U.P: Cambridge University Press

E.F.L: English Foreign Language

e.g: Example given

i.e: That is

L_2 & L_3: French and English

T.OE.F.L: Testing of English as a Foreign Language

U.B: University of Burundi

U.S.A: United States of America

%: Percentage

2^{nd}: Second

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Dedication i
Acknowledgements ii
List of abbreviations iii
Table of contents iv

Chap. I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 1

I.1. The teaching/learning situation in Burundi..... 1
I.2. Statement of the problem 6
I.3. Purpose and significance of the study 8
I.4. Motivation of the study 9

Chap. II. LITERATURE REVIEW: COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING AND TESTING 11

II.1. Communicative teaching and testing..... 12
II.2. General principles in language testing 15
II.3. Non-communicative compared to communicative language testing 18
II.4. The effects of testing techniques on teaching and learning..... 21

Chap. III. THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM FOR BURUNDI 2nd FORM ARTS 23

III.1. Presentation of the syllabus for 2nd Form Arts 23
III.2. Presentation of the coursebook ***Today's English*** *Classe de Seconde*..... 26
III.2.1. Historical background 26
III.2.2. Format of the book 26
III.3. Teaching approaches in ***Today's English*** *classe de Seconde* 29

Chap.IV. TESTING IN BURUNDI..... 32

IV.1.Rationale for testing 32
IV.2. Teachers' and learners' attitudes towards tests 34
IV.3. Test management and administration 35
IV.4. Teaching and testing compared 38
IV.5. Problems in test-taking 39

Chap. V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 41

V.1. Research environment 41
V.2. Research population 43
V.3. Data collection procedure 44
V.3.1. Students' questionnaire 44
V.3.2. Teachers' questionnaire..... 45
V.4. Data analysis procedure 47

Chap.VI. FINDINGS 48

VI.1. Data from students 48
VI.1.1. Students' attitude towards learning materials 48
VI.1.2. Students' attitude towards tests 51
VI.1.3. The contribution of tests to the learning process 62
VI.2. Data from teachers..... 66
VI.2.1. Teaching materials and teaching approaches 67
VI.2.2. Testing techniques used in Second Form Arts..... 71
VI.2.3. The contribution of communicative tests 80
VI.3. Suggested exercises: cloze and dictation 86

Chap VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 97

VII.1. Conclusion 97
VII.2. Recommendations 100

BIBLIOGRAPHY 104

APPENDICES 108

CHAP.I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

I.1. The teaching/learning situation in Burundi

In a system where academic qualification determines the potential affluence of its citizens by way of employment; the relationship between what is taught and how it is tested deserves a close examination. Many researchers in the field of language learning have emphasized the fact that testing cannot be separated from teaching at all stages. Indeed, tests ought to be taken as an extension of classroom work as Davies (1968:5) observes:

The good test is an obedient servant

since it follows and apes the teaching.

From this consideration we can conclude that there exists a relation of partnership between teaching and testing. That relation can be highlighted by the fact that there are occasions when teaching is good and appropriate, and others when testing is not. In the latter case the test has a harmful backwash. But equally, there are occasions when teaching is poor or inappropriate and when testing exerts a beneficial influence.

Our purpose in this study is to analyse the contribution of communicative tests, especially the cloze and dictation ones on the English language learning in Burundi 2nd Form Arts. One wonders if communicative testing can improve learning habits whereas factors such as time management, non-supportive linguistic and social background of both teachers and pupils come to hamper the teaching/learning process.

The affluence of other languages namely French, Latin and Swahili played an important role in the teaching of English. That is why English is not the second language in Burundi, but the third. The Burundian national policy towards languages had been deeply influenced by the language of the coloniser. We will recall at this point that foreign languages were introduced in Burundi curriculum during the colonial period and that they were mainly French, Latin and Greek.

It is in the late 1950s that English was introduced in the Burundi educational system. When it did start, it was decided that the first year of its learning would be the Eighth Form of high school. At the time it did not seem to have any identifiable purposes. That is why school officials, teachers as well as students in many schools never considered it as a principal course subject. Much care was given to Kirundi, the mother tongue for Burundians, and to French, the colonial language which was the language of instruction and of media.

In 1973, Burundian researchers gave some boosting to the English language in their attempt to evaluate the English grammar and vocabulary taught in the low cycle. With clear illustrations, Ndabemeye (1973) pointed out in her study relevant weaknesses of the traditional teaching and testing approaches, and came up with a suggestion of a multiple-choice test as a contribution to the teaching/ learning of English grammar at the time. Ngaruko(1973:8) on her part compared a traditional teacher to a modern one in the following terms:

> *The traditional teachers said that language*
> *learning is intellectual; that is why they tried*
> *to make it philosophical whereas modern*
> *teachers are making it natural.*

This quotation implies teachers' ignorance that foreign language teaching can hardly reach success if it is not done communicatively. It follows that since teaching and testing go hand in hand, communicative teaching should be matched with communicative testing.

In addition to Ndabemeye's and Ngaruko's contributions, further studies in the testing field revealed that the testing of one aspect of language such as grammar or vocabulary is not sufficient. It has been proven that all the aspects of the language are combined to make sense, as we cannot teach or test one skill leaving the others behind. However, no research focused on integrative testing has been carried out. Researchers discussed the communicative approach in teaching classes of upper level; that is 3rd Form, 2nd Form and 1st Form secondary school. Other studies have dealt with the teaching or evaluation of the teaching of one skill: speaking, listening, writing or reading.

For instance, Niyondagara (1984) contributed to developing and testing listening comprehension in Burundi secondary schools. On the other hand, other studies targeted the assessment of the coursebook of the upper cycle (Ntamutumba (1993) in *Evaluation of the Coursebook Today's English classe de première*), the methods used in teaching English, materials and attitudes. Through these studies, the need for a communicative approach to teaching and testing is highly felt.

As our target population is the 2nd Form Arts, it would be useful to look at some of the research carried out on teaching in this class. In his *Analysis of Errors Made by Burundian English Learners in Indirect Speech 2nde Lettre Moderne,* Kataye (1991) pointed out errors made by Burundian English learners in 2nd Form Arts while using indirect speech. A few years later, Niyonzima (2002) analysed

some factors affecting the teaching of English in some selected secondary schools in Bujumbura city. In 2005, Musabimana analysed errors made by Burundian learners when using the active and passive form case of 2nd Form Arts.

The location of Burundi in the region of Great Lakes leads its citizens, especially the young ones to have a lust for learning English. The young need to study in countries using English as the language of instruction, carrying scientific research, business, etc. Lado (1961:1-2) relates the learning of languages to the location of a country in these words:

> *The speed and frequency of international communication have outstripped the speed of teaching and learning languages, and demand more effective methods of teaching.*

Along the same lines, he refers to the need for more effective teaching of languages to run parallel to the need for more effective testing of their use. In this light, one understands that for language testing to meet present and future demands, it requires the advances and methods of science.

In most cases, the atmosphere surrounding tests generally makes them tough for both sides: the teacher's and the pupil's. Rarely do they feel enthusiasm on hearing the word '*test*'. In this connection, Finocchiaro (1983) remarks that:

The very use of the term "testing" is still virtually taboo in some countries. It engenders fear and distrust not only in many students, but also in teachers and other community members.

Like other students elsewhere, Burundian learners are greatly affected by the fear of failing. Teachers on their part are worried about which decisions to take after the test. Indeed, on the part of the students such a dislike may also derive from the quality of the work that they are required to do. For example, students sometimes complain that they are tired of tests which are ambiguous, unclear and sometimes irrelevant. Moreover, they may not catch what the teacher was trying to do by testing them on 'footnotes' while they had studied all the major details of the course.

In this light, our concern is to analyse the contribution of testing techniques to the English language learning in Burundi high schools with an emphasis on the 2nd Form Arts. Our particular interest lies with investigating the level, the place, the quality and possible achievements of the cloze and dictation tests if applied to that level. An important question that we have been asking ourselves for some time now is "Why do students not work on the completion of mutilated passages as they are required to in most standardised tests? Why are they not given a dictation as it so often happens in class?

Sources of liability may include the lack of sufficient linguistic background, of knowledge of the world surrounding them, or ignorance of the culture as this ought to have been provided by the textbook. Another possible explanation could be that teachers neglect dictations tests assuming that they are inappropriate to the

p2nd Form Arts level for some and those pupils fail in them enormously for others. The above clues led the researcher to formulate the following hypotheses:

- Communicative tests can improve students' learning ability,
- The cloze and the dictation tests can help pupils develop their communicative competence,
- The National Test 1st Form impedes learning activities in 2nd Form Arts.

I.2. Statement of the problem.

The linguistic performance of Burundian learners in the upper level, especially in 2nd Form Arts would suggest that the material, the teaching approaches and the testing techniques are not coherent with one another. They further do not meet pupils' needs. Moreover, the objectives of teaching and testing would not lead to the improvement of both teacher's and pupil's language ability to communicate.

On one hand, some people agree that they had better learn without being evaluated, whereas on the other hand, teachers are anxious because the program is not covered in the time planned, which might be seen as a weakness. Also affected by the weakness are teachers who are reluctant to give the cloze and dictation tests arguing that the cloze test requires the learner to have seen the original text and memorise it; and that it is time consuming to administer and correct a dictation. Given the rate of failure in these types of exercises, so they continue to argue, it is not worth using them as testing techniques.

These critical attitudes of both groups towards English tests should however not prevent Burundian learners and teachers from understanding that teaching can rarely be separated from testing as Allen and Davies (1977) observe:

Any self-respecting course in applied linguistics must
have a component in testing and experimental methods.

Indeed, from the above consideration we assume that when theories behind the teaching do not lead to tests of learning, then they, too, are inadequate.

The ignorance of the value of tests in the teaching/learning process makes some teachers use testing techniques which make them so comfortable that they ignore how remedial the test is. Many teachers acknowledge that they hardly give any tests, and that non-communicative are the ones commonly used. Teachers rarely use dictation tests whereas earlier studies found it very important. Oller's (1971) study for example, revealed that:

A ten-minute dictation test is just efficient
as a sixty-minute multiple-choice test.

Heaton (1975:186) on his part supports Oller's idea in these terms:

A dictation... as a testing device measures too
many different language features to be effective
in providing a means of assessing any one skill.

Now that the English language is widening its range through trade, broadcast, sightseeing to say a few, Burundian learners are displaying even more

founded communicative needs in their learning of English. Logically considering, to the communicative teaching should follow communicative testing. However, some pupils of 2nd Form Arts and some teachers are still reluctant about communicative tests, especially the cloze and the dictation tests.

I.3.Purpose and significance of the study

The ultimate goal of teaching a language is the development of the ability to interact successfully in that language; and to interact with somebody else implies the simultaneous use of different skills namely listening, speaking, writing and reading. In a discourse situation for example, interlocutors exchange ideas by speaking one after another and that according to partner's last utterance. They ask each other questions in order to check their respective stands on the subject. The behaviour and the responses will depend on how one has listened. Besides listening, one may also take notes which he may read some time later.

In classroom situations, teachers ask questions to students to check whether they can move to the new material or to evaluate what they taught during a certain period. The general characteristic of tests used in Burundi high schools is that they test one aspect of the language or one skill. Teachers and students forget that to be efficient in communication one must combine different skills and different aspects of the language. Cohen (1980) highlights the importance of communicative tests as follows:

Integrative tests do not seek to separate language skills into neat divisions in order to improve tests reliability: instead, they are designed to use two or more skills simultaneously.

With respect to this issue, the research will bring to the attention of teachers of English, their students, secondary school program designers (B.E.P.E.S) and last but not least, the Burundi National Examination Board, the importance of classroom tests, especially the integrative ones in the teaching and the learning of English. We hope that the outcome of this study will prove right to improve communicative competence so as to respond to the learners' personal but also national needs. We also hope that findings from this study will reduce tension felt by teachers and pupils who are afraid of testing or being tested communicatively.

I.4. Motivation of the study

Many studies in the teaching /learning field confirm that a test is a follow up of any teaching session. Unfortunately, some Burundian learners and teachers do not see clearly the value of tests. Their linguistic background and culture could justify deficiencies noticed in the completion of communicative tasks: writing letter to a friend, taking notes from a lecture, etc.

Our observation when we were doing our training practice in some secondary schools revealed that it is hard for students to cope with a cloze test. When analysing their answers, we realized that they think in Kirundi or French and complete the blank spaces with the words translated in English. We also realised that they do not care about syntax and semantics. In few words we can say that

they ignore how to go about it, having had little or no familiarisation with this kind of exercise.

Concerning the dictation, the same observation revealed that pupils omit, replace and transpose some words. This might be the result of weaknesses in grammar, vocabulary, tense and spelling, especially when they are combined.

Our attention is focused on Second Form Arts pupils because they are supposed to have already acquired reasonable knowledge of English after four years of study. Another reason is that since they may enter the business world whereby they need to talk to other people whose lingua franca is English, they need to be trained to perform using all the skills as well as all the aspects of the English language. Furthermore, students need to get familiarised with standardized tests such as T.O.E.F.L, Michigan and E.T.S; English language proficiency test for foreigner students who wish to study in U.S.A.

CHAP.II. LITERATURE REVIEW: COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING AND TESTING

The communicative approach to teaching and testing, also called modern approach is nowadays on everyone's lips especially those who are interested in the teaching and testing of the English language. Therefore, the communicative approach is supported by many researchers as a reaction to the traditional approach to teaching; that is the Audio-lingual method. In addition, the communicative approach to teaching and testing is known for its taking into account the students' needs and interests; as well as its developing the ability to use the four skills of writing, reading, speaking, listening to perform communicative tasks.

The Audio-lingual method on the other hand, is supposed to develop accuracy and fluency; that is through the production of correct and well pronounced sentences. More details on both approaches will be provided in the ensuing chapter.

Concerning testing, research carried in this field in Burundi so far has proven that in 2nd Form Arts, the teaching of skills was done by handling each skill in isolation from the rest. As a matter of fact, we find it interesting to explore theories and issues related to testing language ability through integrative tests. The first section analyses the communicative approach to teaching and testing while the second deals with general principles of testing. The third makes a rough comparison of communicative and non-communicative testing. After that, a discussion of the effects of tests on the teaching/learning process is held.

II.1. Communicative teaching and testing

As previously mentioned, the main purpose of any language teaching is to train students to use the language for communication. Thus, a good language guide should build on a good theory. By implication, a good teacher should provide the student with the best methods to facilitate the learning. From the relation of partnership which exists between teaching, learning and testing we understand that no one can neglect the role of tests in the teaching/learning process. Moreover, students are normally tested as they are taught. That is, if students are taught communicatively, they should be tested communicatively. Furthermore, a good test leads to future actions on the part of the teacher and the learner. That is why we assert that the concepts of teaching, learning and testing are intimately linked and we can conclude that it is through language teaching that learning and testing are defined and understood.

Nevertheless, there are many different methods of teaching and testing the degree to which the student masters what he has been taught, even though they vary in their application to specific skills. Thus, the most appropriate method of teaching is to deal with all the aspects of the language as well as all the four skills. The teaching of one aspect or one skill in isolation must have been based on faulty theories of language learning. Nowadays, studies done in the teaching area would suggest that a language should not be taught just as a system, but more importantly as a result of an interaction of different language components and skills as well as cultural factors.

Separating the teaching and the testing of those aspects and skills has shortcomings on the part of the learner. From the classroom observation, we note

that students show a good performance enough to cope with grammar and vocabulary tests, especially when they are given in a multiple-choice format. Surprisingly, the students are unable to use the structures and words in their daily conversation. This might be due to the Audio-lingual method which emphasizes repetition and imitation rather than creativity in the learning process.

Another possible explanation of this situation is the textbook used in 2nd Form Arts which does not motivate the students. The use of drills and mechanical exercises as a method of teaching grammar and vocabulary is remote in modern language teaching. In addition, students are asked to listen to the text three times but no one can say that they are developing the listening skill. Teachers should adapt the textbook to the students' needs and interests by introducing for instance some communicative activities. These could include talking to each other at a party for example, writing a postcard to a friend, finding the main idea in a magazine, listening to news or radio shows, taking notes from a lecture, etc. As soon as students are used to the above activities, the teacher would give corresponding tests to stimulate their learning.

The communicative approach has been developed in reaction against audiolingualism. To understand its philosophy let us consider the definition below by Harmer (1983:38):

> *Communicative approach is an umbrella term to describe methodology which teaches students how to communicate efficiently and which also lays emphasis on the teaching of communicative values, and in some cases, the teaching of language function.*

According to him, for a language activity to be communicative, it has to really promote language use and generate in the student a desire to communicate. Thus, communicative approach recognises communication as the main purpose of language learning. Furthermore, this approach has its main goal the acquisition of communicative competence and the development of the four language skills.

To know how many kilos of rice are in a bag, one has to put that bag on a scale. Thus, to know how far skills are developed in a learner, teachers or examiners have to use instruments or techniques which accurately measure them. These instruments or techniques are integrative or communicative tests. Communicative competence then is the rule to determine the appropriate use of the language in any situation beside the knowledge of different components of it.

Many people believe that "communication" or "to communicate" means to speak to someone else. ***The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*** (1985: 48) defines communication as "the exchange of ideas, information ... between two or more persons". On the other hand, ***The Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary*** (1987:226) defines the same word as "an act or instance of transmitting verbal or written messages; a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behaviours".

The learning of a language involves the learning of its culture because they are independent and inseparable. Burundian teachers and students have to mix the English culture to the Burundian one. They could achieve that purpose but have weaknesses of listening to news or other programs on radio stations which broadcast in English.

Equally, they read the magazines and newspapers written in French or

in Kirundi. Moreover, it is rare that either teachers or students use the English language after class. Teachers ought to stimulate their learners into linking communicative activities. To succeed, they should keep in mind the following:

1° education is a process involving a three-way relationship between teachers, pupils and subject matter; and therefore what teachers know and do master,

2° for a teacher of English, knowledge of the nature, structure and the function of the English language is necessary;

3°systematic assessment is inherent and essential to good teaching.

All in all, communicative language teaching and testing is chosen in the sense that it provides students with all the language elements and develops the integrated skills for an efficient communication. Having given an overview of the extent of communicative teaching and testing approach in Burundi, it is now time to have a look on some general principle underlying the testing activity.

II.2. General principles in language testing

The term "test" is used in various domains including medicine, education, psychology, etc. In most cases it means "the quest of information". In the pedagogical field "test" has as equivalents: evaluation, assessment and measurement. However, all these terms mean the systematic gathering of information for the purpose of making decisions. In addition, even if the above terms can be considered as equivalents of 'test' there is a difference between the three depending upon the purpose of the doer of the tests. Bachman (1990:46) comments on the difference in these terms:

Not all measurements are tests, not all tests are evaluations and not all evaluations involve either measurement or test.

To understand this comment, let us use analogous examples. When a tourist wants to know the distance separating Bujumbura- Bugarama he uses a unit of length measurement. In that case we cannot say that he is testing the distance. Another example is when a doctor checks what is wrong with a patient we say that he is doing a blood test but not an evaluation or measurement of blood. Therefore, in the teaching/learning process, the word "test" is used to mean the evaluation which requires appropriate techniques in order to have accurate information about the learner's abilities in the target language and the effectiveness of the teacher's methods. To achieve this purpose, some principles must be taken into account. Rebecca (1967:6) for instance frames her principles on classroom testing as follows:

First of all, classroom objectives must be defined because students study according to the way they are tested.

That is, if the teacher wants his students to be good at listening and speaking, so listening and speaking tests must be given. She continues saying that *the student's progress is to be stimulated.* Therefore, from the assumption that students learn before, during and after the test, it follows that the teacher should give tests which enhance in the learner's mind future actions. Thirdly, she claims to *evaluate class achievement*. Here the teacher is required to identify which aspects of the language are presenting difficulty for individual students and for the class. In other words, he has to emphasise those obscure points, clarify them until the teaching objectives are reached.

On the other hand, Swain (1985:36-45) gives four principles for communicative testing. His first principle is *'Start from somewhere'* and means that items of the test must be relevant to the existing knowledge and examples. According to him, communicative testing is the testing of communicative competence which includes four language areas: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence.

Grammatical competence includes the knowledge of vocabulary and rules of words pronunciation and sentence formation. In this case, knowledge and skills required to understand and express accurately the literal meaning that of utterances are targeted. Let us recall that competence is the mastery of rules governing the word formation, syntax in a sentence, whereas performance is the extent of using the competence in our everyday life.

Sociolinguistic competence refers to how utterances are produced and understood in different sociolinguistic contexts and contextual factors such as topic, status of participants and the purpose of interaction. The discourse competence relates to how to continue grammatical form and meaning to achieve a unified spoken or written text in different genres. Examples: argumentative essays, narratives, scientific reports, business letters, etc. Let us recall that this skill is very important to perform on a cloze test.

Strategic competence means the mastery of communicative strategies, which may be called into action either to enhance the effectiveness of communication or to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to limiting factors in actual communication or insufficient competence in one or more components of communicative competence. Indeed, composition, peer discussion, formal

interview, notes, technical exercises must provide the opportunity to use each component of the communicative behaviour.

The third principle according to the same author is *"bias for best"*. Here, the teacher is required to do everything possible to elicit the learner's best performance. So far, ambiguous and unclear questions must be avoided. The teacher should also give sufficient time to complete the task.

The fourth principle and the last is to *"work for backwash"*. This principle refers to the relationship between teaching and testing. As it was said in the last chapter a test can have a negative, benign or positive effect on the teaching/learning process. The effect of tests on teaching and learning is illustrated by the fact that when most teachers know the content of a test, they teach their students accordingly.

II.3. Non-communicative compared to communicative language testing

The communicative approach to language teaching and testing developed from the traditional methodology materialised through the Audio-lingual approach. The latter is characterised by its tendency to emphasise forms of patterns of language more than its communicative function; it also tends to focus on the reading and writing skills rather than on listening and speaking ones. Communicative teaching on the other hand emphasises communicative function; that is the 'job we do using the language'.

Moreover, it has a good balance among the four language skills and deepens listening and speaking more than the traditional approach does. Another advantage is that it develops the four language areas of competence as enumerated in section II.2 by Swain (1985). So far it is assumed that each

teaching approach will establish corresponding testing techniques. Wilkins (1976) shows the development of teaching methods and testing techniques by pointing out that:

> *It is important that while some people are experimenting with the national syllabus as such, others should be attempting to develop the new testing techniques that should ideally accompany it.*

Textbooks used in Burundi education system, especially those in the upper cycle subject the teacher to using non-communicative methods in teaching and consequently non-communicative tests such as making sentences on a given pattern, multiple-choice, the list is not exhaustive. Obviously, Burundian upper level learners are not expected to be good communicators, particularly after the English class.

Considering the amount of time they spent learning English, students of 2nd Form Arts are assumed to be able to appreciate what their teacher wants them to do, and so should they study accordingly. Hence, if the teacher wants to develop the oral fluency in the classroom; and if tests are for instance written, students will tend to perfect the skills of reading and writing.

Communicative tests also called pragmatic tests, on the other hand, are well known for their effectiveness to assess the learner's ability to communicate in English. Commenting on the function of communicative tests, Harrison (1983:2) says that:

Communicative tests are an attempt to show that a test does not assess skills in isolation from each other or even in pair but in a complex interaction which the students must cope with in order to complete the task set by the test.

By looking at the profile of the cloze and the fill-in blanks tests one can confuse the two whereas they are different. First of all they are similar for the fact that they are based on a reading passage. The difference lies in the preparation since for a cloze test words are deleted systematically while in the blank- filling, the teacher decides on which words to delete. The choice is focused on important content words such as adverbs, adjectives, nouns, connecting words, etc.

For a cloze passage on the other hand, a lead in sentence is given to supply the context to the testee, and it is argued that the more blank spaces the passage contains, the more reliable it is. An illustrative example is given in section VI.3.

Concerning the dictation, it is considered as an integrative testing technique by excellence since it tests at once the skills of listening, reading and writing. Its disadvantages lie in the correction and scoring. It takes long to correct and learners seem to fail in it a great deal. As no method is perfect, non-communicative tests make it possible to have accurate information about the learner's mastery of some aspects of the language.

However, they are criticised for not requiring much thinking, having a negative backwash on teaching and learning, and for being an impediment to

cheating. Communicative tests on the other hand, are praised for their capacity to provide more accurate information about the English performance: the ability to use the language appropriately in specific contexts. Their validity and reliability constitute assets in general achievement as well as in some classroom placement and diagnostic tests.

II.4. The effects of testing techniques on teaching and learning

Testing is an essential part of teaching and every teacher is called upon to test his learners. Despite the fact that few teachers have in mind the value of a test for the teaching/learning process, the reality is that tests have influences on teaching and testing. Alderson (1985:104) supports this idea stating:

> *A poor or inappropriate test will clearly have a negative effect, but this simply proves that tests have an influence. A good test could arguably have a positive effect on teaching and learning.*

He continues by arguing that whether that influence is benign, positive or negative, it will depend crucially on the nature and use of the test. When for instance a test is prepared with the intension of improving the learning abilities, it has a positive effect on the learning process. However, when tests are intended to attribute marks only, their effect is hardly good. In addition, one would not overlook the long-range effect of tests on the student's career. Considering the reasons why students are tested, one can conclude that tests have a permanent

effect on the future career of a student. That is, from results obtained that the lecturer decides the final grade of a diploma or a degree given to a student.

Coming back to the short-range effect of test, non-communicative tests, especially the multiple-choice ones are accused of not stimulating the learning ability and consequently of inhibiting the development of communicative competence. Despite the multiple-choice tests, whatever technique used in quizzes has a positive effect. Research done on language testing have proven that frequent quizzes (that is a five or ten-minute test that is announced or not), encourage students to devote some time to their language study on a more regular basis. Talking about the importance of a quiz, Rebecca (1967:7) had this to say:

> *The value of the quiz lies in its positive effect on students' learning and practice it affords in the art of test-taking; such a practice helps reduce nervousness often affecting performance on longer tests.*

Surely, communicative tests will have a negative backwash when few instructions are given to students while performing communicative tasks. In other words, students will feel anxious because many of them consider some communicative tests (example of a dictation) as a way of losing marks, as a punishment. Communicative tests will have a positive backwash in the case they attract the students' attention and interest; thus enhancing the need to improve their communicative skill.

CHAP.III. THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM FOR BURUNDI SECOND FORM ARTS

From the time when the teaching of English was introduced in the Burundi educational system, the National Curriculum Designing Bureau, the English Section elaborated programs intended to fit levels available in Burundi high schools. These programs have been revised many times and the most recent syllabus was implemented in 1992. The 2nd Form Arts as it is concerned in this study has its proper program and its syllabus comprises the textbook, teacher's guide and records to use with the textbook. This chapter will focus on three major aspects: presentation of the 2nd Form Arts syllabus, presentation of the coursebook ***Today's English*** *classe de Seconde* and teaching approaches in that coursebook.

III.1. Presentation of the syllabus for 2nd Form Arts

The 2nd Form Arts syllabus presented by B.E.P.E.S (1992:117) reflects features of the structural syllabus. It comprises grammar points to be taught and emphasizes that the teacher should respect the order in which they are presented. However, it is not shown how these items should be taught. The class also has a coursebook containing basic texts. Surprisingly, some structures do not appear in the syllabus. That is the case of **(a) few, (a) little** from the same coursebook page 41; **as, like** p.47; **no longer, no more** p.61. The next page presents the syllabus for the 2nd Form Arts as established by Ministère de l'éducation Nationale (1992) ***Programme d'Anglais*** B.E.P.E.S Section Anglais. The markings in it are not in the original. They must have been made by the user (teacher) of the copy that we borrowed to Xerox for the purpose of the present work.

CLASSE DE 2ème LETTRES MODERNES

It's (about) time + SUBJECT (SUBJ) + SIMPLE/CONTINUOUS PAS TENSE (SIMP/CONT PST TENSE)

It's (about) time I went/was going home.

..sh + SUBJ + PST TENSE :

I wish I went/had gone home.

SUBJ + HAD + BETTER (not) + INFINITIVE (INF) :

You'd/had better hurry up.

SUBJ + WOULD + RATHER (not) + INF :

You'd/would rather stay here.

a) Each other : They lovend each other, so they got married.

b) One another : At the end of the match, the spectators were talking to one another in an excited way.

a) Every/Every one of : 1) Every boy should do his share of the work.

2) Every one of my pupils has his copy books.

b) Each/Each of : 1) Each of you must come tomorrow.

2) Give us an example each

a) None (of) : None of my pupils was absent yesterdays.

b) All (of) : All the pupils stood up to greet the visitor.

Own : It's my own pen

Whoever/Whatever/ Whichever/However :

(i) Whoever takes part in this race will win a prize.

(ii) Whatever you do, he will not change his mind.

TO HAVE + OBJECT (OBJ) + PAST PARTICIPLE (PST PART)

I had my hair cut by John.

SUCH A/SUCH/SUCH AS :

(i) It was such a violent storm.

(ii) I don't like such people.

(iii) I don't like people such as you.

2. Once/Twice/Thrice/ Four Times ... a week/month : X
We learn English twice a week.

4. COMP and COMP : ✓
1) It is getting colder and colder.
2) She is getting more and more beautiful.
3) He is getting less and less rich.

. The less/more..., the less/more... : The less/more I work, the less/more I earn.

. On/While when + PRES PART : On going to the room, he found a thief inside.

. Whether ... Or (not) : I don't care whether you do it or not.

. Got + PAST PART PASSIVE (PASS) : Last night I got robbed.

. So : ' Burundian, so is he.

III.2. Presentation of the coursebook *Today's English classes de seconde*

III.2.1. Historical background

The coursebook ***Today's English*** *classe de seconde* is a continuation of other coursebooks in the series used in previous classes. The coursebook comes in the third position after other two coursebooks tried out in the Burundi teaching system. In the 1960s ***Britain 1, 2, 3, 4*** written by Gijssels and Lievens, was used whereas in the 1970s a change was introduced in favour of ***Cartledge book 1,2,3,4*** by H.A Cartledge.

The former series was abandoned because they were not suitable to African students and were too traditional in their presentation. The latter series was appreciated by teachers and learners for it tried to set an African context for its themes. However, ***Cartledge book 3*** was criticized for not being suitable to African settings, the Burundian one in particular. It is in the late 1980s that the coursebook ***Today's English*** *classe de seconde* was introduced in Burundi in replacement of ***Cartledge book 3***. With regard to its content, it includes three categories of texts ABC and from which the teacher has to choose a series for the school year program.

III.2.2. Format of the book

As mentioned in the previous section, it is intended for 2nd Form Arts students. It contains three categories of texts referred to as ABC and each of these categories includes ten passages extracted from African, British and American

literature. By the end of the textbook, a number of poems, newspaper and magazine articles are provided. Lastly, some bibliographical notes are given on authors referred to in the textbook.

With regard to the study of texts, the coursebook presents twelve exercises, the first nine on grammar and the last three being there to test reading comprehension. After each text, photographs are given to illustrate some contexts and situations on some themes. The methodology in that book demands the teacher to present the text orally via listening three times the text to be studied. As a matter of fact, this step is void given the absence of the tape. After that, the teacher's guide supplies a number of questions related to the text, and followed by a series of eight grammatical exercises.

Concerning the methodology, the Audio-lingual approach is the one prevailing in the textbook. One can realise that looking at the type of exercises to be orally repeated. Besides, each unit contains exercises of all kinds, which however display obvious aspects of the structural approach to language teaching. Examples of these exercises are given below all from series A.3.

A confirmed bachelor: p.19-20.

I suggest that he should marry.

- *On the above pattern make five sentences*

Exercise 2: Why are you not married?

→ Why aren't you married?

- *Transform the following sentences as above.*

- *With the following elements make sentences as below*

Exercise 9: **I may have** got it

1. He/ to sell/ his car
2. It/ to rain/ during the night.

- *Essay*: A talk with a friend about whether to get married or not.
- *Comment*: What sort of a man would you say Fielding is?
- *Turn into English*: ex: 'Pourquoi ne voulez-vous pas que votre nom s'éteigne?'

All along the book, eight structural exercises and four reading ones, i.e related to the basic text are supplied. The explanation of rules is not recommended in the book; grammatical structures are rather presented in the form of mechanical drills. An essay, a summary, a comment and a theme are given to develop the reading and writing skills. The last exercise in each unit is translation which requires the mastery of French and English: L2 (French) and L3 (English the target language).

One may wonder if teachers and learners of Burundi high school care about that exercise whereas it is known that no test of translation has ever been used in Burundi. How much of translation can learners and teachers do successfully at that level anyway? Lado (1961:24) cautions on the status of translation in these terms:

> *A fifth skill is the ability to translate, which should be tested as an end in itself and not as a way to test the mastery of the language.*

In the same line of thoughts Ngaruko (1973:6) observes that:

To the skill of translation corresponds a non-immediate objective because to become a good translator, one must really possess not only the four skills but also other personal gifts and a remarkable knowledge of the two languages in question. The mastery of the two languages takes a long time and it is a matter of individual interest.

As far as Burundian learners are concerned, they do not master well either L2 or L3. To sum up, the content of the coursebook used in 2nd Form Arts, its presentation and its objectives make teachers and learners feel uncomfortable when using it. Researchers and teachers have long claimed for its innovation or its adaptation so that it can better respond to the learners' needs. Unfortunately, their calls seem to have been met with total indifference from the decision-makers within the Ministry of Education.

III.3. Teaching approaches in ***Today's English*** *classe de seconde*

To begin with, the introduction of this coursebook indicates that the audio-lingual method had been used as a teaching method all along the years.

Defining the audio-lingual method, ***The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*** (1985:21) writes that:

It is a method of foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading and writing, uses dialogues and drills, discourages the use of mother tongue in the classroom and often makes use of contrastive analysis.

Behind the audio-lingual method lies the aural-oral approach to language teaching which underlies the following beliefs about language learning:

i. speaking and listening are the most basic language skills

ii. each language has its own unique structure and rule system

iii. a language is learned through forming habits.

From the above considerations we understand that the audio-lingual method comes from the aural-oral and structural approach which views the language as a system and which investigates the place that linguistic limits such as sounds, words, sentences have within this system. According to Fries (1945) for instance, audiolingualism is the application of principles of structural linguistics to language teaching and rejected the direct method in which learners are exposed to language, use it gradually and master its grammatical patterns. According to the same author and his colleagues, grammar must be the starting point of any learning and teaching. Systematic attention to pronunciation and intensive oral drilling characterise such teaching. While the theory of language teaching in audio-lingual method was based on structural linguistics, its theory of learning originated from the behaviourist view. Skinner (1957:10), one of the tenants of the behaviourist theory on foreign language learning maintains that:

We have no reason to assume... that verbal behaviour differs in any fundamental respect from non-verbal behaviour, or that any new principle must be followed to account for it.

In the application of behaviourism to language learning, one has to identify the *organism* as the foreign language learner, the *behaviour* as a verbal behaviour , the *stimulus* as what is taught; the *response* as the learner's reaction to the stimulus, and the *reinforcement* as the extrinsic approval and praise of the teacher of the intrinsic self-satisfaction to language use. Briefly speaking, language mastery is seen as an acquisition of appropriate language stimulus-response chains. This method is successful when one wants to meet short-term objectives such as accuracy in producing sentences or success in an exam. However, it fails to help the student to communicate with the others in the target language.

The aim of this chapter has been to give a quick view of the 2nd Form Arts syllabus and the textbook given that teaching and testing go hand in hand. Having presented the syllabus for that class, a provision of the historical background of the textbook, its format, a discussion of the methodology suggested by program-designers have been carried out. These clues have been supplied with the purpose of informing teachers and potential readers about the size and the quality of the material used by teachers and learners of 2nd Form Arts.

CHAP.IV. TESTING IN BURUNDI

It would be awkward to talk about teaching languages in Burundi while forgetting to assess the kind of language the students have acquired, something which implicitly calls for an evaluation of the teacher's methods efficiency and the learner's progress.

In this chapter we intend to focus on how the testing of English is done. The first point discusses the general accepted need for tests; the second point examines teacher's and learner's attitudes towards tests. After that a glance on test management and administration is given. Fourthly, a comparison of testing and teaching approaches is made. The last point analyses the problems linked to test-taking.

IV.1. Rationale for testing

It is widely agreed among language learning and teaching professionals that the test is an extension of classroom activities. Within this context, the construction of language tests should be seen as essentially a matter of problem solving. The basic problem becomes to construct the test which is most appropriate for a particular purpose in particular circumstances bearing in mind the resources available. Here, the teacher must ask himself why he is testing, how and what he wants to achieve. Therefore, if we analyse the kind, the type and the quality of tests given in Burundi high school, in 2nd Form Arts particularly, we notice that the contribution of tests is hardly clear to Burundian educators.

To make an enlightening contribution in this regard, let us quote Cunningsworth (1984:55):

> *Tests are valuable in that they tend to increase student's motivation by providing a short-term goal and a means of checking one's progress. They also provide the teacher with useful feedback which will help him to become more aware of learning difficulties faced by students; in this way the teacher improves his own performance.*

For various purposes, some types of test are given like the placement, diagnostic, achievement and proficiency tests. However, the most used types of test should reflect the objectives of the course, the latter being generally known to students. Sometimes, the answering of a quiz or a test serves as an inducement for students to review their materials, to get their notebooks in order, to sort out and classify grammatical rules and vocabulary to do whatever else particular students do to review for tests.

The preparation for tests stimulates students to think about the material. So, when the test is for diagnostic purposes, students have an opportunity to see how they are able to perform. When teachers and learners are familiar with tests they learn not only their area of strengths but also areas where they are weak, and therefore need remedial actions.

So far, we have just seen how testing go hand in hand with teaching, the main types of test used in Burundi, which are diagnostic (also called formative or

progress tests) and achievement tests (which measure what has been learned from what was taught in a particular course). We also saw that their contribution is to stimulate learners to concentrate on the material. In the next section, we would like to turn to an explanation of the teachers' and students' attitudes to testing.

IV.2. Teachers' and learners' attitudes towards tests

There is a belief that most assessments involve students and teachers in being judged, and that they would probably wish to do as best as they possibly can to get a good result. When students have limited opportunities to know what they can do, some level of anxiety and panic are not surprising. On one hand, the word "testing" sometimes frightens teachers since it suggests statistics and rigor. Teachers are also afraid of not being able to make up tests that are fair and appropriate, particularly in the amount of time available. They would prefer to give less tests because their preparation and administration are much more demanding in addition to the preparation of routine lessons.

Students on the other hand are afraid of the unknown. They also fear the possible consequences of tests namely failure, exclusion, shamefulness and the like. As a remedy, students would like to do more tests hoping that they may fail in the first test and the second but succeed in the third...or sixth! Testing as an external imposition is considered by many students as painful ritual prepared for the bewilderment and is consequently undergone with stress.

One further cause of fear worth mentioning is the testing technique, sometimes judged by them as inappropriate. For instance, when students are given a cloze test, they want to be supplied with alternative words to choose from. For

the dictation, the students questioned would like to practice on dictation-taking so that they get accustomed to sound discrimination, punctuation and the use of grammar as well as vocabulary.

To sum up, Burundian teachers and learners are still anxious about tests. According to teachers, giving a test and scoring it is a tedious task, likely to make them uncomfortable and unreliable. Students on their part fear tests because the setting is not always good and some testing techniques subject them to doubt and confusion. Success like positive attitudes will remain difficult to reach unless students learn to cope with panic; that is to relax before and during the test.

IV.3. Test management and administration

When the English course was introduced in Burundi educational system, it was taught six hours per week. As program designers had planned it, each hour should correspond to a test; which means that the teacher of 2nd Form Arts should give no less than six tests a term.

Nevertheless, due to some factors such as class size, time management, insufficiency of the material to be tested on, etc; some teachers have become constrained to give less tests. This is for instance the case of Lycée de Ngagara which has 73 students. As usual, tests are announced at least one week before whereas quizzes are not announced. Students can be told to be ready for a quiz after any period of instruction (also possible in the case of two consecutive periods). With regard to the administration of tests one has to care about their practicality and security so that the exercise leads to reliable and valid results. For

this purpose, some requisite planning and organisation is required. Hughes (1989:152) cautions about test administration saying that:

> *The best test gives unreliable and invalid results if it is not well administered.*

Other factors include:

a. Material and equipment

The preparation of materials and equipment is concerned with printing the question and answer sheets in plenty of time and to check that there are no errors. As the cloze and the dictation tests are concerned, check if enough instructions are given to make the work clear. Teachers have to check if the equipment is working and replace it if necessary before the test starts.

b. Examiners

Examiners may be teachers or other people sent to supervise the test. Those people are also called "invigilators". Their job is to secure the test in order to prevent students to cheat one from another or to give clear instructions about what students are required to do, and that some time before the test is actually administered.

c. Candidates

Candidates are given instructions about test-taking such as arriving before the test takes place, being informed about the consequences of any irregular behaviour, how marks are attributed per question, etc.

d. Test room

The test room should be large enough so that candidates can sit freely and therefore be prevented from copying from one another. In each test room there should be a clock visible to all candidates so as not to disturb them telling the time left for the test duration.

e. Scoring

Scoring is a judgement of the work value in attributing it a number of marks, and it follows from the correction which consists in removing mistakes from a work. Moreover, it is from the correction and scoring that some decisions are made. These decisions may be about the learner, the course, or methods of teaching.

The decision about the learner results from the exploitation of the outcome of tests. This decision concerns the selection for admission to a new class, placement to group them according to their characteristics, language needs or academic specialisation. Decisions about the course or methods on the other hand are concerned with adapting the learning program by evaluating the appropriateness of its specific components so as to improve them as appropriate.

To sum up, the test results are used for making decisions on the learner and the program. However, it is not possible to make accurate decisions on the basis of unreliable and invalid results, which is why tests should be carefully prepared, administered, scored and well interpreted so as to make decisions on the basis of adequate results and thus objective ones. It is from those results that the teacher

will decide to change or improve his teaching methods; just as he can decide to review the whole chapter or some of its parts.

IV.4. Teaching and testing compared

Nowadays, there is a lust among teachers of English for seeing the traditional teaching materials and teaching methods changed. The main cause is that the needs for language learning have evolved; the present aims of learning languages are no longer to read the literature of other societies, to admire authors writing style and to develop oneself mentally. Rather, they are to develop communicative skills; which implies the development of the ability to read, write, listen and speak; not in isolation but in complex interaction.

The students' needs are not the mastery of grammatical rules and mechanical drills, but the real use of the language they learn in the classroom. From the assumption that any session of instructions is followed by a kind of assessment; Burundians teachers and researchers ought to find new testing techniques which urge the learners to use the four skills simultaneously.

At the time when the Audio-lingual method was in vogue, non-communicative tests like the multiple-choice, blank completion, true-false questions and translation (in some countries) were used. Now that we are advocating the adaptation or innovation of the syllabus for a communicative teaching approach, we should equally think of kinds of integrative tests to assess the language acquired.

That is why tests which evaluate communicative language ability should be implemented whereas the traditional ways of testing should slowly disappear. For example, mechanical drills used in the textbook should be replaced by communicative exercises which are the ones whose type of response is controlled, but the student produces his own information or content. To understand better, let us use this example of practicing the past participle.

Teacher	**Student**
What time did you get up on Monday?	I got up .....
What did you have for dinner?	I had .....

In few words, the teaching/learning process in Burundi can be criticized for not being appropriate from the 1980s until now. The textbook, the teaching methods and the testing techniques do not really contribute to the improvement of the learner's ability to communicate. That is why everyone is thinking of a communicative approach to teaching and testing as a counterpart of the traditional way of teaching and testing. In the meantime, teachers should adapt the textbook and testing techniques in it to help students achieve more communication. Daily life depends on it.

IV.5. Problems in test-taking

Although testing is a problem-solving activity, it is not surprising that test-taking be surrounded by numerous problems, of which most are related to test preparation, administration, material to be tested and the relationship between the teacher and students.

CHAP.V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims to explain how the present study has been conducted. The study is entitled: THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATIVE TESTS TO THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN SECOND FORM ARTS OF BURUNDI HIGH SCHOOLS: CASES OF THE CLOZE AND DICTATION TESTS. In the following lines, clarifications are provided regarding the research environment, the research population as well as the data collection procedure.

V.1. Research environment.

To begin with, the study was conducted in fifteen secondary schools spread around the provinces of Muyinga, Ngozi, Gitega and Bujumbura city. The four provinces have been selected because they were relatively familiar to the researcher. Not only did the latter know about the type and the location of the schools but he also expected to receive a reasonable hospitality. He hoped that the sample collected from those places would supply reliable and valid information as mentioned in the introduction of this chapter. Besides, the choice of these areas was motivated by the following assumptions as already stated in section I.1:

- Communicative tests can improve students' learning ability,
- The cloze and dictation test can help students develop their communicative competence,
- The National Test 1st Form impedes learning activities in 2nd Form Arts.

Although we can claim that the fifteen schools have been selected semi-randomly, some factors which have guide our choice can still be pointed out. They include:

- the expected availability of materials (coursebook, library, radio, cassettes)
- the availability of teachers and different languages spoken around the school (the sociolinguistic environment of the school).

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the sample includes public and private, as well as old and newly-created schools. This decision was taken to allow for the comparison of results. It is widely known that newly created schools generally have less teaching materials than old ones. There is also the fact that the availability of teachers in different schools is widely unbalanced. Indeed, some schools have only part-time teachers, a situation which counts as one of common factors of bad teaching and learning conditions around Burundi.

When the teaching/learning conditions are not good, the researcher wonders which type of test would be appropriate for students to improve their learning ability given that teaching and testing go hand in hand. The schools involved in the study are: Lycée Communal de Muyinga, Séminaire Mureke, Lycée Don Bosco, Lycée de Gisanze, Lycée Musenyi, Lycée Busiga, Lycée COMIBU de Ngozi, Lycée Rohero, Lycée Saint Esprit, Lycée Ngagara, Lycée Indépendante, Lycée Sainte Thérèse, Lycée Buye, Séminaire Muyinga and Lycée Notre Dame de la sagesse. They all have both a junior and a senior level. Since the researcher's study is focused on the 2nd Form Arts, it becomes clear why only Lycées were selected.

V.2. Research population

With respect to the area of the study, our target population is pupil and teachers of the class mentioned in the last section or anyone (a teacher or administration staff) who taught in that class, recently of course. The pupils of 2nd Form Arts are supposed to have acquired enough language patterns as well as a reasonable command of the four language skills. With this in mind, we hope that this group of pupils could reasonably engage in any communication activities or out the classroom.

They are also able to judge the way they are taught, the materials used as well as the way they are tested. This class has been selected because it is the frame of the students' future career. For instance, in one year, the students will be opened the way to different horizons: continuing their studies abroad, attending university studies in Burundi or entering the business world.

Let us say that the size of the sample amounts to 120 students. Within the sample, eight students were randomly selected per class in each school. On the other hand, the population is composed of the respective teachers of that class or those who have taught it. This was done so as to improve the size of the teacher's sample, which is strong of 30 participants. Teachers were targeted because they are the ones most responsible of what happens in the classroom. They can objectively inform the researcher on the availability of materials, teaching methods and testing techniques. For the validity of the study, a pilot study had been conducted before both teacher's and student's questionnaires were administered. The teacher's questionnaire was presented to six teachers in Muyinga and Ngozi. Their choice was also done randomly.

V.3. Data collection procedure

The research area being broad and the time devoted to this work being too short to go round all the four provinces, the researcher used the questionnaire technique to collect the data. Thus, two types of questionnaire have been used: the teacher's and the student's.

The student's questionnaire, on one hand, is a series of 16 questions subdivided into three sections:

- students' attitude toward the learning materials,
- student' attitude toward tests,
- the contribution of tests to the learning process.

The teacher's questionnaire, on the other hand, is a set of 17 questions grouped into three sections:

- materials and teaching approaches,
- testing techniques
- the contribution of communicative tests.

V.3.1. Student's questionnaire

As mentioned above, the student's questionnaire contains 16 questions divided into three sections. The questionnaire was easy to administer: it took a short time to answer as students were to express their choice within the limits of optional answers in the form of close-ended questions that are "yes," "no" questions, except for some where students had to give their point of view

At each of the schools, the teacher was explained the purpose of the study so as to give clarifications on eventual questions of interest to students. Some questionnaires were lost during the collection; so, the researcher had to introduce another copy of the questionnaire. As it could be expected, this mishap delayed the data collection process. This is the case of questionnaires sent to Lycée de Jabe and Lycée de l'Amitié. As a solution, similar questionnaires were handed to other schools with the same characteristics as the ones presented and explained in section V.I above.

V.3.2. Teacher's questionnaire

This questionnaire contains 17 questions divided into three sections. In the first section, teachers are asked to tell the researcher how they handle the teaching material to cater for the students' needs. In few words, they are asked to tell how they use the coursebook and the teaching methods to provide for the students' needs. In the second section, teachers inform the researcher which tests they use to assess the students' knowledge, the purpose and why they use this type of test not the other. In the third section, teachers are required to give their point of view on testing, its advantages and shortcomings. The administration of the teacher's questionnaire was not easy because the researcher had to move to other schools in the quest of other teachers in order to have a good sample.

The table below indicates the schools we visited, the size of the classes, the size of the sample per class and the total teacher sample. As it is read from the table, the fourth column displays two or three teachers per school; this means that the second or the third teacher has been classified in the school in which he had been working before he moves to another service.

Table n°1 : Schools visited

Schools	**Class size**	**Students' sample per class**	**Teachers' sample**
1. Lycée Communal Muyinga	11	8	3
2. Séminaire Mureke	15	8	2
3. Séminaire Muyinga	15	8	3
4. Lycée Don Bosco	30	8	3
5. Lycée COMIBU de Ngozi	23	8	2
6. Lycée Buye	36	8	2
7. Lycée Gisanze	10	8	1
8. Lycée Rohero	32	8	2
9. Lycée Saint Esprit	16	8	2
10. Lycée Indépendante	15	8	2
11. Lycée Ngagara	73	8	2
12. Lycée Musenyi	27	8	1
13. Lycée Busiga	10	8	1
14. Lycée Notre Dame de la Sagesse	42	8	2
15. Lycée Sainte Thérèse	39	8	2
Total	**362**	**120**	**30**

V.4. Data analysis procedure

Concerning the analysis procedure, descriptive statistics by means of percentages have been used; the results are given in tables for easier reference. This section also sets to analyse both teachers' and students' answers. The first part of the students' questionnaire analyses their appreciation of the teaching materials, while the second part looks into students' attitude toward tests; and lastly the students' point of view on test-taking and qualities of tests. The questionnaire required of the respondents to tick the boxes corresponding to the appropriate answer. However, some questions allowed for expression of opinions.

As for the teachers' questionnaire, it seeks information on how teachers cope with the coursebook, teaching approaches and students' needs. The answers to questions in the second section shed some light on why testing is to be considered as a follow up of classroom activities. In the third section, teachers comment on test administration. In most questions, teachers had to tick one of the multiple-options provided by the researcher; that is the one relevant to their personal case. A few questions also required of the teachers to complete their answers with a little explanation or a comment.

CHAP.VI. FINDINGS

This chapter deals with the presentation of the data collected. The aim of this analysis is to test the hypotheses already formulated in the methodology chapter. We recall that it was found necessary to clarify the learners' attitude toward the conditions of learning materials, tests and their contribution to the learning process.

Data from the teacher's questionnaire assess the teaching materials and teaching approaches, testing techniques used in 2nd Form Arts in Burundi, and lastly the contribution of integrative tests to the teaching-learning process.

VI.1. Data from students

For reasons of easy analysis, the questions were grouped into three categories based on the following themes:

- students' attitudes toward the learning materials,
- students' attitudes toward tests,
- the contribution of tests to learning.

VI.1.1. Students attitudes toward the learning materials

This section seeks to know whether the teaching materials are available so as to allow students to learn in good conditions.

***Question n°1**: Do you have English learning materials such as books, radio, cassettes in your school?*

Table n°2: Availability of the course materials

Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentages %**
Yes	4	27 %
No	11	73 %
No answer	0	0 %
Total	15	100 %

The analysis of this question was done in relation to each school. From the table above, we read that 11 schools (73 %) do not have enough teaching materials whereas four schools (27 %) admitted having them in sufficient number to cover the size of classes. In the others, teachers do not use them. For example, the students of Lycée Don Bosco informed us that they have a radio, but it is used in scientific section only.

Another example is the Lycée Indépendante where the teacher has to give photocopies of the text to be dealt with to students. The 11 schools who answered 'no' to the first question noted that they have a few books to be shared between four or five students. From the previous lines we conclude that the leaning conditions are not comfortable, the consequence being less motivation and hard success.

***Question n°2**: Does **Today's English** classe de seconde help you improve your ability to communicate in English?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table n°3: The role of Today's English in learners' ability to communicate

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Yes	90	75 %
No	30	27 %
No answer	0	0 %
Total	120	100 %

The majority of our respondents that is 90 students (75%) agree that the coursebook helps them improve their ability to communicate in English, but they add that they need other books to complete what they learned from it. Those additional books should be grammatical and reading ones. The students' point of view meets the researcher's comments in section III.2.2 where he points out that the book contains eight structural exercises, but the explanation of rules is not recommended.

Within the same line of thoughts, let us point out that the texts are extracts of other books, and therefore do not give the students a complete idea of the story. From the students' answers and comments, we can conclude that they are aware that the coursebook does not respond to their needs. However, 30 students (25 %)

rejected the contribution of ***Today's English***. The reasons might be the same as the ones given by the first category. In addition they do not understand why they have to listen to the text before they read it.

Considering the answers to question one and two of section one, we conclude that students of 2nd Form Arts learn in uneasy conditions and that the coursebook is not appropriate to cater for the students' needs.

VI.1.2. Students' attitudes toward tests

This second section seeks to investigate students' familiarity with tests that is their mood before, during and after tests.

Question n°3*: How many English tests do you do per term?*

Table n°4: Number of tests per term

Number of tests	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
2-3	3	20 %
4-5	10	67 %
More than 6	2	13 %
Total	15	100 %

For this question, the data has been analysed per school. Thus, the above table shows that 20 % of the teachers from the schools selected give between two and three tests a term. This is the case of Lycée de Ngagara. Other schools (67 %) give five tests, which is a requirement of the Ministry of Education. The last category includes schools which give more than six tests per term that is two schools (13 %).

The three positions are supported differently. Those who give few tests argue that their classes are too large to be given many tests. The correction is not easy especially when the teacher has to correct 50 copies and prepare lessons for the day after. Teachers in favour of five tests accept that they ought to give more or less tests but all depends upon the time available, the material to test on and the class size. Classes which do more than six tests justify it as a school administration requirement; this is the case of Lycée Indépendante.

Whatever situation, it seems to us that giving less tests is not good since it prevents teachers and learners from checking their progress, strengths and weaknesses. In addition, it becomes difficult for the teacher to sample what he has taught; as for learners who find it hard to learn a large course content. They consequently learn specific elements pretending covering all the material. Giving more tests should be encouraged since students learn progressively day after day and deepens what they have bee taught.

Question n°4: *Would you prefer to do less or more tests?*

Table n°5: Preferences

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
More	108	90 %
Less	5	4 %
No answer	7	6 %
Total	120	100 %

Many students 108 (90 %) would prefer more tests because when they fail in one test, they may succeed in another. Not only that, but they are also conscious that they improve their knowledge through doing tests. That is, if they fail or succeed they will study accordingly. One student for instance states that:

The more I do tests, the more new things I discover.

The second group of students (4 %) prefers less tests because for them doing tests is discouraging and frustrating. Students have to be put under stress or anxiety. A third group made of seven students (7 %) did not give their point of view.

From the above data, we may conclude that although a large number of students support the idea of doing many tests; there are some who feel afraid of tests and others who consider tests as a coercive activity.

***Question n°5**: Do you think tests can help you improve your learning ability?*

Table n°6: Students' opinions on tests' contribution to learning

Answers	Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	118	98.3 %
No	2	1.7 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	120	100%

Considering these data we see that the majority of students argue that tests can help them improve their learning ability. One pupil for example said:

I think so because if I fail to respond to one question of the test, I ask my classmate or my teacher to tell me how I would have done it. When a good answer is given I keep it for good and it prevent me from failing on it again.

However, two pupils (1.7 %) saw it differently. They appear to them as a way of giving marks only.

***Question n°6**: Does your teacher give you varied types of test?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

In answering this question, all the respondents (100%) accepted that their teacher gives them varied types of test. This implies that some students are accustomed to various types of test including the cloze and dictation as shown in the next tables.

***Question n°7**: Do you do dictation tests in your present class?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table n°7: Schools which use the dictation test

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Yes	5	25 %
No	10	75 %
No answer	0	0 %
Total	15	100 %

As displayed in the data for question n°7, only five schools (25 %) claim to sometimes use the dictation test whereas 10 schools (75%) never do dictation tests. Even those who admitted doing them have a negative attitude toward the latter. For example they say that the dictation is given when the teacher wants to reduce the marks they got in former tests. In analysing the students' point of view, one realises that the dictation test makes students feel suspicious of both tests and the English language teacher himself.

***Question n°8**: What about a text with blank spaces in it that you have to complete using your own suitable words (this is called a cloze passage)?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table n° 8: Schools' familiarity with the cloze test

Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentages %**
Yes	12	80 %
No	3	20 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	15	100 %

Looking at the results, we notice that 80 % of the sample is accustomed to the cloze test. Despite the students' familiarity with the cloze test, they acknowledge that it is very difficult, but helps them to practice by using what they already know in English. On the other hand, students from some schools (20 %) said that they are not familiar with the cloze test. They think that completing a cloze passage is a memorisation exercise of the original text. Others argue that a text with blank spaces in it is not interesting since it helps nothing.

***Question n°9**: Do you review your course before such tests?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table n°9: Students' preparation for tests

Answers	Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	106	88.33 %
No	9	7.5 %
No idea	5	4.16 %
Total	120	100 %

Most students (88.33 %) answered that they review their lessons before each test as usual. However, 7.5 % of the students said that they do not because for a dictation for instance, it is not worth reading notes since it tests many things: grammar, vocabulary, writing, reading and listening. A group of five students (4.16 %) did not give their point of view. No one knows whether the question was unclear or childish.

***Question n°10**: How do you feel before the English test?*

To answer this question, students had to choose between options listed including *panicked, relaxed, calm, worried or anxious*. That is why we grouped them according to the most highly selected option.

Table n°10: Students' feelings before the test

Feelings	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Panicked	21	17.5 %
Relaxed	50	41.66 %
Worried/ anxious	41	34.16 %
No answer	8	6.66 %
Total	120	100 %

As the table above shows, 21 students (17.5 %) feel *panicked* before the English test. We will recall that panic is the feeling which affects many students during assessment work and that can come in many forms; for example trembling or momentary speechless for people speaking in front of an audience, and difficulty to read or understand the question for people sitting for an exam (Henderson :1997). From Henderson's point of view, we conclude that panic can beset the completion of a cloze passage since the latter calls for reading and understanding a text.

The second feeling observed is *relaxation* and *quietness*. The table illustrates that 41.66 % of the respondents feel relaxed and quiet while 34.16% have no idea about the question. Let us mention that anxiety in second language learning is two sided: it can be "facilitating" or "debilitating".

It is facilitating when its pressure enables someone to think efficiently and rapidly recalls relevant materials. It is debilitating when its pressure urges someone to have a great fear of something. As far as this question is concerned, one can realise that the majority have fear before the test and some of them exhibit a feeling which prevents them from performing well on tests and exams.

***Question n°11**: How do you feel during the English test?*

Table n°11: Students' feelings during the English test

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Relaxed	57	47.5 %
Relaxed on some conditions	12	10 %
Anxious	40	32.5 %
No idea	12	10 %
Total	120	100%

From this table we learn that 47.5 % feel relaxed during the test. The fact of feeling relaxed implies that the student is happy and confident with what he is doing. Besides the students who feel relaxed, others, 32.5 % say that they are relaxed only under certain conditions. Those conditions are stated as follows:

When I see that the test seems or is difficult I am not happy and I have fear of failing. But, when I see that most of what I have studied is included in the series of questions, I feel better.

Another pupil added:

I feel bad when I studied less and realise that what I have omitted has been questioned on.

In the third position come students who say that they are worried, that is 32.5 %. Let us recall that worry reduces students' ability to revise and remember or to prepare adequately for an assessment. The last group is the one of those students who gave no opinion. One can say that they have no fear or worry.

***Question n°12**: How do you feel after the test?*

Table n°12: Students' feelings after the test

Feelings	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Happy	45	37.5 %
Angry	10	8.5 %
It depends	60	50 %
No idea	5	4 %
Total	120	100 %

The data as displayed above shows that 37.5 % are happy, which means that either they did well or they came over what was terrifying them. On the other hand, 8.5 % are angry because they are pessimistic or they are not confident in what they have done. They may also be anxious because the type of test was not appreciated. That anxiety may also come from present or previously given tests. Henderson (1997:61) supports that idea in these terms:

> *Students may have had a bad experience in one assessment and have anxiety linked specifically to assessments even though they are not generally anxious.*

To get rid of this anxiety, one needs self-confidence and optimism by developing more realistic expectations of oneself, and using one's imagination so as to get used to cope with the specific fear that the exam room holds on him.

With respect to this question, 12.4 % of the respondents gave no answer regarding their feelings after the test whereas 50 % cautioned that:

We are happy when we have succeeded

and angry when we have failed.

VI.1.3. The contribution of tests

***Question n°13**: What, in your view, are the characteristics of a good English test?*

Taking about the characteristics of a good test, Valette (1967) suggests two of them namely *validity* and *reliability.* According to students of 2nd Form Arts those characteristics are firstly to help the learner improve their knowledge given that they learn while preparing, during and after the test. Secondly, a good test should contain varied types of question and samples what had been seen in the classroom.

In addition, those questions should be clear, and the size of the test should correspond to the time allotted to it. The other characteristic pointed out is that a good test should test grammar, vocabulary, reading and listening; and include an activity which requires the use of all the aspects of language such as composition, dictation, and other exercises which help the students to express themselves orally.

Small group discussion exercises for example. One can even suggest writing exercises based on these oral questions for more skill integration.

In conclusion, the characteristics of a good test as stated by students meet in a way or another, the characteristics of a good test as suggested by Valette (1967). The next question seeks to identify the characteristics of a 'bad' test.

***Question n°14**: Can you distinguish a good test from a bad one?*

The purpose of this question was to enquire students' recognition of a 'bad test'. Many of them suggested that a bad test is the one which lacks the features enumerated in question n°13. However, students added that monotony, ambiguity, low thinking requirement (on the student's part) are the general characteristics of a bad test. In the same line of thoughts, some students added that a test which makes students fail is another bad one.

To conclude, the analysis of the answers from the students proves that they have a clear mind about the characteristics of a bad test.

***Question n°15**: Does your teacher's system of evaluation prepare you for the national English test?*

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table n°13: Students' opinions on the teacher's system of evaluation

Answers	Respondents	Percentages %
Yes	107	89 %
No	13	11 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	120	100 %

This question has been used because in the introduction of the ***teacher's guide,*** teachers are advised to prepare their learners for the national exam done in the year to come. With respect to this question, 89 % agree that their teachers prepare them for the national test. In contrast to the first group, the second said "no". Many researchers especially Cunningsworth (1984) admit that national tests have an effect on the teaching/learning process. He gives an example in these words:

> *When students are taught with the intention of succeeding in the national exam, they will study only how to answer the test items. In that case, the national test has a negative backwash on the teaching and the learning?*

A question which comes to our mind is to know whether weaknesses noticed in relation to students of 2nd Form Arts in communication result from the fact that they are taught according to national exam items. A confirmation from both sides

is necessary so as to conclude that the national exam First Form Arts has an influence on the teaching and the learning of English in 2nd Form Arts.

***Question n°16**: What would you advise your teacher to change in his way of testing?*

Table n°14: Students' advice for teachers

Options	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Suggested something	80	67.5 %
Suggested nothing	35	28.5 %
No idea	5	4 %
Total	120	100 %

As the table shows, three types of answers have been given. The majority of the sample gave some suggestions, that is, 67.5 %. Their suggestions include the following:

- our teacher should give us many questions,

- he should also give a variety of tests such as composition, dictation, oral tests which require the learner to use what he learned; and which help to discover other things,

- the teacher should change his way of teaching and testing. One student added:

If the majority of students fail, the teacher

should give an easy test to motivate them.

From the previous suggestions, one understands that students need to be motivated. This follows from the fact that the advantage of motivation is to have a strong desire of learning English and even use it in their daily communication. After all, they would be feeling proud of it! The second group, 28.5 % of our sample did not suggest anything, which could mean that the teacher could continue with his way of teaching and testing. The last group 4 % has no idea about the issue. One may imagine that they are reluctant to express themselves for fear that their point of view would not be considered.

VI.2. Data from teachers

As it was said in the methodology chapter, teachers of 2nd Form Arts have been selected as the number one contributors to our study. The questionnaire was handed to thirty teachers selected from the fifteen schools visited and others met in different places in order to get a reasonably sized sample. The teacher's questionnaire covers three areas:

- teaching materials and teaching approaches,
- testing techniques used in 2nd Form Arts,
- the contribution of communicative tests.

VI.2.1. Teaching materials and teaching approaches

In this section, the goal was to learn about the teacher's familiarity with the teaching career, the availability of teaching materials, and teaching approaches used to meet students' needs. This section is dealt with from question n°1 to n°5.

***Question n°1**: How long have you been teaching this class?*

Table n°15: Teachers' experience with 2nd Form Arts

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Under one year	12	40 %
Above one year	18	60 %
No answer	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

As the table above shows, 12 teachers out of 30, (40 %) are new in the profession while 18 teachers (60 %) are experienced. It is assumed that when a teacher is not experienced, his teaching approaches and testing techniques are risky of defects. The following question seeks to know the most available teaching materials.

***Question n°2**: For my teaching, I have the following materials available.*

Table n°16: Availability of the teaching materials on the schools visited

Materials	Schools visited	Frequency	Percentages %
Coursebook	15	15	100 %
Radio set	15	5	34 %
Cassettes	15	2	14 %
Teacher's guide	15	7	47 %

This question was analysed by looking at the situation in individual schools. Its purpose was to know if the teaching materials were available as well as the techniques used to teach or to test.

As the table shows, all 15 schools visited have the coursebook (100 %), five schools (34 %) have the radio which unfortunately teachers and learners said they did not use. Thirdly, two schools (14 %) have cassettes whereas seven of them (47 %) have the ***Teacher's guide.*** Let us recall that although every school is expected to have a coursebook, some schools never receive it, so, they recourse to photocopies of it. This is the case of Lycée Indépendante.

Question n°3*: In my teaching I* ☐ *entirely*

☐ *occasionally*

rely on the suggestions in my Teacher's guide.

Table n°17: Teachers' devotion to the *Teacher's guide*

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Entirely rely on the *Teacher's guide*	1	3 %
Occasionally rely on the *Teacher's guide*	17	57 %
There is not	12	40 %
Total	30	100 %

The purpose of this question was to check the teachers' devotion to instructions of the ***Teacher's guide*** or whether they use them with flexibility. Table n° 17 shows that one teacher (3 %) claims to entirely rely on the suggestions from that book, while 17 teachers (57 %) rely on it occasionally; 12 teachers (40 %) do not have it. The conclusion about this question has been that the majority of teachers adapt the book given that some of them do not have it. This implies that those teacher decide themselves which teaching methods to use.

***Question n°4**: In my teaching I care to* □ *cater for my students' needs*

□ *reach my objectives*

Table n°18: Teachers' care while teaching

Answers	Respondents	Percentages %
Care to cater my students' needs	19	63 %
Care to reach my objectives	11	37 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

This question checks how the teacher relates the teaching materials and the students' needs. With regard to this relationship, the table shows that 19 teachers (64 %) care to cater for the students' needs. However, 11 teachers (37 %) said that they care to reach their objectives. Talking about objectives, Ngaruko (1973) distinguishes two types of objectives: "right objectives and false ones". *Right objectives* include long-range in opposition to short-range or immediate objectives. *False objectives* on the other hand, are often met among teachers who are bound to the program or who think that to know a language is to know a lot of its words. Other false objectives are: to finish the book, to get a high score in a standardised test.

From the above considerations, one can conclude saying that when the teacher's objectives are not oriented towards the student's needs, positive results can hardly follow from the teaching/learning process.

***Question n°5**: In order to meet the needs of my learners I use the:*

- ☐ *Audio-lingual method*
- ☐ *Communicative method*
- ☐ *Other (specify)*

Table n°19: Teachers' preferred methods

Methods	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Audio-lingual	2	7 %
Communicative	13	43 %
Other	15	50 %
Total	30	100 %

From this table we read that two teachers (7 %) claim to use the Audio-lingual method whereas 13 teachers (43 %) use the communicative approach. However, 15 teachers (50 %) say that they use either methods or a combination of methods depending upon the subject of the lesson and the situation of the class.

VI.2.2. Testing techniques used in 2nd Form Arts

This section analyses the testing techniques most used in that class, why they are preferred, and why others are not.

***Question n°6**: Both my students and I are aware that teaching must be followed by some form of evaluation including tests.*

Table n°20: Teachers' point of view on the relation teaching-testing

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Yes	30	100 %
No	0	0 %
No answer	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

The table above displays that all the teachers, 100 % of our sample agree that any teaching situation must be followed by some form of evaluation. In other words, both teachers and learners are aware that they need to know the level of their competence and performance through tests.

***Question n°7**: My class is familiar with each of the testing techniques below:*

- *Multiple- choice* ☐
- *Fill- in blanks* ☐
- *Dictation* ☐
- *Composition* ☐
- *Cloze test* ☐
- *substitution* ☐
- *Open- ended questions* ☐

Table n°21: The rate of use of some testing techniques

Testing techniques	Frequency	Percentages %
Multiple-choice	22	73 %
Composition	15	50 %
Cloze test	15	50 %
Dictation	4	13.3 %
Fill-in blanks	19	63.3 %
Substitution	13	43.3 %
Open ended questions	7	23.3 %

This table illustrates the rate at which testing techniques are used. To begin with, while 22 teachers (73.3 %) use the multiple-choice test, 15 teachers (50 %) say that their class is familiar with composition and cloze activities. The dictation is used by four teachers (13.3 %) whereas the fill-in blanks test is used by 19 teachers (63.3 %). Substitution is favoured by seven teachers (23.3 %) while open-ended questions are used by 13 teachers (43 %).

Since the study explores the contribution of communicative tests to the learning of English, let us focus our attention on them. As said in the lines above, the cloze test is favoured by 15 teachers, the reason being probably that it is easy to prepare, to mark and to correct. Nevertheless, it is more demanding to the learners unless they have been prepared enough before doing it. The dictation is used by

four teachers. Obviously, the dictation test is the least used. Reasons for not using it will be given in answering questions n°8 and n°9.

***Question n°8**: In my evaluation, I prefer to use the ……*

……testing techniques because ……

This question finds out from the respondent his preferred testing techniques and the related justification. To begin with, the multiple-choice and fill-in blanks tests are used when teachers want to have the most accurate knowledge of students' command of a specific language area. In addition, they find the two types of exercise easy to prepare and correct. Beside, they allow teachers to check the attainment of their stated objectives.

The composition test is preferred because it tests many aspects of the language including the structure of paragraphs and the use of punctuation marks. Because the introduction of the coursebook indicates that much time should be devoted to writing activities, qualitatively and quantitatively, teachers feel justified to use this test as an additional way to prepare students for the national exam to be done in the following year. The latter includes one such exercise.

Another preferred testing technique is the open-ended questions. According to teachers, it enables learners to express to express themselves freely; and teachers to get acquainted to the learners' ability to communicate with others. Let us mention that no one preferred to use either the dictation or the cloze test, probably because teachers may not be using these tests every time.

***Question n°9**: In my evaluation, I* ☐ *don't use*

☐ *use*

a combination of testing techniques because ……

Table n°22: The use or not of a combination of testing techniques

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
I use	22	73 %
I don't use	3	10 %
No answer	5	17 %
Total	30	100 %

The table shows that 73 % of our sample prefers to use a combination of testing techniques. The reasons given to justify its use include the following:

- students need to have varied tests so as to avoid monotony;
- students need to be familiar with different types of test;
- teachers have different objectives in teaching, which is why they use a combination of techniques to assess different objectives one has in teaching.

Some teachers however are against the use of a combination of techniques claiming that each testing technique is specific to what one wants to check. Therefore, a combination may mislead the students. The last group (17 %) of the

sample gave no answer. The researcher would agree with those who support the use of a combination of techniques because once the teacher uses tests on specific skills or language areas, he should also use tests which check if the learner can use that knowledge in real situations.

***Question n°10**: In my evaluation, I don't use the ……*

technique because ……

Table n°23: The least used types of test

Types of test	**Frequency**	**Percentages %**
Dictation	17	57 %
Cloze test	4	13%
Others	9	30 %
Total	30	100 %

This table displays some testing techniques not used by teachers of 2nd Form Arts. As for the previous question, their justification was required. The dictation test happens to be least used by 17 teachers, (57 %) rejected it under some reasons including:

- the dictation is not suitable to the 2nd Form Arts level,

- students make so many mistakes and get less marks. Therefore, the dictation besets the learning process by discouraging learners.

Concerning mistakes made in such a context, Cohen (1980:113) pointed out that:

> *Experience has shown that learners are found to alter dictated material in one of the four ways by adding new elements, deleting elements, substituting one element for another, or transposing the order of elements.*

Another reason why teachers dislike the dictation is that it is not easy to administer, correct and score, especially in large classes. For example it is obvious that students of 2nd From Arts at Lycée de Ngagara, which has 73 students, will not succeed in a dictation test because they are too numerous to hear the dictated material well. Not only that, but it is also difficult for the teacher to correct all the answer sheets which contain the four types of mistake as pointed out by Cohen (1980).

Some other reasons include that the dictation is multipurpose and covers many language areas: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, writing and listening. Other teachers dislike the dictation, pretending that it assesses the same language aspects as composition and open-ended questions.

As far as the cloze test is concerned, 13% of our sample do not use it arguing that it looks like the fill-in blanks and requires the learner to have seen or memorized the text; it is challenging for most learners. In analysing its format, one can see that to perform on it is not a matter of having seen or memorised the text,

but of knowing the nature, the environment and the context in which a word is used. More information on the cloze test will be given in this chapter section three.

Some other testing techniques such as multiple-choice, fill-in blanks are not used by 30 %, because to their mind they do not develop their thinking ability. Besides, they allow learners to guess and cheat.

***Question n°11**: In my view, the cloze test* ☐ *is*

☐ *is not*

a good testing technique because……

.

Table n°24: Quality of the cloze test

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Is a good test	26	87 %
Is not a good test	0	0 %
No idea	4	13 %
Total	30	100 %

As the table above shows, 87 % of the sample argues that the cloze test is a good testing technique. They agree with the idea that the cloze test enables the teacher to check if learners understand how words are combined within a given sentence, and afterwards to a whole passage. In addition, it requires the learner to

think and to be creative. They go on stating that the cloze test also helps pupils to sharpen their minds by bringing back to memory what they had done in grammar, vocabulary, reading and writing.

Lastly come 13 % of the sample who did not express their view on this question. The reasons might be that they felt forced to answer so many questions, they got lazy but also may be they knew little about the techniques. Another explanation could be that they are among the 12 new teachers in the profession.

***Question n°12**: In my view, a dictation test* ☐ *is*

☐ *is not*

a good testing technique because ……

Table n°25: Quality of the dictation test

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
Is	24	80 %
Is not	6	20 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

This table displays that 24 teachers, i.e 80 % admit that the dictation is a good testing technique. The same teachers agree that it tests at the same time

grammar, vocabulary, writing, listening and reading. According to them, when a student does well in a dictation it proves that he is skilled; that is he can face up to any communication activities once out of class.

On the other hand, some teachers (20 %) claim that the dictation is not a good testing technique. Several reasons are given such as:

- the dictation is less objective,
- it is suitable for beginners,
- students fail more in dictation tests than in other types of test.

With respect to the former group of teachers, let us have an analysis of their view: "*the dictation is suitable for beginners*". Normally if it were so, students of 2nd Form Arts would perform it as well as possible. But experience revealed that those students are unable to respond successfully to dictation tests. We realised that students need to be trained to such a type of exercise so as to develop their listening, writing and reading skills.

VI.2.3. The contribution of communicative tests

Question n°13: *I would personally* ☐ *recommend*

☐ *not recommend*

using the dictation and cloze tests with the 2nd Form Arts

because……

Table n°26: Teachers' position about both tests

Answers	Respondents	Percentages %
Recommend	15	50 %
Not recommend	7	23 %
No idea	8	27 %
Total	30	100 %

This table shows that 15 teachers (50 %) would recommend the use of both tests; seven teachers (23 %) are against while eight teachers i.e 27 % gave no point of view. On one hand, the teachers in favour of the two types of test explain that they require the learners to use what they learned in accurate circumstances; that the dictation and the cloze tests are efficient in assessing the four skills. In addition, those tests prepare students to confront the national exam. On the other hand, some teachers claim that the two types of test do not encourage learners to be creative. From this point of view, one may conclude that the two types of test are unknown to some teachers. Another conclusion could be that the two types of test are given a bad connotation because some teachers pretend that they challenge the students' and teachers' minds; they give an example stating that the dictation challenges the teacher's mind since it requires careful preparation and administration. It also demands plenty of time.

***Question n°14**: I fear that* ☐ *using*

☐ *not using*

those two types of test can have the following effects:……

…… on my class.

Table n°27: Teachers' fears

Answers	**Respondents**	Percentages **%**
Using both tests	6	20 %
Not using both tests	15	50 %
No idea	9	30 %
Total	30	100 %

The above table presents results of question n°14. We read that only 20 % of the sample are afraid of using the two types of test, and that 50 % are pessimistic about not using them. The last category i.e 30 % did not give their view.

To begin with, those who fear using the cloze and dictation tests state that not only students fail a great deal in those tests, but also the latter are discouraging. In addition, they limit students' imagination and creativity. The next group (50 %) supports the use of both tests and cautions that if they are not used, the students will be affected in some way or another. They point out that: linguistic flaws in writing, listening and reading will characterise daily communication activities

among students of that class. In addition, students will hardly ever be aware of their English language production level.

***Question n°15**: I* ☐ *agree*

☐ *don't agree*

with those who claim that testing is important for both teachers and students because ……

Table n°28: Importance of tests

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
I agree	30	100 %
I don't agree	0	0 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

The answers to question n°15 as displayed in the table above demonstrate that all the teachers (100 %) agree that testing is important for both teachers and students. They justify their choice saying that tests help both sides to know how they are progressing in teaching and learning. Secondly, tests constitute a source of motivation, especially when both sides are struggling to do better than before. Thirdly, tests help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the two groups and consequently plan for better results in future.

***Question n°16**: The two prior criteria that I take into account when I design a test are .....*

The aim of this question was to check if teachers care to give tests which help students improve their knowledge of specific language areas. Answering this question, teachers said that they mainly considered the course content and the time available, the objectives of the course and clarity of questions and what they want their students to deepen. Considering the first two criteria, we understand why teachers give less or more tests. From the second and third criteria, we can deduce the tests' contribution to the learning process.

***Question n°17**: When testing my class I* ☐ *care*

☐ *don't care*

to prepare my students for the national test.

Table n°29: Teachers' preparation of students for the national test

Answers	**Respondents**	**Percentages %**
I care	30	100 %
I don't care	0	0 %
No idea	0	0 %
Total	30	100 %

As it appears in the table, 100 % of our sample says that they care to prepare students for the national exam. However, earlier researchers have found that too much preparation of learners for a national or any standardized test can impede on teaching and learning activities of a given class.

Cunningsworth (1984:81) for example begins with an example to illustrate how tests impede on teaching and learning:

> *An examination which focuses on tests of grammatical knowledge is likely to lead to the teaching and learning of grammatical knowledge in courses preparing candidates for the examination whereas a communicative examination is likely to encourage communicative approaches and activities in the classroom.*

As all the teachers said that they prepare students for the national exam, and from Cunningsworth's view, we understand that the inability to perform communicative activities on the students' part could result from the influence of the national test for First Form, given that it hardly contains any communicative items. As a consequence, teachers limit the preparation of students to exercises and all types of "put the verb between parentheses in the correct tense", since they are the most prevailing in the national test.

VI.3. Suggested exercises: cloze and dictation techniques

VI.3.1. Cloze exercise: preparation, administration and marking

From the time when English testing began in the classroom, the cloze test has probably been the least used in most schools. That is why the researcher wished to show its contribution to the teaching/learning process. Instructions related to its preparation and administration, how one could cope with it in doing or correcting it are given. Lastly, an exercise is given in order to support claims made in the previous chapters.

As the answers from both groups of participants in this research showed, the cloze test is badly known. However, some students and teachers confirmed that the cloze test is very important in that it assesses many language areas and skills at the same time. Garman (1983) in the introduction of ***English cloze*** *Exercises* enlightens its contribution as follows:

> *This procedure has been widely used for some time as a way of measuring language ability, but it is increasingly coming to be recognised as a very important teaching tool, one that is much more economical than the traditional reading passage with associated questions.*

From Garman's view, we can deduce that the cloze test can be applied in 2nd Form Arts instead of the traditional reading passage with associated questions prevailing in the ***Teacher's guide***. But the problem is that texts from the textbook are philosophical. Some of them are of higher level than the students'. Therefore, students need to be familiarised through using texts whose gist is easy to seize.

Concerning its preparation, the teacher selects any text suitable to the students' level, decides on its size and the time available. Next he gives an introductory sentence so as to put the students on the track. After that sentence, he deletes the 5th or 6th word until he reaches the number of blanks he wants to constitute the size of this test. The blank spaces should be given numbers to facilitate the correction. A further instruction is to tell the students to write the whole passage underlining the answer words, or then just to write the number of the gap and the appropriate answer-word.

Let us reassure fearful or unconfident teachers and students that the cloze is not difficult. In fact, the answers to some of the blank spaces may be inferred from the immediate context, but for many, the test-taker will need to have understood the whole sentence, a paragraph or even an entire passage. In addition, he has to consider the whole range of features: grammatical forms, vocabulary, idioms, etc. Those features can be put into two groups: *function* (such as conjunctions, prepositions and articles) which has only one filler, and *semantic* (nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs) that can be filled with anyone of a number of alternatives.

Looking at the cloze test, one realises that the task is more demanding because you must not only recognise and understand, but also produce the

appropriate response from your own knowledge of language. While marking, two main systems will be considered: *exact* and *acceptable.* The first is objective and can be done quickly without skilled judgement whereas the second requires the marker to pay attention to the meaning and the context.

Here is an example of a cloze test extracted from *English workshop 3rd Form Book 1*, collected and annotated by the English Department of the B.E.P.E.S. The passage contains 50 blank spaces. The teacher can make his of 15, 20,... blank spaces depending upon the time available and how many tests he will give per term.

Education is not an end but a means to an end. In other words, we do not educate children only for the purpose of educating them; our purpose is to fit them for life. As soon as we realise this _1_, we will understand that it is_2_ important to choose a _3_ of education which will really prepare children _4_ life. It is not enough _5_ to choose the first system of _6_ on finds; or to continue _7_ one's old system of education without_8_ it to see whether it is _9_ or not.

In many modern countries it _10_ for some time been fashionable to _11_ that, by free education for all- _12_ rich or poor, clever or _13_ - one can solve all the problems of _14_ and built a perfect nation. _15_ we can already see that _16_ education for all, is not _17_: we find in such countries a _18_ large number of people with university _19_ than there are jobs for them _20_ fill. Because of their degrees, they _21_ to do what they think "low" _22_; and, in fact, work with the _23_ is thought to be dirty _24_ shameful in such countries.

But we _25_ only to think a moment to understand _26_ the work of a completely _27_ farmer is far more important than that of a _28_: we can live without education, _29_ we die

if we have no _30_. If no one cleaned our _31_ and took the rubbish away from _32_ houses we should get terrible diseases in our _33_. In countries where there are no _34_ because everyone is ashamed to do _35_ work, the professors have to _36_ much of their time doing _37_.

In fact, _38_ we say that all of us must _39_ educated to fit us for life, it _40_ that we must be educated in such a way that, _41_, each of us can do _42_ job is suited to his _43_ and ability, and secondly, that we can _44_ that all jobs are _45_ to society, and that is very _46_ to be ashamed of _47_'s work, or to scorn _48_ else's. Only such a _49_ of education can be called _50_ to society.

Suggested answers

1.	fact	18. far	35. such/his
2.	very	19. degrees	36. such or spend
3.	system	20. to	37. housework
4.	for	21. refuse	38. when
5.	just	22. work	39. be
6.	education	23. hands	40. firstly
7.	with	24. and	41. whatever/ any
8.	examining	25. have	42. brain
9.	in	26. that	43. realise
10.	has	27. uneducated	44. necessary/ important
11.	think	28. professor/ doctor	45. bad
12.	whether	29. but/ however	46. one

13.	stupid	30. food	47. someone
14.	society	31. streets/ houses	48. type
15.	but/ nevertheless	32. our	49. valuable
16.	free	33. towns/ villages	
17.	enough	34. servants	

Note: Most of these answers are from the original text. however, others can be accepted provided that they are suitable to the context. The teacher is free to attribute one or two mark(s) per correct answer.

VI.3.2. Dictation: preparation and administration

Having analysed the students' and teachers' answers, we realised that the dictation is badly viewed by both sides. That is why we wished to reintroduce the dictation in the 2nd Form Arts or even in other classes. Within this subsection, we would like to recall what it is, its preparation, administration and scoring. After that, an example is given.

To begin with, ***The Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*** (1985:81) defines the dictation as:

> *A technique used in both language teaching and testing in which a passage is read aloud to students, with pauses during which they must try to write down what they hear as accurately as possible.*

There exist four types of dictation namely the standard dictation, partial dictation, dicto-comp also called dictation/composition, and the elicited imitation. As far as this study is concerned, our focus is on the standard one, which is referred to as the best known, requiring the examinees to write verbal sequences of material as spoken by an examiner or played back from a recording.

Concerning its preparation and administration, the teacher may use the material that is known to be suitable to the students' level of overall language proficiency, it may be a paraphrase of a familiar material; or it may simply be a selected passage from a student's book. With the same respect, Cohen (1980:112) insists that the passage to be dictated would go beyond 100 words to make assessment performance possible in connected discourse.

For the dictation administration, the examiner reads the text once at a conversational rate while the examinees just listen. He should explain some difficult words if there are. The second time, the passage is read with pauses at the determined points and students start writing. The punctuation is not supplied if it is included in the test. At the third time, the passage is read through normal or with slight pauses at the selected points while the examinees check what they have written.

The scoring and marking of a dictation is what causes trouble to teachers, especially because they have to analyse the four common errors of addition, deletion, substitution and transposition. An additional problem is that most classes are crowded and so make it painful to correct and mark all the sheets from students. Sometimes, it is not encouraging when the teacher finds 50 mistakes in a

dictation of 120 words, especially when the test score is 20. One wonders if he is going to give zero, two ..., how much out of 20?

However, the dictation contributes to familiarising the student's year and eye to written and spoken materials. These include pragmatic situations when people do not see mouth movements of the person whose output they are writing down. This is the case of input from the telephone, the radio or from a lecture in a large lecture hall. We should not forget listening to a lecture in a noisy place. To succeed in these communicative activities, the performer must have developed reasonable ability in more than one skill.

Example of a dictation test

A childhood memory

My name is Raoul Duquette. I am twenty-six years old and Parisian, a true Parisian. About my family – it really doesn't matter. I have no family; I don't want any. I never think about my childhood. I've forgotten.

In fact, there is only one memory that stands out at all. That is rather interesting because it seems to me now so very significant as regards myself from the literary point of view. It is this. When I was about ten our laundress was an African woman, very big, very dark, with a check handkerchief over her frizzy hair. When she came to our house she always took particular notice of me, and after the clothes had been taken out of the basket she would lift me up into it and give me a rock while I held tight to

the handles and screamed for joy and fright. I was tiny for my age and pale, with a lovely little half-open mouth- I feel sure of that.

The above passage from ***Today's English*** *classe de seconde* p.63 stands for an example of a dictation test that teachers should devise for their students after a certain period of instruction. The skills tested are listening, writing, and reading. The areas of language tested are all.

To conclude, the aim of this chapter was to analyse and display the data from the student's and the teacher's questionnaires, and to suggest two types of integrative or communicative tests to "*fearful*" or "*unconfident*" learners and teachers. The opportunity has been seized to show them what the cloze and the dictation tests look like, and to explain how to cope with them.

Summary of the findings

From the findings, it can be concluded that the cloze and dictation tests can improve the pupils' learning habits despite the uneasy conditions in which students and teachers work. In fact, the answers to both questionnaires confirm that even though the two types of test are rarely used, it is worth using them since they accurately measure the students' production level and teachers' methods effectiveness. However, some factors such as class size, time management, teaching material and teachers' experience ought to be carefully thought about and adapted to requirements of the two activities for more success.

From both teachers' and students' data, it has been learned that testing can not be separated from teaching. Unfortunately, the teaching materials, the library to complete the textbook have been declared as missing in many of the schools. For example students have explained that they share one book between four pupils or use photocopies of it. With the official teaching materials missing, and teachers hardly resourceful, one is getting somewhere closer to working in bad learning conditions, which is an ingredient for tests' negative effect on teaching and learning.

The findings of the research revealed that many teachers still use traditional testing techniques, especially multiple-choice and fill-in blanks exercises. The composition and open-ended questions are the only one used as integrative tests.

From the students' view we learn that they would like to do many tests in different proportions and that those tests should include a variety of testing techniques so as to avoid monotony. They also confirm that tests stimulate their learning process by helping them identify their own weakness and strengths while allowing them to improve their knowledge so far. Hence, what is important nowadays is not the knowledge *per se,* but the use of the language one knows, that is performance.

Many students agree that the cloze test is a good testing device for assessing their proficiency level, but they acknowledge that it is difficult to handle. They argue that most of them fail in it, the consequence being that they become discouraged. We cannot undermine the point that tests get easier to cope with when one is familiar with them.

The results from students are also supported by the teachers' data. Indeed, the teachers investigated admitted that the teaching materials are not sufficient, and nor are they appropriate to the 2nd Form Arts level. To meet the students' needs, most teachers explained that they use a combination of teaching methods and testing techniques. Some other teachers said that they do not use a combination of techniques because each testing technique is specific to a certain objective, and that a combination of techniques would mislead the students.

Information was collected by asking teachers and learners to express themselves on their experience with the official program for English. While expressing their feelings toward tests, we realised that learners are not so enthusiastic about the cloze and dictation tests. Their attitude is characterised by feelings of panic, worry, tension and anxiety.

Teachers on their part explained how they handle the teaching materials and testing techniques. 43 % claim to use communicative approach whereas 50 % favour a combination of methods in teaching and testing. Even though the dictation and the cloze tests are not used, teachers recognise their positive contribution to the learning process. We also learn that a further reason not to use communicative tests, especially those which are targeted in this study could be the influence that the national test of 1st Form exerts on previous classes. As was said by teachers, much time is spent on preparing their learners for the national exam; and it is known that when this is the case, the latter generally has a harmful backwash on teaching and learning.

In the course of our study we also found out that Burundian learners are likely to stay weak in communication if they are not equipped with skills to tackle language work involved in communication activities through group work for example.

We take satisfaction from the fact that both teachers and students understand the advantage of implementing communicative teaching and testing and its potential for the promotion of the learners' communicative ability.

CHAP.VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VII.1. Conclusion

The aim of this work was to investigate the contribution of integrative tests to the learning of English in Burundi high schools, 2nd Form Arts in particular. The study was based on the main claim that Burundian learners in the upper level lack communicative competence whereas they have already studied English for a long time then. This deficiency is noticed during classroom communication activities. The level of the learners' performance appears rather limited, not to say poor. We wished to analyse the place, level, quality and possible achievements of the dictation and the cloze tests in the teaching/learning process in that class.

Concerning the hours of English already covered, it is not easy to understand why students at that level are still so weak in writing and listening tasks. We will point out in passing that the latter include such tasks as composition, writing a dictation, taking notes from a lecture, etc. One surprising opinion from both sides was that the dictation is suitable for low lever learners. Regarding the cloze test, it is rarely used because according to some students and teachers, it requires memorising the text or just seeing it before the words in it are deleted. Despite this disapproving attitude, one may delight in the two parties' recognition of the value of these activities, particularly of the cloze test which they say, is an efficient tool for measuring the student's proficiency level.

As we know that students learn according to the way they are tested, integrative tests should be introduced. Students need to be familiar with the dictation and the cloze tests. The result will be that the teacher will no longer need

to write notes on the board, dictate punctuation marks, asked the spelling of some words, etc. To succeed in his familiarisation process, the teacher has to start with easy material and move gradually to the more complex.

This work has evolved around seven chapters namely the Introduction and Background to the Study, the Literature review: communicative teaching and testing, the Official Program for 2nd Form Arts, Research Methodology, Findings and lastly the Conclusion and Recommendations, to end with.

Chapter one provides background information to the teaching and the learning of English in Burundi. In its enclosing lines, it gives the statement of the problem underlying the study. The main question to guide our thinking was "Can testing techniques contribute to the improvement of the students' performance, given the students' and teachers' linguistic background, learning environment, teaching materials and students' immediate and future needs"?

The answer to this question has been that testing techniques contribute to the improvement of students' performance because tests follow from what was taught.

On one hand, students admit that testing techniques help them improve their knowledge, especially those which demand them to think and express themselves either in writing or speaking. They also add that they need to be motivated, which means that they should be submitted to a varied tests and feel that there is a place and difference between non-communicative tests and the communicative ones. On the other hand, teachers confirmed the students' point of view in answering questions n° 13, 14 and 15. They ended by pointing out some weaknesses that affect students' performance as soon as testing techniques are inappropriate.

Examples of these problems are: linguistic flaws in writing reading, speaking and listening, weakness in communication activities; and teachers' ignorance of students' English language production level, etc.

The second chapter presents and discusses some relevant theories related to communicative teaching and testing. After analysing general principle in testing, a comparison of communicative and non-communicative testing techniques is drawn. The chapter continues with an exploration of some effects that tests can have on the teaching/learning process. In this respect, we realise that tests can have an impact on learning activities, which is threefold: it can be harmful, benign or positive.

The third chapter focuses on presenting the official syllabus and its accompanying textbook. In relation to the latter, provision is made for the historical background of the textbook, its format and content.

The fourth chapter explains the motives for testing in Burundi in general, giving some reasons why tests are done. It also provides clarifications on test management and administration, teachers' and learners' attitudes toward tests, and lastly problems related to test-taking as generally observed by parties concerned. The following chapter describes the methodology used in carrying out the present research. In that chapter, details are given with regard to the research environment and the research population. The latter is described as being composed of 120 students and 30 teachers selected from four provinces: Ngozi, Muyinga, Gitega and Bujumbura city.

The sixth chapter which deals with findings constitutes the heart of the study as well. It attempts to identify elements that would constitute ingredients to answer our main question.

VII.2. Recommendations

As the present study revealed that integrative tests can improve learners' performance in Burundi high schools, the following recommendations are formulated to teachers, learners, National Curriculum Designers and to further researchers.

To B.E.P.E.S. and the National Examination Board

To begin with, B.E.P.E.S would do well to design another textbook which responds better to pupils' needs, those related to the improvement of the communicative competence in particular. Secondly, there is a strong need to provide enough teaching materials and qualified teachers to Burundi different schools; and to organise seminars for in-service teachers so that they can update their ways of teaching and testing. Thirdly, the national examination board should make an effort to test the four skills of the language. This would be an indication of their adaptation to new development in E.F.L and testing. After all, don't they need it too for purposes necessitated by globalisation of the world?

To teachers

As they are the only ones to account for what is happening in their classes, the following recommendations can be directed to them:

- they should teach and test all the four skills as well as all the language areas through communicative tests;

- the dictation and the cloze tests should be reintroduced since this study proved that they are worth using;

- they should assign many tests to students which help them develop communicative competence such as group discussion, completing a cloze passage from any source, listening to the radio, tapes or news, etc. For example they should assign students to discuss a topic orally before they can write a composition on it,

- tests should be announced so that learners prepare for them adequately since it is known that students learn before, during and after the test,

- teachers should not behave as policemen, ready to catch and punish students, but to guide them. This would inspire into the learners forming a positive attitude towards tests and towards the English language itself.

To students

Students form a category of people subjected to any teaching and testing situation bad or good. That is why we recommended it the following so as to cope with what they are subjects of.

Firstly, they should develop a positive attitude toward the English language and towards tests. They should avoid considering their teacher as an enemy and

tests as forms of punishment. They may fail in tests, but as a solution, they should identify the source of failure: is it due to the lack of effort or lack of ability? If it is due to the lack of effort, they should go over and over previous assessment work, looking for what they may have got wrong.

Secondly, they should prepare themselves for assessments systematically; that is regularly and cooperatively. So far, they will feel more confident when a test is eventually given. Thirdly, learners may have had a bad experience in one assessment and have anxiety linked to assessments. Ways of overcoming that situation is to regain confidence and optimism by developing more realistic expectations. This way, they will get used to coping with the specific fear related to test-taking. They should also avoid panicking since it can inhibit reading and understanding questions of the exam.

Last but not least, they should train themselves to take notes from a speech, news and other oral materials that they should record in writing. Inside the classroom, activities such as dictation and cloze test can be easily and mutually organised and led by classmates to help one another learn.

Suggestions to further research

All in all, we cannot pretend having exhausted all factors that make communicative tests contribute positively to the learning process. We believe that there is still much to explore about this area for interested researchers.

Therefore, since the study was focused on 2nd Form Arts, a similar study could be carried in Scientific Section. Attempts could also be made towards introducing oral expression tests, for example in combination with writing and listening, given that in real life we often find ourselves using skills simultaneously rather than in isolation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Alderson, C. (1985). Evaluation. Oxford: New York
2. Bachman, L. F. (1990). Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing. Oxford: O.U.P.
3. Cohen, A. (1980). Testing Language Ability in the Classroom. Rowly, Massachusets: Newbury House Publishers Inc.
4. Cunningsworth, A. (1968). Evaluating and Selecting E.F.L Teaching Materials. London: Heineman Educational Books.
5. Davies, A. (1968). A Language Testing Symposium. London: O.U.P.
6. Finocchiaro, M. et al. (1983). Foreign Language Testing : A Practical Approach, P.21-145. Oxford: O.U.P.
7. Fries, C.C. (1945). Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
8. Harmer, J. (1983). The Practice of English Language Teaching. London, New York: Longman.
9. Harris, D. (1968). Testing English as a Second Language. American Language Institute: Georgetown University.
10. Harrison, A. (1986). A Language Testing Handbook. London and Basingstoke: MacMilan Publishers, Ltd.
11. Heaton, J.B. (1988). Writing English Language Tests. London and New York: Longman Group (EF) Ltd.

12. Henderson, P. (1997). How to Succeed in Exams and Assessments. Collins Educational: National Extension College.

13. Henning, G. (1998). A Guide to Language Testing: Development Evaluation Research. Cambridge: Newbury House Publishers.

14. Hughes, A. (1987). Testing for Language Teachers. Cambridge: C.U.P.

15. Hughes, A. (1998). A Testing for Language Study. Oxford: English Publications & British Council.

16. Lado, R. (1961). Language Testing: The Construction and Use of Foreign Language Tests. London: Longman Group Ltd.

17. Lee. et al. (1985). New Directions in Language Testing. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

18. Oller, JNR. JW. (1979). Language test at School: A Pragmatic Approach. Essex: Longman Group Ltd.

19. Swain, M. (1985). Aspects of Theory, Research and Practice. London: Longman.

20. Valette, R. (1967). Modern Language Testing. Harcout: Brace & World Inc.

21. Wilkins, D.A. (1976). Notional Syllabuses. London : E. Arnold.

UNPUBLISHED WORKS

1. Baribarira, E. (1993). Evaluation of Today's English First Form. Bujumbura: U.B.
2. Hakizimana, N. (2003). Evaluation of "Class Discussion" in Teaching the Speaking Skill. Bujumbura: UB.
3. Kataye, P. (1991). Analysis of Errors Made by Burundian English Learners in Indirect Speech Seconde Lettres Modernes. Bujumbura: U.B.
4. Musabimana, C. (2005). Analysis of Errors Made by Burundian English Learners in Active and Passive Form: Case of 2nd Form Arts in Some Bujumbura and Gitega Schools. Bujumbura: UB.
5. Ministère de l'Education et de la Culture (1992). Programme d'Anglais. Bujumbura : B.E.P.E.S.
6. Ndabemeye, D. (1973). Testing Grammatical Structure. Bujumbura: U.B.
7. Ngaruko, C. (1973). Testing Vocabulary. Bujumbura: U.B.
8. Niyonzima, F. (2002). Some Factors Affecting the Teaching of English in Some Selected Secondary Schools in Bujumbura: A criticism of Approach, Materials and Attitudes Case of 2nd Form Arts. Bujumbura: U.B.

9. Niyondagara, A. (1984). Developing Listening Comprehension Skill in our Secondary Schools. Bujumbura: UB.

DICTIONARIES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

1. Richards, J. et al. (1985). Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics. Essex: Longman.
2. Merriam, W. (1987). Webster's Ninth New Dictionary. Springfield: Massachusetts.

COURSEBOOKS

1. Ailloud, D.H. (1975). Today's English Classe de Seconde. Paris: Hatier.
2. Ministère de l'Education Nationale. (1990). English Workshop for 3rd Form Book 1. Bujumbura :B.E.P.E.S.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STUDENT'S QUESTIONNAIRE

School:.....

Number of pupils:.....

Questions: Please answer each question as appropriate. Where there are boxes, put a cross to indicate your choice.

1. Do you have learning materials such as books, cassettes, radio in your school?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

2. Does ***Today's English*** help you improve your ability to communicate in English?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

3. How many tests do you do per term?

4. Would you prefer to do less or more tests?

5. Do you think tests can help you improve your learning ability?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

6. Does your teacher give you varied types of test?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

7. Do you do dictation tests in your present class?

   Yes ☐ No ☐

8. What about a text with blank spaces in it that you have to complete using your own suitable words (that is called a cloze passage)?

9. Do you review your course before such tests?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. How do you feel before the test?

Panicked ☐ Relaxed ☐ Worried/anxious ☐ No answer ☐

11. How do you feel during the test?

Relaxed ☐ Relaxed on some conditions ☐ Anxious ☐ No idea ☐

12. How do you feel after the test?

Happy ☐ Angry ☐ It depends ☐ No idea ☐

13. What in your view are the characteristics of a good English test?

14. Can you distinguish a good test from a bad one?

15. Does your teacher's system of evaluation prepare you for the national test in English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

16. What would you advise your teacher to change in his/her way of testing?

University of Burundi

Institute for Applied Pedagogy (I.A.P)

February…2006

Dear teacher of English,

I am currently involved in carrying a research project with the approval of the Institute for Applied Pedagogy, English Department. The research focuses on the subject:

THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMMUNICATIVE TESTS TO THE LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN 2ND FORM ARTS OF BURUNDI HIGH SCHOOLS: CASES OF THE CLOZE AND DICTATION TESTS.

In this connection, I would like to use this questionnaire to assess the contribution of communicative tests in promoting the learning habit in your class.

I would appreciate your answers to the attached questionnaire. Please be sure your answers will be treated with full confidentiality.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully,

Adelin MANIRATUNGA

APPENDIX 2: TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

School:.....

Number of students in your class:.....

Questions: Please answer the questions as applicable to your own case.

1. How long have you been teaching this class (2nd Form Arts)?

   Under one year ☐ Above one year ☐

2. For my teaching I have the following materials available:

   ☐ Coursebook ☐ Radio set

   ☐ Cassette ☐ Teacher's guide (T.G)

3. In my teaching I ☐ entirely rely on the suggestions in my T.G

   ☐ rely on my T.G only occasionally.

4. In my teaching I ☐ care to cater for my student's needs.

   ☐ Care to reach my own objectives.

5. In order to meet the needs of my learners, I use the

   ☐ Audio lingual method

   ☐ Communicative approach

   ☐ Other (specify)

6. Both my students and I are aware that teaching must be followed by some form of evaluation including tests.

   Yes ☐ No ☐

7. My class is familiar with each of the testing techniques below:

- Multiple-choice ☐ -Fill-in blanks ☐
- Composition ☐ - Substitution ☐
- Cloze test ☐ - open-ended questions ☐
- Dictation ☐

8. In my evaluation, I prefer to use the ..... testing technique because .....

9. In my evaluation, I ☐ don't use
☐ use
a combination of testing techniques because,.....

10.In my evaluation, I don't use the .....technique(s) because .....

11. In my view, a cloze test ☐ is
☐ is not
a good testing technique because.....

12. In my view, a dictation test ☐ is
☐ is not
a good testing technique because, ...

13. I would personally ☐ recommend
☐ not recommend
using the dictation and the cloze tests with 2nd Form Arts because.....

14. I fear that ☐ using those two tests

☐ not using those two tests

can have the following effects:…….. ……... on my class.

15. I ☐ agree

☐ don't agree

with those who claim that testing is important for both teachers and students because, …….

16. The two prior criteria that I take into account when I design a test are: ……..

17. When testing my class, I ☐ care

☐ don't care

to prepare my learners for the national English test.