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Inadequate sylabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in english in burundi secondary schools : the case of second form arts in selected schools in bujumbura city

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

INADEQUATE SYLLABUS AS AN OBSTACLE TO THE EFFECTIVE LEARNING OF THE WRITING SKILL IN ENGLISH IN BURUNDI SECONDARY SCHOOLS: THE CASE OF SECOND FORM ARTS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA CITY

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A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises"

Bujumbura, June 2011

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

My late father and two elder sisters

My cherished mother,

My brothers and sisters,

Mbazumutima Abbas's family,

My dear friends and relatives.

This work is the remembrance of your love and affection.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I cannot forget to thank the authorities of Makerere University for their help during the one month of training that I spent there.

My thanks are also directed to the teachers and students of the secondary schools we went to during my research.

Last but not the least; I thank all the people who provided me with moral, intellectual and financial support.

ABSTRACT

English language is spoken all over the world; its importance in Burundi is obvious. If we consider how Burundi secondary school students perform in the writing skill, we will have the impression that, although they learn the writing skill in English, their proficiency is low. We went ahead to see some of the main causes. Our focus was on the way the syllabus is structured in secondary schools precisely in second form arts.

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate how inappropriate syllabus can stand as a handicap to the effective learning of the writing skill in English.

To collect the data, two questionnaires, one for the teacher and the other the students are used. We also used the classroom observations.
Given the fact that I could not reach all the students of Second Form Arts in Bujumbura city, only six schools located in Bujumbura city were selected.

A conclusion and some recommendations are made to improve the learning of the writing skill in Burundi secondary school in second Form Arts. The recommendations are directed to the students, the English teachers, the course designer and finally to the future researchers.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BEPES : Bureau d'Etudes de des Programmes de l'Enseignement Secondaire
- IPA : Institut de Pédagogie Appliquée i.e Institute for Applied Pedagogy
- COMIBU : Communauté Islamique du Burundi.

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CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I.0. Introduction

All over the world, there is no social group without a communication. Language, in fact, is the great tool which makes human culture possible. It is important because English speakers are economically, politically, commercially and socially important. A nation or society deprived of communication means would sink into chaos. It is obvious that all human activities, which lead to national development or advancement, are carried out through language and, of course, they need to learn foreign languages. In this respect, Halliday (1978:9) states that,

> *language is the main channel through which the patterns of living are transmitted to him through which he learns to act as a member of " a society"- in and through the various social groups, and – and to adopt its 'culture', its modes of thought and action, its beliefs and its values*

This study deals with the teaching/ learning of the writing skill in English. How the syllabus of English in some selected schools is one of the factors that hamper the development of writing. Writing is one of the four important skills of language and when it comes to the case of Burundi where English is not only the second language but the foreign language, its learning needs much attention. It is an area, which is worth investigating not only because it may have been neglected in the past but also because of the preponderant place it has throughout the world. Even recent scholarship emphasis the primacy of writing over speaking (Krashen (1992), Scarcella and Oxford (1992), Reid (1992),...). It is believed that writing helps people to keep a record of what they are teaching, of what they know, of what they are researching on, and of what they are

learning. In other words, it is the most successful way of keeping safe any amount of knowledge or information, if you do not want to forget it, even if much research has been carried out so far concerning writing in English in Burundi. Today, there is a need for more extended research that could suggest to programme designers, what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

I.1. Linguistic Situation of Burundi

Situated in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Burundi is a small country of 27.834 km 2 with a population of over 7 million. It shares boundaries with Rwanda in the North, Tanzania in the East and South, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. As hinted above, Burundi, just like many other African countries, is multilingual in nature, but at the same time has an official bilingual policy with French and Kirundi as official languages. The East African lingua franca, Kiswahili is also used in the country but predominantly along Lake Tanganyika and in the Bujumbura area. Kirundi, according to SIL classification, is a Bantu language in the same way as Kiswahili with which it competes as common languages of wider communication. French is basically used for education, administration, politics, and other activities limited to the formal domains.

As an official language, French is used in all official transactions and is also the medium of instruction in education. From the third grade in primary school to the university, all courses, except Kirundi and English, are taught in French. English on the other hand, is taught as a discipline from the 6 th form in public or government owned secondary schools and even earlier in some private schools. Today some private schools teach English at the primary school level. The Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Burundi was created in the 1980s. Students from this department graduate with the Bachelor of Arts degree.

English is also taught as a foreign language and for academic and professional purposes in other departments, faculties and institutes of the university. Today, the Department of English is the most populous of all the departments of the faculty of arts and social sciences – up from one of the least populous ten years ago.

I.2. Background to the Study

It is obvious that English is widely used throughout the world. It is an official language in many states and it is studied extensively as a second language in many countries. In the scientific sphere, English can certainly be considered as an international language because of its importance as Quirk (1962:7) states "English is a key which opens door to the scientific and technical knowledge indispensable to the economic and political development of vast areas of the world". The aim of teaching a language like English which is a foreign language in Burundi is to help learners to achieve effective and appropriate communication.

Unfortunately, in the Burundi educational system, according to some researches made, the four skills are not given the same place. It is often believed that while using a language to communicate with our fellow humans just a little time is devoted to letters, mail, etc. that some little time is devoted to reading and little time to listening, which more time is devoted to speaking rather than writing in language as Baribarira says in her thesis (1993:55) where she mentions that "the speaking skill should be given more priority" before other language skills.

Teaching materials are available in huge numbers, and have to be assessed somehow if one is to get on with the business of preparing a course and teaching one's students. It is, therefore, surprising that more attention has not been

devoted to the question of syllabus development in second language (S.L) teaching in Burundi.

Today's English which is the main book used in the majority of second Modern, Arts section ,focuses, however, on reading comprehension, the book does not contain genuine- like texts.

Wilga (1981:44) says:

> *fully exploited, authentic texts give students direct access to the culture and help them to use the new language authentically, situations rather than demonstrating knowledge of grammar point or lexical items.*

This may be due to the view of learning as mastery of the "four skills" or to the resulting difficulty of specifying objectives in any terms other than those of linguistic content. In any case, teachers of English as a second language are on the whole still more used to thinking about methodology than about syllabus design. Teachers are generally unprepared to produce an overall and comprehensive plan or design for a second language programs. Nowadays, there is a pressure on language teachers and language planners to produce more efficient courses. In Burundi, it has been increased greatly by the integration of Burundi in the East African Community. According to Cunningsworth (1984:59) "course book that is going to interest a learner should contain something that he wants to learn about or involve himself in quite apart from the language itself."

In the Burundi educational system, there is lack of materials inss quantity and quality and consequently both teachers and students can hardly improve their ability to write in English. Harmer (1983:219) states:

a teacher who over-uses a textbook and thus repeatedly follows the sequence in each unit may become boring in over a period of time for he will find himself teaching the same order again and again

It would be unfair to say that the inadequate syllabus is the only one handicap to the effective learning of the writing skill, but some other factors come to contribute such as the lack of qualified teachers, time allocated to the English course, students' attitude toward the English language, appropriate methodology and techniques. In our research we are only restricted to the impact of inadequate syllabus of English in the effectiveness of the learning of the writing skill.

I.3. Statement of the problem

The achievement of the writing skill needs the improvement of the materials and the teachers themselves. As far as the writing skill is concerned, it is neglected by the curriculum designers who do not take into account its importance. The problem is, teachers do follow the syllabus and the only book used in 2nd form, Arts section does not favor the writing skill whereas it should be given a great importance. One wonders if the syllabus used in English language in secondary school is adequate or not, but what is evident is that Burundi secondary school students, especially those of Second Form Arts, communicate effectively through writing.

The present study, therefore, demonstrates how the syllabus of English in Second Form Arts Burundi secondary schools is a handicap in the teaching-learning of the writing skill and tries to find suggestions in order to improve it.

I.4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to verify whether the low proficiency in writing in English is not due to the inappropriate syllabus or not. By investigating on the part of the syllabus and its impact on the learning of the writing skill, teachers will, therefore, recognize that apart from teachers' books available in the Burundi educational system, they may use internet for their research. We will also propose strategies of improving and facilitating writing in upper classes.

I.5. Importance of the study

As we believe that writing plays a great role in society especially in communication, this study will show the real problems that stand as obstacle to the improvement of the English writing. Knowing that" to know the disease is half to cure", the English language teacher will pay more attention to the writing skill and the students consequently will benefit.

I.6. Research questions

In the attempt to show that the inadequate syllabus of English can stand as an obstacle to the development of the writing skill in Burundi secondary schools, the following questions will help to carry forward this research:

- Is the content of the syllabus of Second Form Arts appropriate to the development of the writing skill?
- How does the inadequacy of a syllabus hamper the teaching and learning of the writing skill?
- What can be done as a contribution to improve on the English writing skill in Burundi English learners

I.7. Hypotheses

The questions that this research purports to answer yield the following hypotheses:

- Firstly, the content of the syllabus of Second Form Arts is not appropriate to develop the writing skill,
- Secondly, the inadequacy of syllabus hampers the teaching and the learning of the writing skill,
- Thirdly, contributions are needed in order to develop the writing skill

I.8. Motivation of the study

The choice of this topic, "inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in Burundi secondary schools: The case of Second Form Arts in selected schools in Bujumbura city", was chiefly an inspiration from the course entitled "writing" that I learned at university. It was my first time that I learned how we can write an essay. This choice was also influenced by the negative attitude or ignorance of any technique used to write any piece of writing in secondary school that I noticed when I was a trainee teacher. I also noticed that the syllabus contained so many shortcomings that are the real causes of the ineffective development of the writing skill in secondary schools.

I.9. Delimitation of the study

This study is concerned with the leaning of English in Burundi secondary schools not in all the four skills but only the writing skill. This study is conducted only in six secondary schools in Bujumbura city, precisely the Second Form Arts.

I.10. Definition of key terms

This section is concerned with the definition of the terms that are supposed to be central to this research and also that seemingly appear to be new for some readers.

Writing:

The ability or the art of transmitting information by means of words and sentences that have been inscribed on a sheet of paper. The Longman dictionary of Contemporary English (1995:1659) gives substance to what has been said about the importance of writing because it adds that "if you receive something in writing, it is official proof of an agreement, promise, etc...

According to Araproff (1975:223) writing "is much more than an orthographic symbolization of speech. It is most importantly a purposeful selection and organization of experience".

Syllabus:

According to Yanice (1987:18) the notion of syllabus is, of course , not at all new in the context of education. The Ministry of Education regularly produces descriptions of overall curricula to be followed in schools of all sorts, according to the prevailing theories of education. The most suitable definition is provided in A.M. Shaw's survey of the literature on the second-language syllabus development (Shaw, 1977) quoting Robertson (1971:564) as "a statement of the plan for any part of the curriculum, excluding the element of curriculum evolution itself"

Curriculum:

According to Shaw (1977) curriculum includes the goals, objectives,content,resources, and means of evaluation of all the learning experience planned for pupils both in and out of the school and community

through instruction and related programs, The term ''curriculum'' is commonly used in two related senses .It refers, first, to the substance of a programme of studies of an educational institution or system. Thus, we can speak of the school curriculum, the university curriculum, the curriculum of French schools, or the curriculum of soviet education. In the more restricted sense it refers to the course of study or content in a particular subject ,such as the mathematics curriculum or the history curriculum .It is ,therefore ,used too as a synonym of what in British universities and schools is sometimes referred to the "syllabus" for a given subject or course of studies . In recent years ,however ,the term ''curriculum'' has come to refer not only to the subject matter or content ,but also to the entire instructional process including materials ,equipment ,examinations ,and the training of teachers. In short the pedagogical measures related to the schooling or the substances of a course of studies. In other words, curriculum is concerned with ''what can and should be taught to whom, when, and how''.

Communication:

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'communication' as the activity or process of expressing ideas and feelings or giving people information. It is also a method of sending information, especially telephones, radio, computers etc. The same dictionary also defines communicative language teaching which is used in this research as a method of teaching a foreign language which stresses the importance of learning to communicate information and ideas in a language.

I.11. Conclusion on chapter I

This chapter opens the discussion for the study. It provides us with the background to the study. The following chapter makes a review of literature, related to this study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

II.0. Introduction

The study of literature that is related to any research endeavour is very important because it allows one to be aware of the available writings about the subject under study. This gives the researcher the opportunity to determine the relationship between the available literature and the current investigation.

II.1.The English Writing Skill in Burundi Secondary Schools

In the Burundi educational system, the English language is used as a foreign language. Writing is given little importance if we consider worth in the world of communication. Audrey and Thelma (1981:1) answer to the question of "who is the writer and what is the writing" they say that

> *all writing is creating. It starts with a blank of sheets of paper and an idea- It ends with a creation- as a note to the milkman or as complex as a five-hundred page novel.*

In our opinion, writers differ simply according to how well they carry out their activity, the quality they give or have given to their writing. At primary school, at secondary and at university, learners write. The type of writing we find at primary school in Burundi does not involve creativity. It rather emphasises on grammatical structures and is mostly done in French and Kirundi. The same situation prevails in secondary schools, except that here some writing in English is introduced. Nyagamukenga (1993:12) criticises this reliance on structures by saying that

> *the teaching of English in Burundi concentrates on making students aware of certain aspects of the code (vocabulary, phonological and morphological features,*

> *and syntactical patterns) without providing adequate practice in the selection of message and in the process of encoding it.*

The researcher in this work approves this observation and believes that they constitute one of the main reasons why learners encounter problems in writing/vocabulary but assumes that this should be in relation to the ability of correctly using language. In other words, the linguistic knowledge about structures should be acquired with the idea in mind of performing the different language functions and uses. The same opinion is held by Johnsons (1983:30) who says that "the students who are structurally competent, yet, cannot communicate appropriately".

This assertion represents to a large extent the situation prevailing in our country. As a matter of fact, Second Form Arts students in Burundi whom we visited displayed a good knowledge in English structure but not in communicative English through writing. For instance, when we were giving them instructions to carry out a given activity, one could see that they understood well what to do. This being a sign, that their brains possessed a large amount of language items. Yet, the analysis of composition samples from their classes showed us significant difficulties in expressing their ideas, in communicating appropriately.

Littlewood (1988:43) and Widdowson (1985:32) also emphasise the point that language is used to carry out functional and social meaning. This means that when the language teacher emphasises structure only, language is deprived of its social and functional uses.

Drills, copying and dictations are the exercises commonly used or dealt with in Burundi secondary schools by teachers to teach the writing skill. These lead to mechanical exercises which, according to Ellis and Tomlinson (1986:42) "only offer practice in structure not in function, are artificial and not very motivating".

However, it could be mentioned here that those exercises about drills, copying and dictation should not be disregarded. These methods can still be used but heavy reliance on them makes learning artificial.

Ingram and King (1980:7) believe that "through writing activities ranging from structured writing" to free "composing", students will become more fluent and confident writers of general purpose in English. The same authors nuance between writing and composing activities. They say that a "composition is rarely, if ever, finished in one work session whereas a writing assignment is usually completed on the first try. We can understand that the type of composition they are referring to is the one that Scarcella and Oxford (1992), and Reid (1993) call "process writing" which is opposed to the "product". The latter being the final text that teachers of writing can produce in one try without resorting to any intermediary stages of drafting and multi-drafting.

Burundians in general rarely produce, if ever, in English. But even so secondary school students do write in English. First of all they write English in class. They also write the language when their teachers ask them to do so by assigning them writing tasks. On the other hand, they write sketches in English to be performed when they have as school party or they send messages and music dedication to their friends through radio programme. The ever increasing technology also brings about an environment that sometimes requires the use of written English.

For this reason, the research on how to develop the writing English in Burundi secondary schools is of a paramount importance by revising the way the English syllabus is structured

II.2. Good writing strategies

In the preparation of the learners to become good writers, a number of aspects have to be looked at.

Gould Di Yanni and Smith (1985:12) in their study point out that

> *writing is a creative act. None of our writing is simply a transaction of completed thoughts into words on a page. Even if we are presenting a list of facts, we have to choose from among evidence and decide how to present it. The act of writing is creative because it requires us to interpret or make a sense of something: an experience, a text or an event. We write largely in order to understand and not just to express ourselves. In fact most of our writing in college and the world of work aim both to reach an understanding and to share that understanding with other people.*

In the above statement teachers should give the writing techniques to the students and the topic to be dealt with should be drawn from their social environment in order to have ideas to support their arguments.

Creativity is an element that must be reinforced. Though intrinsic in nature, it should be facilitated extrinsically and all this is the teachers' duty. The catchword in Gould and colleagues' (1985:16) statements is the element of sharing. When we view how it happens in the Burundi educational system in second Arts form, does it happen? Does the teacher facilitate the sharing? The teacher has a role we cannot underestimate. Picas (1982:20) observes that

> *at all level, learners must be taught what they have to write, rather than being allowed to plunge in and left to swim or sink. This does not mean that all errors can be avoided. But they will be considerably lessened after good preparation*

Kyalikunda (1995:12) says that: Teachers need conscientiously select the methods and materials, techniques and activities they are to use in teaching

writing. Language is largely learnt by imitation. The way the teacher uses the language works as the first role model that a learner uses as a basis to learn the target language. This one calls for more than mere knowledge of the language on the part of the teacher, and, it does not merely know how to write, but also how to help learners grasp skills for writing well.

Kyalikunda (1995:13) further observes that:

> *another important aspect in the teaching of writing is the training of the learners in the actual process of writing. Many teachers place emphasis on the end product of writing, a complete essay, for instance, rather than the actual process involved in reaching this end product.*

The teachers should urge students to take note of the writing skill. They must write what are a paragraph and the way it should look like. The content of an essay its structures, briefly, all that are involved in the writing course.

Have our teachers conceptualized the various approaches to the teaching of writing to guard against the likelihood of confusion arising from the approach they may choose to use? Because as Raimes (1986:156) points out:

> *Misconceptions abound as a "product approach" to teaching is defined as attention only to linguistic and rhetorical patterns that is to grammar and organization, while a "process approach" is seen as concerned only with content and some rather ill-defined strategies for composing. The splits and dichotomies are useful for defining and illustrating the philosophies that prevail in our discipline, but they contribute little towards resolving problems. What we need to know now is to reconcile the concerns of*

> *products and process approaches in our teaching techniques and materials. In fact, that is what real process approach is doing: not neglecting concern with the written product at all but modifying the approach to it so that attention to form and accuracy is included as learners learn how to deal with the constraint of composing.*

When the distinction between product and process approaches is understood, the task of teaching and learning to write becomes enjoyable for both the teachers and the learners because learners can clearly locate where a writing task at hand has to begin, and where it can end.

This is further substantiated when Paoli and Parry (1997:33) observe that:

> *it is important for learners to understand that the writing process starts before they pick on a pen or sit down at a key board it starts when they start to think about how to respond to an assignment, how to find and organize the information that will answer the question how to perform the tasks that will produce the written work.*

Teachers must show some techniques such as brainstorming, drafting and writing. If it is not in the examination, the teacher may first of all explain the topic in order to help the students to write about what they know, to motivate them by giving some key words so that they can at least have the content and maybe be wrong on the form of the composition.

Our writing habits- how often we write, where and why- contribute greatly to our attitude towards writing. How we feel about writing partly determines how effective our writing will be. It is because of this that Gould and Smith (1985:103) argue that:

> *by analyzing our writing habits, we can discover the elements that create a good writing environment for us and can reduce some of the distractions that prevent us from thinking and writing. A pleasant- or at least predictable-writing environment often puts us in a receptive frame of mind and encourages us to focus our attention on the task before us.*

Here teachers are asked to give the topic to write on which is drawn from our actual environment, for instance, in Burundi if we give a topic like impact of the war on family's economy' it will be easier because we are facing the impact of the war.

As writers, we must establish an attitude conductive to writing, a state where our minds can freely receive new stimuli, a context that encourages us to experiment and do our best. And we must teach ourselves to accept without judgment some of the thoughts that pour from our minds during a creative thoughtful period.

Gould and colleagues(1985:104) further quote Georgi Lozanor, a Bulgarian psychiatrist and educational researcher, as saying that we create self protective barriers that prevent us from being bombarded by too many stimuli. We restrict our beliefs and admit only stimuli and ideas that seem logical and compatible with our values, perceptions, and self-confidence. In effect our self-imposed barriers often prevent us from seeing the world differently, from learning, from accommodating new ideas into our existing beliefs.

The target learners in this study (Second Form Arts), like most learners at secondary school levels, form a category of highly selective learners. They will do everything to learn something, however difficult, as long as they know the importance embedded in what they are learning, and will refuse to learn

anything that is of little value to them. That is why Raimes (1983:83) is of the opinion that:

> *learners will endeavor to learn functional writing because it is authentic and they realize the importance and relevance of being knowledgeable in such writing to get things done like sending messages, invitations, filling forms and giving instructions.*

The above activities will obviously appear only mechanical in the classroom. But Kyalikunda (1995:18-19),on his part insists and says:

> *there is need then for the teachers to bring the sense of reality into classroom. One way of doing this is to make learners feel that they are writing for an authentic audience as in real life. In real life, people never just write merely as a form mechanical exercise. People normally write with a specific purpose and audience in mind and choose their words, format and style to suit this purpose and audience. Teachers ought to make learners' writing similarly contextualized.*

II.3.The Components of a Communicative Syllabus

In order to achieve effectiveness in a given language, there should be a plan; syllabus designers should take into consideration some principles. The principles on which a syllabus is structured are different from those for selecting the linguistic content to be included in it. The former involves consideration of a number of extra-linguistic factors, having to do with the educational setting in which the course is to be taught, the characteristic of the learners, the circumstances in which the educational institution operates, even the society in which the language-learning and teaching process is to be carried on as said by Yanice(1987:50):

> *But it is possible to take instead as a point of departure the premise that language is primarily a social function and should therefore be studied as a social phenomenon.*

This means that if we now wish to make up the deficit earlier syllabus types, and ensure that our learners acquire the ability to communicate in a more appropriate and efficient way, we have to inject a larger number of components into the makeup of the syllabus. According to Yanice(1987:68) these components could be listed as follows:

1. As detailed a consideration as possible of the purpose for which the learners wish to acquire the target language.
2. Some idea of the setting in which they will want to use the target language(physical aspects need to be considered, as well as social setting)
3. The socially defined role the learner will assume in the target language, as well as the roles of their interlocutors;
4. The communicative events in which the learner will participate: everyday situations, vocational or professional situations, academic situations, and so on;
5. The language functions involved in these events, or what the learner will need to be able to do with or through the language;
6. The notions involved, or what the learner will need to be able to talk about;
7. The skills involved in the knitting together of discourse: discourse and rhetorical skills;
8. The variety or varieties of the target language that will be needed, and the level in the spoken and written language which the learners will need to reach;
9. The grammatical content that will be needed;
10. The lexical content that will be needed.

According to Yanice (1987:86- 87), the components of a communicative syllabus are listed as follows:

> *The kind of syllabus that incorporates a consideration of all ten components is increasingly referred to as "communicative", since it takes into consideration everything required to assure communication. The matter of which component receives most emphasis is negotiable within the constraints of any given teaching situation.*

Notice that of the ten components listed only two (9 and 10) have traditionally been considered essential. The others have been included sporadically and unsystematically, if at all, since they were either not considered as part of planning task in second language teaching or at best peripheral to it. Within current theories of how the language teaching operation should proceed, a consideration of most if not all, of the ten components listed is viewed as being necessary. A number of syllabus types labeled according to which of many components listed above receives most prominence, have now emerged. Among those that have been most frequently discussed are the structural or grammatical syllabus, and functional-notional syllabus. Each of these constructed according to different principles, and each needs to be understood by the syllabus designer. The kind of syllabus that incorporates a consideration of all the ten components is increasingly referred to as "communicative", since it takes into consideration everything required to assure communication. The matter of which component receives most emphasis is negotiable within the constraints of any given teaching situation.

II.4.Theory of a Composition Syllabus

What should a composition syllabus for a secondary school be like? Certainly it should not consist of a list of subjects. Equally, it should vary widely from country to country and be given to particular needs, environments, experiences and abilities. It is best for each school to work out its own composition syllabus, in a systematic, and detailed progressive form. Without proper syllabus students are in a danger of being exposed to vagueness of approach, unnecessary repetition, aimless and shapeless lessons and pointless writing. It is towards the creation of such document that the following notes are offered. It is not always possible to fulfill all the conditions below but the more that can be met, the better the students' prospect of writing successfully. Yanice(1987:102) gives the following criteria for a good composition syllabus:

1. The students must be presented with a problem and see the need for a written solution. It is the problem that engages their interest and the need that starts the language mechanisms working. The words do not come until some stimulus has been applied. As soon as the students want to communicate something, they are ready to start. They are never put in the position of wanting to find something to say.
2. The problem defines the purpose of writing and reader or class of reader to whom it is addressed. The students must have a reader, real or imaginary in mind. We do not believe that the teacher should be the only reader or even the normal reader. We do not want students to write regularly for the teacher's approval, we are no longer young enough to be certain that the teacher knows the best.
3. The students must then bring attention, experience and imagination into focus upon the problem. A great deal of the art of composition teaching consists in getting the students upon the drafting point, or getting other students in a

group discussion to bring him to the point where, as Gurrey "he is full like a pot of beer preferably just shopping over"

4. The students must know or find out how to set about the job. This is the question of technique. Skinning off the technique and applying it can be used in any kind of writing-advertisements, description, narrative, exposition, argument, dialogue, etc... The problem of technique need to be broken down into manageable units. We have seen a teacher give a lesson on paragraphing in which he attempted to cover the whole of this complicated subject in forty minutes. But narrative paragraphing is quite different from that of exposition, argument or description. The unity is not one of them but of incident, speaker, mood, etc.
5. The composing course should cover the widest possible range of kinds of writing.
6. More useful teaching can be done after a piece of work has been written than before. Writing should be a co-operative endeavour, not solitary penance.
7. All original work should be published.
8. Whatever grammar teaching we do should be relevant to the needs of composition.
9. Nearly all composition work should be based on local material so that students know what they are writing about.
10. All composition work must draw on the students' own experience.
11. Finally, we must take the students into our confidence and explain why he should work in this way.

II.5.Types of syllabus

Two main approaches share the domain of syllabus that is the traditional and the formal or functional approaches.

II.5.1. Traditional approaches

A good syllabus normally deals with how and not with what. The traditional syllabuses, however, focus on "what "rather than "how "in the process of second or foreign language teaching and learning. This means that it is a type of syllabus which favours the form of the target language and gives little attention to its function. As a result, learners are passive and less creative. They are given a set of grammatical structure and lexical items of the target language to be "swallowed"

Janice Y.(1987:25) says what follows about this type of syllabus:

> *Until quite recently, in language teaching, one generally accepted syllabus type has dominated the preparation of the teaching materials. This syllabus has generally consisted of two components: a list of linguistic structures (the grammar to be taught) and a list of word (the lexicon to be taught), often the items in each list are arranged in order showing which are to be taught in the first course, which in the second, etc.*

Suffice it to say here that such a type syllabus cannot achieve the goal of teaching the target language communicatively. One of the shortcomings of this type of syllabus is that the form and the meaning are assumed to match in a one-to-one relationship without any contextual meaning. Students who have been taught the target language using the only this type of syllabus will get enough knowledge about the target language but will never be able t use it.

Talking about the short comings of the traditional syllabuses, which include the structural syllabus, Janice Y.(1987:27) says:

> *The structural syllabus is one which is very familiar to language teachers and which has served generation of teachers and learners alike. However, it has its short*

> *comings: in teaching approaches based on it, form and meaning are assumed in relationship, and meaning is to be learnt together with particular grammatical forms. Meaning (rather than purely lexical meaning), it is used in an utterance and still less in an exchange of utterances between two or more speakers.*

These words by Janice simply mean that a student who has always been taught on the basis of this type of syllabus will not be able to deal with the target language in discourse.

II.5.2. Formal or functional approach

This approach which goes beyond the form of the target language to the communicative competence. It makes use of both the form and the function of the language. In other words, it deals with the "how" and not the "what". This one promotes the fluency and the proficiency on the part of the students. It includes the following types of syllabus as Christopher N. Candi (1983: 28-43) states in "The communicative Teaching of English Principles and exercise typology".

II.5.2.1.The semantic syllabus

The analytic approach leads to the production of the semantic syllabus. However, it is defined, the semantic syllabus will necessarily be more intricate and more demanding in its construction than the grammatical syllabus (structural syllabus) since the former consists of more components. The semantic syllabus is intended to lead the communicative competence in a wide sense rather than linguistic competence alone, it comprises two broad types; situational and notional syllabuses.

a. The situational syllabus

The situational model is closely related to topical or thematic syllabus. All of these syllabus types have situational needs as their starting point, and thus are concerned with language in social context as we might expect. The situational model will comprise units indicating specific situations such as: "at the office", "buying an air line ticket" or "the job interview". The topical or thematic syllabus is similar but generally employs the procedure of grouping modules or lessons around a topic.

e.g. : Theme : TRAVEL

Texts: At the bus station
arriving at the hotel
Visiting the city hall

b. The notion of syllabus

It represents a model in which the difficulties of both grammatical and situational syllabuses are avoided. As its favored teaching techniques, learners are given opportunities for language use in classroom. The teacher tries to provide practice that will be more like communicative activity in the outside world, but material is specially produced and content can be graded. The chief techniques now being employed are communication task (topics) and games and simulations and role play. In the former, there are two basic principles: information " gap" among the learners themselves; and a reason for bridging the gap. In the latter, real- life situations are simulated and the learners assigned specific roles to play and goals to reach.

II.5.2.2. The proto syllabus

At this stage, the syllabus designer will turn to the description of the content that the syllabus will have, that is, the preparation of the syllabus specifications. The components of communicative syllabus might include general notions and specific topics, communicative functions, discourse and rhetorical skills, variety of language, role sets, and communicative events, as well grammatical lexis.

II.5.2.3. The pedagogical syllabus

In order to develop communicative competence, it is now widely recognized that the psychology of the classroom is extremely important. In other words, psycholinguistic considerations are now taught to be more important in language teaching than the contributions of theoretical linguistics (...).

The most obvious effect of using a syllabus set out in the way would be a significant change in the role of the teacher. In teaching adults and in attempting to negotiate with them about process, it is evident that the teacher abandons the position of authority figure and becomes a guide rather than a leader, or even the learner's peer.

Briefly from what has been said so far, it is obvious that all types of syllabus centre on the two main approaches: the traditional approach which mainly deals with the form of the language; and the formal or functional approach which gives more attention to the use of the target language. A good syllabus should include grammatical structures and lexis, situational and socio-cultural aspects of the learner's society. It should also take into account the psychology of the learners. The attitude of the teacher is also a very important factor which enhances the success of a given syllabus.

U. B.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.0. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the procedures used while collecting and analysing the data of this research study, which is entitled "inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of writing skill in English in Burundi secondary schools: the case of Second Form Arts in selected schools in Bujumbura city".

In the following lines, we talk about how data collection procedure was handled. We describe the questionnaires (i.e. one for the students and the other for the teachers), and classroom observations and students' written test. In the same line, the research area, the target population and samples as well as the data analysis procedures are described.

III.1. Research Area

This study," Inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in English in Burundi Secondary Schools: The case of Second form Arts section in some selected schools in Bujumbura city», was conducted in six secondary schools randomly selected in Bujumbura city. These schools comprised private as well as public ones. Both private and public schools are under ministerial authority, that is, they all follow the same programme, the same calendar and they are also under the same control. If possible they also have the same teaching materials. But this is not the case because some are well-equipped in the teaching materials while others are short of them. To select the schools, I wrote down names of schools as many as possible, found in Bujumbura city on a piece of paper. Among these schools, I then picked out six randomly. Note that the mixture of private and public schools was done on the

purpose of getting varied information from different schools. They are the following:

- Lycée Africain
- Lycée municipal de Gikungu
- Lycée du Lac Tanganyika
- Lycée Vugizo
- Petit Séminaire de Kanyosha
- Lycée de la COMIBU Nyakabiga

These schools were limited in number because it was difficult for the researcher to carry out a research study in all Bujumbura secondary schools and also other schools that are outside the Bujumbura city.

In fact, in giving the questionnaires to all these schools mentioned, we selected one class in each school; we came up with 126 students and six teachers as described in the following section.

III.2. Description of the Subjects

The current research is concerned with a study of how students learn the English language. That is how the inadequacy of the syllabus of English affects the learners' proficiency as far as the English writing skill is concerned. The subjects chosen are the Second Form Arts students. This level is the second after choosing the Arts section in the second cycle of secondary schools in the Burundi educational system. The choice of this subject was motivated by the fact that the Second Form Arts students are particular for more than one good reason. They have the extreme need to perform well in the English language because they have already chosen the second Arts section and it is for them the second year. They need also to get enough techniques so that in the First Form

they are well equipped to tackle the National Exam which gives them access to university studies.

In this study, the Second Form Arts English teachers are also included because they know more about the design of the English syllabus provided by BEPES, and the problems that both teachers and students face in relation to the teaching/ learning process.

III.3. Data Collection Procedure

Three ways or procedure were used to collect the data namely questionnaires, classroom observations and students' written test.

III.3.1.Questionnaires

Questionnaires were one of the tools used to gather relevant data about the topic under study. They are convenient for collecting information from a large population within a short period of time. The respondents feel free to give frank answers to sensitive questions especially if they are not expected to giving their names.

As far as this study is concerned, the data were collected by using two questionnaires i.e. one designed for teachers and the other for students. Both questionnaires comprised close-ended and open-ended where the respondent could make choice and suggestions. This was done in order to get full information from our respondents. The two questionnaires were different but they were designed in such a way that they would contribute to a unique goal. They were used to check if the inadequacy of the syllabus is not one of the factors that handicap the effectiveness in writing skill.

The questionnaire which was designed to teachers comprised six questions which well both open-ended and close-ended questions. Here the teacher was asked to select one answer out of the two, three or four options and gives suggestions for open-ended questions.

The students' questionnaire comprised eight questions which were open-ended and close-ended where students were asked to make one choice out of two, three, four or five options of the close-ended questions and give suggestions for the open-ended

All in all, the two questionnaires were designed for the three main reasons. To begin with, they were designed for both teachers and students so as to know first, if the content of the syllabus of second form arts is appropriate to develop the writing skill. Second, how does the inadequacy of a syllabus hamper the teaching/ learning of the writing skill in English? Third, to see if they can give contribution to the Burundi educational system.

III.3.2. Students' Written Test

Another method that was used in the collection of the data was the written test which was administered to the students of the six selected classes. This is because our study is much more concerned with the teaching and learning of the writing skill. This was given to them in order to check if they had studied writing as a skill in the previous classes. To this end, the researcher assumed that the responses from both the teachers and students' questionnaires were not enough to give the data without confusion.

However, while testing, the researcher dealt with one topic: "in one page, tell me the difference between a paragraph and an essay". This topic was given to the students of second form in two classes of all the selected schools.

III.3.3. Classroom Observation

Classroom observations were made before distributing questionnaires and giving students 'written test. This procedure is necessary in any research concerning language teaching and learning. It is of paramount importance in the sense that it helps the researcher to be present in classes in order to be able to make a critical analysis on what is being done while teaching and learning in any language. In relation to this, Musabimana (2005:40) feels that "Teaching is a professional activity in which a researcher should be present, especially as the original class takes place"

In short, classroom observations helped me to get realities which could not be given by both teachers and students in the teaching activity of the language.

For the current study, I could notice that during my research, two lessons were observed in each school because of the lack of time in the teaching and learning of the writing skill.

III.4.Target population and samples

The target population involved in this present study were 126 second form students and their six teachers. The population included students and teachers of both sexes, that is, females and males. Note that the target population visited even before for the classroom observations.

In the sampling methods, the population has to be used to get information for the research. However, sometimes, resources available to the researcher cannot allow him/ her to examine the whole population to represent all the main traits (characteristics) of the whole population. This obliged me to decide on the number of teachers and the students to use in the research.

In fact, the table below indicates the distribution of secondary schools in the Bujumbura city. They are listed in a random way.

schools	Total number of students	Number of students investigated	Number of teachers investigated	Total of respondents
-Lycée Africain	38	24	1	25
-lycée municipal de Gikungu	40	23	1	24
-lycée du Lac Tanganyika	29	21	1	22
-Petit séminaire de Kanyosha	18	14	1	15
-lycée de la COMIBU Nyakabiga	36	25	1	26
- lycée Vugizo	32	19	1	20
Total	193	126	6	132

III.5. Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the section of methodology consists of showing how the data collected by means of three kinds of procedure, i.e. students' and teachers' questionnaires, classroom observations and students' written test were processed and analysed. The data collected by means of questionnaires were analysed by classifying the different answers given by our respondents into different groups according to the alternative answers and suggestions that were asked to them. The following step was to count for each type of answer the number of respondents who chose it and those who did not and then establish a percentage, which helped us to have an idea of the situation.

Classroom observations were needed in the sense that they helped us to check if they teach writing as a skill and the teaching materials that are at their disposal.

Another source of data was the analysis of students' written test which consists of analysing, not in terms of the marks mentioned on them but in terms of cases of the ungrammatical structures they contained, difficulties in expressing their ideas, and paragraphing etc.

III.6. Conclusion on Chapter III

This chapter is of paramount importance in the sense that it helped us to discover the realities in the teaching and learning process. It also helped us to make a contribution and to provide a general conclusion and recommendations about the topic itself. The following chapter shows how the data was collected and analysed.

CHAPTER IV: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

IV.0. Introduction

The present chapter aims at showing how the data collected was analysed. It also shows the extent to which the research hypotheses on which the current study is based have been proven right or wrong. Note that the research hypotheses about the inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of writing skill in English in second form Arts are as follows:

- The content of the syllabus of Second Form Arts is not appropriate to the development of the writing skill.
- The inadequacy of a syllabus hampers the teaching and learning of the writing skill.
- Something should be done as a contribution to improve on the English writing skill in Burundi English learners.

Besides, this chapter deals with the discussion and interpretation of the results from the three main procedures used in the course of the research. The data analysis is presented by means of figures or tables and the answers are reported in percentages. It is in this same chapter that I was keen at finding out the views of the stakeholders, namely the students and the teachers. In addition, I also attempted to find solutions to these problems faced in the teaching and learning activity. Note that, the three procedures used in gathering the information are the following:

- Analysis of data from both teachers' and students' questionnaires,
- Analysis of data from classroom observations,
- Analysis of data from students' written test.

The first section intends to present and discuss the results from both teachers' and students' questionnaires. The second section presents the results from

classroom observations. The third deals with a discussion of the results from the students' written test.

IV.1. Data Analysis and Presentation

This section aims at analyzing and presenting the data collected from the three procedures namely the teachers and students' questionnaires, the classroom observations and the students' written test so as to determine what can be done for a better way of teaching and learning English at large and the writing skill in particular.

IV.1.1. Data from Students' Questionnaire

In this section, I am going to present and interpret the different answers given by the second form Arts students in relation to the questionnaire given to them.

Question 1:

Do you study composition writing in your English course?

Yes ☐ No ☐

a. if" yes" what do you often write about?

- A letter to a friend ☐
- A request card ☐
- A poem ☐
- Other things (specify) .....

b. If "no " does it have an impact on your language ability?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Table 1: Presentation of Data for Question 1

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	91	72.2
No	35	27.8
Total	**126**	**100**

Among 126 students, 91 students i.e 72.2% said that they learn composition writing in the class. Others 35 students' i.e 27.8% said no. it is observed, then, that even if it is taught, it is neglected; it is not regularly taught.

To the same question many students wrote that they write letters to a friend. For those who said no they all argued that the fact that they do not learn composition writing obviously has an impact on their language ability.

Question 2:

Classify the four main language skills according to how many times you study them in the classroom (speaking, writing, listening, and reading)

1: .....

2: .....

3: .....

4: .....

Table 2: Presentation of Data for Question 2

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Reading	43	34
Speaking	39	31
Listening	34	27
writing	10	8
Total	**126**	**100**

From the above table, it is noticed that 43 out of 126 students, i.e. 34% acknowledged that reading is learned at the first position for them, while 39 out of 126 students i.e. 31% responded that speaking is learned at the first position. Other students i.e. 34 out of 126 (27%) responded that listening is learned at the first position whereas the remaining ones, i.e. 10 out of 126 students (8%) confirmed that writing is taught at the first position. In relation to the above results given by the students, we can say that writing is given the last place in the teaching /learning process in second form arts.

Question 3:

When did you start writing a composition in English?

a. lower secondary school ☐

b: upper secondary school ☐

Table 3: Presentation of Data for Question 3

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
lower secondary school	14	11.2
upper secondary school	112	88.8
Total	**126**	**100**

According to the results on the above table, 112 students (88.8%) responded that they started learning writing as a skill in the upper secondary schools; whereas 14 students (11.2%) said that they started in lower secondary schools. It is noticed then that the majority of the respondents started learning writing as a skill at the upper secondary schools. The students should start studying the writing techniques earlier in order to improve their proficiency.

Question 4:

How many composition exercises have you done this year?

a. less than ☐ b. more than five ☐ c. none ☐

Table 4 : Presentation of Data for Question 4

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
More than five	0	0
Less than five	101	80.1
None	25	19.9
Total	**126**	**100**

101 students i.e. 80.1% said that they have done less than five whereas 25 students i.e. 19.9% said that haven't done any composition exercise. I observe then, that they rarely do composition exercises. When students do not have many composition exercises, they cannot perform well in the writing skill.

Question 5:

Does your teacher give you notes and examine on the writing skill?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Table 5: Presentation of Data for Question 5

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	31	24.7
No	95	75.3
Total	**126**	**100**

From the above table, 95 students (75. 3%) out of 126 students said that the teacher neither give notes on the writing skill nor examine on them, while 31 out of 126 students (24. 7%). It is observed that the teachers of second form Arts do not give notes related to the writing skill and they also do not examine on it. For this question, the students cannot remember what the writing techniques are when they are not written in their English copybooks and they can even take them as granted.

Question 6:

When you are doing your writing composition;

a. is your teachers' guidance necessary? ☐

b. is it necessary to let you do it directly without the teachers' guidance? ☐

Table 6: Presentation of Data for Question 6

Answers	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Teachers' guidance necessary	119	94.4
Necessary to let student do it directly	7	5.6
Total	**126**	**100**

The results from the above table show that among 126 students, 119 students', that is, 94.4% said that the teachers' guidance are necessary for the better understanding of the writing skill while only 7 out of 126 students' that is, 5.6% said that the teachers' guidance are not necessary. Here we can deduce that it is necessary to give guidance to the students while teaching them writing composition.

Question 7:

Are the materials used, especially the syllabus, to study writing in English sufficient?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Table7: Presentation of Data for Question 7

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	4.8
No	120	95.2
Total	**126**	**100**

To this seventh question, students mainly said that the materials they use to study writing skill are not sufficient. The percentage is 95.2% that is, 120 students out of 126 whereas only 6 out of 126 students that is, 4.8% said the materials especially the syllabus is sufficient. In this case we can say that the materials they use in second form Arts are not sufficient

Question 8:

Would you propose any change concerning the syllabus used to study writing in English at secondary school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

If "yes" what do you propose?

Table 8: Presentation of Data for Question 8

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	114	90.4
No	12	9.6
Total	**126**	**100**

This question aims at knowing if the students want any change about the syllabus and if" yes" some contributions are expected from them. The results show that 90.4% that is, 114 out of 126 students said yes while 12 out of 126 said no. the proposals they made are many but we can summarize them as follows:

- Revise the syllabus and include some writing techniques.
- Give reading books that can help them to master writing.
- Give enough time to the writing in the syllabus like the other skills.
- Provide notes on the writing skill.
- Teachers should give as many writing exercises as they can.

Table 9: Summary of the students' answers to their questionnaire (in Frequency and Percentage)

Questions	Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1.Do you study composition writing in your English course	Yes	91	72.2
	no	35	27.8
2. Classify the four main language skills according to how many times you study them in the classroom (speaking, writing, listening, and reading)	reading	43	34
	Speaking	39	31
	Listening	34	27
	Writing	10	8
3. When did you start writing a composition in English?	Lower secondary school	14	11.2
	Upper secondary school	112	88.8
4. How many composition exercises have you done this year?	More than five	0	0
	Less than five	101	80.1
	none	25	19,9
5. Does your teacher give you notes and examine on the writing skill?	Yes	31	24.7
	No	95	75.3
6. When you are doing your composition writing,	Teachers' guidance is necessary	119	94.4
	It is necessary to let the student do it directly	7	5.6

7. Are the materials used, especially the syllabus, to study writing in English sufficient?	Yes	6	4.8
	no	120	95.2
8. a. Would you propose any change concerning the syllabus used to study writing in English at secondary school?	Yes	114	90.4
	no	12	9.6

IV.1.2. Data from Teachers' Questionnaire

As already said, teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire were formulated in different ways but they would contribute to a unique goal, that is, the inadequacy of the syllabus of English as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in Second Form Arts. The questions and answers from teachers' questionnaire are as follows:

Question 1:

a. Do you find Second Arts Form English programmes effective for teaching the writing skill?

Yes ☐ No ☐

b.if "no" what could you suggest to improve effectiveness in that field?

Table 1. Presentation of Answers for Question

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1	16.7
No	5	83.3
Total	**6**	**100**

The analysis of the results to this question shows that 5 out of 6 teachers (83.3%) responded that the English programme is not effective for the teaching of the writing skill in second form Arts while only one teacher (16.7%) found it effective. We can, consequently, say that the English programme is not effective.

The respondents suggested that in the syllabus they should include topics for composition.

Question 2:

* How do you go about teaching writing in your class?

1. I give the topic to the students and they work on it individually ☐
2. I first introduce the theory in class and give writing as reinforcement exercise ☐
3. I write a model composition with students in the class and ask them to do the same ☐
4. I follow the steps of the writing process: brainstorming-drafting-writing ☐

Table 2. Presentation of Answers for Question 2

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
I give the topic to the students and they work on it individually	4	66.6
I first introduce the theory in class and give writing as a reinforcement exercise	0	0
write a model composition with students in the class and ask them to do the same	2	33.4
I follow the steps of the writing process: brainstorming-drafting-writing	0	0
Total	**6**	**100**

My intention in this question was to know what methodology they use to teach writing. In the results, we realise that most of the teachers does not teach how to do the composition exercise that is, 4 out of 6 teachers (66.6%), but they give the topic to the students and they work on it individually whereas 2 teachers (33.4%) responded that they write a model composition with students in the class and ask them to do the same. For this, the fourth alternative is the best teaching methodology.

Question 3:

What do you think is the main cause of the low proficiency of the Burundi secondary school students in writing in English?

a. lack of the methodology by teachers ☐

b. lack of the material of the learning activity ☐

c. Inadequacy of the syllabus of the English writing ☐

Table 3. Presentation of Answers for Question 3

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of the methodology by teachers	1	16.7
Lack of the material of the learning activity	1	16.7
Inadequacy of the syllabus of the English writing	4	66.6
Total	**6**	**100**

The target of this question was to see what seems to be the main cause of the deficiency of the Burundi students in writing. From the above table, 4 teachers that is, 66.6% said that the inadequacy of the syllabus of the English writing is responsible. Others I mean 1teacher (16.7%) said that is the lack of the methodology of teachers and finally 1 teacher (16.7%) said that the lack of the material of the learning activity is responsible.

Question 4:

How many writing lessons do you teach per week?

a. more than two ☐ b. less than two ☐

c. two ☐ d. none ☐

Table 4. Presentation of Answers for Question 4

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
More than two	0	0
Less than two	5	83.3
Two	0	0
None	1	16.7
Total	**6**	**100**

From this question, five out of six teachers, that is, 83.3% responded that they teach less than two writing lessons per week and 1 teacher said that he does not teach any lesson per week. No one teaches more than two lessons per week. So, we can say that teachers of second form Arts do not teach many writing lesson per week.

Question 5:

1. How many writing chapters do you find in your teaching syllabus?

a. less than five ☐

b. more than five ☐

c. none ☐

2. Can you make any comment about it? (3 lines)

Table 5. Presentation of Answers for Question 5

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
less than five	6	100
more than five	0	0
none	0	0
Total	**6**	**100**

The aim of this question is to know how many writing chapters are in the syllabus of the English language in second form Arts. From the same question, we noticed that all the teachers said that they have less than five.

On point 2 about the comments, many teachers argued that the English programme provided by BEPES is too old; and that it should be revised so that all the four skills can have the same degree of importance. The current syllabus stresses on grammatical structure but it does not give place to communicative language

Question 6:

Do you find the textbook used in the teaching of English fits for the writing skill lessons?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Table 6: Presentation of Answers for Question 6

Answers	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	0	00
No	6	100
Total	**6**	**100**

To this question about the textbook used, all the teachers said that it does not fit.

Table 7: Summary of the teachers' questionnaire (in frequency and percentage)

Questions	Answers	Frequency	percentage
Do you find second Arts Form English programmes effective for teaching the writing skill?	Yes	1	16.7
	no	5	83.3
How do you go about teaching writing in your class?	I give the topic to the students and they work on it individually	4	66.6
	I first introduce the theory in class and give writing as a reinforcement exercise	0	0
	I write a model composition with students in the class and ask them to do the same	2	33,4
	I follow the steps of the writing process: brainstorming-drafting-writing	0	0
What do you think is the main course of the low proficiency of the Burundi secondary school students in writing in English?	lack of the methodology of teachers	1	16.7
	lack of the material of the learning activity	1	16.7
	inadequacy of the syllabus of the English writing	4	66.6
How many writing lessons do you teach per week?	more than two	0	0
	less than two	5	83.3
	two	0	
	none	1	16.7
How many writing chapters do you find in your teaching syllabus?	less than five	6	100
	more than five	0	0
	none	0	0
Do you find the textbooks used in the teaching of English, fit for writing skill lessons?	Yes	0	O
	No	6	100

IV.1.3. Data from Classroom Observations

In doing the research about the teaching and learning process, classroom observations are used to describe the phenomenon that might not have been captured by other procedures of data collection. As far as this study is concerned, classroom observations were done to check what was actually while teaching and learning the English language at large and the writing skill in particular.

During the classroom observations, we got firsthand the knowledge in relation to the information that might not be offered to me about some problems that both teachers and students face while teaching and learning the writing skill. The classroom observations that we did, we discovered that the teaching methodology was not good enough for the teaching and learning of the writing skill in particular, because students are not given enough writing exercises to check their abilities in the writing skill. We equally discovered that both the teachers and students a problem about learning materials like books related to the writing skill. We also looked in the students' copybooks and we did not find any note related to the writing skill.

IV.1.4. Data from Students' Written Test

This section deals with the analysis and the interpretation of students' scores from the written test in order to get a reliable conclusion for a better teaching / learning of the writing skill in the secondary schools precisely in second arts form.

In the data collected, we pointed out that 18 students took the written test. So, we collected all the answer sheets and marked them out of twenty (20) but the pass mark is ten (10). Concerning the nature of the test, students were asked to

write a composition on the following topic: "In one page, show the difference between a paragraph and an essay". Below is a summary of the scores obtained:

Students' scores.

Scores	Frequency	Percentage
0-4	7	39
5-9	8	44
10-14	3	17
15-20	0	0
Total	**18**	**100**

From the above results, we noticed that 17% of the students succeeded the in written test whereas 83% failed. Those who succeeded the test tried to give at least three differences. Among those who failed, there are some who wrote six or seven sentences, others wrote one paragraph with many grammatical errors. The other things which were analysed in this written test were the form and the content. I observed that apart from the techniques that should be used to write a composition, some students seem not to know what are really a paragraph and an essay. We also found out that students made morphological, vocabulary and spelling errors.

IV.2. Findings

This section deals with some of the factors make that the syllabus of second arts form to be ineffective to the learning of the writing skill and this enables us to find out their main causes.

IV.2.1. The writing skill is neglected

The answers from both teachers' and students' questionnaires showed that the writing skill is neglected. It was noticed that the writing skill occupied the last position in the teaching/ learning process. Commenting on the inadequate teaching of the writing skill, Mckey (1978:2) has this to say, "It has been observed that, of the four skills, writing is the most frequently neglected

During classroom observations, it was observed that the teachers put stress on vocabulary items and text comprehension. As far as the writing skill is concerned, the teachers should give more composition exercises but it is not the case that we found during classroom observations. They randomly write their answers and the teachers gave the right answers without any comment about how they should answer. It was so hard for the teacher to give more writing exercises because of the lack of time allocated to English in Secondary Schools in general. Note that they had the opportunity to give exercises to their students, but they did not have enough time to check and correct the students' errors and this, contributes to the students' failure in the learning process.

Despite the fact that writing is a complicated skill, some linguists have asserted that it is often neglected. In support of this view, White (1980:2) says that "It is taken to be an inferior form of language, a pale imitation of speech". Barbara (1990:12) also agrees with this view by arguing that "The skill was regarded as a secondary concern essentially as a reinforcement of oral habits", such an attitude has negatively affected the writing skill in our Burundi Secondary Schools. There is, therefore, a need to find ways of how the teaching/ learning of this same skill can be given the attention it deserves because it is a vital skill.

IV.2.2. Lack of good writing teaching methodology

This was researched on by analyzing answers given by teachers to questions concerning the way it is carried out. The students' questionnaire is also referred to whenever it is needed. Talking directly to people involved in the teaching/learning of the writing skill was judged to be the most appropriate way to know the truth. Later on, we should be able to know whether they use updated methods of writing, whether they are not aware of them, or whether they simply assign writing tasks and then wait for the final product. As Reid (1993:2) mentions, "product" is opposed to "process"

To be able to discover the different methods used by teachers when administering the writing activities, we ask them to point out the methods they often resort to in their syllabi or lesson plans in order to use them in class. If we take question 2 in the teachers' questionnaire asking how they teach writing; only the fourth alternative was considered to be an updated strategy or methodology because it suggested the use of writing process including brainstorming, drafting and writing. Unfortunately, it was not supported by any teacher. That is why any teacher who did not confirm to be familiar with the fourth method was believed to use in class, methods which have been referred to as traditional methods or old-fashioned. All those who are aware of the multi-process type of writing are assumed to represent those who rely on the writing methods belonging to what Scarcella and Oxford (1992:132) labeled "traditional methods" or "traditional approaches" to writing.

Nevertheless, today' theories such as student-based theory, the writing process theory, the tapestry approach; suggest that" the habit of focusing on product should be abandoned in writing" Reid (1993:1), Hairston in Reid (op. cit) talks about the "revolution in the teaching of writing" where the overall emphasis is put on PROCESS rather than on PRODUCT, that is, on finished texts.

Once the focus is put on the "process" we have the student who is put at the centre of the learning, and the learner is encouraged to concentrate on creativity.

We, thus, realized that most of the time, the main factor that negatively affects the teaching of the writing skill to non-native students is the lack of updated composition theories among teachers. The question 2 shows that no one of them makes use of those new theories. Some of the writing teachers in Second Form Arts are not aware of the existence of those theories, while others may find them much time consuming. All the teachers of the writing skill in Second Form Arts we investigated were graduates from Faculty or IPA of the University of Burundi but did not display any awareness about the theories and practices in the teaching of writing. Even in Burundi, only few teachers have got the chance to take part in any of the seminars organized by the Ministry of Education or the programme designers. Most teachers rely on the knowledge they might have got when they were still undergraduates at the University.

IV.2.3. Lack of Materials in General and Good Syllabus in Particular

From results of both students and teachers' questionnaires, it is noticed that there is a lack of suitable and sufficient teaching/ learning materials that are at the teachers and students' disposal. From question 3 in teachers' questionnaire asking what the main cause of the low proficiency, is said that the inadequacy of the syllabus occupied the first place. Answering the question about the materials used to study English, 95.2 % of teachers said that the materials are not sufficient. From the students' questionnaire, asking if students have enough course books and other teaching materials that deal with the writing skill, the answers show that there is a lack of teaching/ learning materials. This is also confirmed through our classroom observations. In fact, we noticed that the teaching / learning materials that are used in the teaching/ learning activities are

old-fashioned and are quite insufficient. We also observed that students make photocopies for their own interest. Note that the lack of teaching / learning materials is a handicap for an effective teaching/ learning process.

Pictures, real objects and magazines are the appropriate materials for writing lessons. From the data provided by both teachers and students, we noticed that those materials when there are related to a given topic, are helpful for communicative writing lessons. This idea of using materials is supported by Grant (1984:116) when he says "when writing exercises in the textbook are not relevant to the personal needs and interest of our students, we should replace them. Often authentic materials such as newspaper reports and advertisement can be used"

This means that teachers should not only rely on their course books. If a topic from their course books does not fit for the students' needs or levels, they should adapt or change it. And this is possible through the use of sources such as magazines and pictures.

Although those materials above are said to be helpful in the writing skill lessons, many teachers do not use them. In fact, the analysis of the results provided by teachers and students led us to say that those materials are not available and therefore, not used. For the question "Do you find the textbooks used in the teaching of English fit for writing skill lessons? There has been found the unfitness of the textbooks. The textbooks used in Second Form Arts are not appropriate for the writing skill. In fact, if we analyse the answers provided, we can say that course books used are not fit for writing lessons, they only focus on grammatical structures. The unfitness of textbooks is echoed also by Grant (1987:125) when he says "it is a sad fact that many textbooks do not really teach composition writing; they test the teacher; too often, very little guidance is given to the teacher on how best to approach writing in classroom.

Therefore, with regard to all those arguments provided above, we can say that the statement saying that" appropriate materials for teaching communicative writing are not used" proves to be right.

IV.3. Conclusion on chapter IV

This chapter traces the major findings and interpretations from students' and teachers' questionnaires with relations to the English writing syllabus in the Second Form Arts. The following chapter is the conclusion and recommendations of this study.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.0. Introduction

This chapter rounds off the study. It also proposes recommendations to those involved in education process.

V.I. General Conclusion

In the present work, entitled « Inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in English in Burundi secondary schools: The case of second form Arts in some selected schools in Bujumbura City" the main issue was to show how an inadequate syllabus can stand as a handicap to the development of the writing skill in second form arts. In fact, it was realised that the teachers heavily rely on traditional methods that consists of giving the exercise to the students, collecting the paper and marking them without any sample exercise that can facilitate the acquisition. The same methods rely on what is given by "all-knowing" teacher instead of involving the learner in the process of writing. The methods used do not promote fluency grammaticality and structural correctness is the focus of their methodology.

In addition, the above methods used to teach the students, the majority of the teachers answered that they rely on the syllabus that BEPES provided. The reliance on the syllabus negatively affects the students' performance because it was revealed that the syllabus used is traditional. We also realised that the structural syllabus is used in Burundi although it has served generations of teachers and students alike. However, it has shortcomings. The reliance on its form and the meaning are assumed to be learned with particular grammatical forms. We still not have accounted for the way in which it is used in an

utterance, and still less in an exchange of utterance between two or more speakers.

Moreover, our findings also revealed that the materials used to teach the writing skill are not sufficient and, they hinder the acquisition of the knowledge. The only one book called "TODAY'S ENGLISH" used is old-fashioned. There is a great need of materials. The teacher and the learners will need the appropriate book to develop their language skills. Also, in the writing skill, a plan is necessary in order to improve on it. Another thing that is very necessary is the teacher's help and guidance in the writing process.

This work comprises five chapters:
The first chapter, the introduction, deals with the background of the study, discussion for the study. The second chapter contains review of the literature related to the writing skill. The third chapter, which focuses on the methodology we used to collect and analyse the data. The fourth chapter analyses and presents the findings from the results. Finally, the fifth chapter rounds off the study, it proposes recommendations. Note that all this is done with the perspective of giving our contribution to the teaching of the writing in English in Burundi secondary schools.

In sum, we can say that there are many variables determining the writing performance. The syllabus is the one that we investigated mainly into. Apart from the syllabus, some others like the lack of material, good teaching methodology.

V.2. Recommendations

In this study, participants, that is, teachers and students were requested to suggest the ways in which the present situation can be improved. When suggestions from both teachers and students were put together, we were able to direct recommendations to teachers, students, course designers and future researchers.

The recommendations were suggested in order to improve on the writing skill:

A. To the students

1. Learners should do many written exercises, correction of each others' compositions and group compositions. This is mere advantageous to the students and to the teacher than when he is going to correct and mark students' composition.
2. Learners should more often practice writing skills than other skills. They have to find alternative sources of materials. They should be helped by the English Department to cater far all materials; they should be encouraged to exchange them and to read books from other subjects, areas, and libraries. Students will benefit from exposure to different language varieties.

B. To the English Teachers

1. The teachers should be aware of the fact that the writing skill is important and should present their tasks in all four skills systematically so that it can be easy for learners to write in the English language.

2. They should ask their students to write only one or two well-planned and carefully written paragraphs until they have acquired some skills in writing. While correcting, the teachers can cope with one or two paragraphs where

complete compositions would take up far too much of their time in the teaching/learning process.

3. The teachers should know that although their intervention may not always be necessary for improvement to occur, general prescription may be especially helpful for foreign language learning if it gives encouragement and suggestions and revisions but allows learners' flexibility and work with self-assessment

C. To the Course Designers

1. Programme designers should elaborate a detailed or clear teachers' guide. Theory about composition should be introduced. This is because, there is no theoretical background to how composition is taught because for the time being, it is up to the teachers to know how to carry out this activity depending on the extent to which he himself is skilled.

2. Course designers should elaborate materials containing a range of various writing activities. This can help a teacher to plan a lesson in such a way as to maintain students' motivation. The material should provide a sequence which is varied. One activity must not be allowed by a completely similar one. About materials, we know that designing them is not an easy task. Cunningsworth (1984:65-72) says that a fair adaptation of teaching materials would take into account these major elements:

- To base language/learning procedures on models of actual communicative processes
- To make the learning activity purposeful
- To meet learners' needs, both external and psychological.
- To use models of real and authentic language

3. Course designers should include the most beneficial and motivating activities for students. Communicative activities related to exchanging letters, writing

letters, writing games, telephoning, writing reports and advertisements, writing e-mails, reports, telexes, and telegrams could also contribute very much to reach great achievement in communicative language teaching.

D. To Future Researchers

To conclude, my recommendations are directed to future researchers. It would be useful for future researchers to carry out a similar study all over the Burundi territory, so that the findings could be more representative.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

University of Burundi
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Department of English Language and Literature

Dear Teacher and Students,

I am a research student at university of Burundi who is carrying out a research entitled **"Inadequate syllabus as an obstacle to the effective learning of the writing skill in English in Burundi secondary schools: The case of second form Arts in some selected schools in Bujumbura City"** Attached are questionnaires one designed for teachers and another for the students second form arts. It tends at investigating how the writing skill is learned. If these questions are answered objectively, it would deeply help me to complete my research.

I would therefore be extremely grateful if you could be honest and sincere in answering the questions.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours faithfully.

Freddy Mwiseneza

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS

A. General information

.School : .....

.Class you are teaching: .....

B. Answer the following by placing a tick (√) in the box provided with an option of your choice or by writing an answer in the space provided.

1. A. Do you find second Arts Form English programmes effective for teaching the writing skill?

Yes: ☐ No: ☐

b. if "no" what could you suggest to improve effectiveness in that field?

.....

.....

.....

2. How do you go about teaching writing in your class?

1. I give the topic to the students and they work on it individually ☐

2. I first introduce the theory in class and give writing as reinforcement ☐ exercise

3. I write a model composition with students in the class and ask them to do the same ☐

4. I follow the steps of the writing process: brainstorming-drafting-writing ☐

3. What do you think is the main cause of the low proficiency of the Burundi secondary school students in writing in English?

a. lack of the methodology by teachers ☐

b. lack of the material of the learning activity ☐

c. inadequacy of the syllabus of the English writing ☐

4. How many writing lessons do you teach per week?

a. more than two ☐

b. less than two ☐

c. two ☐

d. none ☐

5. 1. How many writing chapters do you find in your teaching syllabus?

a. less than five ☐

b. more than five ☐

c. none ☐

2. Can you make any comment about it?

.....

.....

.....

6. do you find the textbooks used in the teaching of the English fit the writing skill lessons?

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

A. General Information

. School:.....

. Level of education: .....

B. Answer the following either by placing a tick ( ) in the box provided with a open option of your choice or by writing an answer in the space provided

1 .Do you study composition writing in your English course:

Yes ☐ No ☐

a. if" yes" what do you often write about?

- A letter to a friend ☐
- A dedication to a radio programme ☐
- A poem ☐
- Other things specify .....

b. If "no "does it have an impact on your language ability?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. Classify the four main language skills according to how many times you study them in the classroom (speaking, writing, listening, and reading)

1: .....

2: .....

3: .....

4: .....

3. When did you start writing a composition in English?

a. lower secondary school ☐

b: upper secondary school ☐

4. How many composition exercise have you done this year?

a. less than five ☐

b. more than five ☐ c. none ☐

5. Does your teacher give you notes and examine on the writing skill?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐

6. When you are doing your composition writing:

a. is your teachers' guidance necessary? ☐

b. is it necessary to let you do it directly without it? ☐

7. Are the materials used, especially the syllabus, to study writing in English sufficient? ☐

8. Would you propose any change concerning the syllabus used to study writing in English at secondary school?

Yes: ☐

No: ☐

If "yes" what do you propose?

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX IV: WRITTEN TEST FOR STUDENTS

In one page, write the difference between a "paragraph" and an "essay".