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Challenges to the teaching and the learning of the english speaking skill in some selected basic schools in Bujumbura city : case of grade nine

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI



FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

CHALLENGES TO THE TEACHING AND THE LEARNING OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL IN SOME SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA CITY: CASE OF GRADE NINE

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "**Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises"**

Bujumbura, May 2018

DEDICATION

To the Almighty God;

To my wife and my son;

To my late parents;
To my brothers and sisters;
To all my friends;

I warmly dedicate this work

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The current work would not have been accomplished without the assistance of many people. To mention all names of persons who contributed to the completion

of this work would be practically impossible. However, there are few whose names deserve to be mentioned.

First and foremost, I owe my deepest gratitude to Mr. Bosco Harerimana, Supervisor of this work and Lecturer at the University of Burundi, in the Department of English Language and Literature, who accepted to supervise this work despite his many other obligations. His availability, constructive comments and guidance brought this thesis to its present shape.

I am greatly indebted to the staff of the Department of English Language and Literature for their help throughout my university studies.

I also address my gratitude to all my teachers from primary school to the university for the moral and intellectual education they provided to me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank all my relatives and friends who contributed to the accomplishment of this work in one way or another.

Jean Marie Ndihokubwayo

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ESL : English as a Second Language

L1 : First Language

L2 : Second Language

TV : Television

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ABSTRACT

This research aims at investigating the challenges to the teaching and learning of the English speaking skill. To collect data, a sample of one hundred and three learners and six teachers was chosen from six selected schools by the use of the simple random sampling technique. A students' and teachers' questionnaire and classroom observation were used as data collection instruments. Data were presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics through tables and content analysis. The findings show there are three main challenges to the teaching and learning of the speaking skill. Firstly, teachers do not use appropriate speaking methods/activities, that is, activities which give opportunities to their learners to practice their speaking fluency. This is mainly due to the great number of learners in the same classroom. Therefore, teachers find impossible to make all their learners practice the speaking because it is time consuming and so, they decide not to use such activities. Secondly, the learners' attitude towards the English language is not favorable to the learning of the speaking skill; the majority of learners are shy to converse with others because they are afraid of making mistakes and this hinders their speaking fluency. Finally, the learners' environment is not also favorable. After English classes, the majority of learners do not get any other opportunities to practice their speaking.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

All over the world, language is the main tool of communication for human beings. People use it to express their ideas, thoughts and feelings, to ask questions, etc. Human life is organized through the help of a language i.e. beyond immediate silent demonstrations. English is among the languages which are spoken by many people in the world. All the four skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing intervene while communicating. The speaking skill is considered as the most important one since it enables people to communicate with others who speak that language.

Burundi has been a French speaking country for several years due to its colonial background until when it was integrated in the East African Community, a community whose members are all English speaking countries. However, English is till now spoken by a tiny minority of Burundians. Many people speak Kirundi language. Even many intellectuals speak French. As far as Kiswahili is concerned, it is generally spoken by businessmen/women.

In order to overcome that barrier to communication in English for many Burundians, the English language is nowadays given more importance in the educational system of Burundi as compared to previous years. It has been officially introduced in the Burundi educational system from primary school whereas it was taught from sixth form some years ago. This shows that the government of Burundi is aware of the role that English plays not only in the educational domain, but also in other domains of life.

1.1. Background to the Problem

The English language has been introduced in the Burundi educational system in order to overcome the barriers of communication that exist between many Burundians and English speakers. This is of a paramount importance since Burundi has become a member of the East African community whose main working language is English.

Moreover, English has become the international language used in various domains of life. However, in many Burundian secondary schools, it is rare to get learners who can communicate fluently in English with other people. They usually hesitate while expressing their ideas and feelings.

Even though the speaking skill is judged to be difficult, it is a very important skill in the teaching or learning of English. Therefore, the teacher's role is not to inform the learners about the language, but to develop their abilities to use the language for a variety of communicative purposes even though this is not an easy task as it is supported by Brown and Yule (1983:25) who stipulate that:

> *Spoken language production, learning to talk in the foreign language, is often considered to be one of the most difficult aspects of language learning for the teacher to help with. The practical problems are obvious.*

This quotation stipulates that since teaching/learning the speaking skill is not an easy task, both teachers and learners of English have a major role to play in order to develop effective communication. As a matter of fact, these learners are handling a major tool of communication, and teachers of English are viewed as extremely important in this regard.

Therefore, teaching the prescribed courses must take into account the learners' need to gradually develop skills in this language. This can only be accomplished if English teachers are qualified and equipped with sufficient know-how in English. It is not done randomly since it recalls the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Not only have those skills been noticed, but also the sub-skills such as grammar, vocabulary, syntax, collocation and so on, are parts of English language.

Teaching English as a second or foreign language must have as the first step the mastery of the vocabulary sub-skill which is considered as the paramount factor in language learning.

During the learning process, teachers and learners encounter a large number of problems and the reason for such problems is due to many factors: the introversive

character learners, the lack of English speaking environment and a favorable atmosphere without forgetting the traditional mentality of considering a teacher as the only source of good information.

As far as the teaching of vocabulary as a means of improving the learners' oral fluency and vocabulary is concerned, it requires giving opportunities to learners in order to use the already learned vocabulary items in simple conversations of different contexts which are habitual to them. Teachers must give some activities to learners in which they practice the learned vocabulary, either in groups or in pairs. However, Burundian English teachers encounter different challenges which prevent them from teaching the speaking skill as accordingly as they should, for example by using speaking activities which give opportunities to learners to express their ideas. This state of affairs makes teachers feel they might use speaking activities to enhance students' oral fluency in English. In order help Burundian English learners to be able to communicate fluently in English, it is of great importance to know the challenges that both teachers and learners encounter during English speaking lessons and therefore suggest solutions.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The introduction of English in The Burundi educational system was done in order to train Burundians to be able to communicate effectively with other English speaking people. With joining the East African Community, English learning seems to have taken a growing importance. However, English language teaching process has always encountered different problems. Despite their learning of the speaking skill, learners do not speak English fluently when they are expressing their opinions and ideas. They lack appropriate vocabulary to use in their conversations. This might be consequent to the fact that teachers encounter some challenges in dealing with speaking activities while teaching/learning English. Consequently they do not involve their learners in activities which help them in practicing the learned vocabulary.

1.3. Research Questions

In the attempt to check the challenges to the teaching/learning of the speaking skill in basic school learners, the following questions will guide this research:

1. Do the teaching/learning methods used influence the development of learners' speaking skill?
2. Does the learners' attitude towards the English language have an effect on their speaking skill?
3. What is the role of the environment in the learners' speaking performance?

1.4. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses which follow represent a tentative response to the above questions:

1. The teaching/learning methods used influence the development of the learners' speaking skill.
2. The learners' attitude towards the English language has an effect on their speaking skill.
3. The learners' environment affect their speaking skill.

1.5. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the challenges that both teachers and learners of grade nine of the "basic schools" face while teaching/learning the English speaking skill. It also seeks to assess whether the learners' attitude towards the English language affects their speaking performance or not. In modern language teaching, teachers' aim is to make their students be able to communicate fluently either at school or outside. Finally, it intends to suggest some possible solutions to this problem.

1.6. Motivation of the Study

The choice of the topic under study was motivated by the fact that the English course has been taught in Burundian schools for many years. However, some learners cannot express their ideas fluently.

The researcher himself is a teacher and realize that most teachers face different challenges in teaching the speaking skill. There are also some students who show little interest in expressing themselves orally. In addition, the researcher has chosen to work on the speaking skill because the spoken language is needed in everyday communication. For example, if two people meet, they greet each other orally. At the market, the seller and the customer discuss the price orally. In short, as it is said, “to know a disease is half a cure”, this study was motivated by the idea that the main problems of oral fluency in secondary school learners should be solved.

1.7. Scope and Delimitation

The study was conducted in some basic schools located in Bujumbura city, especially in grades nine. The focus was put on the challenges that both teachers and learners encounter as far as the teaching and learning of the speaking skill in helping learners to develop their oral fluency is concerned. Therefore, as Bujumbura is the capital city of Burundi, it will provide the conditions under which the teachers and learners of other areas of the country work in.

1.8. Significance of the Study

This study seeks to contribute to the improvement of the teaching of the speaking skill in Burundi secondary schools. It will complete what has been done before by other researchers concerning the way in which the speaking skill is taught. It will be beneficial for both English teachers and students as they become conscious of the challenges that they encounter while teaching/learning the speaking skill especially when this consciousness comes from themselves. This study will also be meaningful for curriculum developers in the sense that they will know what to add or to omit so that English can be well taught and used for communication purposes in Burundi.

1.9. Structure of the Work

The present work comprises five chapters: The General Introduction, the Literature Review, Methodology, Data Presentation and Findings, and General Conclusion.

The first chapter entitled “General Introduction” gives an overview of the work by stating the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions and hypotheses, the motivation, the significance of the study and its scope and delimitation.

The second chapter is based on other writers’ ideas about the teaching of the speaking skill in the English language, the way the speaking skill is taught, the goal of teaching speaking, the activities used to teach speaking and the challenges to the learning of the speaking skill. Other writers’ views help the researcher to examine how the speaking skill is taught.

The third chapter, “Methodology”, is concerned with the methodology used to carry out the research. It describes the area of our study, the research population, the method used to select the sample and the instruments used to collect data.

The fourth chapter, “Data Presentation, Analysis and Findings”, is concerned with the essential part of this study, that is, the analysis of data collected through teachers’ as well as learners’ questionnaires and classroom observation. It is through this chapter that answers to the research questions are got.

The last chapter, “General Conclusion”, makes a summary of the findings and concludes with recommendations for further actions to deal with the challenges discussed in the study.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the review of what other studies have reached about teaching/learning English and particularly the speaking skill. Literature review will be concerned with the different works which were produced earlier and which are in one way or another related to this study. As it is already known, language is a useful tool to convey message among members of a given speech community. Most often, there are communities which use more than one language: the first language is the mother tongue of that community, the second language is in many cases used as an official language and the third one (s) is/are foreign language (s). As far as Burundi is concerned, Kirundi is the mother tongue and French is the official language. Nevertheless, English is becoming a more important language taking into account its uses either inside the country or abroad. It is used as a mother tongue in many countries and as a second language in many others as it is supported by Baugh and Thomas (1951:4) who claim that:

> '*English is the mother tongue of nations whose combined political influence, economic soundness, and scientific and cultural contributions to civilizations give impressive support to its numerical presence'*.

From the above quotation, it can be noticed that English is of crucial importance in the whole world and in all domains of life. During this era of communication and greater mobility, interest in English is paramount in the world in general and in Burundi in particular, especially today when it is a full member of the East African Community. It is then crucial to contribute to the way it should be taught in schools for the Burundian learners to be proficient users of the English language.

2.1. Speaking Skill

2.1.0. Introduction

Nowadays, learning English language to communicate is the central goal of many people all over the world. The reasons behind learning that language vary from one person to another. Learners have to acquire English skills to establish their abilities to receive and produce that language. As far as speaking is considered as fundamental skill in which it displays the proficiency of the target language, it is regarded as the major skill to be developed because it is necessary for displaying the language proficiency; learners are going to be put in situations where communication in English is needed, that is why the emphasis is mainly on speaking. Speaking is the more favorable skill by students than any other language skill. But in teaching speaking, learners are confronted with many obstacles which prevent them from communicating using this favorable skill.

2.1.1. Definition of Speaking

According to Sheils (1989:24), "*speaking is a form of communication, so it is important that what you say is conveyed in the most effective way. How you say something can be as important as what you say in getting meaning across*". Based on that opinion, speaking is realized as communication. Therefore, speakers are required to be able to express what they want to say as effectively as possible in order to convey the message. Speaking is a basic skill that language learners should master with the other language skills. It is defined as a complex process of sending and receiving messages through the use of verbal expressions, but it also involves nonverbal symbols such as gestures and facial expressions.

Hedge (2000:261) defines speaking as *"A skill by which people are judged while first impressions are being formed"*. That is to say speaking is an important skill which deserves more attention in both first and second language because it reflects people's thoughts and personalities.

Bygate (1987:5) defines that the term oral expression as involving *"making the correct choices when using language forms, following the right order, sounding in a way that is similar to that of native speakers, and producing the right meanings that can be understood by the listener."* For him, speaking is a skill that all people use when they are interacting among each other; therefore, speaking is regarded as the most important skill that learners require in order to be able to speak fluently in the classroom situation.

Chaney (1998:13) defines it as *"the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts"*.

Based on the definitions above, it can be synthesized that speaking is the process of using the urge of speech to pronounce vocal symbols in order to share the information, knowledge, idea, and opinion to the other person. Moreover, speaking cannot be dissociated from listening aspect, because speaking involves speaker and listener.

2.1.2. Characteristics of Good Speaker

Speaking a foreign language is not an easy task for many learners. The speakers' skills and competences have an impact on the success of any exchange. For that, there are some required features that determine the level of proficiency in speaking skill. Harmer (2001.b:407) suggests some characteristics of a good speaker:

2.1.2.1. Fluency

In simple words, according to Harmer (ibid:407) *«fluency is the ability to talk freely without too much stopping or hesitating"*. The good English speaker should be able to use English language fluently with no difficulties. He also states that *"fluent speakers can participate in any conversation with a high degree of fluency"*. He explains that their speech should be accepted and well understood by native speakers. Students who do not care about making mistakes/errors and who have an idea in their minds of what they want to communicate, and they say it with whatever words and language feel the most natural.

They make frequent mistakes, sometimes in every sentence; their grammar can be a mixture of English and their native language. They either do not know or do not care if they are making errors or mistakes these learners have high fluency, but low accuracy.

2.1.2.2. Accuracy

Nowadays; most second language teachers emphasized the term of accuracy in their teaching because learners seek more to be fluent and they forget about being accurate. Without structuring accurate speech, speakers will not be understood and their interlocutors will lose interest if they perform incorrect utterances each time.

The good English speakers should care about making errors or mistakes. They have to think about everything that they say carefully. A good English speaker is able to produce a well-controlled output. To master speaking skill, students should master grammar rules and structures.

2.1.2.3. Vocabulary Range

As the title suggests, it is the knowledge of a wide range of words and their meanings. He believes that good English speakers are able to speak the language with enough vocabulary to participate and contribute effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, cultural, and professional topics, which means they are able to overcome the issue of grouping for words, so they can speak in any topic with no obstacles.

2.1.2.4. Vocabulary Selection

This is another feature of good English speakers. Harmer describes it as the appropriate use of words according to the nature of the topic, the audience (participants), and the setting in which the discourse takes place, which means that speakers are capable enough to select the suitable words in the appropriate setting with the appropriate persons. Their speech is clear and unambiguous which reflects their competency when using the language.

2.1.3. The Importance of Speaking

In the traditional approaches of language learning and teaching, the speaking skill was neglected in many classrooms where the emphasis was mainly on reading and writing. The Grammar-Translation method is one example. Richards and Rodgers (2001:7) support this by mentioning that *"reading and writing are the essential skills to be focused on. However, little or no attention is paid to the skill of speaking and listening."* In the communicative approach, speaking was given more importance since oral communication involves speech where learners are expected to interact verbally with other people. Moreover, the teachers talk will be reduced; that is to say that learners are supported to talk more in the classroom. Penny (1996:120) stresses the importance of the speaking skill by stating that:

> *(…) of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important; people who know a language are referred to as 'speakers' of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing, and many if not most foreign languages learners are primarily interested in learning to speak.*

This quotation stresses, not only on the importance of the speaking skill, but also on the fact that it involves a vast knowledge of different aspects of a language. Moreover, speaking seems to be among the most difficult skills learners may possess since it requires both a great deal of practice and exposure.

Today, many second language learners give the speaking skill priority in their learning because if they master this skill then they will be considered as if they have mastered all of the other skills. Furthermore, the main question often given to foreign language learners is "do you speak English? Or "do you speak French?" but not "do you write English?" We understand that most of people take speaking and knowing a language as synonyms. Celce-Murcia (2001:103) argues that for most people *"The ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication".*

The importance of speaking is more revealed with the integration of the other language skills. For instance, speaking can help students to develop their vocabulary and grammar and then improving their writing skill. With speaking, learners can express their personal feelings, opinions or ideas; tell stories; inform or explain; request; converse and discuss, i.e. through speaking, we can display the different functions of language. Speaking is very important outside the classroom as well. Many companies and organizations look for people who speak English very well for the purpose of communicating with other people. So, speakers of foreign languages have more opportunities to get jobs in such companies.

2.1.4. Teaching Speaking

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

2.1.5. What is Teaching Speaking?

What is meant by teaching speaking according to Rivers (1968:23) is to teach English language learners to produce the English speech sounds and sounds patterns. In the same time to use words and sentence stress, intonation patterns and the rhythm of the second language. And to select appropriate words and sentence according to the proper social setting, audience, situation and subject matter. Also, teaching speaking is to organize their thoughts in a meaningful and logical sequence. According to Nunan (2003:34), teaching speaking means to use language as a means of expressing values and judgments and teaching speaking to use the language quickly and confidently with few unnatural pauses, which is called fluency.

It can be concluded that teaching speaking is the way for students to express their emotions, communicative needs, interact to other person in any situation, and

influence the others. For this reason, in teaching speaking skill it is necessary to have clear understanding involved in speech.

2.1.6. How to Teach Speaking

When teaching young learners we constantly have to keep in mind the fact that what we have in front of us is a mixed class with varied abilities, expectations, motivation level, knowledge and last but not least, different learning styles. Thus, we need to vary our approaches and offer as much opportunity as possible to make the whole class find a little something to hold on to, expand and grow (Thornbury, 2008:123).

Young learners are like sponges, they soak up everything we say and how we say it. Thus, clear and correct pronunciation is of vital importance, since young learners repeat exactly what they hear. One rule that applied here is slowly and steadily through constant revision and recycling. With the help of mixed activities, such as dialogues, chants, songs, poems and rhymes, students speaking abilities grow, their pronunciation gets better and their awareness of the language improves. When applying role-play techniques in classroom it may help the learner to develop their speaking skill and we have keep in mind that interaction and dissection is importance way in learning. Therefore, increased oral emphasis should be included in our teaching to give the students as much speaking time as possible (Thornbury, 2008:152)

Now, many linguists and English as second language teachers agree on that students learn to speak in the second language by "interacting". Communicative language teaching and collaborative learning serve best for this aim. Communicative language teaching is based on real-life situations that require communication. By using this method in English as a Second Language classes, students will have the opportunity of communicating with each other in the target language.

In brief, English Second Language teachers should create a classroom environment where students have real-life communication, authentic activities, and meaningful

tasks that promote oral language. This can occur when students collaborate in groups to achieve a goal or to complete a task

2.1.7. The Goal of Teaching Speaking

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. It means learners should be able to make themselves understood; using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

2.1.8. Activities Used to Teach Speaking

Teaching the speaking skill is not done randomly; a skilled teacher has to look for varied activities to teach that skill in order to make his/her learners practice the language. Harmer (2001: 117) proposes the following activities:

a) Information Gap Activity

This activity provides extensive talks among the learners. In information gap, the learners are given different information that the other students may not have. This gap cannot be completed only if the learners use the language. Every learner has an important role in this activity because it cannot be achieved unless all the participants give the piece of information they have. An information gap activity is one type of speaking activity where two speakers have different parts of information making up a whole because they have different information, and there is a gap between them. One famous information gap activity is called "describe and draw"; in this activity, one student has a picture which he or she must not show his or her partner. All of the partner has to do is draw the picture without looking to the original, so, the one who has the picture will give instructions and description, and the "artist" will ask the questions.

Describe and draw activity has many of the elements of an ideal speaking activity. It is used for motivating (if used only very occasionally), there is a real purpose for

the communication taking place (the information gap, completion of the task), and almost any language can be used. Teachers have to swap the students' roles around if the activity is used more than once, so that the describer becomes the drawer and vice versa.

Information gap activities can also be defined as filling the gaps in a schedule or timetable: partner A holds an airline timetable with some of the arrival and departure time missing. Partner B has the same table but with different blank spaces. The two partners are not permitted to see each other` timetable and must fill in the blanks by asking each other appropriate question (Doff: 1988:142). The features of language that are practiced would include questions beginning with "when" or "what time". Answers would be limited mostly to time expressions like at "8:15" or at ten in the evening.

b) Discussion activities

According to Oxford Dictionary (1990:26), discussion is defined as *"the action or process of talking about something in order to reach a decision or to exchange ideas"*. For instance; the committee acts as a forum for discussion on a given directive which is currently under discussion, or a conversation or debate about specific topics: discussion is a way of conversation that aims at finding a common decision or sharing thoughts. Harmer (2005:91) asserts that discussion can be held for various reasons. The students may aim at a conclusion, share ideas about an event, or find solutions in their discussion groups.

Discussion is an activity which is organized by certain procedures in classroom; teachers need to be aware that discussion activities are not randomly used and that they follow determined steps therefore before starting the discussion it is essential that the purpose of this activity is set by the teacher. The teacher also must know that the most important thing to remember is that learners need time to assemble their ideas before starting any discussion activity.

In this phase the discussion points are relevant to this purpose so that learners do not spend the rest of time speaking and chatting with each other about useless

things. Gavin, D. & Hockly, N. (2008:66) suggest some procedures that teacher should take into account while preparing discussion activities:

1. Prepare the student: give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it;

2. Offer choices: let student suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vocation, or news about mutual friend. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on student's linguistic competence.

3. Set a goal or outcome: this can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.

4. Use small groups instead of whole class discussion: large groups can make participation difficult.

5. Keep it short: give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes for discussion, and allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.

6. Allow students to participate in their own way: not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic: Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.

7. Do topical follow up: have students report to the class on the results of their discussion.

8. Do linguistic follow up: after the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

9. The student needs to be engaged with the topic.

They also give an example of how discussion activities would be carried out as follows:

> *An example of how discussion activities would be carried out as follows if students can become involved in agree/disagree discussions. In this type of discussion, the teacher can form groups of students, preferably 4 or 5 in each group, and provide controversial sentences like people learn best when they read vs. people learn best when they travel . Then each group works on their topic for a given time period, and presents their opinions to the class it is essential that the speaking should be equally divided among group members and at the end, the class decides on the winning group who defended the idea in the best way.*

c) Communication games

There are several kinds of games that learners enjoy in the classroom. Games give learners opportunities to use the language they are learning in non-threatening, enjoyable contexts. Teachers can adapt standard games like Bingo or make up their own simplified versions of games based on TV game shows like Jeopardy or The Price is Right Games like Bingo, Concentration, The Price is Right, or Go Fish are appropriate for literacy-and beginning-level classes including general ESL, family literacy, and workplace. Spelling bees may work with beginning or intermediate classes. Team competitions or most complicated games such as Jeopardy (where students are given answers and have to ask questions (can be appropriate at any level).

However, as with any instructional activity, students need to be told. The aim of this activity (for example, to practice asking "what", "when", "where", and "why" questions, or to practice the letters of the alphabet) (Brown: 2001: 171).

Otherwise, they may think the activity is not serious and may be hesitant to participate. It may take some time for students to learn the rules of the game. After a few practices, however, the games should take less time.

However, game should not be overused. For example, in an intensive class of 10-15 hours a week, learners might want to play Bingo or another game for an end of the week treat (that reinforces the week's new vocabulary) .In a non-intensive class of four hours a week, students might not want to give up their learning time to play a game. Items used in games can vary according to the game, but many can be homemade. Some ESL specific games are sold by educational companies, and the rules of some standard games can be adapted for Adult students learn to understand a variety of spoken (and written) instructions and how to make appropriate conversation in social groups, including asking for clarification and politely disagreeing .Specific goals such as learning numbers or new vocabulary are associated with particular games.

Procedure: Luckily, most students are familiar with game-playing and may know the same or similar games as the ones you introduce. The best way to introduce a game in hands-on. That is, demonstration is more effective than lengthy explanation.

Practice: Learners work in groups or pairs to play the game. There may some confusion and game rules may evolve, but as long as learners are participating, the activity is useful (Brown: 1994:174).

2.1.9. Types of Classroom Speaking Performance

Brown (2001:69) categories six types of oral production that students asked to act in classroom. These are the following:

a) Imitative Speaking

A very limited portion of classroom speaking time may legitimately be spent generating "human tape recorder" speech, where, for example, learners practice an intonation contour or try to pinpoint a certain vowel sound. Imitation of this kind is

carried out not for the purpose of meaningful interaction, but for focusing on some particular element of language form.

Example: Students listen to the teacher and repeat the pronunciation of English words and expressions.

Imitative speaking is the ability to parrot back or repeat the other's speech as a word, phrase or a sentence. This kind of repetition may include different properties of language as grammar and lexis in order to convey a meaning or even to interact in a conversation, by paying attention to pronunciation as an attempt to help learners to be more comprehensible (Brown;2004:141).

b) Intensive Speaking

Intensive speaking goes one step beyond imitative to include any speaking performance which is designed to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language. Intensive speaking can be self- initiated or it can even form part of some pair activity, where learners are ''going over'' and use certain forms of language through controlled speech production. Brown (2004:141) stated that *"Intensive speaking is defined as the production of short stretches of a discourse through which they demonstrate competence in a narrow band of grammatical relationships such as intonation, stress and rhythm; here the speaker must be aware of the semantic properties in order to be able to respond"*. This type of speaking also includes some assessment tasks like reading aloud, sentences and dialogue completion, and so on.

c) Responsive Speaking

A good deal of student speech in the classroom is responsive. Responsive speaking involves short replies to teacher or student- initiated questions or comments. These replies are usually sufficient and do not extend to dialogues. Speech production can be meaningful and authentic. This type of speaking includes brief interactions like short conversations, small talk and simple requests in order to preserve authenticity with only one or two following up questions or retorts as it is shown by Brown (2004:142) in the following short conversation**:**

Teacher: How are you?

Student: Pretty good, thanks, and you?

d) Interactive Speaking

Interactive speaking differs from responsive speaking in terms of length and complexity of interaction, this type involves two forms of languages; transactional language and interpersonal language. The former is aimed at exchanging specific information whereas the latter has the purpose of maintaining social relationships. In this form of language (interpersonal), oral production can become more complex with the use of colloquial language, ellipsis, slang and so on. Interactive speaking includes some assessment tasks such as interviews, role play and discussion activities ". (Brown; 2004:142).

e) Transactional language

Transactional language is an extended form of responsive language which is carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information.

Example:

Teacher: What is the main idea in this essay?

Student: The United Nations should have more authority.

Teacher: More authority than what?

Student: Than it does right now…

f) Interpersonal Language

Interpersonal language carried out more for the purpose of maintaining social relationships than for the transmission of facts and information.

Example:

Amy: Hi, Bob, how’s it going?

Bob: Oh, so-so

Amy: Not a great weekend, huh?

Bob: Well, far be it from me to criticize, but I'm pretty miffed about last week…

g) Extensive Speaking

The final type of speaking that was stated by Brown (2004:142) is the extensive one. Usually occurs when students at intermediate to advanced levels are called on to give extended monologue in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps short speeches. For him, extensive speaking or monologue includes speeches, oral presentation and story-telling, but the language style that is used in this type of speaking is more deliberative and formal for extensive tasks, because we cannot rule out some informal monologues like a casually delivered speech and so on.

Each category above can be implemented based on the students' level and students' ability. Here are the summary purpose of each element: imitative for focusing on some particular element of language form, intensive to practice some phonological or grammatical aspect of language, responsive can stimulate students' in speaking, transactional to invite students to engage in a conversation, interpersonal to learn how such features as the relationship in the conversation, and the last one, extensive is to practice in the form of oral reports, summaries, or perhaps in short speeches.

2.1.10. Challenges to the Learning of the Speaking Skill

Learning how to speak seems to be the most difficult task for second language learners. Brown (2001:54) suggests there are three different factors contributing in making speaking difficult.

These are: cognitive, social, and psychological factors.

2.1.10.1. Cognitive Factors

a) Clustering

Clustering enables students to organize their output physically and cognitively.

According to Brown, fluent speech is "phrasal" not "word by word".

b) Performance Variables

Spoken English has special problems such as, contractions, elisions, reduced vowels, etc…which may have an influence on students who have been studying the "full forms" of the language.

c) Reduced Forms

In spoken language, the process of thinking as you speak permits you to create a number of performance hesitation, pauses and corrections. Teachers have to help their students to think at the same time of performance (using uh, um, well, like… etc).

d) Colloquial Language

Teachers have to help their students to get practice in producing forms of colloquial language (such as, idioms, slang, cultural knowledge) because it is hard for students to use it by themselves.

e) Stress, Rhythm, and Intonation

All these are the most important characteristics of English pronunciation that lead to convey messages.

f) Interaction

Learning to produce a language robs speaking skill of its richest component the creativity of conversational negotiation (giving feedback, asking for explanation).

2.1.10.2. Social Factor

Benati (2009:125) states that according to behaviorism view, learners' errors in second language is due to interference (it is similar to the term negative transfer). He added that interference happens when old habits presented to stop learning of new ones.

L1 Transfer

It refers to the influence that the learner's first language (L1) exerts over the acquisition of a second language (L2). This influence has often referred to negative transfer which means that learner's L1 is one of the sources of errors in learning target language. Avoidance is one of L1 transfer consequences which reflect that the foreign learners avoid using structure of target language which it does not exist in their mother tongue. L1 transfer also result in overuse. This means that learners overuse some expressions of target language in accordance with the norms of their mother tongue.

2.1.10.3. Psychological Factors

Rivers (1968: 111) states two main psychological problems of speaking between the learners. They are:

a) Lack of Interest in the Subject

The silent student reflects that he has nothing to say because teacher may select unpleasant subject for him or subject that he knows a little. This maybe because the teacher has chosen a topic about which students know very little. Moreover, the common expiration second language learners use when they are imposed to participate in a given topic is "I have nothing to talk about", "I don't know", "no comment" or they keep silent. These expressions are due to the lack of motivation in expressing themselves or the chosen topic they should discuss or talk about.

Rivers (1968:192) says that: *"the teacher may have chosen a topic which is uncongenial to him (the learner) or about which he knows very little, and as a result he has nothing to express, whether in the native language or the foreign language"*. Backer and Westrup (2003:147) support that many students find it difficult to answer when teachers ask them to say anything in the Target Language. The learners may have only some ideas to talk about; they may not know to use

some vocabulary or they are not sure of the grammatical correctness. Also, students could not carry out the discussion on topics that are not interesting for them. As a result, he cannot speak or express in English. When the student has something to express, he should have the will to share his opinion with his teacher and classmates. Sometimes, a student feels that what he is going to say is not interesting for the other because he does not have a good relation with the topic. So, he prefer to remain silent.

b) Lack of Confidence and Fear of Making Mistakes

There are many reasons that make some students hesitate and do not participate in classroom discussion. They may be afraid of making mistakes while expressing their opinions. They think that when they start speaking, their teacher corrects every slip they make. So, they prefer to play role of listener. Correcting students' mistakes must be done, but when student is intended to speak, teacher should note the most common mistakes of grammar and pronunciation and wait until student finish his speaking, and then he makes the correction for the whole class. The teacher must motivate his students to speak by offering them a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.

This view is supported also by Bowman et al (1989:135) who argue that in teaching speaking you are asking your learners to express themselves in front of the whole class, so this leads many of them to experience the stress when doing speaking activities.

To end, stress and anxiety are two factors that also can stop the students from speaking confidently in front of their classmates. As result, student will feel at ease to participate.

2.2. Students and the Speaking Skill

The good class atmosphere and suitable topic and task make students who have appropriate English level interact with each other freely. In contrast, incorrect choice of topic and the selection of difficult tasks lead to problem that often occurs which is reluctance of some students to speak and participate. Here, the role of teacher is vital.

2.2.1. Reluctant learners

Students may face problems such as, shyness especially when they are asked to express opinions and personal information and worry about speaking badly in front of their classmates. These problems lead to reluctant to speak. Howarth (2001:78) suggests some solutions that can be helpful:

- **Preparation**

If teacher gives chance to students to think about what they are going to say and how to say it, the performance will be much better.

- **The Value of Repetition**

Repetition has many beneficial effects. It helps to fix words and phrases in student's memory. Furthermore, it aids students to improve what they did before. Howarth (2001:97) describes repetition as" process speaking" characterized by the pattern:

Plan ⇨ **perform** ⇨ **analyze** ⇨ **repeat**

2. 2.2. Roles of the Teacher during Speaking Activities

During speaking activities, a teacher needs to play number of different roles. Harmer (2001:275-276) suggests three roles if the teacher is trying to get students to speak fluently:

2.2.2.1. Prompter

The teacher should help his/her students when they get lost, or cannot think of what to say next or in some other way lose the fluency the teacher expects of them. Sometimes, the best option teacher can do is to leave the students to struggle out

on their own. However, the teacher may offer discrete suggestions to help the students. This will avoid students' sense of frustration when they finish their ideas.

2.2.2.2. Participant

Teachers can participate in discussions or role-plays themselves to prompt covertly, introduce new information this will help the activity along, ensure continuing student engagement, and maintain a creative atmosphere. But there are some situations where teachers have to be careful and do not participate too much because when they dominate the speaking, they focus all the attention to themselves.

2.2.2.3. Feedback provider

Teachers should be aware of when and how to give feedback in speaking activities because over-correction may inhibit students and take the communicativeness out of the activity. On the other hand, positively and encouragingly correction may get students out of difficult misunderstanding.

Everything depends upon teacher tact and the appropriateness of the feedback provided. As Harmer (2001:124) says *"When students finish their activity, teacher should correct what they have done and tell them about what went well; in response to the content of the activity as well as the language used"*.

In summary, when a teacher a prompter, a participant, even a feedback provider, they have to be careful that they do not force students, do not participate too much, and do over correction.

Conclusion

This chapter attempted to shed some light on the speaking skill. What have been said on the speaking skill might seem recurrent to the teacher, but it helps learners speaking the foreign language and makes them reduce their fear and shyness feeling in speaking. As a productive skill, speaking is key to communication, it is a very important process that helps to evaluate learners' proficiency in the target language. It should be one of the basic curriculum designs of second or foreign language teaching, in addition to other skills. Learning to speak entails learner's engagement in communicative situation so that they will activate their speaking capacity.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter deals with data collection and analysis procedures. For any scientific research to be reliable there must be a method that the researcher uses to collect data in order to reach the research objectives. This chapter therefore describes the area of study, the population concerned, the sampling methods and the instruments used while collecting data. Finally, it describes how the collected data were analyzed.

3.1. Area of Study

As it has been mentioned in the first chapter, this study was conducted in some Bujumbura city basic schools, especially in grade nine. Bujumbura city is the biggest city in Burundi and shelters many schools. It has three communes which are Muha in the south, Mukaza in the center and Ntahangwa in the North. So, the study could not be conducted on all the schools of that city; it was limited to two schools per commune and therefore, it was conducted on six schools in the whole city.

3.2. Research Population

According to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1986:27), population is "a group of individual persons, objects or items from which a sample is taken for measurement statistically". In other words, the target population is the group that the researcher is interested in, the group about which the researcher wishes to draw a conclusion.

As the study deals with the teaching of the speaking skill, we have been interested in grades nine of basic schools because learners of this grade have been studying English for some years and are supposed to be accustomed to English. Learners are expected to have knowledge about some basic elements of English that can enable them to interact orally. Since learning and teaching go together, we cannot talk about learners without teachers. Therefore, the research population includes teachers, too.

Table 1: Presentation of the population

Schools	Number of learners	Number of teachers
1. Stella Matutina Basic School	40	1
2. Nyakabiga Basic School	49	1
3. Kibenga Basic School	48	1
4. Kinanira Basic School	54	1
5. Ngagara Basic School	52	1
6. Kamenge Basic School	64	1
Total	309	6

As seen through the above table, the population is made up of 41 learners and 1 English teacher at Stella Matutina basic school, 50 learners and 1 English teacher at Nyakabiga basic school, 48 learners and 1 English teacher at Kibenga basic school, 54 learners and 1 English teacher at Kinanira basic school, 52 learners and 1 English teacher at Ngagara basic school, and 64 learners and 1 English teacher at Kamenge basic school.

3.3. Sampling Methods

Richtering and Chancered (1977: 37) define sampling as *"a technique estimating certain features of a population using a representative sample or a restricted number of subjects"*. In this research, a simple random sampling method which consists of selecting randomly the population used in the research was used.

Since there are many basic schools in Bujumbura city, it was impossible to visit all of them; just a sample of six schools mentioned in the table above was chosen. At each of the three schools, a sample of one third of learners was chosen to be distributed questionnaires and observed. One may wonder if the sample (either the six schools or one third of the learners per school) is sufficient for this study to be reliable. To shed light on this, Karikunzira (1981:54) says that:

> *En fait, en supposant que le hasard seul ait décidé du choix des sujets, un échantillon de 500 éléments donnera des résultats aussi précis pour une étude qui engloberait la population des Etats Unis que pour une enquête qui ne porterait que sur une ville.*
>
> *In fact, supposing that only chance has decided the choice of subjects, a sample of 500 individuals will yield the results which are as precise for a study carried out on all the United States' population as for a survey which would be carried out on one town. (Trans; mine)*

From Karikunzira's conviction, there is a hope that the data which were provided by the learners from the three selected schools are reliable. What is important is that the choice of informants was made objectively.

As it has been said that simple random sampling has been used in determining the sample of this study, the following strategy was consequently used in selecting both schools and respondents: in each class, we wrote learners' numbers and schools' names per commune on small pieces of paper. Afterwards, we put them in a box and mixed them.

Finally, we chose randomly one third of the total number of learners and two schools per commune. As far as the selection of teachers is concerned, all the teachers of the concerned grade in the schools selected were selected. Thanks to the above strategy, we obtained the sample presented in the following table.

Table 2: Presentation of the Sample

Schools	Learners		Sampled teachers
	Population	**Sample**	
7. Stella Matutina Basic School	41	14	1
8. Nyakabiga Basic School	50	17	1
9. Kibenga Basic School	48	16	1
10. Kinanira Basic School	54	18	1
11. Ngagara Basic School	52	17	1
12. Kamenge Basic School	64	21	1
Total	**309**	**103**	**6**

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

In collecting data from grades nine of the selected schools, two instruments were used: classroom observation and learners' and teachers' questionnaires.

3.4.1. Learners' Questionnaire

As mentioned previously, one third of learners per school were randomly selected and then given each a copy of the learners' questionnaire to answer.

3.4.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire was also used to seek information about the role play lessons and the problems they encounter while using this technique. Three teachers were then given each a copy of teachers' questionnaire to answer.

3.4.3. Classroom Observation

To test the relevance of the data from the written questionnaire, classroom observation was also used. In sport they say that a spectator sees most of the game. The observation was based on some criteria: firstly, the teaching/learning methods or activities and how much the teacher emphasizes on the speaking skill. Secondly, the learners' interest in the English speaking learning, i.e., how the learners behave during speaking lessons: whether they are bored or not, or whether they all attend the speaking lessons. Finally, the researcher observed if the environment is favorable to the learning of the speaking skill.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedures

After data collection, these data were then analyzed systematically. The discussion of findings was based on three themes which are the appropriateness of methods in teaching the speaking skill, the learners' attitude towards the English language and the role of the environment in the development of learners' speaking performance.

To sum up, this chapter is concerned with the different procedures and techniques used to carry out the research. It describes the area of the study, the research population, the method used to select the sample and the instruments used to collect data. To collect data, a students' and teachers' questionnaire were used. Data will be presented and analyzed using descriptive statistics through tables and content analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4. 0. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of the data collected by using different techniques mentioned in the preceding chapter. Those techniques are questionnaires designed for both the English teachers and learners in schools where this research was conducted. Tables have been used in order to clearly present the data. The next step is the interpretation of data and then the conclusion.

4.1. Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1.1. Presentation of the Data from Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was based on the teaching and learning activities and materials, and the learners' attitude during English speaking lessons. All the selected schools were visited twice during English speaking lessons. Concerning the teaching and learning activities, it was observed that only two of the six visited schools, that is, Stella Matutina and Kibenga basic schools sometimes involve their learners in role plays. At other schools, they just ask their learners to tell the meaning of new words and make meaningful sentences with them. As far as the teaching and learning materials are concerned, the only material at the disposal of the learners are their books. For the case of the learners' attitude during English speaking lessons, it has been observed that at all the visited schools, the majority of the learners are shy. Only few learners feel free to talk when they are asked to. Even if their teachers ask them to utter meaningful sentences using the vocabulary items given to them, many of them do not want to speak, they are afraid of making mistakes.

4.1.2. Presentation of Data from Learners' Questionnaires

1. Do you learn English speaking at school?

a) Yes, we do ☐

b) No, we don't ☐

Table 3: Inquiry on the Learning of English speaking

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	103	100
No	0	0
Total	103	100

This question was asked in order to be informed if learners learn the speaking skill. All the respondents (one hundred and three) answered that they do. This therefore asserts that the speaking skill is taught in ninth grades of Burundi schools. What remains is to know how they learn it in order to check if the way they learn it contributes to the improvement of vocabulary.

2. How do you feel when you are learning speaking?

Table 4: Learners' moods during speaking lessons

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Very interested	68	66
Interested	31	30
Not interested	4	4
Total	103	100

Through this table, one can realize that learners can be grouped in three categories based on their points of view about the way they feel during speaking lessons: the first category of sixty-eight learners (63%) is that which feels very interested, the

second one which is made of thirty-one learners (30%) is that which feels interested, and the last one which is made of four learners (4%) is that which feels uninterested. From this table, one can notice that learners are motivated during speaking lessons even though there are very few of them who feel uninterested.

3. Which of the following can help you to better learn speaking in your class?

Table 5: Learners' suggestions about the best activities to learn speaking

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
By memorizing	8	7.8
By explaining	0	0
By role-playing	75	72.8
By role-playing and memorizing	20	19.4
Total	103	100

By asking this question, the researcher wanted to know which activity can help learners to better learn speaking. Seventy-five of the respondents (72.8%) would like to be taught speaking by role-playing. This shows that learners think that practice makes perfect. They think that to be fluent, one has to practice in some activities which give them an opportunity to speak with their peers. There is another category of twenty learners (19.4%) which would like to have memorized the vocabulary items to use while playing roles. However, there is also another category of eight learners (7.8%) which would like to learn speaking by memorizing only.

4. Which activities do you think your teacher could invite you to do in order to develop your speaking fluency?

Table 6: Learners' activities during speaking lessons

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Poems	11	10.8
Topics for discussion	0	0
Playing roles	71	69
Songs	21	20.2

Total	103	100

To this question, learners answered in three different ways as they did on the previous question; only eleven learners (10.8%) would prefer to use poems to develop their speaking fluency. As far as topics for discussions are concerned, no one of the learners prefers to use it. It is the role play activities that the majority of the learners would like to use in reinforcing their speaking fluency. From this table, one can therefore realize that some learners would like methods by which they practice while developing speaking fluency.

5. How would you feel if you were asked to make a conversation with your classmates in front of the class?

Table 7: Learners' feelings while conversing with others in front of the class

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Self-confident	8	7.8
Shy	65	63.1
Motivated to use English	9	8.7
Happy	21	20.4
Worried	0	0
Total	103	100

Looking at the answers provided on this question, it is clear that they are different, but the majority of the respondents tend to feeling shy during speaking lessons. Only eight learners (7.8%) feel self-confident, twenty-one others (20.4%) feel happy and sixty-five others (63.1%) feel shy while speaking English. However, there are nine of them who answer that they would feel motivated to use English. This is also normal because when a learner is asked to make a conversation with others in class for the first time, he/she must be shy, but the more he/she practices, the more he/she becomes accustomed and free to express himself/herself. In short, the above table shows that many learners are eager to practice speaking with their classmates in class.

6. How often does your teacher give you the opportunity to speak in English classes?

Table 8: The frequency of English speaking opportunities during English classes

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Always	0	0
Often	11	10.7
Sometimes	45	43.7
Rarely	40	38.8
Never	7	6.8
Total	103	100

This question was asked in order to know how often learners get an opportunity to speak in class. It is of a paramount importance because learners cannot improve their speaking fluency if they do not get enough speaking practice either in classroom or outside. Eleven of the respondents (10.7%) assert that they often get such opportunities, forty-five respondents (43.7%) say that they sometimes, forty of them say that they rarely, and seven of them say that they never. The table therefore shows that the majority of the learners do not get enough opportunities to practice speaking, and one may conclude that it is one of the causes of the problems of oral expression in English for many learners.

7. Do you think the time used by the teacher to teach you English oral expression is sufficient for you to be proficient in English?

Table 9: Learners' perceptions on the sufficiency of oral expression lessons to reinforce proficiency in English.

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes, I do	43	41.7
No, I don't	55	53.4

I have no idea	5	4.9
Total	103	100

This question was asked in order to know the frequency of English speaking lessons because a learner develops a given skill if he/she gets as many times as possible to practice it. Here, only forty-three learners (41.7%) affirm that the time given by the teacher is sufficient, fifty-five of them say that it is not sufficient, and five of them say that they do not have any idea. From the table above, one can conclude that the majority of the questioned learners do not get enough oral expression lessons in order to improve their proficiency in English.

8. Do you get other opportunities to practice your English speaking after English classes?

Table 10: Learners' other English speaking opportunities outside the classroom.

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes, I do	21	20.4
No, I don't	82	79.6
I have no idea	0	0
Total	103	100

The above question was asked in order to know whether learners get other opportunities to practice speaking apart from in class, that is, during break time, at home or in clubs. The results are disappointing because eighty-two of the respondents (79.6%) say that they do not. Only twenty-one of them (20.4%) get such opportunities. This also asserts the reason why learners do not improve their speaking fluency. The environment in which they live is not favorable to the learning of the speaking skill.

9. What do you think are the challenges to your learning of the English speaking skill?

To this question, learners' answers are grouped in three main categories and are provided below:

1. Unfavorable speaking environment: the majority of the learners assert that except during English classes, they do not get any other opportunity to practice speaking. Even during break time, many learners do not want to converse in English and even some who try are sometimes laughed at by their peers. Even at home, it is the same case; they do not get other people to converse with. This therefore hinders the improvement of their speaking fluency.

2. Inappropriate techniques in teaching the speaking skill: Some questioned learners attest that their teachers do not give them enough opportunities to practice speaking. There are even others who say that they never have oral expression lessons. This is most often due to the fact that many classrooms are crowded, that is, there is a great number of learners.

3. Lack of appropriate teaching resources and materials: The respondents assert that they lack the resources and materials to rely on in order to better learn the speaking skill; they consider their teachers as their only guide in improving their speaking skill. This also hinders the improvement of that skill in the sense that since it is known that the majority of classrooms are crowded, teachers are not able to make all learners practice; he/she should just be a guide who can indicate his/her learners which materials or resources to use in improving their English speaking fluency.

10. What do you think should be done in order to improve your English speaking fluency?

Like on the previous question, answers provided by the respondents are based on the challenges that they encounter while learning the speaking skill.

1. Concerning the lack of favorable speaking environment, learners suggest that some measures should be taken, especially at school, so that learners use English only during break time or other free times.

2. For the use of inappropriate techniques in teaching the speaking skill, they suggest that teachers should give them as many opportunities as possible so that they practice speaking. They also suggest that the number of learners in classrooms

should be reduced because when class has a great number of learners, there are few chances for learners to practice speaking.

3. As far as the lack of teaching resources and materials are concerned, they suggest that their headmasters should provide their schools with enough and appropriate teaching materials and resources.

4.1.3. Presentation of Data from Teachers' Questionnaire

The researcher administered copies of this questionnaire to 6 teachers, that is, all the English teachers of the six selected classes at six schools. All the copies given were handed back. The teachers' questionnaire was presented question by question. Some of the teachers' questions are similar to the learners' because there was a need to compare their views about their perceptions on the challenges to the teaching and learning of the speaking skill.

1. How do you feel when you are teaching the English speaking skill?

Table 11: Teachers' feelings while teaching the English speaking skill.

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Very interested	4	66.7
Interested	2	33.3
Not interested	0	0
Total	6	100

By asking this question, the intention was to check if teachers are interested or not while teaching the English speaking skill. Four of them (66.7%) answered that they would feel very interested while two (33.3%) replied that they would feel interested. This asserts that all the questioned teachers consider that teaching the speaking skill to learners is very vital. They were therefore asked to explain why they feel so. All of them converged on the same view: it is because speaking lessons give opportunities to learners to practice what they learn in English. It is also because they can easily notice their learners' progress.

2. How do you think your learners feel when you try to help them improve their English speaking fluency?

Table 12: Teachers' perceptions on the learners' feelings while helping them to improve English speaking fluency

Answer	Frequency	%
Interested	2	33.4
Not interested	0	0
Shy	4	66.7
Total	6	100

The question above was asked in order to inquire from teachers how learners feel while learning English fluency. As the above table indicates, all the six questioned teachers do not have the same view: two of them (33.4%) attest that learners feel interested whereas four of them (66.7%) attest that they feel shy. No one says that they do not feel interested. This shows that learners, even though they are eager to know to speak English fluently, they are still shy, maybe because they are afraid of making mistakes in front of others.

3. According to you, how often do you think the speaking skill should be taught per week?

Table 13: Teachers' perceptions on the frequency of speaking skill lessons per week.

Answer	Frequency	%
Once	0	0
Twice	4	66.5
Three times	2	33.5
Four times	0	0
Total	6	100

The intention of this question was to know the teachers' suggestions about the frequency of speaking skill lessons per week. Four of them (66.7%) suggest two times a week and two others (33.3%) suggest three times. One may wonder that

they suggest few times, but the English language is taught in four skills: the speaking, the writing, the reading and the listening skills. So, if much time is given to the speaking skill only, other skills will not get enough time to be taught. Two or three times are then sufficient to teach the speaking skill.

4. Do you involve your learners in speaking skill activities?

Table 14: Inquiry on the involvement of learners in speaking activities by teachers

Answer	Frequency	%
Yes, I do	4	66.7
No, I don't	2	33.3
Total	6	100

This question was asked in order to know if teachers really involve their learners in speaking activities such as role plays, poems, songs, etc. As the table indicates, four of the respondents (66.7%) assert that they involve them in such activities, but two of them (33.3%) do not. The reason for these teachers not to involve their learners in speaking activities are not known yet.

5. Which of the following would be the most helpful to teach speaking fluency?

Table 15: Teachers' suggestions about the best activities to teach speaking fluency

- By inviting learners to:

Answer	Frequency	%
Memorize new vocabulary items	0	0
Explain vocabulary items	0	0
Practise role playing	6	100
Total	6	100

A teacher can teach a given skill but not use an appropriate method. This question was therefore asked to check which methods/activities they would use while

teaching fluency. As the table above indicates, all the six teachers (100%) would use the same activity; make their learners practice role play. The two other suggested activities, that is, memorization and explanation of new vocabulary items are judged as not effective because they do not involve learners in using a language in real situations.

6. Do you face any challenges in teaching speaking?

Table 16: Challenges to the practice of the speaking skill

Answer	Frequency	%
Yes, there are	4	100
No, there are not	0	0
I have no idea	0	0
Total	6	100

This question was asked because there may be a teacher who may not use role play activities even if they are effective. The intention was therefore to know the hindrances to their use. From the above table, all the six questioned teachers attest that there are hindrances to its use.

7. If yes, what do you think is/are those challenges?

Table 17: Challenges to the teaching of the speaking skill

Answer	Frequency	%
It is time consuming	6	100
Classes are large	6	100
Learners are shy	6	100
Total	6	100

While looking at this question one may think that the number of the respondents has increased, but this is not the case. This is just because they all converge on those challenges which seem to overlap: the speaking skill is time consuming. Therefore, when classes are large, teachers opt for not using that method because they are afraid of not achieving the programme on time. They request that the

school administrators should reduce the number of learners in classes in order to facilitate the use of appropriate methods. Moreover, learners are shy to express themselves because they are afraid of making mistakes. This then hinders their speaking fluency because without practice, one cannot be fluent in a language.

8. Do you think English should be given more time in order to help learners develop speaking fluency?

Table 18: Teachers' perceptions on giving more time to English course in order to develop learner's speaking fluency

Answer	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes, I do	6	100
No, I don't	0	0
I have no idea	0	0
Total	6	100

Through the table above, all the questioned teachers have the view that English course should not be given more time in order to improve their fluency in general. They say that the time given to this course is enough, but the problem is always class size; at many schools, there are many learners in classes and this hinders the use of appropriate methods and activities.

4.2. Findings

4.2.0. Introduction

In this section entitled “findings”, the researcher discusses the challenges to the teaching/learning of the speaking. Firstly, the focus is put on how the teaching/learning methods influence the development of the learners’ speaking skill. Secondly, it stresses on how the learners’ attitude toward the English language, especially the speaking skill has an effect on their speaking skill. Finally, it shows the role of the environment in the learners’ improvement of the speaking skill. In order to be clear, it is worth reminding the research hypotheses and see how they were proven right or wrong. The following were the research hypotheses that guided this investigation:

1. The teaching/learning methods used influence the development of the learners’ speaking skill.
2. The learners’ attitude towards the English language has an effect on their speaking skill.
3. The learners’ environment affect their speaking skill.

4.2.1. The Influence of the Teaching/Learning Methods on the Development of the Learners’ Speaking Skill

Teaching and learning methods are key factors in developing learners’ speaking skill. Teachers are supposed to develop learners’ speaking skill by involving them in various speaking activities. Learners are also supposed to search for other opportunities to practice their speaking either at school or at home. However, the data proves the opposite. In fact, both teachers and learners are aware of the best methods to improve the speaking skill. This is expressed through the fourth and fifth questions of the learners’ questionnaire and the fifth question of the teachers’ questionnaire where they were proposed the speaking activities to better develop the speaking skill. Almost all of them converge on role-play because it gives a chance to learners to practice speaking. Others proposed activities were judged as not effective because learners do not practice speaking.

Unexpectedly, that role-play-activity or other activities which give the opportunity to learners to practice speaking are not used by teachers while teaching the speaking skill. This is expressed through the eighth question of the learners' questionnaire when they were asked if their teachers involve them in speaking activities. Only eleven of them said that they are often given such opportunities, forty-five of them said that they sometimes, forty of them said that they rarely and seven of them asserted that they are never involved in speaking activities. This shows that teachers do not involve their learners in speaking activities which are the most effective methods to develop learners' speaking fluency. This therefore shows that the first hypothesis was proven right.

4.2.2. Effect of the Learners' Attitude Towards the English Language on their Speaking Skill

The learners' attitude towards the English language is very significant as far as their speaking fluency is concerned. In fact, to become fluent in English, learners must be interested in that language, that is, they must be eager to use it as very often as possible, either at school or at home. Nevertheless, data has proven that the majority of the learners do not feel well. This is expressed through the sixth question of the learners questionnaire when they were asked how they would feel if they were asked to make a conversation with others. A great number of them asserted that they would feel shy. This has an effect on the development of the speaking skill since no one can be fluent in a language without being interested in it and practice it very often. The learners' bad attitude towards the English language is also stressed by the teachers on the sixth question of their questionnaire when they were asked the challenges to the teaching of the speaking skill. Among those challenges, all the questioned teachers converge on the fact that their learners are shy. Consequently, they are not willing to practice speaking by conversing with their peers because they are afraid of making mistakes. The second hypothesis was also proven right.

4.2.3. The Effect of the Environment on the Learners' Speaking Skill

The learners' speaking fluency depends on the environment in which they live. In fact, for the learners to be fluent in English, they should be in an environment

where that language is most often spoken, either at school or out. However, data from this research prove the opposite. This is expressed through the eighth question of the learners' questionnaire (page 38) when they were asked if they get other opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom. Eighty-two of the one hundred and three questioned learners asserted that they do not get such opportunities. This is also a big hindrance to the development of their English speaking fluency because they lack where to practice it. In sum, the learners' speaking environment is not favorable for them to practice their speaking. The third hypothesis was therefore proven right, too.

Conclusion

All results from the data analysis revealed that there are challenges to the teaching/learning of the speaking skill. Firstly, the majority of teachers do not use appropriate speaking methods/activities which give opportunities to their learners to practice their speaking. Secondly, the learners' attitude towards the English language is not favorable to the learning of the speaking skill; the majority of learners are shy to converse with others because they are afraid of making mistakes and this hinders their speaking fluency. Finally, the learners' environment is not also favorable. After English classes, the majority of learners do not get any other opportunities to practice their speaking.

CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. General Conclusion

This research set out to investigate the challenges to the teaching and the learning of the English speaking skill in some selected basic schools in Bujumbura city with a special focus on grade nine. It seeks to shed light on the challenges that both teachers and learners encounters while teaching/learning the speaking skill.

To start with, the first step was to introduce this study showing the importance of the speaking skill in language learning in general and English learning in particular. Readers were also informed about the situation which is prevailing as for as English teaching in Burundi is concerned.

The second step was based on other writers' ideas about the importance of the speaking skill in English language teaching, the way the speaking skill is taught, the goal of teaching speaking, the activities used to teach speaking and the challenges to the learning of the speaking skill. Other writers' views helped us to examine how the speaking skill is taught in the schools where this research was conducted and then to point out the challenges to its use.

The third part was concerned with the methodology used to carry out the research. It describes the area of our study, the research population, the method used to select the sample and the instruments used to collect data.

The following step was concerned with the essential part of this study, that is, the analysis of data collected through teachers' as well as learners' questionnaires and classroom observation. It is through this chapter that answers to the research questions were got, and it can be claimed that these questions have been fully answered thanks to the results from the data collected.

Therefore, it is worth showing the main challenges encountered while teaching/learning the speaking skill. Firstly, the majority of teachers do not use appropriate speaking methods/activities which give opportunities to their learners to practice their speaking.

Secondly, the learners' attitude towards the English language is not favorable to the learning of the speaking skill; the majority of learners are shy to converse with others because they are afraid of making mistakes and this hinders their speaking fluency. Finally, the learners' environment is not also favorable. After English classes, the majority of learners do not get any other opportunities to practice their speaking. In short, the findings led to the conclusion that both teachers and learners encounter challenges during English speaking lessons. For this reason, a number of recommendations have been formulated:

5.2. Recommendations

To end this research, the researcher would like to suggest some recommendations. The recommendations given in this study are directed to the government, to the ministry of education, to teachers and the future researchers.

a. To the Government

The government should:

- Invest more in the domain of education by providing schools with enough teaching resources and qualified teachers, and by building enough schools in order to limit the number of learners in classrooms.

- Make regular visits to schools in order to check if English is taught as it is designed and then correct if need be.

b. To Teachers

Teachers should:

- Be conscious of the importance of the speaking skill in English and the use appropriate activities to improve students' English speaking fluency,
- Make effort to do their best and use the teaching tools at their disposal,
- Use methods which would make them respond to learners needs and involve them in oral communication.
- Take some measures to make their learners speak English even after English classes.

c. To Future Researchers

All in all, more researches to complete this study are still needed to improve the teaching and learning of speaking skill so that learners from basic schools should be able to express themselves orally. The basic schools' field has many aspects to further researches. This study had tried within its limitations, it is not exhaustive. A quasi-experimental study can be conducted to exactly know other challenges encountered while teaching/learning the speaking skill because 'to know the disease is half the cure'.

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Karikunzira, M. (1981). Les Qualités du Professeur Idéal. Sciences Humaines

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APPENDICES

LETTER TO LEARNERS

Dear pupil,

I am writing this letter to seek help from you for my work entitled "CHALLENGES TO THE TEACHING AND THE LEARNING OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL IN SOME SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA CITY: CASE OF GRADE NINE ".

In fact, I am a researcher at the University of Burundi and for the time being, I am carrying out a research on English teaching/ learning and I need your help in order to complete it. It is for that reason you are requested to answer the present questionnaire.

If your answers are objective, this questionnaire will be vital to the completion of my work and will contribute to the improvement of the teaching methodologies in Burundi. I would be grateful if you answer as sincerely and clearly as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Jean Marie Ndihokubwayo

LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear teacher,

I am writing this letter to seek help from you for my work entitled "CHALLENGES TO THE TEACHING AND THE LEARNING OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING SKILL IN SOME SELECTED BASIC SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA CITY: CASE OF GRADE NINE ".

In fact, I am a researcher at the University of Burundi and for the time being, I am carrying out a research on English teaching/ learning and I need your help in order to complete it. It is for that reason you are requested to answer the present questionnaire.

If your answers are objective, this questionnaire will be vital to the completion of my work and will contribute to the improvement of the teaching methodologies in Burundi. I would be grateful if you answer as sincerely and clearly as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Jean Marie Ndihokubwayo

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Learners' questionnaire

A. Identification of the respondent

School……..

i) **Do not indicate your name**
ii) **Answer freely and honestly**
iii) **Tick (V) the right suggestions where there are many**

B. Questions

Theme I: Teaching/learning Methods

1. Do you learn speaking at school?

a) Yes, we do ☐

b) No, we don't ☐

2. How do you feel when you are learning speaking?

a) Very interested ☐

b) Interested ☐

c) Not interested ☐

3. which of the following can help you better learn speaking in your class?

a) By memorizing ☐

b) By explaining ☐

c) By role-playing ☐

☐

d) By role-playing and memorizing

4. Which activities do you think your teacher could invite you to do in order to develop your speaking fluency?

a) Poems ☐

b) Topics for discussion ☐

c) Playing roles ☐

d) Songs ☐

5. How would you feel if you were asked to make a conversation with your classmates in front of the class?

a) Self-confident
b) Shy
c) Motivated to speak English
d) Happy
e) Worried

6. Does your teacher give you the opportunity to speak in English classes?

a) Yes ☐
b) No ☐

7. Do you think the time used by the teacher to teach you English oral expression is sufficient for you to be proficient in English?

a) Yes ☐
b) No ☐

8. Do you get other opportunities to practice your English speaking after English classes, either at school or at home?

a) Yes ☐
b) No ☐

9. What do you think are the challenges to your learning of the English speaking skill?

……
……
……
……
……

10. What do you think should be done in order to improve your English speaking fluency?

……
……
……
……

II. Teachers' questionnaire

A. Identification of the respondent

School……..

Instructions
i) Do not indicate your name
ii) Answer freely and honestly
iii) Tick (V) the right suggestions where there are many
B. Questions

1. How would you feel if you had to teach the speaking skill?

a) Very interested ☐

b) Interested ☐

c) Not interested ☐

2. How do you think your learners would feel if you try to help them to improve English speaking fluency?

a) Very interested ☐

b) Interested ☐

c) Not interested ☐

3. According to you, how often do you think the speaking skill should be taught per week?

a) Once ☐

b) Twice ☐

c) three times ☐

d) four times ☐

4. How often do you involve your learners in speaking skill activities?

a) Yes, I do ☐

b) No, I don't ☐

5. Which of the following would be the most helpful to teach speaking fluency? By inviting learners to:

a) Memorize new vocabulary items ☐

b) Explain vocabulary items ☐

c) Practice role-playing ☐

d) By other ways (please mention them)……

6. Are there challenges to not making learners practise the speaking skill during English classes?

a) Yes, there are ☐

b) No, I don't ☐

7. If yes, what do you think is/are those challenges?

a) It is time consuming ☐

b) Classes are large ☐

c) Other reasons (please mention them)…….....

8. Do you think English should be allotted (given) more time in order to help learners develop speaking fluency?

a) Yes, I do ☐

b) No, I don’t ☐

c) I have no idea ☐