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Problems encountered in teaching english reading comprehension to sixth form pupils.a study conducted in some secondary schools in Cibitoke province

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN TEACHING ENGLISH READING COMPREHENSION TO SIXTH FORM PUPILS. A STUDY CONDUCTED IN SOME SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN CIBITOKE PROVINCE.

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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, August 2006

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the almighty God to whom we owe everything.

My late father, Ndikumazambo Sylvestre alias (Mababa)

My mother, Rose Ndayisaba;

My husband,

My daughter, Rosy Mackenzie Ingabire;

My brothers and sisters;

My cousins, uncles and aunts;

To the beloved family of Déogratias Bayaga

To my cherished friends

I warmly dedicate these few pages

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The realisation of this work is a contribution of so many people that any attempt to list them would be doomed to failure. However, the following deserve special mention.

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Joselyne NKURUNZIZA

Key to Accronyms

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

CLT : Communicative Language Teaching

L1 : First Language (mother tongue, native language)

SQ3R : Survey; Questions, Reads, Recites, Reviews

WPM : Words per minute.

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Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Human beings have the capacity to talk, to communicate with each other so that they are understood by other human beings. They communicate through language, a code that is different according to different communities. This is to say that each community has its own code through which members of that community communicate. For example, Burundian, French or English people have as their major language Kirundi, French and English respectively.

Even if there are many codes, all languages have in common some features and one of them is that they are constituted with words. People put ideas into words in larger units referred to as sentences. The misunderstanding of a key word in a sentence breaks down the communication.

The present study focuses on the importance of the Reading skill in general and Reading comprehension in particular and the problems faced by the teachers of English in the sixth form. They are given a very limited time-table (for example, four periods of English per week in the first cycle of secondary education). So, teachers have the problem of forming and developing a whole new set of linguistic habits in a limited number of hours per week of class instruction. Another obstacle is the interference of previously learned languages. The problem is how to get rid of old habits from the first language or languages and to establish new systems instead. It is obvious then that foreign language teachers encounter difficulties in teaching new languages.

In this research, we consider English since English seems to be very important these days. To say that a language is more important than another is to be mistaken. Every language is important for the people who use it. Lyons (1981:30) clarifies this idea when he argues that *"all living languages are in their very nature efficient systems of communication".* However, one language may be better adapted than other languages for particular purposes. This is the case of English, a language which is becoming the major international language today.

In the case of Burundi, English is spoken by a small number of people but nowadays, it has a valuable status for many reasons. First, English is sometimes for tourism or business, reading printed information, etc. Moreover, this language is becoming the vehicle of World's scientific, commercial and technological knowledge.

The knowledge of English is often a requirement for getting some job in non-governmental organisations or other sectors of public service. There is also the need to communicate with many foreigners speaking English who are present in Burundi today. Besides, English is spoken in neighbouring countries with which Burundi maintains relations so there is a great need of learning it, and this should concern adult as well as young people. With regard to the paramount importance of English today, to know this language, the window to the outside world is very important. Moreover being able to speak languages other than your own can open all sorts of doors and make life more enjoyable.

English Skills I is a course book designed for the sixth form pupils of first cycle in Burundi secondary schools. It comprises the teachers' guide and the pupils' book. Texts which are in that coursebook can be classified in two categories: There are eighteen units and five reading and writing sections.

The teachers' guide comprises the same materials as the ones which are in the pupils' book except that there is additional information about how to use the pupils' book. The teachers' guide also comprises questions about texts in which pupils are required to give quick and short answers. There are also teaching guidelines for each unit, how to introduce a new unit, how to present new words and phrases, etc. Besides, the purposes of each dialogue are spelt out.

In this study, we look at some of the barriers encountered in teaching reading comprehension in the sixth form. The choice of the sixth form level was dictated mostly by the amazingly positive behaviour of Burundi beginning-level learners of English. Penfield and Roberts (1959) point to psychological and neurological potentials which young learners possess in regard to language learning as being the major sources of language beginning learner's motivation. They give two main reasons: First, they point out the strong motivation that young pupils have when they learn a new language. Secondly, they mention that the child's brain has a specialised language capacity that decreases with the passage of years.

Young learners, indeed, display pride while attending target language classes. Such a favourable situation is very encouraging in language teaching and learning. Candlin's (1981:30) research and experimentation with young learners led him to state that

> The most stable and most highly correlated prerequisite for the variable of language performance is that of motivation taken by the learner to the subject.

Corder (1981: 48) sustained the above statement by expressing that "*people with the right attitudes, high motivation, self confidence and low anxiety will be more prone to interaction and thus get more input*". Likewise, one will certainly observe the same behaviour on behalf of Burundi sixth form pupils when performing classroom activities. We would however be mistaken in thinking that our pupils (Burundi sixth form pupils) will always react positively to the teaching of English.

To conclude, it follows from the factors and cases indicated above, that learning a second or foreign language is primarily a psychological process. Young learners like the Burundi sixth form level pupils are motivated and dynamic.

1.2. Background to the Problem

The teaching of the English language starts at the high level of education in the public secondary school system, beginning with the sixth form. As a matter of fact, learning a language other than one's

mother tongue is not an easy task. Indeed the beginners are linguistically virgin (in English). All that is presented to them is new. Consequently they are amazed for the first time. In this connection, The Webster's international dictionary (1962:880) states:

> When one sees or hears a new word (or expression) or unfamiliar word, he is puzzled by its real meaning. If the new item is not well explained and repeated, one cannot hope that the word will be remembered by the learner.

Actually, the teaching of English in sixth form is essentially based on a series of dialogues and grammatical structures which sixth form pupils –beginning learners of English will have to memorize and recite through repetition drills in order to develop their lessons.

The aims of the English language teaching course are commonly defined in terms of the four skills which have to be developed in the pupils. The teaching of these skills is a prerequisite for facilitating language learning education; it depends on the quantity and quality of reading. All study skills require quick, efficient and imaginative reading. Reading therefore is the care of education and as Bright and Mc Gregor (1970:52) observe,

> Only by reading can the pupil acquire speed and skills he will need for practical purposes ... it is hard to find or imagine any skilled work

that does not require the ability to read.
Professional competence develops on it.

English should not be neglected in the Burundian education system, thus in order to facilitate interaction, Burundi should promote the use of English.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

A language is taught for the sake of communication. For the case of Burundi where English is taught since the sixth form pupils are asked to communicate in English but pupils still have many problems, difficulties in understanding and reading the passages in English skills 1, the textbook used in sixth form. I discovered this during my teaching practice and decided to investigate on how problems in teaching English reading skill in general and reading comprehension in particular can be solved. We insist on the teacher's role because we think that the understanding and reading of the passages in English skill 1 by sixth form pupils depends upon the ways the teachers explain those passages (texts, units). However, there are some hindrances to their job.

Firstly, classrooms are too large. According to me, the optimum number of pupils in an English class should not exceed twenty pupils. We think that this number facilitates a close exchange between the teacher and his or her pupils because as we know the teacher's method in an English class must be communicative. A small class allows the teachers to listen to the pupils, to encourage them, to reward them and above all

to know the specific problems and needs of each individual pupil. However, from our experience there, there are classes with more than fifty pupils, in which pupils do not consequently have enough time to practise. They have little opportunity to participate in the classroom. Also, teachers lack opportunities to control the understanding and reading by all the pupils.

In the second place, the lack of teaching materials constitutes another serious problem. Teachers cannot work well if they do not have enough teaching materials. The above points are some of the difficulties that teachers come across while teaching sixth form pupils. They have difficulties in making themselves understood by pupils. Our work entitled **Problems Encountered in Teaching English Reading Comprehension to Sixth Form Pupils .A Study conducted in Some Secondary Schools in Cibitoke Province.** Attempts to propose solutions so that pupils will benefit from teaching reading comprehension in an appropriate way.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The teaching of English skill in general and the teaching of reading comprehension in particular is of paramount importance as far as communication is concerned. The purpose of this study is to reveal to the teachers the problems related to the teaching of the reading comprehension to sixth form pupils. Reading comprehension is a difficult task both to teachers and pupils, and it is in this perspective that we would like to research on how exactly the reading comprehension is

taught, which kind of reading tasks are taught in sixth form, and whether they correspond to pupils needs since the main reason of learning a language is to be able to communicate successfully. Furthermore, we will be interested in looking at the teaching materials used in classroom since they constitute a principal tool in the teaching and learning of a language. Besides, we will look at the teaching of reading comprehension on the basis of texts found in English skills book used by teachers and pupils of the sixth form.

In the present work, the emphasis is on texts, units, to see if the vocabulary used in those texts does not cause problems to the pupils of sixth form, to the teachers who most of the time use gestures, mimics, and to the pupils. We will also consider if the language used in texts fits the pupil's level and if the topics are relevant and varied.

1.5 Research Questions

Actually, the study intends to account for three main questions which are:

1. Are reading comprehension activities relevant and varied in English skills I, for sixth form pupils?
2. Is time allotted to reading comprehension enough?
3. Are reading comprehension materials sufficient and appropriate?

Therefore, the current questions are likely to help in establishing Problems encountered in teaching English reading comprehension to sixth form pupils

1.6 Research hypotheses

After a carefully study about the teaching English reading comprehension to sixth form pupils, the following hypotheses will be tested:

1. Reading comprehension activities are not relevant and varied in English skills I, for sixth form pupils.
2. Time allotted to reading comprehension is not enough.
3. Reading comprehension materials are not sufficient and appropriate

To sum up, this chapter has introduced the study, stated the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, and research hypotheses. In the next chapter we will deal with the Literature Review.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

2.1. Teaching English in Burundi Secondary Schools

Three languages are taught in the Burundian educational system. These are: Kirundi as a national language, French as an official language, and English as a foreign language. It is useful here to try to differentiate terms such as English as a native language, English as a foreign language, and English as second language since the concern of this research is English teaching. According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1980:1), these terms can be distinguished as follows:

> *A speaker of English as a native language acquires English naturally as a young child. He does so because his parents use English as their normal means of communication with him and with each other and because English is the language used by the community in which he is growing up.*

> *A speaker of English as a foreign language is usually taught English as a subject at school or college and lives in a country where English is not normally used. He does not usually learn English from his parents and does not use it as a means of communication with his parents or in the community in which he lives.*

> *A speaker of English as a second language usually lives in a country where English is not the native language of the indigenous inhabitants. However, in this country, English is frequently used as a means of communication between speakers of different native languages and as the language of particular activities such as education, commerce and politics.*

It follows from Ellis and Tomlinson's comment that English is taught in Burundi as a foreign language.

2.2. Approaches to Language Teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), nowadays, the second and foreign language teaching is mostly characterized by a huge proliferation of approaches and methods. To some observers, these approaches constitute the major strength of the language teaching. To others, however the wide variety of methods is largely more confusing than comforting. The former see in the current changes of methods and / or teaching materials the commitment to finding more appropriate and effective ways of teaching language. As a matter of fact, everyone is now free to choose methods and materials according to the pupil's needs, the teacher's suggestions or the constraints of the schools or any educational setting. The latter, that is, those who meet discomfort and confusion in the existence of varied methods base their restlessness on the lack of a common agreement about what a language is and how it is

learned. Therefore, some proposed classroom techniques or practice become unfamiliar and stranger, whereas others are described as materials that are hard to locate and very difficult to understand. What is more, the practitioner is often embarrassed by the lack of any comprehensive theory of what approach and methodes are.

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 14-29) 'method' is viewed as the cover term for all language teaching, from theory to practice. It is divided into approach, design and procedure. Approach is also divided into theories of learning. On its part, 'design' comprises terms such as syllabus design and contents, roles of materials, roles of learners and roles of teachers. 'Procedures' is referred to as specific activities that are actually in the classroom. In the course of the history of language teaching, various methods have been proposed and all reflected the progressive changes in the theories of the nature of language and language learning.

Richards and Rodgers (1986) distinguish various methods such as Language Teaching, the Audio-lingual method, the communicative language, to name but a few.

2.2.1. The Audio-lingual method

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 44-61), the entry of USA into the World War II gave a significant effort on language teaching. In order to supply the US government with fluent personnel in almost all languages –whose speakers were involved in the war, that is people who

could work as interpreters, code-room assistants or translators, all the academic staff proposed the Army specialized training program (A.S.T.P) to fulfil such demands. Many linguists gave successful results. The main innovation relied in terms of the procedures used on the intensity of teaching, rather than in terms of its underlying theory.

However, many specialists in linguistics, especially in applied linguistics, were convinced of the value of an oral – based approach to the learning of foreign language. Finally, by the mid-fifties, they came up with the American approach to English as second language which had become known as audio-lingualism.

In this approach Fries (1915) develop and apply the principles of structural linguistics to language teaching and reject the direction method in which learners are exposed to language, use it and gradually master its grammatical patterns. For Fries and his colleagues, grammar must be the starting point of any language learning and teaching. Systematic attention to pronunciation and intensive oral drilling characterize such teaching. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 46) point out the need for the pattern practice as a basic classroom technique when they say that:

> (...) these basic patterns constitute the learner's task drill, drill and more drill and only enough vocabulary to make such drills possible.

This approach was variously known as the oral approach, the aural-oral approach, and the structural approach which led to audio-lingualism. Richards and Rodgers (1986: 47) note that:

> It was advocated aural training first, then pronunciation listening, followed by speaking, reading and writing. Language was identified with speech, and speech was approached to structure.

In short, the audio-lingual method also called the aural-oral method of foreign or second language teaching which emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening, but also this method does not neglect the other which are: Reading and writing which followed the speaking and listening skills. According to me, this method does fully equip pupils with communicative abilities, which is the ultimate goal in any language learning.

Furthermore, the audio-lingual method promotes the four language skills (speaking, learning, reading and writing) as recommended by BEPES in 'Programme d'Anglais pour l'Enseignement Secondaire Général (1989:1):

> Le programme d'Enseignement de l'Anglais au Secondaire a été conçu pour promouvoir les quatre aptitudes linguistiques à savoir Ecouter, Parler, Lire et Ecrire.

That is

> The English teaching programme in secondary school has been designed to promote the four skills that are Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing.

The audio-lingual method is one of the main methods in teaching English as foreign language. It is similar to direct method but different in its usage of linguistics and psychology. As a result of that, a new emphasis on being able to communicate another language led to coining of the term aural-oral, a method which aimed at developing listening and speaking skills first, as the foundation on which to build the skills of reading and writing.

The audio-lingual method depends on many techniques such as dialogue, repetition, memorization and chain transformation drills, grammar game, and other techniques. Most audio-lingual courses consist of short dialogues and sets of recorded drills. The method is based on a behaviourist approach; which held that language is acquired by habit formation.

2.2.2. Communicative Language Teaching (C.L.T)

The objective of language teaching is to train learners to use language for communication. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986: 66) communicative Language Teaching is an approach that aims:

> To make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and develop procedures for the teaching of the form skills that acknowledges the interdependence of language and communication.

However, Communicative Language Teaching proponents hold different views of it. For some, communicative approach means a unification of grammatical functional teaching. According to Littlewood (1981:1)

> One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language.

For other researchers, it implies making use of procedures where pupils work in pairs or groups using accessible language resources in problem-solving lessons or exercises.

As suggested by Widdowson (1979: 251)

> In general English Language Teaching (ELT) or English as a foreign Language (EFL), it is desirable to adopt a communicative approach to language teaching.

It seems to me appropriate to teach reading comprehension within the communicative language teaching approach as it has the main goal

the acquisition of communicative competence and the development of the four language skills.

According to David Nunan (1991: 279), there are five basic characteristics of communicative language teaching:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language:
2. Introduction of authentic texts into the language situation.
3. The provision opportunities for learners to focus, not only on the language but also on the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experience contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom.

2.3. Reading comprehension techniques

Sometimes reading comprehension failure happens and the pupil is unable to achieve his or her purpose. This comprehension failure may be a simple matter of not knowing the meaning of a word, but it is likely to be a deficiency in one or more of number of reading comprehension techniques.

Most of the techniques dealt with in this section are already familiar to the pupils in their native or second language. However, it is necessary to train them to a foreign language. The aim of these techniques is to provide strategies that pupils need to cope with unfamiliar words, complex or obscure sentences, paragraphs and reading

texts. In the present thesis, I am interested in eight techniques namely inference, increasing, reading speed, prediction, previewing, skimming, scanning, SQ3R, and effective use of a dictionary.

2.3.1. Inference

According to Grellet (1981:14), inferring means *"making use of systematic, logical and cultural clues to discover the meaning of unknown elements".*

When dealing with a new reading passage, it is better not to explain difficult words to pupils beforehand. They would only get used to being given pre-processed reading passages and would never make the effort to cope with a difficult passage on their own.

On the contrary, pupils should be encouraged to make a guess at the meaning of the words they do not know rather than to look them up in the dictionary to get a precise meaning; they should only use a dictionary after having tried to work out an answer on their own. Effective use of a dictionary is discussed in a later section.

2.3.2. Increasing Reading speed

One of the ways of increasing reading speed is to give pupils passages to read and ask them to time themselves. A table taking into account the length of the reading passage time will make it easier for

them to try and read a little faster every time. According to Nuttal (1982: 35-36),

> Secondary school pupils in countries where English is a second language may read at 120-150 words a minute before training (...). But it is useful to know that for an L1 speaker of English of about average education and intelligence (...), the reading rate is about 300 w.p.w.

According to Grellet (1981:16), 'reading should also be followed by comprehension question, or activities since reading speed should not be developed at the expense of comprehension. The same author adds that:

> When practicing faster reading systematically the pupils can be encouraged to keep a record of their results, showing their progress (e.g.: in the form of graph). This should encourage them to read more.

In my opinion, pupils must be trained in reading speed, because pupils who read slowly will easily get discouraged. They will also tend to stumble on unfamiliar words and fail to get the general meaning of the passage.

2.3.3. Prediction

Nuttal (1982: 120) confirms that the ability to predict what the writer is likely to say next is both an aid to understanding and a sign of it. It is useful because it makes the reader to start thinking about what he/she is going to read and makes his/her to be involved. According to Grellet, prediction is the faculty of predicting of guessing what is to come next. It can be practised, for example, by giving the pupils unfinished passages to complete or by going through a reading text little by little stopping after each sentence in order to guess what is likely to come next.

In short, prediction ensures the reader's active involvement. It is worth training pupils in that technique as it can develop their reading comprehension ability.

2.3.4. Previewing

This reading technique aim at training the pupil to use titles and tables of contents to get an idea of what a passage is about. In relation to this, Grellet (1981: 17) says the following:

> Unlike prediction, previewing is a very specific reading technique which involves using the table of contents, the appendix, the preface, the chapter and paragraphs headings in order to find out where the required information is likely to be.

As for Hedge (1985: 72), he says that to preview means the following:

> To look at the title, look at the cover read any blind. On the back cover about the story or the writer. Look at the list of contents or chapter headings and glance through the look to get an impression of the lay-out, the illustration and so forth.

This exercise is one of many that can be used to show pupils how much they can guess about a passage by simply looking at the table of contents. This will be useful to most pupils later in the course of their studies. Pupils should be trained in this reading technique because it can increase pupils' interest and strengthen their motivation to read.

2.3.5. Skimming and Scanning

When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it, to know how it is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or the intention of the writer. The pupil needs to develop his/her ability to locate the main idea of a reading selection rapidly if he/she is to read with better comprehension. Skimming and scanning are reading techniques that are used for very special and specific information. These techniques require an extremely fast reading rate. One of the major purposes of skimming is the location of main idea. Scanning on the other hand is the processing of large quantities facts or details. These two techniques are parts of the total reading process and

will help the pupil greatly to enhance both his/her speed and understanding in reading.

However, the knowledge that he/she gains through the use of these techniques alone, is not sufficient to enable him to pass the examination that he will take at school. Grellet (1981: 19) points out that:

> When skimming, we go through the reading material quickly in order to get the gist of it. When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do even follow the linearity of the passage to do so.

Skimming can be practised, for example, by asking pupils to say briefly what a text is about, or giving questions that can be answered by glancing quickly through the text. As far as scanning is concerned, it can be practiced by requiring pupils to scan for single word or a specific fact (a data, name, place, etc. in a text).

I share Harmer's (1991: 91) point of view, when he draws attention to these two reading techniques saying that *"it is considered vitally important to train pupils in the skills of skimming and scanning".* About these techniques, pupils should be trained in both skimming and scanning strategies because they are necessary for quick and efficient reading comprehension.

2.3.6. The Use of Dictionary

Some pupils are not aware of the efficient way to use a dictionary .Others are over-conscious of the importance of checking individual words. Whenever they come across a new word in a passage, they immediately stop and not proceed until they have checked it up in a dictionary.

This can prevent all interest and even interfere with comprehension because the reader is so concerned with the individual words that he is less aware of the context which gives them the meaning. Thus this results in efficient reading. In relation to this, Nuttal (1982: 69) notes that:

> *Every time you break off your reading to consult a dictionary, you not only slow down your reading speed because of time involved, but more seriously you interrupt your own thought processes (...) constant need to refer to a dictionary makes effective reading very difficult.*

The teacher must convince pupils that it is a waste of time to look up very new word in a dictionary. It is so necessary to show them how to use a dictionary efficiently. Nuttal (1982: 69) believes that:

> The first step is the need to decide which words must be looked up and indicate that they should be as few as possible. The second step is to be able to do it quickly and make the best use of the information the dictionary supplies.

This technique is then recommended for pupils, because it is particularly useful if the teacher has not provided guidance. Hedge (1985: 70) shares the same view when he observes that pupils need much dictionary practice as possible in the class. She however continues by saying that *"constant use of bilingual dictionary encourages word-for-word transmission during reading comprehension ability, but this should not be overused".*

However, reference to a dictionary will only be helpful if the pupils have experience using it.

2.3.7. SQ 3R (Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review)

SQ3R is formula that outlines a strategy for studying reading, equally applicable to books, chapters, articles, and so on. This reading techniques, as described by Nuttal (1982: 169) consists of five steps which are:

Survey (S); Question (Q); Read (R), Recite (R), and Review (R).

a. Survey (S): It consists of going through the text rapidly to get an overview of its point.

b. Question (Q): This strategy consists of what you want to get out the text: you have to ask yourself the question you want the text to answer.

c. Read (R_1): This means to read carefully, actively and carefully, applying the techniques that allow the pupils to read units of thought with increased eye-span.

d. Recite (R_2): This does not consist of reciting the text, but answers to your questions. Writing them down would also be effective.

e. Review (R_3): This includes Surveying the whole text again, making sure of the structure and organization of the material. This step should be a repetition of all the previous steps in the SQ3R strategy.

2.3.8. Note-taking, Reference, Deduction and Comprehension

a) Note-taking

Note-taking is essential as it helps one to remember what he reads. According to Grellet (1981: 23), *"it involves understanding meaning in the read text"*. When taking notes, it is necessary to establish the structure of the text, and to learn to leave out unessential information. Grellet (1981: 24) *"further observes that it is a difficult activity which sums up most of the strategies developed in the text"*, to mean that it is not a simple activity.

U. B.

b) Reference

According to Grellet (1981: 25) *"reference covers all the devices that permit lexical relationships within the text"*. According to me, it can be reference to an element already mentioned or to one which is to be mentioned. It also involves the use of encyclopaedic, dictionaries, advertisements or any other reference materials. The Oxford Encyclopaedic English Dictionary (1991: 1213) defines reference as *"an act of looking passage or something else or looking for information in a text."*

c) Deduction

Deduction involves understanding explicitly stated information and also when information is not explicitly stated. According to Hedge (1985: 28), *"it involves reading between the lines and work on meaning of the text at different levels, understanding information and critically evaluating ideas"*.

d) Comprehension

This is the thorough understanding of the text so that any question about it can be correctly answered. In addition Grellet (1981: 30) observes that understanding a written text means extracting the required information from it as efficiently as possible according to the purpose. Furthermore, comprehension involves identifying the main points of the paragraph or text, following the ways in which meaning

links across sentences and working with cross cultural information about the topics of the texts and the assumption of writers so that pupils can extract cultural meaning from the text.

All in all, in my opinion, pupils of sixth form must be trained in all these reading techniques in order to improve their reading comprehension abilities.

2.4. Intensive and Extensive Reading

2.4.1. Intensive Reading

In spite of areas of overlap, intensive and extensive reading involve different activities and different skills but they are complementary and both necessary.

Intensive reading is an exercise in extracting maximum reading from a well knit piece of written material. Nuttal (-1982: 23) asserts that:

> Intensive reading involves approaching the text under the close guidance of the teacher or under the guidance of a task which forces the pupil to pay great attention.

She continues saying that:

> The aim of Intensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the

text: not only of what it means, but also of how the meaning is produced.

It is therefore imperative that the sub-skills required in reading in the second language should be mastered. Traditionally, researchers on reading, focussing on the reader, have attempted to analyse and categorize the reading skill into a series of sub skills.
Alderson, C.J & Urquhart, A.H. (1984), reportedly distinguishes five skills: literal comprehension, re-organisation of the ideas in the text, inferential ability, evaluation and appreciation.

Through Intensive reading activities in the classroom, pupils are trained in the various sub-skills mentioned above and the strategies necessary for progress in reading. These activities involve a close study of texts and examinations of different features of the target language at the various levels of words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and the whole text.

Intensive reading activities are designed to help pupils to understand the surface and deeper meaning of shorter texts, and interpretation of the writer's intension in relation to pupils' ideas, knowledge and attitudes. They get to understand better how the language is used to communicate the author's message through detailed analysis of the language, subject matter and the implication of the message. Furthermore, they acquired fluency and ability to extract factual information in any given text. Intensive reading also includes activities such as reading prescription flight schedules, maps, diagrams and general reading for information.

An intensive reading programme is therefore necessary in schools to actively promote reading out of class. This is because class time is too short. Yet the amount of reading needed to achieve understanding and fluency is very great. There is also a need for some class time to be devoted to intensive reading in order to maintain pupils interest in it and to train pupils how to deal with full-length texts. Pupils need the guidance and encouragement that an organised reading programme can provide.

Nuttal (1982: 168) encourages intensive reading when she claims that we learn to read by reading and she continues:

> The best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it.

This quotation shows us that we cannot improve your knowledge of foreign language without practising it.

2.4.2. Extensive Reading

For extensive reading the pupil reads entirely on his own many pages of connected discourse graded to his level of achievement. According to Rivers (1964: 23),

> Special readers were published which conformed to specific level of word-frequency and idiom counts, and the pupil was guided by the teachers from level to level as his reading ability developed. In this was acquired a large passive or recognition vocabulary.

However, the pupil's comprehension of what he has read is tested by questions on the content of the reading material, not by translation. So that the pupils might read with greater appreciation of cultural differences, projects were undertaken on the background of the country when the language was spoken and on the ways of life and customs of the people.

According to Rivers (1964: 24), the project often entails further reading in the foreign language as the pupil gathers the necessary information. As for Richards et al. (1986: 100) point out,

> Extensive reading involves reading in quantity in order to gain a general understanding of what is read. It is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of

> vocabulary and structure, and encourage a liking for reading.

The system of extensive reading gives pupils the opportunity to progress at their own rate and pupils within the same class can work with readers at different levels of difficulty. If not sufficiently controlled, the system of extensive can lead to satisfaction with quantity rather than quality and the number of pages read rather than the degree of comprehension.

As Hedge (1985: 37) points out,

> *The aim of extensive reading is to give pupils the opportunity to practise the skills learned through intensive study by reading longer texts and developing the ability to read understandably and quickly.*

However, pupils need an extensive reading curriculum that actively promotes reading out of class, because class time is not enough and the amount of reading needed to achieve fluency and efficiency is very great. For Nuttal (1982: 192), it is noteworthy to mention that the teacher's own interest in reading is essential as some pupils are likely to come from homes where little reading takes place. For some of them, the teacher may be the only reader they meet. Therefore, they must be able to see that their teacher is a reader. According to Nuttal (1982: 193),

> *Showing that you are a reader means carrying books around with you, referring to books as you teach, reading out brief passages that*

may interest pupils, talking about what you are reading at the moment, and handling books as if you loved them!

The foregoing review indicates that in the development of reading, intensive and Extensive Reading skills should be taught effectively in public as well as in private schools in Burundi.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

This provides an insight into the different procedures involved in collecting the data necessary for this work, and also to shows how these data will be analysed.

3.1. Description of the Research Area

The present study was carried out in Cibitoke province. We decided to work in upcountry because it seems that many studies have been conducted in Bujumbura schools.

Cibitoke is located in the North West of Burundi. It has six communes and each commune has at least one communal college. Apart from the communal colleges there are three lycée. These are: Lycée Cibitoke, Lycée Butara, and Lycée Mère du Sauveur de Buhayira.

3.2. Research Population

The research population consisted of pupils and teachers of sixth forms. Pupils whom we got an opportunity to be with during our observations were in the sixth form. Apart from the pupils of Lycée Cibitoke, Lycée Butrara and Lycée Mère du Sauveur de Buhayira, pupils from three communal colleges were involved; those Colleges are collège Communal de Ndava, Collège communal de Rugombo, and Lycée Technique de Rugombo. We sent the questionnaire to both pupils and teachers we thought that both categories of subjects were in position to help our research by giving their opinions on the different questions.

3.3 Sampling

The table indicates the distribution of secondary schools with Sixth Form in the Province of Cibitoke[1]

Schools	Number of classes of Sixth Form
1.Lycée communal de Mabayi	1
2.Lycée Delhove De Buganda	1
3. Lycée Pédagogique communal de Buganda	1
4. Lycée de Rusagara	1
5. Lycée Technique communal de Rugombo	1
6. Collège communal de Buhayira	1
7. Collège communal de Buhoro	1
8. Collège communal de Bukinanyana	1
9. Lycée communal de Buseruko	1
10. Collège communal de Butahana	1
11. Collège communal de Masango	1
12. Collège Communal de Murwi	1
13. Collège communal de Ndava -Village	1
14.Collège communal de Rugombo II	1
15.Collège communal de Ruziba	1
16. Collège communal de Kirehe	1
17. Collège communal de Rubona	1
18. Collège communal de Butara	1
19. Collège communal de Ndora	1
20. Collège communal de Buhindo	1
21.Lycée Mere du Sauveur	1
22.Lycée de Cibitoke	1
23.Lycée de Butara	1

[1] Direction Provinciale de l'Enseignement à Cibitoke

3.4. Sampling Procedures

It was impossible for me to conduct the research in all the above schools; consequently a sample of the population was select to represent the entire population by the simple random sampling method. This method was used because it gives every item in the research population the same probability of being selected (Harris and Liba, 1960:1182).

De Landsheere (1982:382) defines the verb' to sample ' as follows:

> *Echantillonner c'est choisir un nombre limite d,individus,d' objets ou d'événement dont l'observation permet de tirer des conditions (inférences) applicables à la population entière (univers) à l'intérieur de laquelle le choix a été fait.*

Translation :

> *To sample is to choose a limited number of individuals, objects or events whose observation allows to draw conclusions (inferences) applicable to the entire*

population (universe) inside which the choice has taken place.

The following is the way the schools were sampled. I wrote the names of communal colleges and lycées. I folded them and put them in two separate boxes, that is, one for the lycée (box 1) and another for the communal colleges (box 2).
I churned the two boxes to mix the pieces of paper then I drew one at a time and randomly 5 pieces of paper in box 1 and 7 in box 2. This led me to choose 3 schools which are lycée Cibitoke, Lycée Butara and Lycée Mère du Sauveur de Buhayira and 3 communal colleges namely College Communal de Rugombo, College Communal de NDAVA and Lycée Technique communal de Rugombo. Are these schools representative?

According to Javeau (1971:32), ' *Un échantillon de 1/10 ou 1/20 de la population parente quand il est tiré au hasard est suffisamment representative de celui –ci* ', that is, 'A sample of 1/10 or 1/20 from the research population when it is drawn at random is sufficiently representative of the latter.'

Along the same lines, Easton (1984:209) says that:

Pour qu'un échantillon soit statistiquement représentatif de la population, il doit être établi de manière à ce que chaque unité dans la population ait une chance égale d'en faire partie.

Translation :

> *In order to have a sample that is statistically representative of the population, it must be established in a way that every unit in the population has equal chance of taking part in it.*

From the research population in the chosen schools I selected the present research sample which is made up of a total 160 pupils and 6 teachers. In each selected school, half of the pupils were chosen through the simple random sampling method to answer the questionnaire, that is, in each class the names of pupils were written on pieces of paper thanks to their teacher. Then half of the pupils were selected randomly. The following table presents informants on the selected schools and the samples used in the present study.

Table 1: Distribution of sampled pupils and teachers in the Chosen secondary schools

Schools	Number of teachers	Number of pupils	Number of sampled pupils
1. Lycée Butara	1	44	22
2. Lycée Cibitoke	1	50	25
3. Lycée Mère du Sauveur de Buhayira	1	36	18
4. Collège communal Ndava	1	60	30
5. Collège communal Rugombo	1	64	32
6. Lycée technique communal de Rugombo	1	66	33
Total	6	320	160

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

The data were collected from different teachers and pupils of Cibitoke schools. We used classroom observation and research questionnaire.

3.5.1. Classroom observations

Classroom observation is an important technique of collecting information. It helps the investigator to draw the relationship between what is said and what really happens in the classroom.

Since we could not visit all sixth form classes we chose six of them to be a sample population and we thought that the sample was representative. The sample is made of 3 day – schools pupils and 3 of boarding school pupils. We visited Lycée Cibitoke, Lycée Butara, Lycée Mère de Sauveur de Buhayira and the communal college of Rugombo, communal college of Ndava and Lycée technique communal de Rugombo.

Classroom observations allowed us to see what actually happens in the classroom. This method proved to be quite useful since, in addition to the teachers' answers, we got a chance to observe even what the teachers would not tell us. We thought that the method of sending only a questionnaire to the informants would not, by itself, provide reliable information.

3.5.2. Research Questionnaires

The research questionnaire, like any other research instrument has advantages and disadvantages.As Faverge (1972:51) points out:

> *Le questionnaire risqué d'être mal compris ou ambigu de sorte que la réponse sera inadéquate ou donnée plus ou moins au hasard.*

Translation :

The questionnaire risks to be misunderstood or vague in such a way that the answer will be inadequate or given more or less at random.

I agree with the author that a questionnaire has limitations, for instance, the researcher cannot explain to the informant if a question is unclear or the return rates from respondents can be very low.

However, it has many advantages: it is inexpensive and wide ranging, it can be well –designed, simple and clear, it is self-administering, it can be made anonymous and the results are easy to analyse (Javeau, 1971:30).

In the present research, I decided to use questionnaires because they allow to analyse better the aspects of this study. Two types of questionnaires were designed, one for teachers and another one for pupils of sixth form. Two types of questions were also used closed questions and semi-closed questions.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

The importance of a pilot study in a research is to assess the questionnaire ,to check whether it is understandable, to find out its imperfections and correct them, to discover and remove awkward questions or replace them by more accurate and adequate ones (PINTO et GRAWITZ,1964:819).

Indeed, a questionnaire needs to be tried out first on a small group of population before it is given to the research population .The pilot study population and the research population must have the same characteristics as Mucchielli (1973:45) states:

> *Les individus doivent d'abord avoir pour caractéristique Première d'appartenir à la population d'enquête ultérieure. Leur nombre peut être restreint de 10 à 20 pour une Enquête qui portera ultérieurement sur un échantillon Pouvant aller de 100 à 200.*

Translation:

> *In this first place, the individuals must belong to the subsequent research population as first characteristics .Their number can be reduced from 10 to 20 for a research that will be subsequently conducted on a sample varying from 100 to 200.*

The choice of schools ,teachers and pupils of the pilot study was made using the random sampling method .three secondary schools were sampled namely Lycée Cibitoke ,Collège communal de Rugombo ,Collège communal de Ndava ,five pupils and a teacher answered the questionnaires in each selected school .A total of fifteen pupils and three teachers took part in it.

The results analysis of the pilot study helped me to modify and adapt the questionnaire to the research population .Thanks to their suggestions and answers.

3.5.4. The Administration of Questionnaire.

The data collection was conducted in May, 2006 because that period is in the third and final term of the school year. Considering the degree of knowledge in English, sixth form pupils have a very little, if any, knowledge of English. It is worth mentioning, then, that the experience of learning English is new they are pleased to be able to learn and understand a few words in a foreign language. The questionnaires were distributed to pupils with the assistance of their English teachers. 160 copies of the pupils, questionnaire were distributed and also with 6 copies of the teachers.

The same day they answered the questionnaires and we collected the pupils and teachers' copies. In total we collected 160 copies from pupils and 6 copies from teachers.

3.5.5 Encountered Difficulties

While I was conducting this research, I faced difficulties .The schools to be visited were located at a long distance. Thus it required me enough effort. Another problem due to the lack of experienced teachers

some teachers were new in the teaching career, one teacher even though he accepted to be observed used almost the whole time role-playing the unit. The consequence was that few Reading comprehension items were observed .He knew that our aim was to observe the teaching of Reading comprehension but may be he feared to be observed.

I think that it would be better to mention another major difficulty that I faced; it is due to the lack of enough references, sources. Few works have been written on teaching Reading comprehension on the ones which exist are not in our library. As a consequence, we did not get an opportunity to comfort many ideas.

3.6. Data Analysis Procedure

To analyse the data, we used descriptive statistics by means of percentage and the results were given in the tables. In this section, we analyze at answers given by both students and teachers, and the findings of classroom observation. This leads to conclusions and recommendations that can help to encounter problems in English teaching reading comprehension sixth form pupils.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methods and procedures of the research used in the study were discussed.

This chapter deals with the presentation, the analysis and the interpretation of data gathered during the data collection stage; on the basis of data from questionnaires and observations.

The following section is about classroom observations which will tell us the reality of what happens in classrooms.

4.1. Analysis of Data from Classroom Observations

For the sake of our study, we decided to visit the schools and attend classes during the reading comprehension lessons in order to get an idea on how reading comprehension was dealt with. Concerning the way classes were conducted we found it to be not satisfactory because the course itself did not bear the communicative aspect, and pupils ,

speak less than the teacher does. This is so probably because pupils are very weak in reading comprehension and the teacher tries to proceed as quickly as possible in order to cover the programme.

In that case, pupils are not given enough time to practise. It was also realised that a very limited number of pupils ask questions or answers when they are given the opportunity to speak.

Besides, those observations helped to draw some pedagogical implications which are classified in two categories: on the one hand, problems faced by pupils and on the other hand, the problems faced by pupils.

4.1.1. Pedagogical Implications

4.1.1. a. Problems Faced by Teachers

After observing what happens in classroom, we realised that teachers have various problems. First of all, they speak very quickly. So it becomes difficult for the students to understand them. In addition, the difference between the teachers' level and the pupil's level in English is so great that it becomes very hard for teachers to select words to use while addressing beginners. Moreover, students ask genuine questions. For example, a teacher was introducing the "ING FORM" to pupils. He explained how it is used and what it indicates. But some faces of pupils showed that they were not convinced. Then, one of them asked the following question. "What is ING?" The teacher was very surprised to

hear that question because he did not see how to explain any more he had done.

It is not only teachers who have problems, but also pupils. Let us see what happened to them.

4.1.1.b. Problems Faced by Pupils

Classroom observations have shown us that while learning, pupils face a number of problems. The first problem is linked to practical considerations (schools do not have enough books). Pupils are obliged to sit and listen to teachers because they do not have their own books. This creates frustration on the part of the pupils because they would like to have their own books.

In fact, a book gives to learners a sense of security in that, they can revise on their own.

Haycraft (1979: 124) writes about the psychological impact of a textbook:

> Psychologically, a textbook is important to students. It is something concrete that gives a measure of progress and achievement as lessons are completed are completed one by one until finally the book is finished.

This quotation shows us that lack of textbook may hamper process of learning.

Besides, most pupils have the problem of catching the general idea when a teacher is reading a text, this may result from the teacher's speed on the one hand (if he is very quick) and on the other hand from pupils (if they are absent-minded). So, reading comprehension lesson was very difficult for pupils because of these problems mentioned in this section.

4.2. Analysis of Data from Pupils' questionnaire

In this section, the results of our investigation will be presented. Here we are concerned with the data we have collected from pupils of sixth form. In fact, the questionnaire was sent to 160 pupils from six secondary schools. Their answers and comment will be given in the following section.

Table 1: Presentation of the answers to the question "Do you like the method used by your teacher during reading comprehension lesson?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	70	43.7
No	90	56.2
Total	160	100

To begin with the first question, the answers collected confirm that 56.2% of the pupils do not like the method used by their teacher during reading comprehension lessons. However, 43.7% of the pupils

like it. The justification given for this has been that because pupils of sixth form are the beginners, it is difficult for them to appreciate the method used by their teacher; they do not have any idea about the new language. The aim of this question was to see if they are motivated by method used by their teacher.

Table 2: Presentation answers to the question "Among the four skills which one do you prefer most and why? Classify them by their importance."

Skills	Frequency	%
Speaking	76	47.5
Reading	64	40
Writing	12	7.5
Listening	8	5
Total	160	100

From the above table, it is clearly seen that 47.5% would choose speaking skills in the first position. 40% would prefer reading skill 7.5% prefer writing and 5% listening. The reason for this has been that because of the lack of teaching materials especially for listening and writing, speaking can be taught without any teaching material according to them. Those who chose writing said that writing is very important as many official matters are operated in writing. For instance when one wants to apply for a job, he has to write. Moreover, people can also prefer writing in order to communicate with their relatives, friends or others through a written form. However, no skill among the four basic language skills should be forgotten or neglected when learning or

teaching a language. People enhance their knowledge by reading magazines, newspapers, journals, books, etc. You can be sent a message or letter that requires to be able to read it and perhaps keep as a secret for yourself.

In our view, both productive and receptive skills are important and should be well developed because when one listens, he needs also to speak and after speaking, he needs to read and then to write. Here we are still convinced that no skill is to be neglected. Each skill of the four is needed in particular context. Learners should be able to express themselves at any time it (in speaking or writing), but also to get an information when they need it (by reading or listening).

Table 3: Presentation of answers to the question "Is reading comprehension a good and interesting activity?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	150	93.7
No	10	6.2
Total	160	100

About reading comprehension, 93.7% assert that it is a good and interesting activity, while 6.2% state that it is not good. We discovered that pupils of sixth form like reading activity and the reason for this is that, the teaching of English in the sixth form is essentially based on series of dialogues and grammatical structures which sixth form pupils will have to memorise and recite through repetition drills in order to develop their lessons. In fact, pupils of sixth form enjoy reading

comprehension because they have opportunity to practise some methods which are used in teaching reading comprehension such as: role-play, discussion in class, questions and answers individual reading, silent and reading aloud, etc.

Table 4: Presentation of answers to the question "Is reading easy or difficult?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Easy	90	56.2
Difficult	70	43.7
Total	160	100

The majority of the pupils, 56.2% asserted that reading is easy whereas 43.7% indicated it is difficult, they are motivated to learn the new language. Those who find it difficult said that it is because of many expressions and words found in the reading excerpts are known to them.

Table 5: Presentation of answers to the question "Is the time allotted to reading comprehension sufficient?"

Answers	**Frequency**	**%**
Yes	15	9.3
No	145	90.6
Total	160	100

The answers related to this question show that 90.6% stated that the time allotted to the reading comprehension is not sufficient in the sense that they have four hours per week, and 9.3% indicate that the

time is sufficient. A large number of pupils suggested that the English course should be treated like French, Mathematic, History, etc. They continued saying that four hours per week is not enough and sufficient. In this situation pupils have problems when they encounter difficulties because they do not have time to ask questions and sometimes, teachers went ahead with pupils who participated in class.

Table 6: Presentation of answers to the Question "Do dialogues and texts motivate you to learn English?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	138	86.2
No	22	14.6
Total	160	100

In the above question, pupils we asked to say if dialogues and texts motivate them to learn English. The vast majority of them 86.2% state that they are motivated, and a small number 14.6% asserted that they are not motivated by dialogues, and texts. It can be argued that dialogue and texts which are in sixth form are good even if pupils do not understand all of them. They can capture their attention. Some of examples of these are unit 12, "A New Girl at School"(P. 43); unit 15" what are you going to do (P. 62); reading and writing section "John and Kathy" (P. 34) and so forth.

Table 7: Presentation of answers to the question "Are you satisfied with dialogues contained in the English book "English skills 1?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	65	40.6
No	95	59.3
Total	160	100

With this table, pupils are asked to say if they are satisfied with the dialogues contained in the English book *"English Skills 1?"*. A significant number of pupils are not satisfied that is 59.3% and 40.6% stated that they are satisfied. Here we can see that the coursebook needs to be improved. Those who were not satisfied with the dialogues formulated some reasons: to begin with, the topics are not as varied as they would like, but they added that some more interesting topics should be included in the textbook. Also, they complained because the topics are not realistic enough. They would like to see most of themes writing reflect Burundian life. For those who said that they are satisfied with the dialogues, they recommended that the coursebook continues to be used without any change. But, they did not give any reasons which support their satisfaction.

Table 8: Presentation of answers to the question "Does my school provide all the reading comprehension material?"

Answers	Frequency	%
Yes	0	0
No	160	100
Total	160	100

Pupils were asked to say if their school provide all the reading comprehension material, 100% of the pupils agreed that they don not have any book, no dictionaries, etc. This lack of materials can partly explain pupils' reading comprehension failure.

Table 9: Presentation of answers to the question "what do you do when you encounter difficult words while reading text?"

Answers	Frequency	%
I consult a dictionary	15	9.3
I ignore them	45	28.1
I ask my classmate or teacher for the meaning	100	62.5
I infer from context	0	0
Total	160	100

With regard to this, pupils were asked to say what they do first when they encounter difficult words in dialogues or units. Many pupils, that are 62.5%, indicated that they ask first to their classmates or teachers for the meaning. Another group, that is 28.1%, stated that they ignore them. Few pupils, that are 9.3%, stated that they consult a dictionary. No pupils infer from context. The answers to this question confirm that pupils tend to ask for the meaning of difficult words they come across in a reading passage. It is therefore important to develop ways of dealing with new words while reading, so pupils will not be so dependent on their teachers or dictionaries.

4.3. Analysis of Data from Teachers' questionnaire

This section deals with the analysis of the data from teachers' responses to the questionnaire and some comments will be drawn.

Table 10: Presentation of answers to the question "How difficult or easy do you find teaching reading comprehension?"

Answers	Frequency
Difficult	1
A little difficult	2
Very difficult	3
Easy	0
Total	6

We discovered that sixth form teachers of English find the task of teaching reading comprehension difficult. One teacher answered that teaching reading comprehension is difficult, 2 teachers ticked a little difficult answer and 3 chose very difficult answer. The easy response was chosen by no one.

Reading comprehension seems to be difficult because when the teachers are explaining new words, they have to spend a large amount of time to pupils of sixth form. In fact, the pupils have no knowledge in English (all the informant admit it) and there are not enough teaching aids in relation to the teaching of reading comprehension.

Table 11: Presentation of answers to the question "What do you think of training pupils in the following reading comprehension techniques: Previewing, inference, scanning, skimming, prediction, increasing reading speed, SQ3R? Please make a comment, on each technique."

Answers	Frequency
Helpful	4
Unhelpful	1
No answer	1
Total	6

In the above question, teachers were asked to say what they think of training pupils in some reading comprehension techniques namely previewing, inference, scanning, skimming, prediction, increasing reading speed and SQ3R. 4 teachers said that the techniques would be helpful. 1 teacher gave no answer and another one stated that the techniques would be unhelpful. Those who said that these techniques are helpful, suggested that pupils must be trained in any reading comprehension technique.

Table 12. Presentation of answers to the question "How often do you give reading comprehension homework to pupils?"

Answers	Frequency
Sometimes	4
Rarely	2
Total	6

In the above question, teachers were asked to say how often they give reading comprehension homework to pupils. 4 teachers stated that they sometimes give reading comprehension homework. 2 teachers said that they rarely give homework. Homework is very important in the sense that it gives opportunities to the pupils to reinforce their previous lessons.

Table 13. Presentation of answers to the question "Are the pupils motivated to learn reading comprehension"

Answers	Frequency
Yes	4
No	2
Total	6

In answering the above question, 4 teachers indicated that pupils are motivated to learn reading comprehension because when they learn a unit or text they gain new English items. Those who are not

motivated, that are 2 teachers said that it is because it is difficult to understand some words without the teacher's help. They have to learn by heart new words.

Table 14. Presentation of answers to the question "what are your suggestions to contribute sixth form pupils' reading comprehension ability?"

Answers	Frequently
Balancing reading comprehension lessons with the other three language skills	4
Varied and many reading comprehension exercises	2
Total	6

With regard to this question, 4 teachers suggested that balancing reading comprehension lessons with the other three language skills namely listening, speaking and writing should contribute to the sixth form pupils' reading comprehension ability. 2 teachers suggested that varied and many reading comprehension exercises should also contribute sixth form pupils' reading comprehension ability.

Table 15. Presentation of answers to the question "Is the time allotted to reading comprehension enough?"

Answers	**Frequency**
Yes	1
No	5
Total	6

Teachers were also asked to say if the time allotted to reading comprehension is enough. 5 teachers asserted that they do not have enough time. They are obliged to hurry and even if they notice that pupils do not understand they have to continue. Here, they suggested that they should add time because it is not good when teachers are busy with running after the programme whereas pupils do not benefit from that learning.

After considering all answers and comments given by teachers, it is clearly seen that most teachers agreed that they encounter some problems in teaching English reading comprehension.

4.4. Findings

This study aimed at some problems encountered in teaching English reading comprehension pupils of sixth form in Cibitoke province. Indeed, education in public secondary schools is experiencing great problems mainly due to the lack of sufficient and appropriate teaching materials; others to time allotted to the reading comprehension skills or to the size of the class, and many others.

Briefly according to the findings, it can be concluded that English teachers of sixth form encounter problems when developing the reading comprehension skills.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

1. Conclusion

The work is divided into five chapters that are all interrelated. The first chapter it is about the general introduction and provides some background information with regard to the teaching English language in Burundi, its history and concepts. The second chapter talks about the literature review in which some of the authors who have written on reading skill in general and reading comprehension in particular.

The third chapter is about the methodology, used to collect the data. This includes the area of research, the research population and instruments used which are classroom observations, and the use of questionnaires.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the results derived from the questionnaires and their integration, and the findings

I conclude this work in chapter five with a general conclusion and some recommendations for English teachers, pupils, BEPES English Language course Designers, Government and the Ministry of Education.

From the beginning, the difficulty of teaching reading comprehension was the focus of this study. Indeed, the present work

had the aim of analysing the problems encountered by sixth form teachers with regard to reading comprehension. Even if we conducted our study in Cibitoke schools we may say that the results we came up with could apply to all sixth form classes throughout Burundi. It should be remembered that not all the problems have been picked up in this study. Nonetheless, we hope that our objective has been successfully achieved on the basis of the results obtained. The present work has revealed a number of facts.

The linguistic background of sixth form pupils is another factor that causes the difficulty of teaching reading comprehension. Sixth form teachers lack what to rely on since the pupils knowledge in English is poor.

When the teaching is based on items unfamiliar to the pupils, the teacher encounters many difficulties. For example, the new words may represent new concepts to both the teachers and the pupils or even if the concepts are familiar to the teachers , the latter will hardly convey the meanings of those new words to the pupils.

Finally, this work has revealed the difficulties of evaluating the reading comprehension knowledge of the pupils in the classroom. It also follows from this study that testing reading comprehension bristles with difficulties.

These are some problems our analysis revealed . Nonetheless, it seems that sixth form teachers do not do all their best in order to

seriously cope with the handicaps in the teaching of reading comprehension.

2. Recommendations

1° To the BEPES English Language Course Designers

Teachers in Burundi have no control over the choice of the coursebook; this is the choice of BEPES. It was sad to find out that, of all the teachers questioned, no one is satisfied in this research with the sixth form coursebooks they are using. So, we would like to invite the BEPES to consult English teachers when the Bureau is designing a coursebook. Teachers are in a good position to know what happens within the classroom walls, so if they are consulted, they will be able to make suggestions about the content of the coursebook which will fit the learners' needs. English teachers, and we share the same view, would like the BEPES to try to put at their disposal appropriate equipment for teaching reading comprehension.

Of course, we are aware of the financial problems the country is facing, but we invite the BEPES first to supply books for reading in the classes which do not have them, like Cibitoke province schools. Secondly, the BEPES should ask for donations of books and dictionaries. Finally, the BEPES should also design another teacher's book which contains more detailed guidelines for teaching reading comprehension items that seem difficult, and many pictures of concepts represented by some difficult new words.

2° To the Government in general and especially to the Ministry of Education

The Government's policy of education today is to instruct as many pupils as possible. Nevertheless, the policy has not been studied enough: there is a proliferation of schools without increasing the number of teachers. Consequently, we observe a creation of large classes. Large classes are too demanding and present the teacher with numerous problems. Some techniques are not possible in large class.
Our suggestion towards the Government is to train many teachers and motivate them with a high salary. If there are many teachers, the size of classes will be reduced. In a poor country like Burundi, to have many teachers is not possible in short or medium term. That is why we advise English teachers to look for methods of handling large classes such as organising pupils into small groups.

3° To the pupils

The best way to master a language is to practise it every time and everywhere and not only in the classroom. Pupils should search for opportunities to speak English as often as possible at or outside the school when they are with their fellows or other people who can speak English.

4° To the teachers

Teachers must know that they are the key figure in their learning course; they are the pupils' important source of information and their goal is to provide materials to meet the pupils' particular needs and interests. They also have to use their body (mimics, gestures, facial expressions) and their imagination in order to clarify some difficult points being taught.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter to the Respondent

Dear informant,

I am a research student at the University of Burundi, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, in the Department of English Language and Literature.

I am presently writing a thesis on some problems encountered in teaching English reading comprehension to pupils of sixth form.

I would therefore appreciate it you could answer the following questions as objectively as possible. There is no need for you to disclose your name.

Sincerely,

Joselyne NKURUNZIZA

Une lettre aux enquêtés

Cher enquêté,

Je suis étudiante à l'Université du Burundi dans la faculté des lettres et sciences humaines, département de langue et littératures anglaises.

Je suis entrain de faire une recherche sur les problèmes que rencontrent les élèves de huitième année en langue anglaise sur la compréhension du texte.

Je serais alors très reconnaissante si vous m'aidiez en répondant aux questions suivantes aussi objectivement que possible. Ce n'est pas nécessaire de mentionner vos noms.

Merci pour votre collaboration.

Nkurunziza Joselyne

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Pupils

Please tick the right answer

1. Do you like the method used by your teacher during reading comprehension lessons?

Yes ☐

No ☐

2. Among the four skills which one do you prefer most? Classify them by their importance.

a) Speaking skill ☐ c) Writing skill ☐

b) Reading skill ☐ d) Listening skill ☐

3. Is reading a good and interesting activity?

Yes ☐

No ☐

4. Is reading difficult?

Yes ☐

No ☐

5. Is the time-allotted to reading comprehension sufficient?

Yes ☐

No ☐

6. Do dialogues and texts motivate you to learn English?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. Are you satisfied with dialogues contained in the English book *"English skills 1?"*

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

8. Does my school provide all the reading comprehension material?

   Yes ☐

   No ☐

9. What do you do when you encounter difficult words during reading text?

   a) I consult a dictionary ☐

   b) I ignore them ☐

   c) I ask the meaning to my classmate or teacher ☐

   d) I infer from context ☐

Appendix 3: Questionnaire for teachers

1. What are the main problems you meet when teaching Reading?
   a) Difficult ☐
   b) A little difficult ☐
   c) Very difficult ☐
   d) Easy ☐
2. What do you think of training pupils in the following reading comprehension teaching: Previewing, inference, scanning, skimming, prediction, increasing, reading speed, SQ3R? Please make a comment, on each technique.
   a) Helpful ☐
   b) Unhelpful ☐
   c) No answer ☐
3. How often do you give reading comprehension homework to pupils
   a) Sometimes ☐
   b) Rarely ☐
4. Are the pupils motivated to learn reading comprehension?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐
5. What are your suggestions to contribute sixth form pupils' reading comprehension ability?
6. Is the time allotted to reading comprehension enough?
   a) Yes ☐
   b) No ☐