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**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
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**PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN LEARNING
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN BURUNDI:
CASE OF FIFTH FORM PUPILS IN SOME
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BUJUMBURA CITY**

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DEDICATION

To my parents;

To my wife;

To my children;

I warmly dedicate this work

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this work has been done thanks to the contribution of a number of people to whom I want to express my heartfelt gratitude.

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

L1	: First Language
L2	: Second Language
RP	: Received Pronunciation
SNE	: Standard Neutral English
Vd	: Voiced
Vl	: Voiceless
X→Y	: X is pronounced as Y

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ABSTRACT

This present study aims at investigating the pronunciation difficulties made by fifth form pupils in learning English as a Foreign Language and try to find out what brings them about in order to suggest strategies and recommendations to improve proficiency in pronunciation in general and in the beginning level in particular. This work tries to answer the following questions: -do phonological differences between Kirundi and English or French and English affect English pronunciation?-why do fifth form pupils often have pronunciation problems?-what strategies and materials should teachers of English fifth forms use to help their learners achieve a good and correct pronunciation?

This work comprises a methodology chapter which describes the way the data was collected. Probability and non-probability sampling techniques have been used. Hence, the researcher has used a random sampling in order to avoid subjectivity. In findings, from the analysis of the data collected from classroom observations, the teachers' questionnaire and the pupils' read aloud test, the researcher was able to get factual information about the causes of pupils' pronunciation errors when learning English. It was concluded that phonological differences between Kirundi and English as well as those between French and English affect the way fifth form pupils produce English sounds. As for recommendations, the Ministry of Education should revise fifth form programs in order to include pronunciation components wherein some basic notions of English phonetics and phonology should be introduced to fifth form pupils before ended their junior cycle and also set up language laboratories. Teachers should be aware of pronunciation problems and care for the teaching of sound mechanisms. Pupils should know that "practice makes perfect" and speaking inside or outside the classroom with other classmates should be their way of life. They should also be good imitators of their teachers' pronunciation.

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CHAPTER I: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I.0. Introduction

The Learning of a second or a third language is not an easy task in the sense that it is affected by a number of factors. Strevens (1977:46) outlines three sets of factors namely, “*factors contributed by the teacher, those contributed by the learner and finally those contributed by the circumstances in which the learner and the teacher come together*”. As such, people find themselves in the need to communicate and language is the best tool at their disposal. To interact and then share life experience cannot be achieved without effective knowledge of languages other than those of their background. In such away, people as well as Burundians need to learn foreign languages so as to fully communicate with the outside world.

In fact, people learn languages due to a number of reasons-one may want to understand others while travelling or while doing one’s business; one may want to be a member of the society speaking the target language or may have to know the target language for employment. Then, one varies his medium in accordance with his interlocutor as for mutual cooperation since communication is a two-way process, one needs to be effective to make oneself understood. Thus, proficiency becomes a prerequisite in the four communicative skills, i.e listening, speaking, reading and writing.

I.1. Background to the Study

The learner has already a firm knowledge of the sound system of his own language so that the integration of new sounds is likely to encounter some problems. Likewise, a second language often causes a lot of difficulties in the acquisition of a third one.

In Burundi, for instance, by the 6th form pupils are going to be introduced to English, they have already mastered the sounds of Kirundi as well as those of French. In speaking, one combines sounds into words and these words are in turn combined to form sentences. As languages are systems of sounds, the way they combine those sounds, the way they are articulated, produced and then transmitted are different. Thus making the learning of the target language becomes a new phenomenon in the learner's habits. In relation to this idea, it is obvious that the listening and the speaking skills are interrelated and, must be carefully dealt with in order to achieve better pronunciation. Since each nation has at least its own language different from other languages, the difference between them often causes a lot of difficulties to the learners. In this connection, Haycraft (1971:2) points out that "*different nationalities will clearly have different problems in producing the correct patterns of stress and intonation, and the sounds of English will be relative.*" This assertion reveals that one's difficulties in language learning will be relative to one's first language(s). He continues by saying that the teacher's success will depend on "counteracting the interference of the student's mother tongue." In the same vein, Cross (1999:214) echoed Haycraft's idea when he says that "*learners of different nationalities experience different difficulties.*" This is because they tend to hear and speak English via their mother tongue set of sounds.

Although language interference, according to Haycraft (1971), Cross (1999), and many other linguistics, is viewed to the forefront this is not the only factor at the origin of pronunciation learning difficulties. Sometimes learners are unable to perceive the difference between the target sound and a related sound in their mother tongue. This is referred to as poor aural discrimination. At other times, they can hear a difference but cannot reproduce the foreign sound. In this way, it is referred to as a poor articulation. In sum, they may neither hear a difference

between distinctive features nor articulation of the foreign sounds. In fact, some languages present a great variety of sounds and others do not.

As Ladefoged (1993:157) puts it, *“There is a wide variety of consonants in the languages of the world. The places of articulation employed in speaking English do not represent all of the possibilities. Different manners of articulation also occur in other languages.”* This highlights that some sounds in different languages are similar; others present some slight differences whereas within those same language there are other sounds that do not present any likeness with the target language sounds. As our concern is production, transmission and the perception of English sounds, our approach is based on speaking with better pronunciation. Errors while learning English are made at all levels in general and in sounds production or pronunciation in particular since this is the integral part of language learning.

These errors may be phonological, morphological, syntactic or lexical, but the phonological errors will be much more of our concern since it is this level that hampers aural/oral communication. It is also important to know that acquisition later in life brings about learning difficulties. As O’Connor (1980:1) puts it,

It is well known that a child of ten years old or less can learn any language perfectly, if it is brought up surrounded by that language, no matter where it is born or who its parents were. But after this age, the ability to imitate perfectly becomes less (...); adults have great difficulties in mastering the pronunciation (as well as other parts) of foreign languages

The difficulties encountered by adult learners in pronunciation are quite understandable by the fact that there is a general principle which claims that the limitation faculty is primordial in language learning. However, Corder (1981:7) claims that the adult learner has got some other force to counterbalance the infant’s predisposition to develop language behavior.

This claim sounds reasonable since there are adult learners who can achieve a good performance in the pronunciation of a foreign language.

I.2. Statement of the Problem

If secondary school pupils are taught English, it is for the sake of communication. Then communication implies a good pronunciation in order to be understood while speaking or communicating with others. After two years of English language learning in the four main communicative skills, Burundi secondary school pupils in the 5th form still have poor pronunciation. Their pronunciation suffers from overgeneralization, stress dislocation, sound interference, wrong intonation and rhythm. The problems in English pronunciation may be due to a number of factors such as teacher's wrong pronunciation of some sounds and words, wrong acquisition of some sounds by learners which results in fossilization, lack of adequate and appropriate instruments.

Having been introduced to English after they had mastered the Kirundi language and had a certain knowledge of French, Kirundi and French languages are learnt by imitation from hearing. After some years, languages would have created habits within the learner. Those habits become so strong that they make the learner "fall back" to his old knowledge of language whenever she/he is learning a new structure. In other words, Kirundi and French habits interfere in the learning of English. The way English sounds are articulated, produced and then transmitted will be a new phenomenon in the speech organs of the learner. Thus, one has the problem of detecting the degree of difference that is, the nature of difference between sounds systems of the native and foreign language as there is no language laboratory or any other material used such as tapes, cassette players or a well-equipped library.

Besides, English in Burundi and particularly in schools is learnt in an artificial environment-classroom. In the four main skills of English, reading should provide best opportunity of teaching pupil's pronunciation especially by using new words, vocabularies or expression. In this respect, they exercise their oral skill. Otherwise, teachers are interested in teaching components of language such as understanding grammar and vocabulary thus ignoring that language has become written after speech.

I.3. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to look at pronunciation problems made by 5th form pupils and try to find out what brings them about in order to suggest strategies and recommendations to improve proficiency in pronunciation in general and in the beginning level in particular. The main assumption is that once we find out those problems, solutions should be given and we should be able to eradicate them, or least, to reduce them to a minimum.

I.4. Research Questions

This work tries to answer the following questions:

- Do phonological differences between Kirundi and English or French and English affect English pronunciation?
- Why do fifth-form pupils often have pronunciation problems?
- What strategies and materials should teachers of English 5th forms use to help their learners achieve a good and correct pronunciation?

I.5. Motivation

With regard to the motivation for the choice of this topic "Pronunciation Challenges in Learning English as a Foreign Language in Burundi: Case of Fifth Form Pupils in Some Secondary Schools in Bujumbura City", I have chosen to work on pronunciation difficulties with the hope of bringing a contribution to Burundian schools in general and in 5th forms in particular. The study on

pronunciation difficulties in speech sound pronunciation by secondary pupils should be done now that Burundi is an effective member of the East African Community, a region where English is an overwhelming tool of communication in different sectors of life like commerce, economy, politics and education. Furthermore, even though there can be some errors in pronunciation which do not necessarily hamper understanding, there are some others which are capable of making the speaker's message difficult to decode or which result in total unintelligibility.

This idea is illustrated by Strevens (1977:303) statement about the foreign language learner:

He may succeed in speaking with the phonetic and phonological system of his own language in which case he is likely to be totally unintelligible to most native English listeners or, at best, comprehensible only to the extent that a small number of information points can be decoded as a result of the general context of the situation

Another reason for choosing to work on pronunciation problems is a pedagogical one because as Corder (1981:1) points out “*a good understanding of the nature of the learner's errors is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found*”. It is obvious that knowledge of the learners' errors are necessary in the teaching of languages and of pronunciation in particular. It is also worth mentioning that my motivation to do research on the beginning level in general and in 5th form pupils in particular took its root in my teaching practice experience in 5th form at Lycée Municipal Gihosha in September 2013. During a certain time, I noticed how serious the pupils' pronunciation problems were and to deal with issue or skill were.

I.6. Scope of the Study

This study entitled “Pronunciation Challenges in Learning English as a Foreign Language in Burundi: Case of Fifth Form Pupils in Some Secondary Schools in Bujumbura City” will be carried in Bujumbura Mayor Ship. It would be difficult to conduct a research on all levels of a language. Since each language has its phonology, its morphology, its syntax and its semantics. I have been more interested in the phonological level, the area of pronunciation.

Considering the low level of 5th form pupils, I have chosen to work on isolated words in which the pronunciation of definite sounds is tested.

Five sounds will be tested during my research. These are: Fricatives /θ/ and /ð/ the nasal /ŋ/ and two pure vowels /a:/ and /u:/. The secondary schools in which my research was conducted are: Lycée Municipal Gasenyi, Lycée SOS, Lycée Vugizo, Lycée Municipal Gikungu and Lycée Municipal Gihosha and to name few. All these secondary schools were chosen randomly.

I.7. The Significance of the Study

This study will help learners open their minds and know the need to produce perfect sounds. In this way, they will be conscious of improving sound articulation and the way sounds are transmitted while speaking. As for teachers, they should know that to keep constant interaction with the learner is crucial in improving pupils’ pronunciation. Teachers will realize that there is a need to pay attention to Kirundi as well as to French interference errors. The roots of learners’ errors will be identified and good learning or teaching methods will be suggested.

As a matter of fact, those errors will tell the teacher the learner’s needs.

In this connection, Richards (1974:2) points out that: “*The learners’ errors are indicative both of the state of the learner’s knowledge and the ways in which a second or a third is learned*”.

Course designers, material developers and teacher trainers will have insight into training teachers capable of handling oral skill lessons as well as using appropriate materials. Besides, learners will realize that constant practice of English speech may result in pronunciation improvement. This then may yield speech communication intelligibility.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

II.0. Introduction

English phonology like any other phonological system has two parts: segmental and suprasegmental systems. The former consists of sounds while the latter comprises such features as stress, intonation, juncture, rhythm, etc. To this, Leon (1966:57) claims *“that pronunciation has sometimes been confused with phonetics. But it is not enough to learn phonetic theories.”* Rather, one has to cultivate the habits in the pronunciation of the foreign language sounds and their different combinations. To this end, one needs a great deal of practice in the production of and the listening to sounds.

According to McCarthy (1978), the education of the ear is a prerequisite for efficient foreign language study and it is obvious that sounds are very important in communication. Their perception is at the basic of meaning intelligibility when they are well produced. The meaning distortion is when there is at least one sound improperly produced. Ellis and Tomlinson (1980:3) assert that difficulties in pronunciation of sounds are a matter of gymnastics but they seem to ignore the importance of the listening skill in achieving a good pronunciation. They add that: *“In order to form the speech of a foreign language, the student has to learn to put his tongue, lips and other parts of the organs of speech into certain definite position.”*

II.1. What is Pronunciation?

According to Richards et al. (1985:232), pronunciation is “the way a certain sound or sounds are produced (...) pronunciation stresses more the way sounds are perceived by the hearer”. This implies that when someone speaks, he/she combines different sounds in a certain order to build up words or sentences to be uttered”. In this way, the hearer is then able to decode what is said if the speaker

and the hearer share the knowledge of the emitted sounds. The way these sounds are produced, transmitted and then perceived by the hearer is part of pronunciation. As observed by Baker and Westrup (2000), sounds are differentiated by their timbre. These are caused by different degrees of resonance resulting from the shape and size of the cavities or, resonating chambers, formed in the mouth and nose. All this is phonetics.

As for White (1960:100), he refers to pronunciation as “the way a sound is formed and moulded in a way different from any other sound, in intelligibility and acceptable way. During pronunciation, sounds emitted create waves that disturb the air till the hearer’s ear duration. These perceptual properties are interrelated and are interpreted in neuromuscular systems as pitch, force, quality and time. Spencer (1996:2), on the other hand, points it out to be “the study of the physical aspects of speech” while it is defined by Crystal (1985:229) as:

“The science which studies the characteristics of human sound-making especially those sounds used in speech, and provides methods for their description, classification and transcription”. According to Spencer (1996:2), phonology deals with it as “aspect of speech production or perception which are purely the result of the physical properties of the system”. Then, phonetics and phonology are of great interest in order to understand what pronunciation is.

II.2. Stress and Intonation

As far as stress is concerned, it is said that it refers to the amount or emphasis placed on specific syllable in uttering words. Not all syllables in a given word take the same amount of emphasis. In this connection, Gilbert (1984:24) observes that “words often take a difference stress pattern when serving different grammatical functions”.

He concludes by saying that a particular stress serves as a grammatical signal and it part of the proper pronunciation of any word.

It therefore becomes difficult to understand a speaker who stresses any syllable other than that which should be stressed for a specified function.

Moreover, a number of stress levels can be distinguished. But not all linguists agree on the number of stress levels. For some, there are three levels: the primary stress, the secondary stress and the weak stress. For some others, there is a fourth level, that is, the third level. But one fact is that there is one prominent syllable, that is; the primary stress which makes the other sounds quite weak. Authors such as Ladefoged (1975), Roach (1991) state that in English, the word stress is unpredictable and this has to be learnt when the word itself is learnt. In learning pronunciation, it is not enough to be able to pronounce isolated sounds of the language. As Nasr (1980:45) point it out, he defines stress as “the force of breath with which sounds are produced”. And since the force spent on all syllables is not the same, some syllables become more prominent. According to Roach (1991:86), prominence is produced by four main factors, namely loudness, length, pitch and quality. Then, stress which is not only a matter of greater prominence of one syllable in relation to other syllables in the same word-is a distinctive feature in English, that is, it can account for a difference between two words. For example, the words “contrast” and “contrast”. In terms of pronunciation, these words are distinguished only by stress placement, the first one having the stress on the first syllable is a noun while the second one with the stress to a second syllable stands for a verb. The same thing can be said about “conduct” and “conduct” which are a noun and a verb respectively. As Niyoyita (1996:1) points out, a stress misplacement within a lexical unit can shift its part of speech or its meaning and thus can lead to unintelligibility or a mispronunciation of an utterance. The area of stress needs more attention so that English pronunciation can be improved.

According to Chomsky and Halle (1968:16): “*When a primary stress is placed in a certain position, then all other stresses in the string under consideration at that point are automatically weakened by one*”. On the other hand, intonation means the way a speaker’s voice rises and falls in speech. Intonation patterns usually cover more than one word, unless the word is used as a contraction for a larger unit of language. The structure of intonation is less language specific than that of stress. It is rather function specific, as intonation may be used to express emotions such as surprise, disbelief, disappointment or sympathy.

As Rugambwa (1992:22) cited in Nyandwi (2009:22) points out, intonation is “a variation in sound pitch of a speaker which aims at making segments of speech”. Here, a tone group therefore is a unit of information rather than a syntactically defined unit. Intonation may be used for specific purposes:

- He/she is at school. (statement)
- He/she is at school? (Question)

Intonation can be used to denote mood:

- Thank you (real gratitude)
- Thankyou (acknowledgement of something unimportant)

Ogundipe (1975) develops a series of drills on “suggestive emphasis” and “stress and intonation in questions” that illustrate the effect of raising the voice on a particular word in a phrase on the meaning of the phrase. The utterance ‘oh my dear’ for example, may imply a pleasant surprise when with a rising tone or sympathy when said with a falling tone. As earlier said, whereas such intonation does not change the grammar of what is said, it may lead to ambiguity and this hinders precision in communication. In this section, Roach (1983:4) recognizes that,

Imitation as a fundamental skill in developing practical work in phonetics whereas initiation involves aural perception and oral production, the latter is secondary to and dependent on the former; and is sometimes only a test of whether one can discriminate sound which they may not even be capable of articulation for some anatomical or other reason

II.3. English Pronunciation and English Spelling

With regard to the pronunciation and spelling of an English word, there is a broad correspondence between the way words are pronounced and the way they are spelt in most of their respective languages. English pronunciation has changed overtime but the spelling has not been revised to be brought up to date. Sometimes, the word spelling and pronunciation fall apart. As Kuiper and Alan (2004:105) say, “clearly there is more than one way of spelling a single sound and particular spelling may present more than a single sound. This takes us farther away from our seemingly achievable goal of one sound, one spelling symbol. To make matters worse, the spelling of a word may contain silent letters. These letters have no sound associated with them (although they may have been pronounced at some earlier time in the history of English)”. Furthermore, the pronunciation of a word may include a sound that is not presented in the spelling. As far as pronunciation and spelling are concerned, the spelling of English is conservative while its pronunciation is dynamic. This dynamism may have an impact on the teachers and learners of English as a foreign language. Sometimes, the spelling intervenes in the pronunciation of unfamiliar words although one way falls into a pit of mispronunciation. In such away, the spelling becomes phonemic.

Ellis and Tomlinson (1980:7) point out that “*each language has specific patterns according to the ways in which the sounds combine together*”. To clarify this idea, they say that in one language, consonants may cluster together three or at a time whereas in another language, each consonant alternates with a vowel sound. In the Burundian linguistic context, the teacher while teaching English needs to know that neither Kirundi nor French are patterned like English. The knowledge of differences between these languages will make the teacher help his pupils in the English language acquisition (learning a foreign language).

II.3.1. Received Pronunciation (RP)

People learn a language for the main reason which is fully communication. Facing great diversity of English accents, a foreign learner wishes that there would exist a neutral pronunciation. This would eliminate divergences in English. In this vein, the English language intelligibility would increase. For Kimble-Fry (2001), this neutral pronunciation is referred to as “Standard Neutral English” (SNE). However, RP has been chosen as the model for production because it is the most widely understood and is the most common accent in English with regard to pronunciation.

II.3.2. English Received Pronunciation

Historically, it is said that not all Britain speaks Standard English. One variety of South Britain was favored to be the language of education. Contrary to French pronunciation that has developed a uniform variety, English knows regional Standard English. In this case, RP or Received Pronunciation means “*to be accepted and understood*” in its sense of “*accepted in the best society*”. Wells (1982:10) refers to RP as a “non-localizable variety of England”. As Gimson (2001:297) puts it, for a foreign learner, RP is not only a “*suitable model in the first race but also guidance on acceptable tolerance and deviation from this model*”. Then, this assumption shows how RP is of great importance as far as pronunciation is concerned.

II.3.3. English Accents

As devoted by authors such as Wells (1982), English language has faced varieties of accents. In this way, accent will refer to varieties of pronunciation and is defined by Wells as “*the way English is pronounced by different people in different places*”. English accents may be due to a number of factors that may affect it; those are: geographical area, social class, sex and age. Taking into account such a factor, accent may also be peculiar to an individual. In this way, it is referred to as idiolect. Wells (1982:1) further explains “*foreign accent*” as “*pronunciation patterns which may be expected to reflect many of the phonological and phonetic characteristics of their mother tongue*”. This view matches more the situation in Burundi where a difficult sound in the target language is replaced by a similar one in the learner’s mother tongue or rules of L₁ or L₂ are transposed in the target language.

II.3.4. Issues and theories related to the Teaching and Learning of Pronunciation

To hear someone speaking, we learn how to speak also. While hearing words or expressions from a native speaker, one should imitate as closely as possible and speaking should follow. In addition to this, Nida (1957:16) highlights by saying that a “scientifically valid procedure in language involves listening first, to be followed by speaking, then reading and finally writing the language. In spoken English or any other language, a number of difficulties are faced. According to Jones (1972:2), there are five things one must learn as far as pronunciation is concerned:

- (1) “He must learn to recognize readily and with certainty the various speech sounds occurring in the language, when he hears them pronounced; he must moreover learn to remember the acoustic qualities of those sounds.
- (2) He must learn to make the foreign sounds with his own organs of speech.
- (3) He must learn to use those sounds in their proper places in connected speech.
- (4) He must learn the proper usage in the matter of “sound-attitudes” or “parodies” as they are often called (especially length, stress, voice and pitch).
- (5) He must learn to catenate sounds, i.e. to join each sound of sequence on the text, and to pronounce the complete sequence rapidly and without stumbling”.

As stated earlier, learners need to acquire sounds at early stage in order to avoid mispronunciation since correcting them later is difficult or even impossible when fossilization has taken place. The learner may not know the sounds involved in the language she/he is learning and then fail to articulate them. In fact, in order to surmount pronunciation difficulties, the key to language learning needs to involve conscious mimicry and practice.

While leaning pronunciation, it is worth paying more attention to the teacher's pronunciation. If the teacher is a good model, the learner will build up helpful strategies in his language acquisition (FL). As Jones (1972) states, "A systematic practice in listening for sounds is required for good ear cultivation". This assertion implies that the learner will train his ear for the ability to perceive whether he pronounced the foreign sound correctly or not, or even understanding others. In relation to this, Dubin and Olshtain (1977:84) point out that

Attention must be paid to these sounds so that the learner begins by hearing and possibly also imitating them correctly. Such special attention to the segmental sounds can be given only at the initial state while sentence intonation, sentence rhythm are practiced constantly throughout the whole course of study as part of regular oral language drills

They continue by saying that:

When we listen to the flow of speech in an unfamiliar language, we cannot understand what the sounds mean. Even if we recognize some of the sounds, we still hear the foreign language as an unintelligible stream of human noises. What is missing for us to be able to understand the noises is the system of arrangement which occur in that language

As far as language skills are concerned, Dubin and Olshtain (1977) further give two basic requirements:

- i) "If pronunciation work does not start at the beginning of the course, wrong pronunciation habits might develop. Such habit, because they are acquired at the very beginning, are very hard to correct at a later stage";

- ii) “Fostering some auditory recognition ability before reading and writing are begun will greatly help to prepare the learner for the teaching of literacy skill.”

II. 4. Phonology of a Foreign Language

A foreign language is defined as a language which is not acquired in a natural environment. People then learn this kind of language for other reasons such as traveling, doing one’s own business, politics or to be able to communicate with people speaking that target language. To distinguish between a second language and a foreign one, Bavumiragiye(2009:5) while quoting Weber et al, (1974:108) says that “*L2 is a language which is not native language but which is used as a medium of instruction in school or as a language of communication within a country.*” In this respect Niyongabo (2006:15) says that a foreign language is

A mere subject matter in schools, a L2 fetches both in social environment (just a L1) and in classroom environment (just as FL and as medium of instruction). In other words, L2 acquisition has to take) place in course of everyday communication and international intervention on the one hand, and takes the form of regular instruction in school on the other hand

In the Burundian context, MT or L1 is Kirundi, L2 is French and FL is English needless to say that it is learnt in artificial environment-the classroom. As Baker and Westrup (2000:144) point out, “A foreign accent” is inevitable if students attempt to produce the sounds of a new language while keeping their mouths shaped and their tongue placed as for similar sounds in their native language.

To be capable of pronouncing or being introduced to a new language or a foreign language, the learner needs to train his muscles to a new system of articulatory positions. He/she will also train his/her ear in order to correct sound and gain facility to transfer impulses from the brain to correct speech muscles.

According to Wells (1982:39), phonology is viewed as “*a phonetic aspect of grammar, that is the way words or sentences are pronounced.*” As for Kreindler (1989:10), phonology is thought of as “a collection of phonemes and collection of rules for putting these units together to express the meaning of morphemes, words and sentences”. The teacher also needs to be skilled in all levels as well as sounds discrimination. To being a non-native speaker, he/she must make proof of his/her accent. In doing so, his/her keen auditory discrimination of sounds will help him/her perceive whether the learner is making a “foreigner accent” or not. In this vein, Baker and Westrup (2000:120) point out that:

In order to overcome the natural tendency by of the student to “hear” in the categories made familiar by the native language, the teacher will need to give aural-discrimination exercises in which near-equivalents in the native and in the foreign language are clearly demonstrated and in which near-equivalents in the foreign language are distinctly differentiated. Drill in aural discrimination is best accomplished by the use of minimal pairs, words which differ only in pronunciation of the sounds being practiced

II.5. Phonological description of English, French and Kirundi Sounds

II.5.1. English Speech Sounds

English speech sounds are divided into two categories: consonants and vowels. Then, consonants are made with restriction or obstruction of the air whereas in vowels, there is a free passage of the air.

II.5.1.1. English Consonant Sounds

English consonants are made up of friction consonants, stop consonants, nasal consonants, lateral consonants and glides. As far as friction (fricative) consonants are concerned, we distinguish nine consonants whose main sounds all have friction as their important feature. Those sounds are /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/. For all these sounds, the lungs push the air through a narrow opening where it causes friction of various kinds. Gimson (1981:180) divides RP (Received Pronunciation) fricatives into five groups according to the place of articulation. We have then labial, dental, alveolar, palate-alveolar and global.

For /f/ and /v/, there is a particular way of pronunciation. The soft palate is raised so that no air goes through the nose, and it is all forced through the mouth, the bottom lip is very close to the upper front teeth. As for /θ/ and /ð/ they are differentiated by the fact that the first sound is strong and the second sound is weak. The following position of the vocal tract is involved in the production of those sounds. The soft palate is raised so that all the breath is forced to go through the mouth, the tip of the tongue is close to the upper front teeth. The noise made by /θ/ and /ð/ is very great. Considering the sound /h/, this occurs before a vowel and consists of the sound of breath passing between the open vocal cord and out of the mouth which is already for the following vowel.

A. Stop Consonants

In stop consonants, the breath is completely at some point in the mouth, by the lips or the tongue back and then released with a slight explosion. They are /p, b, t, d, k, g/. The sounds /p/ and /b/ are pronounced in the following ways: the lips are closed firmly and the soft palate is raised so that the breath cannot get out of either the nose or the mouth but is trapped for a short time; when the lips are opened suddenly the breath rushes out with a slight explosion. For the sounds /t/ and /d/, the tip of the tongue (not the blade) is firmly against the

middle of the alveolar ridge, not too near the teeth and not near the hard palate. The soft palate is raised, so the breath cannot pass over the sides of the tongue. When the tongue tip is lowered suddenly from the teeth rigor, the breath rushes out without a slight explosion. The last other sounds are /k/ and /g/ called velars involve the back of the tongue being in firm contact with the soft palate and being raised so that the breath is trapped for a short time.

B. Nasal Consonants

Those are /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/. In all nasal consonants, the soft palate is lowered and at the same time the mouth passage is blocked at some point, so that all the air is pushed out of the nose. As far as /m/ and /n/ are concerned, the position of the speech organs is the following: the soft palate is lowered for both /m/ and /n/. For /m/, the mouth is blocked by the two lips. For /n/, by pressing the tongue against the alveolar ridge and the sides of the tongue against the sides of the palate. Both sounds are voiced in English, as they are in other languages like French and Kirundi, and the priced air passes out through the nose. Both sounds are voiced in English, and the priced air passes out through the nose.

C. Lateral Consonants

According to O' Connor (1980), there is only one English lateral consonant. This consonant is /l/. It is formed laterally, that is, instead of the breath passing down the center of the mouth, it passes round the sides of an obstruction set up in the center. The position of speech organs for /l/ as in /laɪk/ is described as follows: The position of speech organs for /l/ as in and the sides of the tongue-blade are in firm contact with the alveolar ridge obstructing the center of the mouth. The sides of the remainder of the tongue are not in contact with the sides of the palate, so air can pass between the sides of the tongue and the palate, round the palate, round the central-obstruction formed by the tip and blade of the tongue and so out of the mouth.

D. Gliding Consonants

Those are /j/ and /w/. The consonant /j/ is quick glide from the position of the vowel /i:/ or /I/ to any other vowel. The consonant /w/ consists of a quick glide from a quick /u:/ or /v/ to whatever vowel follows.

Here is a chart that classifies them as presented by Nasar (1980:30).

Manner of articulations Place of Articulation	Bilateral	Labio-dental	Interdental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
VI Stops Vd	P B		t d					k g	
VI Affricatives Vd						tʃ dʒ			
VI Fricatives Vd		f v	θ ð	s z		ʃ ʒ			h
Nasal vd	M			N				ŋ	
Laterals vd				L					
Vibrant vd					R				
Semi-vowel vd	W						J		

VI : voiceless sounds

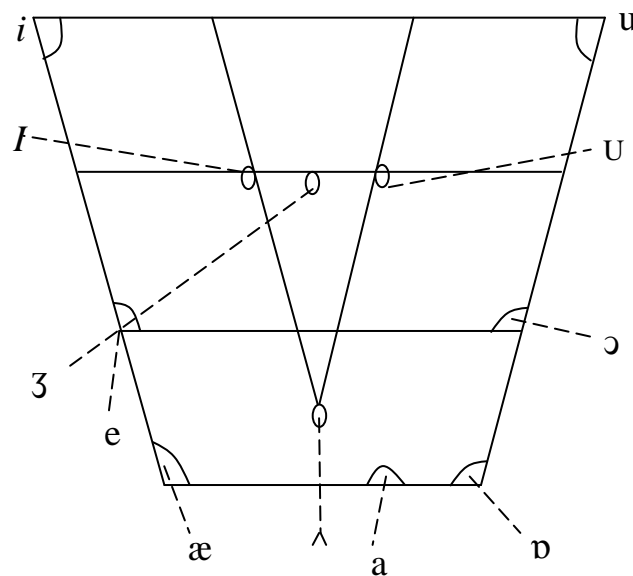
Vd : Voiced sounds

II.5.1.2. English Vowel Sounds

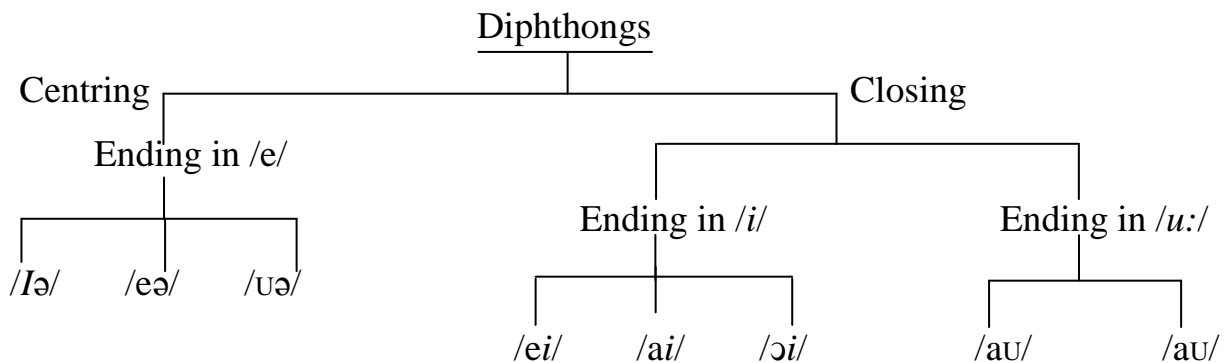
The English vowels are different from consonant in the way they are articulated. This is emphasized by Lions (1980) in saying this “*As far as their articulation is concerned, consonants differ from vowels in that consonants are produced by temporarily obstructing or restring the air stream as it passes through the mount whereas vowels are produced without obstruction*”. The change from vowel to another is the outcome of changing shapes that the speech tract takes, by changing the position of the tongue.

This alone does not make the quality of the vowels as Jones (1972:39) agrees: vowel quality, though chiefly dependent on the position of the tongue, is also affected to a considerable extent by the position of the lips. Jones (1972:33, 63) also gives a list of rounded and unrounded vowels. The unrounded vowels are /i:/, /I:/, /æ/, /ɛ/, /a/, /a:/, /ʌ/, /ə:/ and /ə/ whereas the rounded vowels are /ɔ:/, /ɔ:/, /u:/, /u/. These vowels are called RP monophthongs. Vowels are divided into two categories: short vowels and long ones. Diphthongs are divided into three groups: sounds ending in /I/, those ending in /u/ and those ending in /ə/.

According to Roach (1991:20) diphthongs are defined as sounds that consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another. He also states that the total number of diphthongs is eight. Below is a chart for pure English vowels as provided by Gimson (2001:303).



The following chart shows diphthongs:



II.6. Kirundi Speech Sounds

Like English, Kirundi language has consonants and vowels. As we did for English sounds, the consonants will be described first and then the vowels.

II.6.1. The Kirundi Consonant Sounds

The number of Kirundi consonants is twenty-two according to Ntahokaja (1983:3). They are /*p, b, t, d, k, g, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, dʒ, m, n, ŋ, r, pf, ts, tʃ, w, j, h*/. According to Ndayishinguje (1978:120) cited in Kayonde (1998), Kirundi consonants are classified in six groups as far as the manner of articulation is concerned. The first group refers to stops, this group is made by bilabials /*p*/; /*b*/, labiodentals /*Pf*/ and /*D*/, velars /*K*/ and /*g*/. The second group is that of fricatives; it consists of the labiodentals /*F*/; /*V*/, the alveolar /*s*/ and /*z*/, the retroflex /*f*/ and /*z*/ and the glottal /*H*/. The third group is that of nasals; it consists of the bilabial /*m*/ and the alveolar /*n*/. The fourth group, the one of vibrant is made only of one sound /*r*/ which is alveolar. The fifth group, the one of affricates is made of the labiodentals /*pf*/, the alveolar /*ts*/ and the palatal /*tʃ*/. The last group, which called “glides”, is made of the bilabials /*w*/ and the palatal /*j*/. Here is the Kirundi consonantal chart drawn from Ndayishinguje (1978:120).

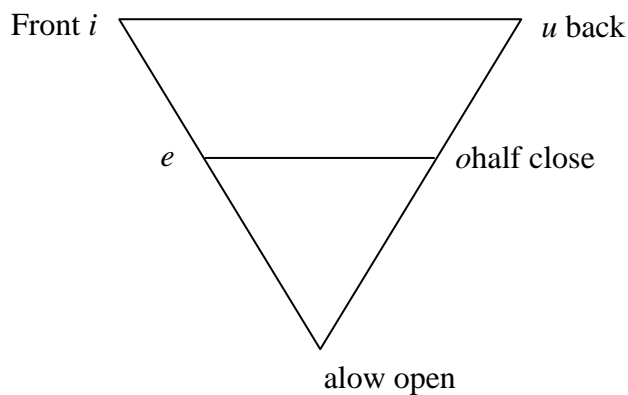
Manner of articulations Place of articulation	Bilateral	Labio-dental	Interdental	Alveolar	Retroflex	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
vl Stops vd	<i>p</i> <i>b</i>	<i>Pf</i> <i>D</i>						<i>K</i> <i>g</i>	
vl Fricatives vd		<i>F</i> <i>V</i>		<i>s</i> <i>z</i>	<i>f</i> <i>z</i>				<i>H</i>
Nasal vd	<i>M</i>			<i>n</i>					
Vibrant vd			<i>ŋ</i>	<i>r</i>					
vl Affricatives vd				<i>ts</i>	<i>tʃ</i> <i>dʒ</i>				
Glides	<i>W</i>				<i>J</i>				

II.6.2. The Kirundi Vowel Sounds

The Kirundi language has five vowels such as /a, I, u, o, e/. /a/ is a low open vowel, /i/ is high close front vowel, /u/ is a high close back vowel, /o/ is a half close back vowel and /e/, is half close front vowel.

Kirundi vowels sounds are however very limited when compared to French vowels or English ones.

Here is a Kirundi vowel chart as presented by Rashida (1991:33).



II.7. French Speech Sounds

Just like English and Kirundi, French has also consonants and vowels classified according to the way places of articulation vary as well as the manner of articulation. Here are French consonants: /p, b, t, d, k, g, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, r, l, R, m, n, ŋ/. /w, y, h/ are semi-vowels. As for vowels, we have /i, y, u, e, Ø, o, ε, œ, ɔ, ã, È, œ, a, α, ə/.

II.7.1. The French Consonant Sounds

Here is French consonantal chart as provided by Kayonde (1998:40) from Deloffre and Hellengonar'h (1983:87).

			Bilabials		Labiodentales		Alvéolaires		Prépalatales		Médiopalatales		Postpalatales	
Orales		Occhisives	sound	son	sound	Son	sound	son	sound	Son	sound	son	sound	son
		<i>P</i>	<i>b</i>				<i>t</i>	<i>d</i>			<i>k</i>	<i>g</i>		
	Constrictives	Spirantes			<i>F</i>	<i>V</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>z</i>						<i>R</i>
		Vibrantes						<i>r</i>						
		Laterals						<i>l</i>						
Nasals				<i>m</i>			<i>n</i>					<i>ŋ</i>		

II.7.2. The French Vowel Sounds

As far as French vowels are concerned, we have sixteen French vowels as earlier mentioned. Here is a chart of French vowels sounds as provided by Delbecque (2006:151).

closed							
	<i>i</i>	<i>y</i>					<i>u</i>
	<i>e</i>	Ø					<i>o</i>
	ε	ε	œ	œ	ə	ɔ	ɔ
opened							
	<i>a</i>	ã					<i>a</i>

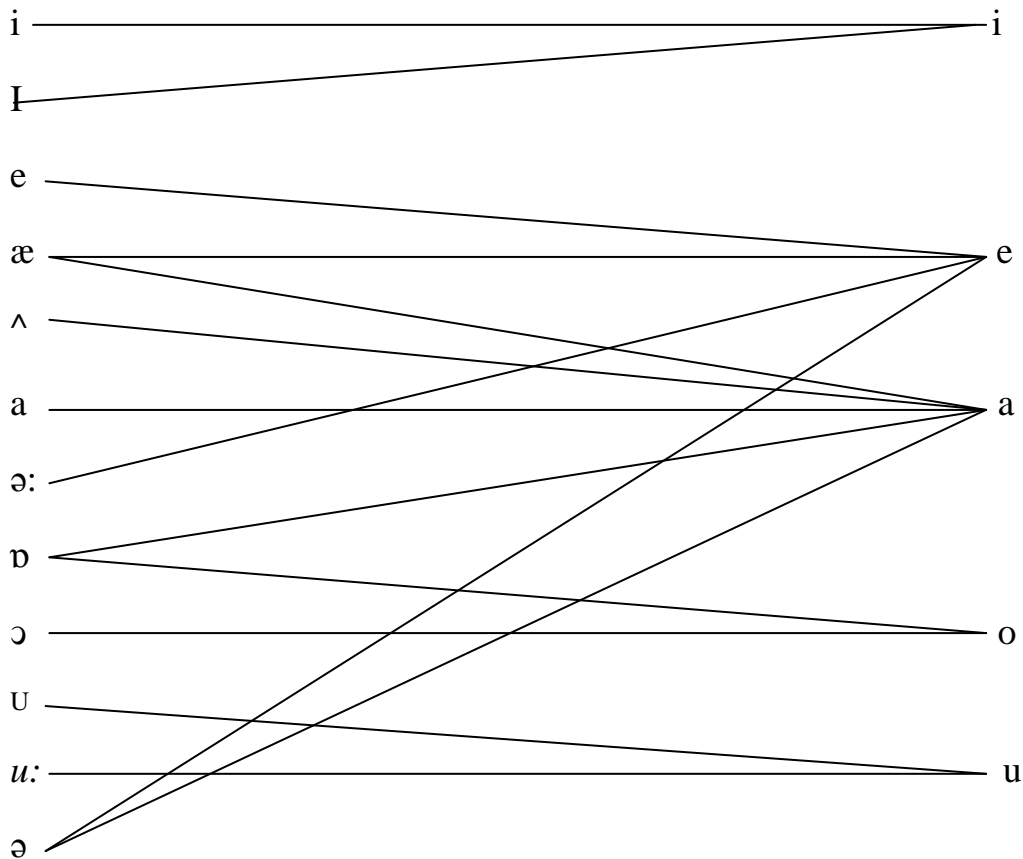
II.8. Phonological differences

The difference between those three languages, those are English, French and Kirundi languages lies in consonants of each language on the one hand and in vowels of each language on the other hand. As far as consonants in those languages are concerned, one may see that /ð/ and /θ/ do not exist in French as well as in Kirundi. /ð, θ, l, ŋ, dʒ/ do not exist in Kirundi whereas /pf, tʃ, .../ do not exist in English and not in French. These sounds /ð, θ/ cause a lot of troubles to non-native speakers of English. As for vowels, the difference between these three languages is great. English is composed of 20 vowels (Tench, 1981); French, sixteen (Delbecque, 2006) and Kirundi only five (Rashida, 1991:33). There is a big gap between English vowels and Kirundi ones when they are composed while there is a small difference between French and English vowels.

Here is an illustration of such a problem as provided by Gahungere (2004:39).

English vowels phonemes

Kirundi vowels phonemes



II.9. Interference

At birth, an individual is endowed with the ability to acquire human language. However on the acquisition of the mother tongue (L1) he acquires only those linguistic habits of that language ignoring the rest. According to the behaviorist learning theory, old habits get in the way of learning new habits. Thus in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), the patterns of the learner's mother tongue get in, the way of second language and foreign language learning. Mispronunciation may be due to the interference from first language (L1). The foreign language learners tend to show their habit while faced with a new word or item to pronounce.

They want to move their vocal organs very fast some sounds they tend to hear as the same or close to their first language. Such habit may lead to bad pronunciation and as O'Connor (1983:17) points out, *“Although the habit formation theory of language acquisition is no longer held to be true, much of what the learner does in the field of pronunciation is demonstrably a matter of habit”*. For instance, learner of English in Burundi whose mother tongue is Kirundi tend to pronounce /d/ while pronounce the word “father”. This is because the sound /ð/ of father does not exist in Kirundi and they are used to producing the sound /d/. Then they pronounce /fatal/ which becomes a mispronunciation of the word “father” in English. Furthermore, to learn a foreign language while is still young, at an age at which patterns and rules of his or her native language is small. But if one is old, the more the rules and system of native language are likely to interfere with learning the system of the foreign language. According to Rivers (1970:126) *“teaching student to pronounce strange sounds is easier with younger children”*. In the same vein, Robert (1965:9) asserts that

The older, the person, the more difficult it is to combat the interference coming from the native system and the more it must be a matter of directed conscious effort. Interference causes problems in pronunciation of English words, because of the existence of some sounds of English in the learner’s native language

A good pronunciation in foreign language is very difficult to achieve. Having an acceptable pronunciation in foreign language means that you can pronounce the sounds in the foreign language in such a way that a native speaker recognizes and can hear the differences between them. A good pronunciation implies that you actually pronounce the foreign language sounds as they are produced by native speakers and that you do not substitute the sounds of your own language.

This means, according to Robert, L.P (1965:89) that pronouncing correctly implies the ability to hear correctly. Then, a good pronunciation necessitates listening to the new sounds especially sounds which are different from those of the native language of the learner and consequently different to him/her to pronounce. After the listening, learners of foreign language need enough time to produce new sounds.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

III.1. Introduction

The present study entitled “Pronunciation Challenges in Learning English as a Foreign Language in Burundi: Case of Fifth Form Pupils in Some Secondary Schools in Bujumbura City”, just like any other scientific study, comprises a methodology chapter which describes the way the data was collected. This section shows also the methods the researcher has used to answer his research questions. Therefore, this chapter comprises its concern such as population, sampling techniques, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

III.2. Data Collection

III.2.1. Description of Population

The subjects involved in this study were males and females pupils from 5th Forms and teachers of English in those different schools. All speak Kirundi as their mother tongue (L1) to which French is added from their primary school as a second language (L2). Whereas they have a firm knowledge of L1 and L2, they have learnt English as their third language from the sixth form. The total number of the subjects was eighty: seventy five pupils and five teachers. In all, the population amounts to 883 and 80 were used in the sample.

III.2.2. Sampling Techniques

In any research of a scientific study, the word sampling is one of the most unavoidable steps to meet. Since the researcher could not use all the subjects, much attention is to be paid so that the sample should reflect the reality of what happens to learners of foreign language and of fifth form pupils in particular. In this vein, Bouma (1984:114) cited in Nyandwi (2009:38) confirms that a reliable sample is “*an accurate reflection of the whole population from which it is taken*”. Do a matter of fact, the way the sample is determined is for to what extent we can generalize from the findings.

According to Fink (1995) cited in Nyandwi (2009), as far as sampling is concerned, there are two types: “probability sampling and non-probability sampling. First of all, probability sampling gives a statistical basis that a sample is representative of the target population. This is to say that each member of the population has equal chance to be eligible. It implies a random sampling which avoids subjectivity in sample choice. As for non-probability sample, it is a choice made with a judgment on the characteristics of the target population and the needs of the survey.

Based on such a technique, some members are not going to be eligible. Hence, the researcher has used a random sampling in order to avoid subjectivity. Names were written on small pieces of paper and then folded before they were put into a basket. Seven pupils in each class, by picking up seven pieces of paper from the basket, were therefore chosen to represent others in the test while in the classroom observations each class was taken as a sample. Besides, each teacher in the targeted class level was included in the sample. After the population sample, a test was administrated to the selected pupils. Teachers on their hand were also given questionnaires to fill in. these were to be handed back.

To collect the data needed for the achievement of this study, I made use of three kinds of procedures, namely:

- a) Classroom observations of 5th form English lessons
- b) Pronunciation test for 5th form pupils
- c) A questionnaire for 5th form teachers of English

III.2.2.1. Classroom Observations

The observation was also crucial in data collection. One of the reasons why I insisted on being present in the classroom for direct observations of what was going in English lessons is that expressed by Wallace (1991:62).

This kind of observation is also extremely valuable since certain aspects of the action will be clear to the observer in a way that they cannot be to the teacher. In sports, there is a saying that the spectator sees most of the game.

Also, observations were due to the fact there is a relationship between pupil's errors and pupil's learning situation and as Norrish (1988:33) puts it, "error in the foreign language satiation really has to be a result of something that happens in the classroom, since it is usually only here that the learner comes into contact with the target language".

In the same vein, Hirst (1974:3) adds that "the process of teaching can be planned and discussed while the activity itself can be observed". The observations made by the researcher were based on four criteria such as:

- how much emphasis the teacher put on the pronunciation of new words;
- how much emphasis was put on the learning of the skill whether pupil's pronunciation errors are corrected or not as well as teacher's awareness of them;
- how the teacher's own English sound articulation is, especially that of /η, θ, ð, u:/ and a:/;
- and how many errors in pronunciation went unnoticed by the teacher's strategies and materials used in teaching pronunciation.

III.2.2.2. The Test

During my research work, the test is of a paramount importance. It helped the researcher to answer his first research question. "Do phonological differences between Kirundi and English and French and English affect English pronunciation?" Having listed the words from 6th and 5th form containing sounds the researcher wanted to hear pupils pronounce was made such as th-sounds respectively represented as /θ/, /ð/ as well as like /ŋ/ and other long vowels sounds as /u:/ and /a:/.

Then the list of words was administered to each member of the sample to be read aloud. While reading, the researcher was able to decode the mispronunciation of some words containing such sounds.

III.2.2.3.The Questionnaire

A questionnaire is, according to Ritchterial and Chancerel (1980) cited in Hakizimana (2006:25), “*the structured instruments for the collection of the data which translate research hypotheses into questions*”. In this respect, questions on a questionnaire turn around research hypotheses. Besides, Niyongabo (2006:52) highlights this point when he says that “it helps the researcher get the data in providing answers to research questions”. These questions on a questionnaire are controlled by research questions or hypotheses. Son the questionnaire are controlled and then written in simple language so as to make their understanding easy.

Pints and Grawitz (1974:657) distinguish two types of questions namely open questions and closed questions. To clarify between open and closed questions is that in the former, the informant is quite free to organize his/her answer as he/she pleases while in the latter the informant’s freedom of expression is limited. In fact, in this kind of questions the informant is provided with many answers among which he/she is invited to choose the right one. The importance of all those questions has to do with English sounds teaching and related problems, the teacher’s own pronunciation and place given to it, their pronunciation teaching methods, pupil’s environment for practice, the relationship between the teachers and their pupils and how they help the pupils to improve their pronunciation. After the teachers fill in the questionnaire, they handed them back to the researcher to be compared and analyzed before drawing some conclusions and making some recommendations.

III.3. Data Analysis Procedures

This section intends to show how the data collected has been processed. Then, the analysis was based on the data got from the three kinds of data collection procedures referred to in the previous section, namely, the classroom observations, the pronunciation test in reading taken by fifth form pupils and a questionnaire reserved for fifth form English teachers. First of all, English lessons were observed to see if pupil's pronunciation errors were not the results of the teaching with or without materials at their disposal. Then the observations made were to evaluate the teaching and leaving pronunciation in particular.

Second, the tests given to 5th form pupils were analyzed on the basis of tables thus categorizing good and bad performance in percentages and their relative frequency. To any reader of this work, this then leads to a better understanding of pupils' pronunciation errors. The researcher was able to get clear answers to questions related to pupils' pronunciation. The purpose was getting information on common difficulties in English language learning pronunciation. Finally, answers from the teacher's questionnaire were very useful in my research work. They then helped me to have a clear understanding of how pronunciation should be handled for the sake of the pupils. Besides, the questionnaire and the classroom observations gave me a clear understanding of the causes of pupils' errors in pronunciation and then suggested solutions and recommended strategies to be used so as to improve the English pronunciation by Burundi secondary pupils. In addition to this, this chapter deals with the researcher's methodology and shows how the data were collected thanks to the classroom observations, pupils' test and the teachers' questionnaire. It also shows how they were analyzed.

CHAPTER IV : DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

IV.0. Introduction

This present chapter shows how data collected from classroom observations, pronunciation test and teacher's questionnaire have been present, discussed, analyzed and interpreted. In addition, it shows the extent to which the research question under investigation of this study have been answered. It is convenient to recall them :

- 1) Do phonological differences between Kirundi and English or French and English affect English pronunciation?
- 2) Why do fifth form pupils often have pronunciation problems?
- 3) What strategies and materials should teachers of English 5th forms use to help their learners achieve a good and correct pronunciation?

During analysis, frequencies and percentages will be used to discuss and interpret the data collected from classroom observations. Identification of difficulties will be done in the analysis of the pronunciation test given to the fifth form pupils and possible answers from teachers' questionnaire.

IV. 1. Data Presentation and Analysis

IV.1.1 Data Presentation and Analysis from the Classroom Observations

In the classroom, the research wants to see and analyze how the teacher learns English pronunciation to his/her pupils especially during his/her course lessons. While the researcher was in class, the interaction between the teacher and his/her pupils shows how teacher carries out pronunciation of dental fricatives /ð/, and /θ/, and the nasal /ŋ/ and two pure vowels like /ɑ:/and /u:/. At that time, problems that pupils face in sound production were also realized.

IV.1.1. 1. The Teacher's own Sound Production

In different classes where in this study was conducted, the researcher was introduced by the fifth form teacher. After a short introduction, the researcher realized that, to some teachers but not all, the sounds /ð,θ,ŋ/ and /ɑ:/ and /u:/ still cause problems in that there was no distinction between English sounds and other sounds from their already acquired languages. For the word that and then, some pronounce [dat] instead of /ðæt/ and /den/ instead of /ðen/. These two examples show that some problems may result from teacher's own wrong pronunciation.

In pronunciation therefore, required materials are needed. As Hill (1967:77) cited in Niyongabo (2006:21) points out.

It is impossible for a teacher to teach better pronunciation than his own.

What a conscientious teacher can do is to learn to speak with a pronunciation that is internationally intelligible and then teach his students to do the same.

In relation to this, a teacher would, through hearing records, help himself as well as his pupils when imitating a good model.

IV.1.1. 2. Pupils' Problems during English Sound Pronunciation

Having attended English course lessons during classroom observations, data are obtained via their readings in class, rehearsal of some words, their oral speech while doing their grammar exercises as well as their debates. In all these, data obtained provide information that pupils' learning of English pronunciation is poor. Some words are influenced by either Kirundi and French on one hand and English on the other hand. For instance, when the researcher was in class, he heard pupils say /park/ instead of /pa:k/ .

Furthermore, the researcher found that a few pupils were motivated. He noticed that some pupils become shy while performing their English pronunciation. In most schools, pupils are not willing to speak unless the teacher calls his/her name to answer his/her question. Therefore, teachers need to encourage their pupils to develop good attitudes and help them plan sufficient time thus making much effort to English pronunciation especially through practice. In this way they may see that, as Stevenson (1948:1859) puts it, “*even hard word grows easy to the practiced hand*”.

In addition, it was realized by the researcher that some English words were not corrected by the teacher. In such a way, pupils still keep practicing their mispronunciation. Even in some corrected words, some teachers do not invite their pupils to imitate or encourage them to repeat. Needless to mention that, in cases with many pupils it was difficult to follow all the pupils since some were not following and the class was numerous. Besides, the researcher notices that books are the only materials aids. Again these books do not contain the phonetic transcription of words that may be new to learners. No drawings were used in any of the classes visited, and where the imitation method was used no kinaesthetic images were used.

All in all, the classroom observations revealed to the researcher that the respondents’ information match the reality. Then, it is in light of this, together with the read aloud test and the teacher’s questionnaire that conclusion as well as recommendations were made.

IV.1.2. Data Presentation and Analysis from the Achievement Test

In this part, the research’s intention is to show how failure and success were in the achievement test done by fifth form pupils. The results from that achievement test will be more helpful in order to discuss each of the factors such as language interference, environment as well as learning and teaching strategies.

Table 1: English Sounds like /ð,θ, a:,u:/ are a major problem for Fifth Form Pupils in the schools under study

Sounds	English words	Right sounds		Wrong sounds	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
/ð/	Another	8	10.7	67	89.3
	Brother	10	13.4	65	86.6
	Father	11	14.7	64	85.3
	Mother	9	12	66	88
	The	7	9.1	68	90.6
	This	13	17.7	62	82.6
	Those	10	13.8	65	86.6
	Rather	8	10.7	67	89.3
	Without	12	16	63	84
	Together	15	20	60	80
	There	14	18.7	61	81.3
	They	19	25.4	56	74.6
	Then	18	24	57	76
	Them	16	21.4	59	78.6
	Their	6	8	69	92
That	17	22.7	58	77.3	
/θ/	Wealth	5	6.6	70	93.4
	Nothing	3	4	72	96
	With	2	2.6	73	97.4
	Three	6	8	69	92
	Threw	4	5.3	71	94.7
	Through	8	10.6	67	89.4
	Everything	3	4	72	96
	Theatre	0	0	75	100
	South	0	0	75	100
	Thought	10	13.3	65	86.7
	Thirsty	1	1.3	74	98.7
	Month	2	2.6	73	97.4
/ŋ/	Singing	22	29,4	53	70,6
	Sing	25	33,4	50	66,6
	Ring	29	37,4	47	62,6

	Bring	27	36	48	64
	Breathing	19	25,4	56	74,6
	Singer	20	26,7	55	73,3
	Sung	18	24	57	76
	Tongues	14	18,7	61	81,3
	Morning	16	21,4	59	78,6
	Nothing	15	20	60	80
	Everything	17	22,7	58	77,3
	Breaking	28	37,4	47	62,6
	Parking	30	40	45	60
<i>/a: /</i>	Star	15	20	60	80
	Farm	12	16	63	84
	Card	10	13,4	65	86,6
	Dark	13	17,4	62	82,6
	Hand	12	16	63	84
	Arm	14	18,7	61	81,3
	Part	17	22,7	58	77,3
	Park	19	25,4	56	74,6
	Laugh	16	21,4	59	78,6
	Half	9	12	66	88
	Fast	11	14,7	64	85,3
	Last	13	17,4	62	82,6
	Car	18	24	57	76
<i>/u: /</i>	True	30	40	45	60
	Room	28	37,4	47	62,6
	Soon	25	33,4	50	66,6
	Who	20	26,7	55	73,3
	Do	18	24	57	76
	Tooth	16	21,4	59	78,6
	Tool	19	25,4	56	74,6
	Loose	22	29,4	53	70,6
	Fool	26	34,7	49	65,3
	Looser	15	20	60	80
	Zoo	12	16	63	84
	Smooth	13	17,4	62	82,6

Looking at the above table, it is obvious that wrong pronunciation exceeds in percentages those of right pronunciation such as a remark is very significant. Fifth form pupils in the targeted schools have problems of pronunciation respectively with dental fricatives /ð/and /θ/, the nasal/ŋ/ and two long vowels/u:/and /a:/.None of these sounds were satisfactorily performed as the percentages indicate. Since “to know the disease is half the cure”, the awareness of that phenomenon in both teachers and pupils will enhance a particular effort to solve problems of mispronunciation. In the same vein, Tench (1981:265) points out that

Errors provide feedback, they tell the teacher something about effective of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques and show him what parts of the syllabus he has been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. They enable him to decide whether he must devote more time to the item he has been working on.

Then, this is the daily of errors: to care for actions that help one overcome pronunciation difficulties. It is also worth mentioning that in the above table, many of the pupils fail to pronounce those sounds under study. This is the case of the researcher’s testees while reading the word with /ð/and /θ/.

*For example the sounds /ð/was produced as :

- 1° [d] in words like their (69 subjects), father (64 bits subjects), mother (66 subjects), together (60 subjects), brother (65subjects), there (62 subjects), those (65 subjects), rather (67 subjects), there (61 subjects), them (59 subjects), another (67 subjects), without (63 subjects), the (68 subjects), they (67 subjects), then (57 subjects), that (58 subjects).
- 2° [z] in words like another (7 subjects), those (5 subjects), and brother (8 subjects).
- 3° [v] in the word without (22 subjects)

* The sound/θ/was produced as:

- 1° [f] in words like three (69 subjects), nothing (72 subjects), through (65 subjects), with (73 subjects), thirsty (74 subjects), wealth (70 subjects), South (75 subjects), through (67 subjects), threw (71 subjects).
- 2° [t] in words like through (18 subjects), theatre (35 subjects), through (43 subjects), threw (55 subjects).
- 3° [s] in through (5 subjects) and south (2 subjects).

This can be explained by the Kirundi and French do not proceed of the same way their spelling of words for specific sounds. The Kirundi spelling of words corresponds more to its pronunciation than it is in French on the one hand, and the French spelling of words is consistent with its pronunciation on the other hand. Both Kirundi and French pronunciation are proceeded unlike English pronunciation. Also, the knowledge of the pronunciation of the two languages affects English pronunciation which, even though it may be said to be of regular pronunciation, is inconsistent. First of all, English has a great variety of sounds when it is compared to both Kirundi and French. This implies that there are some sounds of English that are not in those two languages.

Those sounds cause a lot of troubles in the creation of new habits in the learner's speech organs. The problem is that they substitute these target sounds with the similar ones that exist in the former languages. Learners do not understand why shaping their mouth or why placing the tongue in the position unlike the way they used to do to other sounds. So when they try to produce the sound, the articulation of it is made on unacceptable area and thus bringing about a sound error. Some sounds are confusing due to the fact that the learner has problems of sound discrimination. The learner extends sound-pattern in applying the former rules to the new language, which result from negative transfer such as [f] where /ð/ is required as a correct sound. The other case is that of word "theatre", the form of *[fiata]* or *[tɛtɔ:r]* or *[flɛta]* instead of *[θlɛtə]* is much more influenced by French pronunciation. In this some flow of ideas, Lewis and Hill (1981:20)

argues that “are of the reasons that pupils sometimes cannot hear sound is that they cannot “hear” the difference between that sound and a similar one in their own language.

Secondly, the fact that the spelling of English words does not always reflect their pronunciation is problematic to a foreign learner of English. Whereas a certain grouping of letters correspond regularly to a certain sound in both Kirundi and French, English grouping of letters may yield in silence or a variety of sounds. If, while learning, the foreign learner applies the previous knowledge of his languages, his sound production may be a sound error production. Furthermore, the syllabification of Kirundi and French as pronunciation is concerned, differs from that of English. Kirundi syllable structure is always with a vowel sound and two or more vowel sounds cannot co-occur. Two or more cannot also co-occur frequently in French. Yet, this is a normal phenomenon in English and a consonant at the end of a word is usually pronounced. So, Burundian learners of English are hindered in producing a correct sound by introducing most of the time a glide in an environment of a diphthong or triphthong. Besides, they have a tendency to add a vowel in an environment of consonant final position or in a sequence of consonant in a way different from the previous mastered ones. In this way, Burundians are performing in English pronunciation as they do in either Kirundi or French.

Finally, the weak articulation of any sound is a major problem. A mispronounced sound may affect its neighboring sound and it becomes hard to the listener to decode the meaning conveyed to him or her. Consequently, these kinds of mispronunciation are bad. They result in hampering or delaying communication between the speaker and the listener. This is emphasized by White (1960:166) when he points out that “*many words depend upon a single*

sound for identification. If that sound is improperly produced, is muffled, or is slurred, comprehension will be delayed and misunderstanding may result”.

As White (1960) puts it, sounds are carriers of meaning. It is because when a sound is distorted the meaning is also distorted. For instance, if one utters the words (thank) with [t] when pronouncing, if the substitution of /θ/ with [t][s] or [d] results in four different words “thank”, “tank”, “sank” and “dank”. Things like those different words “thank”, “thank”, and “dank”. Things like those make the pronunciation hard to be followed if not given up.

Therefore, the analysis from the read aloud test was helpful in that it proves that Burundian learners of English have difficulties in English pronunciation especially of sounds not existing in the former languages-Kirundi and French. They result from negative transfer, over generalization, mismatch between pronunciation and the spelling, the tendency of inserting a glide in vowel-between or inserting a vowel in an environment of consonant cluster or consonant final position ; some cases of sound omission or sound inversion are also found. So, those elements are important to understand pronunciation problems of some English words by Burundian Secondary school pupils who have acquired English after Kirundi (L) and French (L2). But still, there are other factors that influence those elements and constitute to pronunciation difficulties.

IV.1.3. Data Presentation and Analysis from the Questionnaire

Here, the researcher is to deal with teachers' answers to the questions that were on the questionnaire. Most of those questions are close except that these are some questions of two parts-one of a close question and another of an open question. This is the case of questions like number 1, 3 and 14. It is worth mentioning that question 5 was open. Four subdivisions were made to fully discuss different views from the answers given on the questionnaire by finish from teachers in the schools understudy. They are the following.

- Teacher's knowledge about English sounds
- The place of pronunciation in the teaching of English skills
- Pronunciation difficulties
- Ways of improving pronunciation.

IV.1. 3.1. Teachers' Knowledge about English Sounds

Questions under this heading were asked with the intention to assess the teachers' knowledge of English sounds as far as producing them is concerned. The first question seeks to know whether fifth form teachers master sounds of languages they have acquired.

Question 1: Is it easy for you to discriminate Kirundi and French sounds from English sounds?

a) Yes

b) No

Table2 : Discrimination of Kirundi and French Sounds from English Sounds

Answers	Frequency
Yes	5
No	0
Total	5

As the above table shows, all the fifth form teachers assert that they are able to discriminate Kirundi sounds and French sounds from English ones. Then the researcher was curious to know if the knowledge teachers have is transmitted to their pupils or not. Thus he asked the following sub-question:

- If yes, do you teach that to your pupils?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Table 3 : Pupils got Teachers' Knowledge of discrimination sounds

Answers	Frequency
Yes	3
No	2
Total	5

As the table reflects, three out of five teachers teach the discrimination of English sounds. Yet, there is another part a little bit considerable that neglects the teaching of sounds discrimination. All teachers should know that the ability to discriminate sounds is very important to develop "clear speak".

The second question inquires the teacher's knowledge in phonetics.

Question 2 : Do you know the articulation of the existing English sounds?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Table 4 : Knowledge of articulation of existing English Sounds

Answers	Frequency
Yes	5
No	0
Total	5

In the table, one observes that all teachers have articulatory knowledge of English sounds. As such, one should expect their pupils to do the same as the adage says "like father, like son". The problem is that English sounds teaching are not the concern of every English teacher as the sub-question reveals.

As for question 3 , the researcher, is not being subjective, he asked fifth form English teacher to see whether the assumption asked are pronunciation problems, is justified or not.

Question 3 : Do your pupils have problems with English Pronunciation?

- a) Yes b) No

Table 5 : Problems with English Pronunciation

Answers	Frequency
Yes	4
No	1
Total	5

Looking the above table, four teachers out of five teachers agree with the researcher that there are pronunciation problems. Only one says that there are not, which can be hardly believed. Then it is surprising to see that there are pronunciation problems, and still there are some teachers who do not feel like helping their pupils overcome pronunciation problems. They should take this issue as theirs.

Therefore, the research was eager to know the kinds of problems their pupils have. Thus the following sub-question:

- If yes, what are they?

Here teachers were free to enumerate them. These are the problem their pupils face :

- Confusion between French sounds and English ones that is English sounds are read as if they are French ones;
- Problems related to the negative transfer of Kirundi or French sounds or tonality;
- Confusion between long vowels and short ones as well as diphthongs;

- Confusion between stressed and unstressed syllables.

IV.1.3. 2. Place of Pronunciation in the Teaching of English Skills

The fourth question intends to know whether lessons are planned or not. In this way, one may infer that there is room for it when planned.

Question 4: How much time do you devote to the teaching of Pronunciation?

- A lot of time
- Sufficient time
- Not sufficient
- No time at all

Table 6 : Timing according to the Teaching of Pronunciation

Answers	Frequency
A lot of time	0
Sufficient time	1
Not sufficient	3
No time at all	1
Total	5

As the table shows clearly, one teacher out of five admits that he uses sufficient time when teaching pronunciation to his pupils whereas three teachers say that time devoted to teaching pronunciation is not sufficient with the exception of one teacher who says he never teaches pronunciation to his pupils. To see this chart, it shows that many teachers do not plan to teach pronunciation. Consequently, pupils remain in their poor performance of pronunciation skills since only one teacher out of five has sufficient time. Teachers know that when there is a problem, they should know how to solve it.

The fifth question investigates whether all skills are taken alike.

Question 5 : Do you think the amount of time spent on teaching Pronunciation is the same as that spent on teaching Grammar or Vocabulary ?

a) Yes b) No

If not, Why ?

Table 7: Teaching Pronunciation is the same as Teaching Grammar or Vocabulary

Answers	Frequency
Yes	1
No	4
Total	5

Looking at the above table, four teachers assent that all English are not taken alike. All this is in the disfavor of pronunciation as the table of question 4 reflects it. The researcher agrees with them since pupils do not have equal problems in all skills. Therefore, a skill of more problems should be favored.

As for the sub-question, it was the question of justifying why not the equal treatment of all skills.

- If not, why ?

The following reasons were given :

- There are a lot of grammar points ;
- There is no availability of tapes to use ;
- As there is no special time for pronunciation, the latter goes along with other skills mainly reading ;
- Fifth Form English programs are mainly based on reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary.

Taking into consideration all these, the researcher finds out that fifth form pupils have difficulties in English pronunciation due to the fact that materials such as tapes and cassette players are not available. Besides, the fact that it is not tested during class evaluations makes teachers neglect it as if it is peripheral. Also, pronunciation going along with other skills and mainly reading makes teachers

overlap on the teaching of pronunciation as they do not have special time or sufficient time for it.

Furthermore, pupils not having in their English books phonetic aids (the spelling does not always match pronunciation) that help them to internalize a right pronunciation make pupils persist in their own pronunciation errors.

Similarly, Nida (1957 : 8-9) views these difficulties when he says that

Taking insufficient time to study a language is perhaps the most common reason for failure in learning it. (...) some of the failure to learn a language results from the wrong approach. (...) Being taught an indigenous language by some older missionary and without the constant presence of a native speaker can prove disastrous. (...) Another mistake in language learning is the habit of placing reading ahead of speaking

In the sixth question, the researcher inquires to know the place pronunciation occupies among other English Skills.

Question 6: Classify the following language skills from the most important to the least : Writing, reading, speaking, listening, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

1..... 2..... 3..... 4..... 5..... 6..... 7.....

Here is the classification given by the teachers:

i) 1. Speaking 2. Listening 3. Reading 4. Writing
5. Grammar 6. Vocabulary 7. Pronunciation

ii) 1. Vocabulary 2. Speaking 3. Listening 4. Grammar
5. Reading 6. Writing 7. Pronunciation

iii) 1. Vocabulary 2. Grammar 3. Speaking 4. Reading
5. Writing 6. Pronunciation 7. Listening

iv) 1. Speaking 2. Reading 3. Listening 4. Writing
 5. Vocabulary 6. Pronunciation 7. Grammar

v) 1. Writing 2. Speaking 3. Reading 4. Listening
 5. Pronunciation 6. Vocabulary 7. Grammar

Table 8: Reflection of the Place of Pronunciation

Answers	Frequency
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	1
6	2
7	2
Total	5

Looking at the table, it is obvious that teachers consider pronunciation skills as not being important. The first classifies it is the fifth position, two teachers classify it in the sixth position and finally the remaining teachers classify it in the last position (7th).

Therefore, it is not surprising to encounter fifth form pupils unable to pronounce English sounds properly as far as speaking is concerned. Besides, two teachers out of five place speaking at the forefront whereas among the three, two teachers value writing and one vocabulary. Nowhere listening has been favored when one knows that speaking and thus pronouncing is conditioned by our listening ability. This idea is also used by Stack (1971). In all cases, pronunciation is not given the place it deserves and consequently, pupils have pronunciation problems.

IV.1.3.3. Pronunciation difficulties

Question 7 : Is it easy to teach Pronunciation ?

- a) Yes b) No

Table 9 : TeachingPronunciation Challenges

Answers	Frequency
Yes	2
No	3
Total	5

In the above table, one sees that three teachers find teaching pronunciation difficult. The researcher agrees with them since the already acquired languages- Kirundi and French affect English Sounds. Besides, teachers devote much time on making pupils repeat what they hear them speaking. However, this is not the only method suitable to use when teaching pronunciation. Teachers should know method and material aids that are appropriate to make pupils be aware of English sounds.

In as much as teaching pronunciation is the concern in Burundi, problems are inevitable. The researcher was informed from teachers about some problems :

- Pupils' immaturity. Here pupils get troubled to discriminate between English sounds and other sounds of acquired languages. Consequently, pupils get bored to repeat sounds as their teachers force them to repeat what is mispronounced ;
- Lack of materials (tapes, radio, dictionaries,...). If the teacher is not a good model, those tools are very important ;
- Lack of time and environment that do not allow practice.

After having information on how fifth form teachers find teaching pronunciation, the researcher was eager to know strategies used by those teachers.

Question 8: What strategies do you use while teaching Pronunciation ?

- a) Imitation (pupils repeat after me)
- b) Using recorded materials
- c) Having them listening some recorded messages by native speakers
- d) Having the pupils act out dialogues
- e) Asking the pupils to read (the text in textbook or the sentence written on the blackboard).

Table 10 :PronunciationTeachingStrategies

Answers	Frequency
Imitation (repeat after)	2
Wrong recorded materials	1
Having them listen to some recorded messages by native speakers	0
Having the pupils act out dialogues	1
Asking the pupils to read (the text)	1
Total	5

As we can see from the above table, imitation is mostly used as an aid to pronunciation teaching.

Yet, recorded materials have been used by one teacher. Another asks them to act out dialogues and the last asks them to read. (text from book or the sentences written on the blackboard).

Kimble-fry (2001) provides three methods in his approaches for teaching speech sounds: auditory mode, visual mode and kinaesthetic mode. Still, visual and kinaesthetic modes are not used by the teachers. Then the researcher asks himself how imitation can help pupils overcome pronunciation difficulties. To understand more of how it is handled, the following sub-question was asked :

- If a), do you teach your pupils the kinaesthetic image of a correct sound ?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No

Table 11 : Teaching Kinaesthetic Image of a Correct Sound

Answers	Frequency
Yes	1
No	4
Total	5

As this table shows it, four teachers out of five mostly use imitation do not teach the kinaesthetic image of a correct sound. Among schools understudy, only one teacher uses kinaesthetic image of a correct sound. Imitation is not fully dealt with mouth shape, tongue position as well as air flow are not taught. Needless to mention that material aids are of paramount importance to eradicate if not alleviate pupils pronunciation difficulties.

The ninth question investigates whether pupils do have time to practice English pronunciation in English lessons or not.

Question 9: Do all your Pupils get the opportunity to practice Pronunciation while teaching them ?

a) Yes

b) No

If not, do they have another environment for practice?

Table12 : Pronunciation practice by pupils

Answers	Frequency
Yes	2
No	3
Total	5

The above table shows that two teachers favor pronunciation practice in their English lessons whereas three of them do not.

In a situation like that, most pupils will always have pronunciation difficulties. Teachers should know that « practice makes perfect ». In this way, teachers create occasions wherein pupils exercise their speech.

The researcher was curious to know whether there is another environment for speech practice or not thus asking the following sub-question:

- If not, do they have another environment for practice?
 - a) At the school English club
 - b) at school during break
 - c) no
 - d) other

Table 13 : Pronunciation practice environment

Answers	Frequency
At school English club	2
At school during break	0
No	3
Other	-
Total	5

In the above table, three teachers confirm that there is lack of environment for English speech practice. As pupils do not find where to practice English speech, an environment becomes a hindrance to language learning. This idea is also pointed out by Krashen (1957 : 58) when he says that « *any real world environment is always superior to the classroom* ». So, teachers should create an environment for English speech production. In this way, some difficulties will be overcome when practice is made.

As far as question 10 is concerned, the researcher was inspired that having no variety at all of teaching makes English language learning difficult especially pronunciation sound mastering. Thus he wants to know what is taught.

Question 10 : What variety of English do you teach your pupils ?

- a) British b) American English c) The RP (Received Pronunciation)
d) a mixture of Varieties

Table 14: Varieties of English taught to pupils

Answers	Frequency
British English	2
American English	0
The RP(Received Pronunciation)	0
A mixture of varieties	3
Total	5

As it can be seen from the above table, two teachers have a variety of English to teach. However, the remaining teachers do not have any variety to teach. This becomes problematic as far as mastering sounds of English is concerned. This is because the way some sounds of English are pronounced in one variety may be altered in the other with some slight differences. This is the situation for English foreign learners. To overcome this phenomenon, the RP is recommended to be taught to foreign learners of English since they do not have any variety of it in their environment. Besides, it is intelligible to other varieties of English. Therefore, teachers should know the RP and teach it to their pupils. In addition to pronunciation, teaching methods and environment, the researcher thought that there may be other reasons impeding English language acquisition. Therefore, a question turning around pupils' mood in the English classroom was asked.

This ideas also enlightened by Haycraft (1978 : 55) when he says that « skilled pronunciation teaching also gives life to a class because it reflects feeling and reactions to different situations ».

Questions 11: What is the pupils' attitude during English Pronunciation Lessons?

- a) Motivated b) Interested c) Shy d) Troubled e) They find it funny

Table 15 : Pupils' attitude during English Pronunciation Lessons

Answers	Frequency
Motivated	1
Interested	1
Shy	3
Troubled	0
They find it funny	0
Total	5

The above table reveals that most pupils do not feel at ease during English pronunciation. This is confirmed by three teachers and the researcher agrees with them. The problem is that when pupils fear to speak, it becomes difficult for the teacher to detect where exactly his subjects have difficulties as far as English pronunciation is the concern. In the same way, pupils persist in their errors since they do not like to practice. In the same vein, they lose self-confidence. Teachers should encourage pupils to overcome fear, and the latter should know that « you cannot make an omelet without breaking eggs ». Mieder et al. (1942: 438).

IV.1.3.4. Ways of improving Pronunciation

The twelfth question inquires among teachers about causes of pronunciation difficulties as far as English language learning is concerned in their classes. In the light of this, the researcher wants to know whether teachers are aware of the source of errors in English pronunciation or not.

Question 12: From your own experience as a teacher, what are the causes of wrong pronunciation in your class ?

- a) interference from Kirundi
- b) interference from French
- c) both Kirundi and French interferences
- d) unfamiliar sounds
- e) materials used at school
- f) other causes

Table 16 : Causes of Wrong Pronunciation

Answers	Frequency
Interference from Kirundi	0
Interference from French	1
Both Kirundi and French interferences	3
Unfamiliar sounds	1
Materials used at school	0
Other causes	-
Total	5

The above table shows that Burundian learners of English have problems in English sounds due to the fact that both Kirundi and French sounds interfere with the learning and acquisition of English sounds. Bright and McGregor (1970:179) point it out « *it is difficult to hear unfamiliar phonemes. We tend instead to hear the nearest familiar one and ignore the difference as insignificant* ».

This makes the researcher answer affirmatively that English pronunciation of sounds is affected by both Kirundi and French sounds. Therefore, English teachers should have a good knowledge of Kirundi, French as well as English sounds. Thus, they can compare and contrast all those sounds so as to help pupils overcome pronunciation difficulties. As for pupils, they should practice speaking inside as well as outside the classroom. Question 13 is about

evaluating pronunciation skill. So, in testing or examining pronunciation skill, pupils would develop a will for good pronunciation since it is given its value.

Question 13: Do you ever test the Pronunciation Skill in tests or exams ?

Table 17 : Testing Pronunciation Skills

Answers	Frequency
Yes	2
No	3
Total	5

As one can observe in the above table, three teachers do not test pronunciation skill. As result, pupils do not make any effort to improve on it. Then to researcher has investigated to know the why of not testing pronunciation when he gave the following sub-question :

- if not, why ?

According to the respondents, the English pronunciation is not tested because they do not have special time for it. Rather, they do not have materials related to English pronunciation whereas other find pronunciation skill relative and that marking it would bring subjectivity.

In consideration of all these, the research finds that most teachers do not test it because they do not teach it. For those who teach it and do not test it many result to the fact that they fail to teach the neutral variety (RP) and may thus lack what they refer to as correct pronunciation when testing.

They may also have no time for such an activity.

Then teachers should know that testing the pronunciation skill and thus giving marks on it would stimulate pupils. In this way, pupils would found it important and reserve some time for it.

Question 14: How do you handle your pupils' errors in Pronunciation ?

This question investigates teachers' attitudes towards pupils' pronunciation errors; and how they help their pupils overcome their errors. In relation to this, two respondents out of five claim to understand their errors. The other three did not indicate what their attitudes are. All converge in correcting pronunciation errors committed by their pupils except that two out of five are limited to do this in reading lessons. Stockwell (1970 :121) values correcting when he points out that « the first step in teaching pronunciation is learning when to make corrections. When to make corrections varies from student to student, from class to class, and from time to time ».

In addition, teachers should avoid discouraging their subjects and, as Corder (1973 : 256) puts it, « *all learners make mistakes.*

We all make mistake when speaking our mother tongue ». So, while correcting mispronounced sounds, they should go beyond imitation or repetition to help the subjects to overcome their difficulties.

Then, this cannot be possible to put certain knowledge of how organs involved in the speech sound work. In light of this, Ellis and Tomlinson (1980:98) say that :

A knowledge of how the vocal organs work also helps the teacher to spot what a pupil is doing wrong in his attempts to articulate a particular sound. He will be also to warn pupils against making errors in pronunciation caused by interference from the mother tongue.

Hence, any pronunciation errors resulting from interlanguage or intralanguage will be detected, and the role of the teacher will be to give the right pronunciation. The last question is about what can help teacher do better while teaching pronunciation. Then the researcher asked the following question:

Question 15: According to you, what strategies and materials should be used so as to improve the English Pronunciation of Burundian Learners and particularly Fifth Form Pupils?

The researcher got different propositions from his respondents. Then, suggested strategies or materials to improve English Pronunciation of Pupils were as follows:

- imitation and having pupils acting out dialogues ,
- the use of materials such as cassette players, tapes containing songs, conversations, and or speeches to be listening to repeating as well as TV-sets,
- dividing large classes into small ones,
- organizing English club in schools,
- revising Fifth Form English Pupils book to include notions of phonetics and phonology,
- refreshing Teachers' Knowledge of English Pronunciation through seminars.

IV.1.4. Findings

From the analysis of the data collected from the classroom observations, the teachers' questionnaire and the pupils' read aloud test, the researcher was able to get factual information about the causes of pupils' pronunciation errors when learning English. In fact, while discussing data from classroom observations together with data from teachers' questionnaire, the researcher had understood the results from the read aloud test. He came to conclude that the lack of materials aids (these determine which method to be used) for both teachers and pupils are barriers to the development of English pronunciation and subsequently barriers to success in oral communication. This is due to the influence of both Kirundi and French sounds on those of English.

In relation to this, Gimson (2001:3) points out that "the more firmly consolidated the basis of a first language becomes and the later in life that a second language is begun, the more the learners will be subject to resistances and prejudices dividing from the framework of their Burundian learners overcome such problems as far as pronunciation is concerned.

Equally, the researcher finds that the classroom environment is not favorable for the teaching of pronunciation. This idea is backed up by Gimson (2001:3) when he argues that

The learning of another language later in life, acquired artificially in brief and sporadic spells of activity and often without the stimulus arising from an immediate need for communication will tend to be tedious and rarely more than partially successful

As a matter of fact, a few pupils can only speak whereas others remain passive. Time is limited in classroom and only a few teachers can profit from it to teach pronunciation. Besides, the classification of pronunciation among other skills (the sixth question on teacher's questionnaire) shows that English pronunciation is not given the place it deserves. As for the results from the read about test, the researcher finds that wrong sounds exceed the right ones. One may ask oneself why that phenomenon. That is because English is acquired later in life after Kirundi and French. Then, most errors made in pronunciation result from interlanguage (or negative transfer), overgeneralization, mismatch between pronunciation and spelling, sound insertion or addition, sound inversion as well as sound omission.

CHAPTER V: GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

V.0. Introduction

After having shown to need to investigate on pronunciation difficulties and explored views from different linguists on the acquisition of L2 or FL later in life, especially as far as mastering pronunciation is concerned, methods and procedures to be used in data collection were presented. Then the data were analyzed and interpreted thus providing some findings. The aim is no to draw a conclusion and consequently give some recommendations.

V.1. Conclusion

This work aims at finding out the factors underlying the Pronunciation difficulties 5th Form Pupils in Some Bujumbura Secondary Schools face while learning English in general and especially in English Sounds /ð, θ, η, a:, u:/.

These questions were taken into account:

- Do phonological differences between Kirundi and English or French and English affect English Pronunciation?
- Why do fifth form pupils often have pronunciation problems?
- What strategies and materials should teachers of English 5th Forms use to help their learners achieve a good and correct Pronunciation?

First, it was concluded that phonological differences between Kirundi and English as well as phonological differences between French and English affect the way 5th form pupils produce these English sounds /ð, θ, η, a:, u:/. This is revealed in the achievement test when pronunciation of those English sounds was due to the fact that they did not exist in the phonetics of Kirundi and French.

In light to this, Freeborn (1986 : 102) points out that *“the way we learn a second language after we have already learned our first will differ from the way we learned the first one, because knowledge of the first language is bound to affect*

our learning of the new language, in helpful and unhelpful way". Then, the "unhelpful way" results in difficulties when trying to internalize new habits of sounds production. So, as an ultimate solutions, they try to transfer Kirundi sounds or French ones that are nearly like English sounds /ð, θ, ŋ, a:, u:/ thus hampering the intelligibility of communication. Furthermore, it was obvious that there was interference of Kirundi and French sounds, overgeneralization, errors due to the spelling; incomplete knowledge of English sounds, sound insertion or addition. All these errors are due to phonological differences between Kirundi and English or English and French. In addition, the 3rd question on the teachers' questionnaire that required teachers to assess pupils' problem in pronunciation confirmed that some sounds of English are produced as if they were Kirundi or French ones.

Second, despite the phonological differences between French and English and, Kirundi and English, other factors leading to pronunciation difficulties had to do with the environment. Environment does not itself hamper pronunciation, but when there is no real use of it for language communication, the learners do not exercise their oral speech and consequently the TL pronunciation is affected (see question 9 on the teachers' questionnaire). Practice for some sounds is neither made in the classroom nor outside the classroom except for two cases out of three. Third, it was concluded that there is a lack of books have no lessons helping pupils to achieve better pronunciation.

This idea is echoed by Grant (1987: 35) when he argues that, in speech work, many textbook are deficient in some of the following ways:

- They do not contain any oral drills at all,
- Contain some drills but not enough,
- They contain only mechanical drills there is hardly any provision for meaningful communication activities.

In relation to this, the researcher agrees with him. As such, teachers are limited to one method (imitation or repetition) while English pronunciation problems are raised with little chance to solve them. That is because teachers do not have facilitating material aids such as audio-visual aids or any other materials. Turner et al. (2007:108) point out that *“if you find that particular sounds/sounds combinations are difficult for you, you can help yourself by using pronunciation exercises available on tapes and in books, which you should find in the language laboratory or the language center of your college or university”*. This quotation reveals the importance of teaching materials. They affect the teaching methods thus working pupils understanding difficult or easy. So, Burundian’s poor pronunciation is affected by the lack of materials and these determine the method to be used. In relation to the points raised above, some recommendations should be made concerning way of solving pronunciation problems or difficulties.

V.2. Recommendations

Since the improvement of English pronunciation cannot be without oral skills, pupils should be given maximum exposure to the English speaking skill. Then, lots of from educational partners ought to be conjugated.

➤ To the Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education should revise 5th form programs to include pronunciation components wherein some basic notions of English phonetics and phonology should be introduced to 5th Form Pupils before ended their junior cycle. In this way, Burundian learners would practice what they understand to be mechanisms of the sound concerned. Speaking should also be given priority as it is mostly used in daily communication. In the same vein, the Ministry of Education should be provide materials aids to the English pronunciation teaching such as audio materials, visual materials and audio-visual materials. These help learners to master sounds using less effort.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should encourage teachers to develop their professional knowledge through organizing seminars, workshop as well as training courses on pronunciation based on phonological differences between Kirundi and English as well as French and English. This helps the teacher's knowledge be refreshed as recent pronunciation knowledge is concerned. In this flow of ideas, since the real environment is always superior to the classroom, English teachers should be sent to English speaking countries for the intensive use of English.

Similarly, since most teachers are from the University of Burundi, the Ministry of Education should let student do their linguistic immersion as it was before.

Finally, the Ministry of Education should set up language laboratories. As such, linguistics, a scientific discipline, should be studied with experiments from laboratories. Then linguists or teachers need a language laboratory. In such away, linguists could successfully analyze data and find authentic information.

Equally, teachers would help their pupils as well as themselves overcome pronunciation problems. Unfortunately no single language laboratory is found in Burundi. Then Burundi should try to meet this challenge and alleviate the problems of pronunciation.

➤ **To teachers**

Teachers should be aware of English pronunciation problems and care for the teaching of sound mechanisms and particularly for /ð, θ, ŋ, a:,u:/. Then, they should make room for speech practice so as to improve on “clear-speak”. Pupils should be encouraged to use English interactively both side and outside the classroom through creating English club, debates, songs in their respective schools. In addition, they should vary pronunciation teaching methods. Instead of relying only on imitation, this method should be used together with the visual mode as well as kinaesthetic mode. Recorded materials from native speakers should also be used. All this should be used in accordance with how pupils should understand how to produce a particular sound.

➤ **To pupils**

Pupils should know that “practice makes perfect”. Then, they should be aware of the concern to make themselves understood when communicating in English. So, speaking inside or outside the classroom with other classmates should be their way of life.

Furthermore, they should be good imitators of their teachers’ pronunciation. Equally, they should develop the need to listen to English news broad casts a programs from radio or TV channels such as BBC, VOA with the intention to listen to sounds that create problems especially /ð/and /θ/and others.

V.3. Suggestions for further investigation

As this field of English Pronunciation has not been exhaustive, further investigation should be carried out on the impact of Kirundi and French in mastering English Sounds taking into account time of exposure. One may also be interested in looking at the impact of the entry of a new lexicon in English as far as Pronunciation is concerned.

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