

DECLARATION

I, Paul Mukarage BAGAMBE, hereby declare that this work is really my own effort and where the contribution of others has been reflected, due acknowledgement has been made. It has never been submitted for any award to any institution or published.

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with our approval as supervisors

.....

Mr. Alfred Kenneth KIIZA

.....

Mr. Robert Mugabe

DEDICATION

I truly dedicate this work to my little children; Paul Jr, Pauline and Kwera and my dear wife Rossette all of whom have endured the pain of missing my full company during the course of study. I also dedicate it to my beloved parents; Mr Paul Mukarage and Mama Monique, who have never ceased to advise me. In the same spirit, I dedicate this book to my parents' in-laws Mr. Paul Karagire and Mrs. Mary Karagire for their love and moral support.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my best friend and my 'grandfather' Sebastian Kanamugire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to acknowledge those people who have been of invaluable support towards the completion of this work. I would like to begin with my two supervisors; Mr Alfred Keneth Kiiza and Mr. Robert Mugabe who have devoted their time to give me support and guidance and also give me counselling when I felt like stopping the endeavor. I truly owe you a lot and ask Almighty to bless you abundantly. Acknowledgement also goes to my friends Patrick Kashaija and Fred Tushabe who have given me guidance and encouragement during the course of study. Acknowledgement go to my fellow participants more particularly Gloria Titi whom we exchanged encouraging words and support to finish the course.

My special acknowledgement go to my supervisor at Plan International Rwanda, Mr Casimir Youmbi who was so understanding and supportive during the course of this study. I acknowledge support accorded to me by my brother in-law Gideon Mujurizi and my sister Jane Murungi, their maid, Antoinette Mukanyandwi who had to stay awake because of me.

Acknowledgement also goes to my friend James Mugabe for his swift response to my plea for immediate financial assistance. May God keep filling your gourds.

support to my Finally, I acknowledge tireless and unwavering support I received from my friend Aggrey Nuwagira, he endured my pressure to have my work delivered to my supervisor on time as I required without consideration for his time and resource.

May God bless all of you abundantly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	I
APPROVAL	II
DEDICATION	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	IV
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	V
LIST OF FIGURES	XII
LIST OF TABLES.....	XIII
ABSTRACT.....	XVI
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2: Background Of The Study.....	1
1.2.1 Historical Background	1
1.2.2: Theoretical Background.....	3
1.2.3: Conceptual Background.....	6
1.2.4: Contextual Background.	7
1.3. Statement Of Problem.....	9
1.4: Purpose Of The Study.....	10

1.5: Objectives Of the Study.....	10
1.6: Research Questions.....	10
1.7: Hypothesis	11
1.8: Conceptual Review	12
1.9: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	13
1.10: Justification Of The Study	13
1.11: Scope Of The Study.....	14
1.11.1: Geographical Scope	14
1.11.2: Content Scope.....	14
1.11.3: Time Scope	14
1.12: Operational Definition Of Terms.....	15
CHAPTER TWO	16
LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Introduction.....	16
2.2 Theoretical Review	16
2.3 Conceptual Review	18
2.3.1 Literacy Skills And Students’ Performance.....	19
2.3.2 Ability to Speak Fluently And Students academic Performance.....	19
2.3.3 Ability to Write and Read And Students’ academic Performance	20

2.4 School Learning Environment and Students’ Performance.....	21
2.4.1 Language Spoken at School And Students’ Academic Performance	22
2.4.2 School Curriculum and Students’ Academic Performance	22
2.4.3 School Textbooks and Students’ Academic Performance	24
2.5 Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills And Students’ Performance	25
2.5.1 Pronunciation And Students’ Academic Performance	25
2.5.2 Students’ Comprehension And Students’ Academic Performance	26
2.5.3 Grammar and Students’ Academic Performance.....	27
2.6 Summary Of Literature Review	28
CHAPTER THREE	29
METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 Introduction.....	29
3.2 Research Design.....	29
3.3 Study Population.....	30
3.4 Sample Size And Selection.....	30
3.5 Sampling Techniques.....	31
3.6. Data Collection Methods	32
3.6.1 Questionnaire Survey.....	32
3.6.2 Interviews.....	32

3.6.3 Documentary Analysis.....	33
3.7 Data Collection Instruments	33
3.7.1 Questionnaire	33
3.7.2 Interview Guide	33
3.7.3 Documentary Review Checklist	34
3.8 Validity And Reliability.....	34
3.8.1 Validity	34
3.8.2 Reliability.....	35
3.9 Procedure	35
3.10 Data Analysis	36
3.10.1 Qualitative Data	36
3.10.2 Quantitative Data	36
3.11 Measurement Of Variables	36
CHAPTER FOUR.....	37
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Response Rate.....	37
4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	38
4.3.1 Age of Respondent.....	39

4.3.2 Respondents by Gender	39
4.3.3 Respondents by level of Education.....	40
4.4. Extent to which literacy skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District.....	41
4.4.1 How people interpret students’ performance in relation to english language proficiency.	44
4.4.2 Testing the hypothesis that literacy skills significantly influence the students’ academic performance in secondary schools.....	466
4.5 The school learning environment.....	48
4.5.1 Testing the hypothesis that school learning environment affects and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.....	51
4.6 Extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in bugeresera district.....	54
4.6.1 Testing the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District .	56
CHAPTER FIVE	59
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	59
5.1 Introduction.....	59
5.2 Summary.....	59
5.2.1 The extent to which literacy skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District.....	59

5.2.2 Influence of learning environment on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	60
5.2.3 The extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	60
5.3 Discussion.....	60
5.3.1 The extent to which literacy skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	61
5.3.2 Influence of school learning environment on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	62
5.3.3 The extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.	63
5.4 Conclusions.....	63
5.4.1 Extent to which literacy skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	64
5.4.2 Influence of learning environment on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	64
5.4.3 The extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in bugeresu District.....	64
5.5 Recommendations.....	65
5.5.1 Extent to which literacy skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	65

5.5.2 Influence of school learning environment on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in bugeresa district	65
5.5.3 Extent to which basic interpersonal skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.....	65
5.6 Limitations of the study	66
5.7 Contributions of the study.....	66
5.8 Areas recommended for future research	67
REFERENCES	67
Appendices.....	I
Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Teachers and Students.....	I
Appendix 2: Interview Guide for key Informants.....	V

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Surface and deeper levels of language proficiency	5
Figure 2: Showing the conceptual review of dependent and independent variables	12

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1. Table showing the study population and sample size.....	31
Table 3.2: Reliability statistics for the questionnaire.....	35
Table 4.1: Response rate.....	38
Table 4.2 Respondents by age	39
Table 4.3: Respondents by gender	40
Table 4.4: Respondents by level of education	41
Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics showing the extent to which literacy skills influence students’ performance in secondary schools in Bugeresu District.....	42
Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics showing people’s interpretation of students’ performance in secondary schools.....	45
Table 4.7 Spearman’s correlation coefficient between literacy skills and students’ performance in secondary schools.	47
Table 4.8 Regression model summary for literacy skills.....	48
Table 4.9 Spearman’s correlation coefficient between school learning environment and students’ performance in secondary schools	52
Table 4.10 Regression model summary for school learning environment	53
Table 4.11 Descriptive statistics showing basic interpersonal communication skills	55

Table 4.12 Spearman’s correlation coefficient between basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Students’ academic Performance in Secondary Schools. 57

Table 4.13 Regression Model Summary For Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills 58

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

'A' Level:	Advanced Level
BICS:	Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
CALP:	Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency
CSEE:	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination
CVI:	Content Validity Index
DEO:	District Education Officer
DRC:	Democratic Republic of Congo
EAC:	East African Community
ELP:	English Language Proficiency
FY:	Financial Year
G.S:	Groupe Scolaire
MINEDUC:	Ministry of Education
MoI:	Medium of Instruction
NECTA:	National Examination Council of Tanzania
NGOs:	Non-Government Organizations
'O' Level:	Ordinary Level
PTC:	Parent Teachers Committee
REB:	Rwanda Education Board
SBMs:	School Based Mentors
TDM:	Teacher Development and Management
UMI:	Uganda Management Institute
USA:	United States of America

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of English language proficiency on students' academic performance in Secondary Schools in Bugerese District. The objectives of this study were; to investigate the extent to which Literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District; to establish how School Learning Environment influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District; to assess the extent to which Basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District. The study was a descriptive case study design. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis were used. A sample of 184 respondents was got from an accessible population of 346 respondents with a response rate of 100% obtained. The findings of this study show that: There is a positive and significant relationship between literacy skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools, that there is a significant positive relationship between the learning environment and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District as well as in other schools in Rwanda and that there is a high and positive correlation coefficient significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District. The study concludes that English language proficiency greatly influences students' performance. The study recommends that government authorities in Rwanda and Bugerese District in particular together with parents should ensure that these skills are imparted in students right away from their tender age. It further recommends that education stakeholders should ensure that learning environment is conducive enough for meaningful students' academic performance to be realized. Lastly, the study recommends that stakeholders be it government, district education authorities, teachers and parents should try to encourage students to speak the language of instruction to be able to understand English language and this will lead to improved students' performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The influence of language of instruction on students' academic performance in secondary schools is as old as education itself and has been studied by a number of researchers. English language proficiency is presumed to be one important contributor to the unexplained variances of the differences in academic performance. This study was to establish the influence of English language proficiency on students' performance in secondary schools in Bugesera district in Rwanda. In this study, English language proficiency was conceived to be independent variable and students' performance as dependent variable. English language proficiency was measured in form of Literacy skills, School learning environment and Basic interpersonal communication skills and students' performance was measured in form of grades and scores in national examinations.

This chapter therefore, covers the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, the hypothesis, the scope of the study, the significance, justification, and operational definitions and concepts.

1.2: Background of the Study

1.2.1 Historical background

Rwanda like many other African countries was colonized by the Belgians who introduced French as official language of instruction in schools until the 1960s when the wave of struggles for independence hit the bigger part of the continent (Ministry of Education and Sports-Rwanda, 2000). Since the colonial masters used French as the medium of communication/ instruction, the post Independent Rwanda

adopted French as the official language in government offices, business and social life of the local population (Ministry of Education - Rwanda, 1999). Since attaining independence, French has been the dominant language of communication in Rwanda. In 2007, Rwanda joined the East African Community (EAC) where English language is used as a medium of communication. For Rwanda to fit well into the business of the EAC countries, cabinet in 2008 adopted the use of English as the official language of instruction and since then, a lot of Government efforts have been made to effect this change as policy shift from French language (Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 2008). English is not only becoming popular in Rwanda alone, but also the transformation of a tribal language to Standard English in the 19th century is well documented (Ministry of Education-Rwanda, 2004). Its spread is arguably the most striking example of 'language expansion' of this century if not in all recorded history (Platt, 2004; Crum, 2006; Machan and Scott, 2002 and Brurchfield, 2004).

Pinon and Haydon, (2010), assert that Kinyarwanda is the language of government, and English the primary education medium. French remains important, but it is used as a second language in most government communication. The introduction of English language by the government in 2008 as the medium of instruction across education levels in Rwanda poses a huge challenge for the government. According to the Ministry of Education, Rwanda - Girls' Education Policy, (2008), Rwanda is undertaking major and far reaching rebuilding efforts after the 1994 genocide and has committed itself to developing a society that is democratic and participatory hence English as a language has been made the corner stone in unifying Rwanda. The necessity for such a society is human resource development that reaches down and out to all sectors of the nation and ensures that within the limits of the country's resources, all individuals are given the opportunity to obtain the basic education and training especially in English Language as a medium of communication. Since 2009, the Government of Rwanda has been committing a lot of funds in the teaching of English in all schools. For example, in 2009/2010 Financial

Year (FY), about 200m Francs was budgeted for hiring expatriates from Uganda and Kenya to teach English. In 2011/2012, 240m Francs was budgeted still for the same exercise and out of that amount, Bugesera was allocated 12m francs (National Planning and Development Review, 2013). However, there seems to be insignificant improvement in the proficiency of the language, which called for a study to be conducted in Bugesera to establish the real situation.

1.2.2: Theoretical Background

This study was guided by Cummins' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) Theory, (1981). The Theory assumes that students' academic performance is as a result of their English language proficiency. It also assumes that the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is related to literacy skills in the first and second language which requires higher levels of language and cognitive processes in order to develop the language proficiency needed to succeed in school. Cummins, (1981), argues that there are two important types of language proficiency which he labeled Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). CALP is the type of language proficiency needed to read text books, to participate in debates and dialogues and to provide response to tests. Students who have not yet developed in their cognitive-academic language proficiency could be at a disadvantage in learning academic subjects (Chamot and O'Malley, 1986).

In support of the Cummins' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, Aguti, (1996), notes that students' performance is related to language proficiency. Chamot and O'Malley, (1986) and Shuy, (2001), argue that language proficiency has a great impact on students' academic performance. They have conceptualized the relationship of language proficiency and academic achievement by using an iceberg representation. (See Figure 1 below) In this representation, basic interpersonal communication

skills (BICS) or skills which depend on the surface features of language and lower levels of cognitive processes are represented above the waterline while the cognitive – academic language proficiency (CALP) or skills related to the meaning of language and higher level of cognitive processes are represented below the waterline.

**Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
(BICS)**

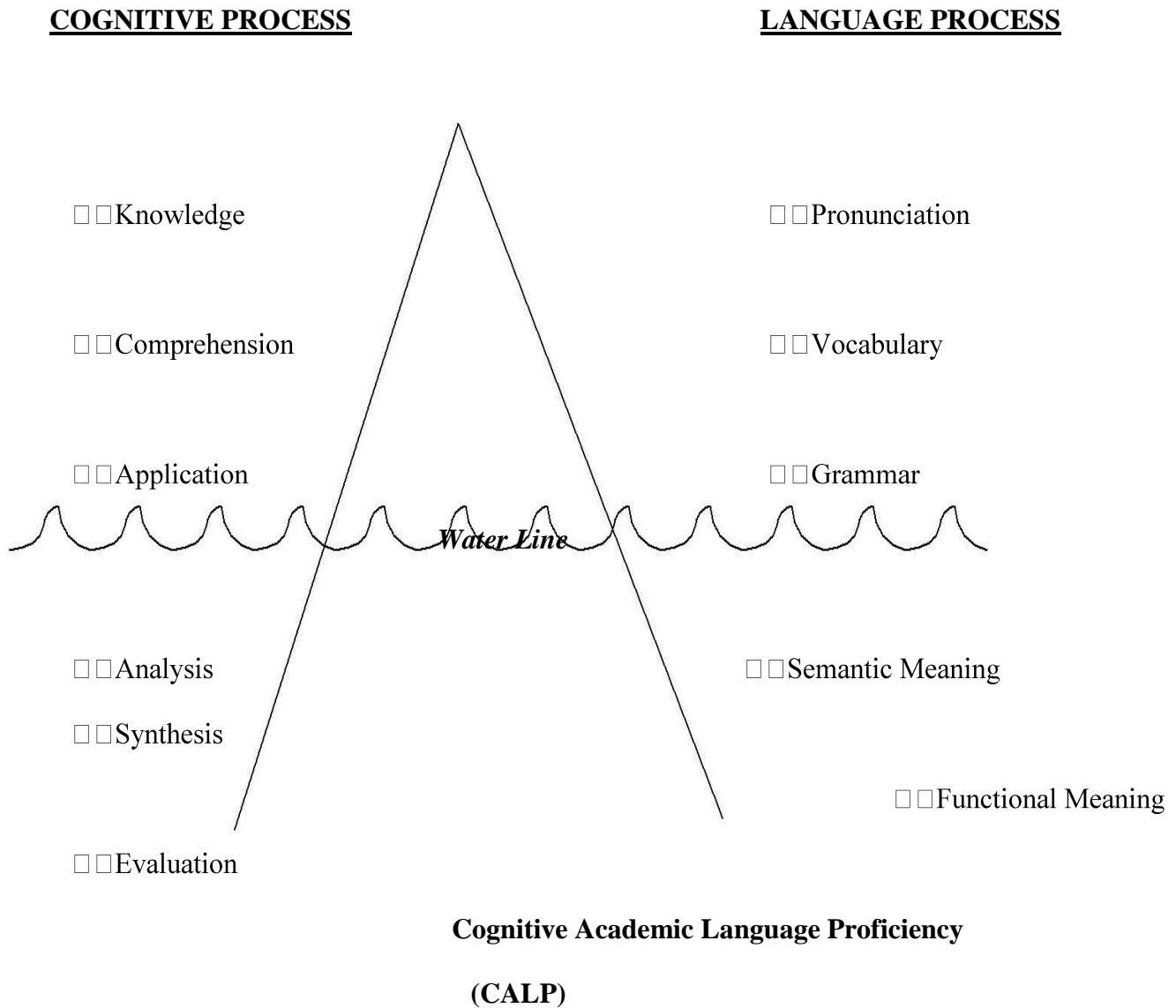


Figure 1: Surface and deeper levels of language proficiency
(Adapted from: Rosenthal J.W, (1996), *Multilingual Matters*)

Cummins, (1982), contends that a student develops basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and learns to communicate in their first language and that cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) reflects a combination of language proficiency and cognitive processes that determine a student's success at school. Basing on this theory, it was necessary for the researcher to carry out a study in Bugesera district to establish whether students' performance depends on language proficiency.

1.2.3: Conceptual Background

The concepts were English Language Proficiency and Students' Performance as a dependent variable. English language proficiency refers to the ability to speak, read, write and comprehend the English language in general (Sternberg, 2008). Academic English proficiency refers to the ability to speak, read, write and comprehend academic English which is characterized by academic and content-specific vocabulary, complex sentence discourse (e.g. interpretation and analysis of data and text). It involves the students' ability to demonstrate understanding of subject knowledge on academic measures (Sternberg, 2008). According to Rumberger and Scarcella, (2000), Academic language involves mastery of a writing system and its particular academic conversational as well as proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening, which is a strong determinant for success in academia and the job market. Learning the multiple complex features of academic language prepares students for long-term success in schools, successful completion of higher education and employment with opportunity for professional advancement and financial rewards. Given the nature of today's academic demands, lack of proficiency in academic language affects students' ability to comprehend and analyze texts, limits their ability to write and express themselves effectively, and can hinder their acquisition of academic content in all academic areas. To be successful academically, students need to develop the specialized language of

academic discourse that is distinct from conversational language (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, and Kieffer, 2006; Solomon and Rhodes, 1995).

Performance is to complete an action or an activity. It is the standard of success that some one or something achieves (Oxford English Dictionary, 1993). According to Wayne, (2006), and Bernadin, (2007), performance is the outcome of work, goal setting, measurement and assessment, which will enable someone to know what, is expected of him or her. Aguti, (1996), observes that students' performance is related to language proficiency.

Bowen, (2000), avers that for students' performance (those using English as a language of instruction in school) to be meaningful, students should have the mastery of English language that will enable them speak fluently, debate and write correct grammar there by helping them to pass highly.

1.2.4: Contextual Background.

Rwanda is a small landlocked country located in East – Central Africa. It is boarded by Uganda in the North, Tanzania in the East, Burundi in the South and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the West. Rwanda covers 26,338 sq km. The current census reveals that Rwanda has over 11 million people (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2002). Bugeresa district covers an area of 1,288 km² and has a population of 363,399 (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012). 56% of whom are below 19 years of age, and this population 52% is identified as non-poor dependent on agricultural wage income, while the rest (48%) are considered to be extremely poor. There are 81 secondary schools in Bugeresa district with a student enrollment average of 13, 329 (net rate less than 25%). upon the attainment of her independence on 1st of July 1962, Rwanda adopted French as an official medium of instruction until

December 2008 when the government decided to shift from the use of French to English language as the medium of instruction across education levels (Minutes of Cabinet Meeting, 2008). In 2007, Rwanda joined the EAC, there was need for integration and in 2008, and the Cabinet approved a decision to adopt English language as the medium of instruction in schools.

According to Pinon and Haydon, (2010), the economy of Rwanda relies on the official languages: Kinyarwanda (spoken by most of the population-98%), French and English. French is spoken by 68% of the population reflecting its colonial history, whereas English which is also the medium of instruction in schools is spoken by 15% of the population. Although most companies use French as the main business language, English is growing in importance. With the decision to make English language as a medium of instruction, the Ministry of Education has embarked on a school based monitoring programme to support teachers and students to improve their English Language Proficiency. Bugesera District got 25 school based mentors in 2010 and 30 in 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2011). In 2012, the district received 45 school based mentors (Ministry of Education, 2012). Although Bugesera District received school based mentors and facilitation from the Ministry of Education, students' performance in national exams continuously declined (Bugesera District Education Report, 2012). For example, out of 3000 students who sat national exams in 2009 in Bugesera district, only 200 (6.7%) came in division one compared to 400 (15%) who had come in the same grade the previous year before English was adopted as the medium of instruction. 310 (10.3%) in division two and 634 (21.1%) in division three compared to 456 (23%) and 780 (43%) respectively (Rwanda Examinations Council Report, 2009). The rest of the candidates were in fourth and F grades. Even in 2010, out of 7000 students who sat national exams at S.3, only 401 got division one (5.7%), division two 10%, three 14% and four 20%. Majority 50.3% were

in F grade (Rwanda National Examinations Council, 2010). It was this kind of situation that compelled the researcher to carry this study.

1.3. Statement of Problem

English as a language of instruction is a new policy in Rwanda. Both the teachers and students have the challenges of using the language proficiently. The government's rapid decision to ensure implementation of the policy causes a huge academic concern for quality of education and particularly for the performance of students as well as teachers whose English language command is handicapped. The Ministry of Education has embarked on a School Based Mentoring Program to support teachers improve their English language proficiency (Rwanda Ministry of Education, 2012). Teachers of English language have been recruited from Uganda and Kenya to mentor or train the Rwandan teachers in English language with the ultimate goal of improving students' performance and quality of education. In this case, Bugesera district received from the Ministry of Education 25 School Based Mentors (SBMs) (Bugesera District Education Report, 2012). The district also works with Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) (in the field of Education who support with teacher training in English language). Even though there is huge investment in the training/mentoring of secondary school teachers in the district, there are still issues around this; many teachers look at the School Based Mentors as "their supervisors", they are not comfortable to teach with someone observing them due to their lack of language confidence (Ministry of Education, 2012). Schools in the district are often characterized by use of mother tongue yet it is un official in schools, inadequate supplies of instructional materials and lack of enough qualified teaching staff and management. Success rates in national examinations are very weak – barely less than 27% against national average 50% (Bugesera District Education Report, 2012). For example, out of 3000 students who sat national exams in 2009 in Bugesera district, only 200 (6.7%)

came in division one compared to 400 (15%) who had come in the same grade the previous year before English was adopted as the medium of instruction. This poor performance is attributed to English language proficiency problems in terms of literacy skills, School learning environment and Basic Communication Skills. It is therefore, feared that if English language is not seriously attended to particularly when a decline in students' performance is evident in failing national exams, the quality of education in the district will continue to decline, in the long run, the whole nation will be affected. It is this apprehension that motivated the researcher to explore the effects of English language proficiency on students' performance at secondary level in Rwanda – a case study of Bugeresa.

1.4: Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of English language proficiency on students' academic performance in Secondary Schools in Bugeresa District.

1.5: Objectives of the Study

- 1) To investigate the extent to which Literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District.
- 2) To establish how School Learning Environment influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District.
- 3) To assess the extent to which Basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District.

1.6: Research Questions

- 1) How literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District?

- 2) How does school learning environment influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District?
- 3) To what extent do basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District?

1.7: Hypothesis

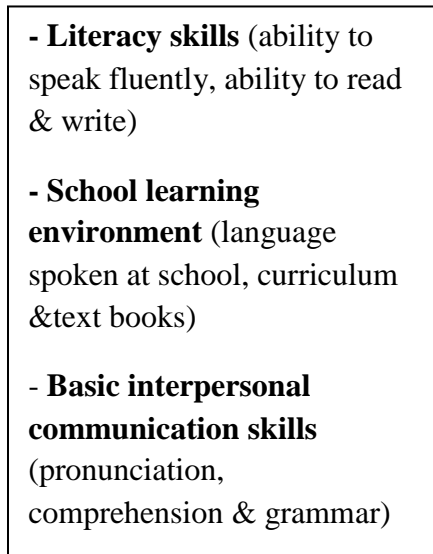
- 1) Literacy skills significantly influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.
- 2) School learning environment positively influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.
- 3) There is a positive significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

1.8: Conceptual Review

Conceptual Framework

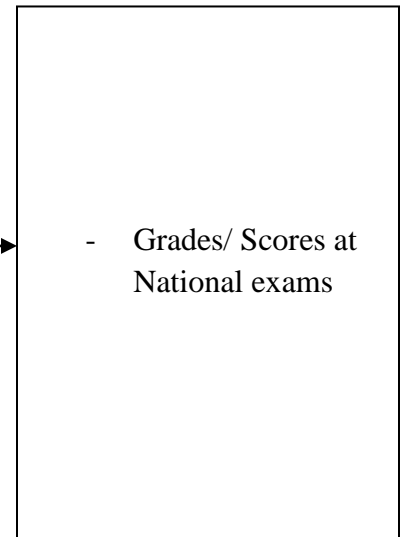
Independent Variable

English Language Proficiency



Dependent Variable

Students' performance



(Source: Adopted from Cummins and modified by the researcher)

Figure 2 showing the relationship between English language proficiency and students' performance

From the above figure, the interaction between the independent variable (English language proficiency) and the dependent variable (students' performance) is explained. When English language proficiency is well observed, students' performance increases. English language proficiency was looked at in terms of literacy skills, school learning environment and basic interpersonal communication skills. English language proficiency is of great importance to students' academic performance. This view is shared by Aguti, (1996), who notes that students' academic performance is related to English language

proficiency. For this reason, the researcher felt it necessary to use Communs' Theory of Cognitive Academic language proficiency (CALP).

1.9: Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study may contribute to better practices of adapting English language as the medium of instruction to improve students' performance and the quality of education in general as the policy makers are struggling to improve English language skills of both teachers and students for performance. The findings from the study may propose language acquisition/ training approaches needed for English language acquisition among others.

The study may contribute to scholarly research and literature since English language is receiving wide attention and support by partners and a current area of concern for the Ministry of Education and the education sector as a whole.

1.10: Justification of the Study

The Ministry of Education is facing a huge challenge to train teachers in the English language and redesign and translate the curriculum and syllabi in the English language, and certainly this cannot be achieved in a year or two. The findings from this study may help provide information for the identification, development and publication of all appropriate education frameworks or approaches that would support students in becoming successful in secondary schools and performing well in national examinations.

No research of this kind and magnitude has ever been conducted in Rwanda and therefore the findings may provide a synthesis of factors that policy makers could use to improve on the English language capacity program.

1.11: Scope of the Study

1.11.1: Geographical scope

The study was conducted in secondary schools of Bugesera district in Rwanda. The district is bordered by Nyarugenge and Kicukiro districts in the North, Republic of Burundi in the south, Nyanza district in the West and Ngoma district in the East. It is located in the Eastern Province of Rwanda with its capital at Nyamata and is 45 kilometers from the Capital City, Kigali. Four secondary schools were sampled because they are the only ones that are comprehensive (with upper secondary school level or Advanced level).

1.11.2: Content scope

The study concentrated on the influence of English language proficiency on students' academic performance. The objectives of this were; to investigate the extent to which Literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District, to establish how School Learning Environment influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District, to assess the extent to which Basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. The researcher ensured that other factors influencing students' performance were controlled not to affect the results of the study.

1.11.3: Time scope

The study mainly covered the period 2008 to 2012 because this is the period that the cabinet passed the policy of shifting French to the use of English as the language of instruction in schools and when a sharp decline in academic performance was noted.

1.12: Operational definition of terms

Academic language: This concept is used interchangeably with medium of instruction to mean the language that teachers and students use during the teaching and learning process.

English language proficiency: This concept is used to mean levels of English learners' competence in speaking, writing, reading and listening

Or the ability, the expertise and skill to use English language as the medium of communication for academic purposes

Medium of Instruction: In this research proposal this concept is referred to as the language of teaching and learning. It is also the accepted language of communication between teachers and students in the transaction of education business.

Performance: In this study, this concept is used to mean the standard yard stick to measure achievement in education for both the teachers and the students

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the reviewed literature on English language proficiency and students' performance. The researcher reviewed related literature on English language proficiency and students' performance from books, internet, journals, Newspapers, Government publications, reports, magazines, minutes of meetings and conference papers, which assisted the researcher to lay a background to the study in chapter one, identify the theory to guide the study and selecting research methodology.

2.2 Theoretical Review

A number of theories have been put forward to explain language proficiency. These include; Cognitive Learning Theory by Chomsky, (1965), which assumes that mental functions can be understood. It emphasizes that the learner is viewed as the information processor. The Cognitive theory focuses on inner mental activities. In short, the theoretical concept is opening the "black box" of the human mind. In the Cognitive model, it is necessary to determine how the learning process occurs, such as thinking, memory, knowing, and problem solving. The theory posits that people are not simply "programmed animals" that merely respond to environmental stimuli; people are rational beings whose actions are a result of thinking. Motivation and environment affect learning. Cognitive learning theory states that learning is an active process, in which learners select information from their environment, organize the information, relate it to what they already know, retain what they consider to be important, use the information in appropriate contexts, and reflect on the success of their learning efforts (Chamot, 1999). This study focuses on Academic Language through the use of Academic Vocabulary; therefore, the researcher recognizes a student's active cognitive process to choose an academic word over a

“playground” or conversational word as the applied learning theory. However, this theory did not fit the study because according to the Rwanda curriculum of education, students do not have the liberty to choose what they want to study as it is teacher centred than student centred.

Behaviorism Learning Theory of Brown and Spada, (1999), assumes that the learner learns and develops a second language from the learning environment. That is the learner gets what he or she likes from the environment and suggests it to be learnt. This theory was not relevant to the study because the learners have no choice of choosing what to study as the curriculum is more of teacher centered than student centered. Moreover, this study focused on English Language Proficiency, a newly introduced language in the country where no choice is given for students to select.

In this study, the researcher believed that Cummins’ Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) Theory, (1982), was the most appropriate to guide it. Cummins’ Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Theory, (1982), assumes that students’ academic performance is as a result of their language proficiency. It also assumes that the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) is related to literacy skills and basic interpersonal communication skills in the first and second language which requires higher levels of language and cognitive processes in order to develop the language proficiency needed to succeed in school. Cummins, (1982), argues that there are two important types of language proficiency which he labeled Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) and Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). CALP is the type of language proficiency needed to read text books, to participate in debates and dialogues and to provide response to tests. Students who have not yet developed in their cognitive-academic language proficiency could be at a disadvantage in learning academic subjects (Chamot and O’Malley, 1986).

In support of the Cummins' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, Aguti, (1996), notes that students' performance is related to language proficiency. Chamot and O'Malley, (1986) and Shuy, (2001), argue that language proficiency has a great impact on students' academic performance. According to Anderson and Anderson, (1970); August and Hakuta, (1997); Baral, (1979); Brown, (1973); Canale, (1981); Carrasquillo and Rodriguez, (1996); Connor and Kaplan, (1987); Krashen, (1976) and Oller, (1980), there is a strong relationship between English reading and writing and academic achievement. Therefore, academic language proficiency is very important in students' academic performance hence justifying the Cummins' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Theory that guided the study.

2.3 Conceptual Review

In this study, English Language Proficiency (ELP) was looked at as an independent variable and Students' Performance as a dependent variable. English language proficiency refers to the ability to speak, read, write and comprehend the English language in general (Sternberg, 2008). Academic English proficiency refers to the ability to speak, read, write and comprehend academic English which is characterized by academic and content-specific vocabulary, complex sentence discourse (eg interpretation and analysis of data and text). It involves the students' ability to demonstrate understanding of subject knowledge on academic measures. According to Rumberger and Scarcella, (2000), Academic language involves mastery of a writing system and its particular academic conversational as well as proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening, which is a strong determinant for success in academia and the job market. Learning the multiple complex features of academic language prepares students for long-term success in schools, successful completion of higher education

and employment with opportunity for professional advancement and financial rewards. Given the nature of today's academic demands, lack of proficiency in academic language affects students' ability to comprehend and analyze texts, limits their ability to write and express themselves effectively, and can hinder their acquisition of academic content in all academic areas. To be successful academically, students need to develop the specialized language of academic discourse that is distinct from conversational language (Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, and Kieffer, 2006; Solomon and Rhodes, 1995). English Language Proficiency was broken into literacy skills, school learning environment and basic interpersonal communication skills.

2.3.1 Literacy Skills and Students' Academic Performance

According to Francis, Rivera, Lesaux, and Kieffer, (2006), Literacy Skills of a family have a strong influence on a child's ability to speak a language fluently as well as writing and reading it, consequently be able to interpret and understand the questions asked and perform better than that child whose family literacy levels are wanting. Literacy skills were therefore, broken into ability to speak fluently and ability to write and read.

2.3.2. Ability to speak fluently and Students' academic Performance

The literacy levels of a family matter a lot as far as students' academic performance is concerned. For instance, parents who support their children by teaching them English at an early age and buy supplementary reading books help their children to improve their English speaking fluently, knowledge and skills (Campbell and Qorro, 1997). Such opportunities help them to cope with their academic studies in secondary schools using English as the language of instruction unlike children who are unable to get additional support from their families. Campbell and Qorro, (1997), further reveal that children who have a language background of studying English from kindergarten or class one and a home

environment that is supportive by allowing them to practice English with family or with friends, have a positive contribution in helping them learn English language and speak it fluently while those who start English later (from class three) and usually speak their mother tongue at home or with friends indicate that their poor competence in English is due to the weak foundation from primary school. Family literacy also sometimes depends on the location-whether it is urban or rural as there are higher literacy levels in urban that contribute a lot in speaking a language fluently as compared to the rural since there is limited support from the parents in the language of instruction and speaking it is a great challenge, which inevitably leads to performing it poorly.

2.3.3. Ability to Write and Read and Students' Academic Performance

In a study conducted in Botswana by Prophet and Badede, (2006), on the effects of changing the language used in the science examinations in junior secondary schools, they found out that language can be a barrier to understanding examination questions particularly the wording of the questions in science examinations as students could not properly read them. Students studying in rural schools seem to be more affected since their writing and reading skills in English are limited due to lack of opportunity to develop them unlike those in urban schools (Ministry of Education- Rwanda, 2012). Therefore, literacy levels of the family in terms of writing and reading have a great impact on language proficiency and consequently academic performance. However, studies conducted by Aiken, (1971); Baral, (1979); Bender and Ruiz, (1974); Cocking and Chipman, (1988); Cottrell, (1968) and Goodrum, (1978), on the effects of English language proficiency on the acquisition of science content knowledge showed that English language proficiency had an insignificant effect on academic achievement except on verbal ability in the general population.

On the other hand, Baptist, (2004), conducted a study on students' participation and performance in 'fasihi' and literature in teachers training colleges with the focus on whether there was progress or regression using the language of instruction in these two subjects. He explained in his findings that 62% of the tutors in teacher training colleges said the relation between language and performance is crucial towards enabling students perform well in their academic subjects. Baptist continues to elaborate that English which is the language of instruction in secondary schools is a problem in which most students are incompetent or have low proficiency in the language since it's mainly a classroom language used only in class and not outside; students are unable to fully benefit their education due to pedagogical hindrances where can't speak it fluently as well as read and write it properly. Students therefore, understand very little and thus perform poorly in examinations. It is this state of affairs that compelled the researcher to carry out a study in Bugesera district to establish the influence of English language proficiency on students' academic performance.

2.4. School Learning Environment and students' academic performance

Many research findings have shown that the success of any educational endeavor rests on the availability of a conducive-learning environment and physical facilities especially the school buildings, which encourage the learners to have the urge to master a language. According to Prophet and Badede, (2006), Students who have had early exposure to English from the beginning of primary school where the learning environment was conducive are able to cope using English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools, which makes them perform better academically. School Learning Environment were looked at in terms of school buildings, school curriculum and school text books.

2.4.1. Language spoken at School and Students' academic performance

The language spoken at school greatly impacts on the learners' academic achievement. Olutola, (1982), notes that the language spoken at school contributes to good academic performance as it enhances effective language adoption as well as other teaching-learning activities. He further states that well sited school buildings with aesthetic conditions, playground, lavatory, noise free environment usually contribute to achieving higher educational attainment by the students, which motivates them to like and speak any language of instruction. According to the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, (1999), the total environment within a school building should be comfortable, pleasant and psychological uplifting. It should provide a passive physical setting that is educationally stimulating, it should produce a feeling of well-being among its occupants, and it should support the educational process thereby enhancing language fluency of the learners. The above condition can only be met through the cooperative efforts of imaginative teachers, administrators and a creative knowledgeable architect. According to Stockley, (2008), in developing countries where English is used as a medium of instruct and the mother tongue is a different one, quite many learners and teachers find it an uphill task to adopt quickly to English Language, which consequently affects learners' performance. This is the same situation that Rwanda as a country faces particularly with the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction.

2.4.2 School Curriculum and Students' Academic Performance

The curriculum determines a lot in making students perform better because a curriculum that does not favour students' interest makes them dislike studies, the language of instruction and consequently affects their performance. One of the reasons why students in secondary schools face so much difficulty in using English is the nature of the curriculum, which does emphasize sematic curriculum at lower levels and by the time students are introduced to English, it is late for them to cope with it thus influencing

them to perform poorly (Campbell and Qorro, 1997). They add that students are unwilling to actively participate in class discussions because teachers would criticize them or other students who started their school from urban setting laugh at them because of their lack of ability to express themselves in English. According to Prophet and Badede, (2006), Students who have had early exposure to English from the beginning of primary school where the learning environment is conducive because the curriculum there emphasizes English as a medium of instruction, their performance tends to be better off in comprehension tests conducted unlike those who started learning English from class three and thus have less exposure in the language.

It is important for the school curriculum to be conducive for the learners to allow effective teaching and learning to occur. The curriculum design and the curriculum content greatly affect students' performance. A good curriculum should be age-appropriate, relevant and drawing from the learners' experience and environment (Howie, 2002). Such a curriculum gives room to student participation in learning and the reverse is true. According to Samuelson and Freedman, (2010), it is also important that the curriculum is delivered in a language students and teachers are able to understand otherwise learning will not take place. For this reason, the curriculum of education should in a language that students understand better because it may lead to their failure in exams. Since the introduction of English language as a medium of instruction in Rwanda in 2008, there has been a decline in performance in national exams (Rwanda National Examination Council, 2011). For the case of Rwanda where both the students and the teachers have the limitation in the language of the curriculum (English), learning is likely to remain a challenge.

However, Ceaser, (2001), in his study in Mexico about the education curriculum discovered that there was a negative relationship between the curriculum and students' academic performance. This was perhaps Ceaser, (2001), did his study in S. America where conditions in education may be different from

Rwanda's. In addition, this study was done in 2001 since then conditions have changed. From the field in Bugesera district, the findings indicate that majority 141 (82.9%) agreed that school curriculum influences students' academic performance. Thus the school curriculum does much in influencing students' performance.

2.4.3 School Textbooks and Students' Academic Performance

The impact of the availability of textbooks in a learning environment should not be undermined. Students who access more materials to read and interact with have more chances of improving their language proficiency and consequently better performance than those students with less access to study materials whether at home or at school (Olutola, 1982). The low English language proficiency is also closely linked to students' lack of books to use at home (Howie, 2002). Text books help students to read and dig deep into a subject and when there are many novels in the library; it becomes easy for the teachers to encourage students to read them, which helps to them master English language (Baptist, 2004). Therefore, in a school where there are many text books, chances are that students' reading culture will be high and consequently resulting into better performance.

The study by Prophet and Badede, (2006), on the effects of the availability of textbooks on students' performance showed that the availability of textbooks enhances students' academic achievement but this can be facilitated by the learners' language proficiency as it will help them read, interpret, understand and write the questions properly. Basing on this situation, the researcher felt encouraged in carrying out a study in Bugesera district and establish the real situation. The findings from the field show that majority respondents 134 (78.8%). This indicates that availing enough and right text books to students greatly influences their performance.

2.5. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and students' academic performance

The fact that Rwanda has only one autochthonous language makes it a special case, as most African nations are multilingual. Thus Kinyarwanda is viewed as a unifier (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010). This means that Rwandans speak the same language and understand each other very well irrespective of their ethnicity, social status, level of education, geographical location among others. However, with the introduction of English as a medium of instruction in 2009, the situation in school has changed and communication between students and teachers has proved a challenge and students' ability to speak, read and write English language has adversely affected their performance. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills were broken into pronunciation, Comprehension and Grammar.

2.5.1 Pronunciation and Students' academic Performance

In Rwanda, Kinyarwanda is a language of the majority and pronunciation is quite perfect. The teachers speak the language of the students and students find it much simpler for them to communicate with the teachers in a language they are more comfortable in-Kinyarwanda which also the home language. This makes it difficult for students to master and pronounce the academic language which is English. Mvungi, (2003), conducted an empirical study to see whether there was any correlation between language pronunciation, grammar and comprehension and performance. Her study came to the conclusion that English language pronunciation and grammar were a major hindrance towards effective learning and thus affected school performance in both science and arts subjects. The introduction of English language by the government in 2008 as a medium of instruction across the education levels in Rwanda poses a challenge for both the teachers and students to be fluent users of English language for academic purposes. Alidou, (2009), says that under-achievement is not experienced by learners because

they have inherent cognitive problems but due to the fact that most learners do not fully master the language of instruction used as well as the pronunciation of words.

With Rwanda, pronunciation of English words is full of Kinyarwanda and this makes it hard for the students to speak and write correct words hence leading to poor performance. With this literature supporting pronunciation leading to performance, the researcher was motivated to carry out the study and establish whether in Bugesera district pronunciation in a language helps students in academic performance. From the field in Bugesera district, majority respondents 136 (80%) believed that pronunciation is a big component of influencing students' academic perform. It is therefore true that students' pronunciation influences their academic performance.

2.5.2 Comprehension and Students' Academic Performance

According to the National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA), (1993), the language problem inhibits students to comprehend what is taught because the teachers themselves fail to express themselves before students, have poor pronunciation of words, resulting into poor performance in National examinations. Mwinsheikhe, (2003), shares her experience as a National examination marker and says that students who attempted to answer in Kiswahili usually the answers were correct because they were able to comprehend what they studied in Kiswahili than in English. Unfortunately the marking regulations disqualify such answers from being marked because of grammatical mistakes. NECTA, (2003), conducted an analysis on candidates' answers using examination results of 1990 CSEE (Certificate of Secondary Education Examination) and the analysis showed that the answers of students were unintelligibly expressed because of poor command of English language as a result of poor

pronunciation, grammatical mistakes and lack of comprehension. Although some of the answers were correct but the overall manner of expression displayed that students were unable to express their knowledge, they lacked clarity and markers were unable to draw any meaningful message out of them. In Rwanda where the shift from Kinyarwanda to English is more recent, students find it a challenge to comprehend what is taught and therefore, their performance is greatly affected.

On the contrary, Donant, (1999), in his study about the role of students' comprehension of a language in Michigan State University in the United States of America (USA), Concluded that comprehension of a language was not a big factor in determining students' academic performance. Instead factors like pronunciation and language proficiency were more influential in students' performance. This was possibly because his study was done in the USA, a developed country whose conditions of education are different from those of Rwanda. It was due to such conflicts in the literature reviewed that the researcher was engineered to conduct an independent study in Bugesera district and find out whether pronunciation influences students' academic performance. The findings of the study show that majority respondents 114 (67%) agreed that pronunciation in a language influences students' academic performance.

2.5.3 Grammar and Students' Academic Performance

According to Alidou, (2009), under-achievement is not experienced by learners because they have inherent cognitive problems but due to the fact that most learners do not fully master the language of instruction used, the pronunciation of words and grammar. Lack of grammatical expression in English language greatly makes students perform poorly because they normally write words that are not English or words that change meanings. In a number of schools in Rwanda, students' grammar in English leaves

a lot to be desired. This is because most teachers and students are used to Kinyarwanda and English is a new language of instruction, which makes them perform poorly particularly in national exams. According to Howie, (2002), students' poor performance in national exams is as a result of grammatical errors. Learning grammar in a language should start as early as primary level. Those students who have the opportunity to learn English right from primary one, have a greater advantage of mastering grammar over those who learn it from primary three or even five (Baptist, 2004). It is this apprehension that compels the researcher to conduct a study in Bugesera district to establish whether basic interpersonal communication skills in terms of pronunciation, comprehension and grammar of students influence students' performance there.

Given this literature, it was important that the researcher went to field to establish whether students' ability in grammar influences their performance. From the field in Bugesera district, majority 87 (51.1%) agreed that pronunciation influences students' academic performance. This shows that the way students pronounce words may lead them to write such words as they pronounce them, which may lead to writing wrong words thus limiting their performance

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

The available literature indicates that literacy skills significantly influence students' academic performance. The literature also indicates that school learning environment positively influences students' academic performance. The available literature shows that basic interpersonal skills significantly influence students' academic performance. This means that Language proficiency greatly affects students' academic performance.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study research design, study population, how sample size was determined and selected, sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods, instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, procedure of data collection, data analysis techniques and measurement of variables

3.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive case study research design with both qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection and analysis. A case study design was preferred because it focuses on an investigation of one setting that has similar situation with other settings or the whole (Amin, 2005). Also because of time and budget constraints, a case study design was preferred.

Qualitative research approach was selected because it involves direct experience during field work in order to be able to understand and interpret the setting as well as the individuals, which enabled the researcher to make an in-depth analysis of the problem under study (Amin, 2005). It also provided a naturalistic inquiry which involves studying real-world situations without manipulation of the variables (Patton, 2002). The approach was considered appropriate for the study because it produces numerical quantifiable data (Bellis, 2000). It was also preferred because more than one method of data collection can be used such as observations, interviews and documentary analysis (Yin, 2003). The former gives precise and testable expression to qualitative ideas while the latter enhances the understanding of the meaning of numbers (Kothari, 2003).

3.3 Study Population

The study population included senior four students ('A' Level) from the four public secondary schools in the district- Nyamata High School, Groupe Scoliare (G.S) Rilima, Apebu, and Rilima Catholic as well as key informants. That is; head teachers, teachers, students, education officers, and Parent Teachers Committee (PTC) representatives, and an official from Rwanda Education Board, Department of Teacher Development and Management (TDM).

3.4 Sample Size and Selection

A sample of 184 respondents was selected from 346 to participate in the study. The key informants were chosen because they are knowledgeable about and have all the relevant information on the research topic (Kombo and Tramp, 2007). Senior four students were selected because they are directly affected by language proficiency in their study and they have written their national examinations in English language (language of instruction). This sample size was determined using Krejkie and Morgan tables from Amin, (2005). The distribution was determined as shown in table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Table showing the study population and sample size.

Target population Category	Population size	Sample size	Sampling technique
DEO	1	1	Purposive
Head teachers	4	4	Purposive
Teachers	100	70	Simple random and stratified random sampling
Students (s.4)	224	100	Simple random and stratified random sampling
PTC representatives	16	8	Simple random
REB/TDM Representative	1	1	Purposive
Total	346	184	

(Source: Bugesera District Education Office)

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques to obtain a representative sample. In the selection of the key informants, purposive sampling technique was adopted because it enables the researcher to decide on who to include in the sample because of the knowledge such subjects have about the researcher's topic (Sekaran, 2003 and Kothari, 2004). Since each school had only one Head teacher, one member from REB/TDM as well as one DEO at the district, all were sampled. In the selection of teachers and students simple random sampling was used. This is because it gives each member of the population equal chance of participating in the study (Amin, 2006). Stratified

random sampling was applied to ensure equal representation of male and female participants as well as boarding and day schools (Enon, 1998 and Sarantakos, 1998).

3.6. Data Collection Methods

Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect data because they lead to higher degree of validity and reliability hence reducing the bias (Amin, 2005). Primary data was collected using the questionnaire survey and interviews while documentary analysis was used in getting secondary data.

3.6.1 Questionnaire Survey

This study employed self-administered questionnaires that were structured and were used to collect quantitative data from teachers and students because this method helps respondents to give independent opinions without fear since they do not need to indicate their names. It also enables the researcher to code information easily for subsequent analysis thereby reducing the error gap (Sekaran, 2004). The questionnaire was structured under sections where A was on background information, B on independent variable and (English language proficiency) and C on dependent variable (students' performance).

3.6.2 Interviews

Only one structured face-to face interviews were conducted using a prepared interview guide to direct in covering the issues related to the research objectives. Interviews were for key informants-head teachers, DEO, parents representative and REB/TDM. This method was used because it is flexible, with a high response rate and helps the interviewees share the important issues related to the research topic, at the same time allow flexibility (Bryman, 2008). Open-ended questions were used to generate rich answers where interviewees use whatever words they want to express what they have to say as each interviewee provides different answers (Patton, 2002).

3.6.3 Documentary Analysis

This method was employed to collect information from documents such as results from national exams, assessment reports, results from internal exams, policy documents and admission files so as to get a clear picture of the students' performance at various levels.

3.7 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used three instruments to collect primary data from the field. They include the questionnaire, interview guide and documentary checklist.

3.7.1 Questionnaire

The researcher used structured self-administered questionnaires with closed ended questions to collect data from teachers and students. This was because they allow appropriate flexibility of the respondent as well as restrict them to relevant issues and are easy to administer as each item on the questionnaire is followed by an alternative answer (Sekaran, 2004; Amin, 2005; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The researcher used questionnaires to collect information from teachers and students.

3.7.2 Interview guide

According to Patton, (2002), interviews are done with the intention of finding out things that cannot be observed. This study used structured-face-face interviews to collect data from head teachers, parent representatives, official from REB/TDM and the education officers. The purpose of interviewing was to find out what was in and on someone else's mind, to gather their stories (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, interviews are flexible and allow room for clarity on certain issues by asking additional follow up questions and in-depth information is obtained (Sarantakos, 2005; Amin, 2005).

3.7.3 Documentary Review Checklist

For this study, the researcher reviewed documents containing particular information about students' performance. These included results for candidates in national exams, assessment reports and admission files. This was because documents are used to support and supplement evidence from other sources (Yin, 1994). The assessment documents were used to substantiate the evidence from various sources of literature regarding the influence of English language proficiency on students' performance. Documentary analysis was basically limited to data related to students' performance but yet essential to the study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

3.8.1 Validity

Accuracy of information was ensured by the use of relevant instruments. The questionnaires were subjected to the scrutiny of the supervisors to ensure their effectiveness in collecting accurate data. Later, content validity was used to determine their ability to collect accurate data (Amin, 2005). This was based on the expert judgment of the two research supervisors. Each item rated as relevant to be used, content validity index (CVI) was applied by summing up all items rated as relevant by the supervisors divided by the total number of items in the instrument. That is;

CVI = No. of items rated valid by the two judges

Total number of items in the instrument

CVI = $\frac{25}{30} = 0.83$

30

For any instrument to be considered valid, the CVI should be 0.7 or above (Amin, 2005). Since the content validity index of this tool was 0.83 which is above the recommended 0.7, the tool was strongly believed to be valid.

3.8.2 Reliability

The questionnaires were pre-tested in 10 selected public secondary schools in Kicukiro district to ensure consistency and dependability. This was because such schools did not participate in the study. After, internal consistency method was employed. According to Amin, (2005), all the measurements in an instrument that show adequate levels of internal consistency of Cronbach’s alpha 0.7 or above is accepted as reliable.

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics for the questionnaire

Instrument	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of items
Questionnaire	.942	10

3.9 Procedure

After the approval of the proposal, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Uganda Management Institute (UMI). On arrival to the District, the researcher sought for permission from the District Education Office, and the Head teachers of the schools of study, target students, parents, and teachers to collect data in the schools. REB/TDM official was contacted to schedule appointment before the interview. Self-administered questionnaires were then administered to key informants. The

questionnaires were personally delivered to the students and teachers. Later, they were collected for analysis.

3.10 Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher will analyze both quantitative and qualitative data.

3.10.1 Qualitative Data

The researcher analyzed qualitative data using discourse analysis. This was because it enables the researcher to observe patterns of speech like what the respondents say about English language proficiency and students' performance (Berg, 1989). Discourse analysis also enables the researcher to be able to detect non-verbal responses like facial expressions and body language.

3.10.2 Quantitative Data

In this study, the researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze quantitative data using mean, frequencies, percentages and standard deviation (Amin, 2005). Inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses using Spearman's Correlation Coefficient.

3.11 Measurement of variables

In this study, the researcher used interval scale to measure the age groups of the respondents. Nominal scale for assigning number symbols to variables in the questionnaire. Nominal scale was also used to measure both the independent and dependent variables in the five point Likert scale as a basis for making units equal (Kothari, 2003).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of English language proficiency on students' academic performance in Secondary Schools in Bugeresa District. This chapter presents, analyses and interprets the data collected from the field which includes the response rate of the respondents, the social economic status of the respondents and also analyses and interprets the respondents' responses to address the research objectives of this study.

4.2 Response rate

Response rate shows the percentage of respondents who managed to give their responses out of those that were targeted in this study. Out of 184 respondents, who were given questionnaires and subjected to interviews, their response rate is as presented in table 4.1:

Table 4.1: Response rate

Category of Population	Sample size	Response Rate	%age of response rate
DEO	1	1	100
Head teachers	4	4	100
Teachers	70	70	100
Students (s.4)	100	100	100
Parent PTC representatives	8	8	100
REB/TDM	1	1	100
Total	184	184	100

Table 4-1 shows a very high response rate by different categories as compared to the representative response rate of at least 50% as recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The study targeted 184 respondents from whom 6 key informants were purposively selected while others (178) were randomly selected and then stratified method was used to allow both female and male students, teachers and PTC representatives a chance to have a representative sample. This high response rate was achieved because the researcher was able to personally reach respondents and guide them in interpreting questions. It was also due to the fact that all the respondents targeted in this study knew how to read and write which made it possible for the researcher to register a very high response rate of 100% in all categories of respondents considered for this study.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In this study, the researcher presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents from Bugesera district who were interviewed during the data collection process. This was also intended to show

whether the sample was fairly selected from the population. The demographic data included age, gender and level of education.

4.3.1 Age of Respondents

Respondents were asked to reveal their ages. This was intended to find out whether the sample selected was a fair representation from the population where the sample was selected from. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percent
14-23 years	141	79.2
24-33 years	27	15.2
34- 43 years	6	3.4
44 and above years	4	2.2
Total	178	100

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the respondents (79.2%) were aged between 14-23 years and the least were aged between 44-and above years at 2.2%. Although there was differences in age distribution, it was concluded that the sample was fairly selected since all the age categories found in the population was captured in the sample.

4.3.2 Respondents by gender

Respondents were asked to reveal their gender. This was intended to find out whether the sample selected was a fair representation from the population where the sample was selected from. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	102	57.3
Female	76	42.7
Total	178	100

Source: Primary data

Table 4.3 shows that majority of the respondents (57.3%) were males and the least were females at 42.7%. Although there was differences in the gender distribution, it was concluded that the sample was fairly selected since both gender categories found in the population were captured in the sample.

4.3.3 Respondents by level of education

In this study, level of education was characterized as ‘O’ level completion, S.6 completion, diploma, degree, postgraduate and Masters. The level of education in this study was important because the study is about the English language proficiency which has a very significant relationship with the level of education an individual attains.

Table 4.4: Respondents by level of education

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Completed 'O' level	139	78.1
S.6 Graduate	18	10.1
Diploma	8	4.5
Degree	9	5.1
Postgraduate Dip	3	1.7
Masters	1	0.5
Total	178	100

Source: Primary data

Table 4.4 shows that majority of the respondents (78.1%) had completed 'O' level, followed by those who completed S.6 at 10.1% and the least had completed masters at 0.5%. Although there was differences in the level of education, it can be concluded that the sample was fairly selected since all the education levels found in the population were captured in the sample for the results to be valid.

4.4. Literacy skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools.

The first objective of this study was to investigate the extent to which literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

As a way of achieving this objective, the researcher administered various questions to the respondents in order to analyze them and generate answers to the research question and test the hypothesis that "teachers' competence greatly influences English language proficiency and the students' academic performance in secondary schools." Data was collected using 5-likert scale, where strongly agree and agree were taken to be agree; strongly disagree and disagree were taken to mean disagree. Mean and

standard deviation were also used for the analysis. A mean of above 3 means respondents agreed with the statements put to them; a mean of 3 means respondents were undecided and a mean of below 3 means respondents disagreed with the statement put to them. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics for literacy skills

Literacy skills	SA%	A%	UN%	DA%	SDA%	Mean	SD
Students speak English fluently	42.3	37.1	10.6	10.0	0	3.81	1.19
The way students/teachers speak English makes them proud of the language	37.1	42.4	12.9	5.3	2.4	3.80	1.21
Students speak English perfectly, which helps them to understand and interpret the questions in exams	52.4	24.1	1.2	10.6	11.8	3.68	1.42
Students/ teachers can read and write English language without difficulty, which helps them perform better	62.9	23.5	5.3	7.6	0.7	4.02	1.06
Students are able to read and write English properly, which enables them to understand what is right	52.4	26.4	1.8	12.9	6.5	3.86	1.48
Performance in national exams is affected by what students write down in English	44.7	26.4	2.4	15.9	10.6	3.51	1.32

All the respondents agreed to the statement put to them. This is shown by the mean that is greater than 3 and the standard deviation close to 1.

Table 4.5 shows that majority agreed that literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District since the value of mean is above 3 in all the responses. Also standard deviation of 1 shows that there are very few respondents who were deviating from accepting that literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresera District.

Respondents agreed that students in secondary schools in Bugesera district have acquired literacy skills as shown by majority 79.4% of the respondents who said that they are able to speak English fluently and 86.4% who agreed that they can read and write English language without difficulty, which helps perform better. Also, it was revealed by the majority 79.5 % of the respondents that the way they speak English makes them proud of the language which is also a sign that teachers are motivated to perform to their expectations. However, not all of the students in the district are competent as shown by the findings. According to the findings it shown that there are students who cannot speak English fluently and others can read and write English language with difficulty though they are few as given by the minority 10% and 8.3% of the respondents respectively.

Also majority of the respondents 76.5% showed that students speak English perfectly, which helps them to understand and interpret the questions in exams while 1.2% remained un decided and 22.4% declined to accept that students speak English perfectly. Also, majority 78.8% of the respondents agreed that students are able to read and write English properly, which enables them to understand what is right, 1.8% remained undecided while 19.4% were disagreeing which shows that not all students have the ability to read and write English perfectly.

However, the findings in table 4.5 above further reveal that the performance of students in national exams is affected by what they write down in English as raised by the majority 71.1% compared to 26.5% who were disagreeing and 2.4 of the respondents who were undecided.

4.4.1 How people interpret students' performance in relation to English language proficiency.

Here, people's understanding on the academic performance in relation to English language proficiency was determined. The analysis was done using 5-likert scale, where strongly agree and agree were taken to be agree; strongly disagree and disagree were taken to mean disagree. Mean and standard deviation were also used for the analysis. A mean of above 3 means respondents agreed with the statements put to them; a mean of 3 means respondents were undecided and a mean of below 3 means respondents disagreed with the statement put to them. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Descriptive statistics showing people’s interpretation of students’ academic performance.

Students’ academic performance	SA%	A%	UN%	DA%	SDA %	Mean	SD
Students’ scores in exams is determined by their ability to speak, read and write English	52.3	31.8	1.8	6.5	7.6	3.99	1.13
Proficiency in English language has a strong effect on the passing of students at national level	48.2	32.4	3.5	10.6	5.3	3.71	1.29
The introduction of English as a medium of instruction contributed to failure in national exams	43.5	21.2	2.4	23.5	9.4	3.34	1.36
English language proficiency determines the grades/scores in other subjects	42.4	44.7	2.4	5.3	5.3	4.18	1.05
The way students understand English leads to their final performance in national exams	43.5	44.7	2.9	3.5	5.3	4.21	1.01
Students’ understanding of English, helps them to pass better in national exams	55.3	28.8	1.2	7.6	7.1	3.99	1.14
With the introduction of English as a medium of instruction, students’ passing rate in national exams have increased	26.5	49.4	2.4	12.4	9.4	3.68	1.34

Table 4.6 shows all the respondents agreed to the statement put to them. This is shown by the mean that is greater than 3 and the standard deviation close to 1.

Table 4.6 further shows that the majority 84.1% of the respondents agree that students' score in exams is determined by their ability to speak, read or write English, while 14.1% disagree and 1.8% are undecided on this view. Also, when respondents were asked whether proficiency in English language has as strong effect on the passing of students at national level, majority 80.6% agreed, 15.9% disagreed while minority 1.8% were not decided. Also, 87.1% accept that English language proficiency determines the grades / scores in other subjects as well as helping them perform better for national exams according to the majority 88.2% and 84.1% of the respondents.

Findings further reveal that the introduction of English as a medium according to 64.7% of the respondents as compared 32.9% who declined to accept that English contributes to failure in exams and 2.4% who were undecided. This is supported by the majority 75.9% of the respondents who agreed with the statement that students' understanding of English helps them to pass better in national exams.

4.4.2 Testing the hypothesis that Literacy skills significantly influence the students' performance in secondary schools.

The first hypothesis of this study was an alternative hypothesis (H_A) which stated that "Literacy skills significantly influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District". This was tested at sig level (0.05) using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient method and regression analysis. The results for this hypothesis testing were presented in the tables 4.7 and 4.8.

Table 4.7 Spearman’s correlation coefficient between literacy skills and students’ performance in secondary schools.

Correlations				
Spearman's rho			Literacy skills	Students’ academic performance in secondary schools
	Literacy skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.869**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	178	178
	Students’ academic performance in secondary schools	Correlation Coefficient	.869**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	178	178

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.7 shows that the correlation coefficient between literacy skills and students’ academic performance in secondary schools is significantly high ($r = 0.869$; $p < 0.05$). This analysis shows that literacy skills contributes much to students’ academic performance in secondary schools. However, this analysis is not conclusive since the relationship is just casual. In trying to establish the extent to which the literacy skills is influencing the students’ academic performance, co-efficient of determination was analyzed using linear regression. The responses were presented in the table 4.8

Key informants were also interviewed using interview guide about how literacy skills influences students’ performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Their views were in agreement with

the responses of other respondents that were interviewed using the questionnaire whereby the official from Rwanda Education Board (REB) confirmed the relationship between literacy skills and students' performance "Students ability to read and understand texts automatically helps them to make appropriate responses. Even when they don't know the exact answer, they show understanding of the question".

Table 4.8 Regression Model Summary for literacy skills

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.869 (a)	.753	.752	.4421

a predictors (constant), literacy skills

The results shown in table 4.8 indicate that the correlation between the observed and predicted values of students' performance in secondary schools (R value) is equal to 0.869 while the coefficient of determination (R square) is equal to 0.753. This implies that 75.3% of the changes in students' performance are significantly explained by literacy skills.

Basing on the spearman's rank order correlation coefficient shown in the table 4.7, regression analysis in table 4.8 and the descriptive statistics presenting the responses of the respondents as presented in table 4.6, the alternative hypothesis that teachers' competence in English language proficiency greatly influences the students' academic performance in secondary schools is accepted.

4.5 The School learning environment.

The second objective of this study was to find out the relationship between school learning environment and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District. To achieve this, respondents were asked a number of questions and their responses were analyses and presented in the table 4.8. The analysis was done using 5-likert scale, where strongly agree and agree were taken to be

agree; strongly disagree and disagree were taken to mean disagree. Mean and standard deviation were also used for the analysis. A mean of above 3 means respondents agreed with the statements put to them; a mean of 3 means respondents were undecided and a mean of below 3 means respondents disagreed with the statement put to them. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.9: School Learning Environment

Learning Environment	SA%	A%	UN%	DA%	SDA%	Mean	SD
Teaching in Kinyarwanda at school by some teachers affects students' acquisition of English language.	50.0	23.5	1.8	1.2	18.2	3.66	1.37
Students speaking Kinyarwanda at school with each other, with teachers & school administration limits their acquisition of English language	44.7	31.7	2.4	10.6	10.6	3.88	1.18
The school curriculum is in line with the students' expectations and interests in education	48.8	34.1	1.8	12.9	2.4	4.12	1.09
The curriculum provides for effective learning of English language	44.7	46.4	1.2	5.3	2.4	4.64	1.06
The curriculum helps students to learn English which makes them pass better	65.8	31.8	0	2.4	0	4.82	1.02
There are enough text books written in English language in our school library	34.7	54.3	1.8	5.3	12.9	4.35	1.10
The text books in English in the library enable us to understand English and speak it fluently	41.2	48.2	2.9	5.3	2.4	4.38	1.07
Students read and understand the text books in English which encourages them to speak the language properly	41.2	43.5	1.2	8.8	5.3	4.16	1.04

Table 4.9 shows that all the respondents agreed to the statement put to them. This is shown by the mean that is greater than 3 and the standard deviation close to 1.

The findings in table 4.9 further reveal that learning environment determines the students' academic performance as shown by the majority 89.4% of the respondents saying that a school that has its text books in English language will have students that are proficient in English language as well as academic performance. Also, majority 82.9% reveal that a school that has curriculum that is in line with the students' expectations and interests in education helps its students to perform academically and to be proficient in English language. Majority of the respondents 78.8% also agree that teaching in Kinyarwanda in some school by some teachers affects students' acquisition of English language while majority 76.4% say that using Kinyarwanda at school affects students' ability to fluently speak and write good English which therefore results into the poor performance of students since they can hardly explain a point to in English language according to the majority 67.0% of the respondents.

4.5.1 Testing the hypothesis that school learning environment affects students' academic performance in secondary schools.

The second hypothesis of this study was an alternative hypothesis (H_A) which stated that "school learning environment affects students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District". This was tested at sig. level (0.05) using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient method and regression analysis. The results for this hypothesis testing were presented in the tables 4.10 and 4.11

Table 4.10 Spearman’s correlation coefficient between school learning environment and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Correlations					
Spearman's rho			School learning environment, English language proficiency	Students’ academic performance in secondary schools	
	School learning environment, English language proficiency		Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.659**
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
			N	178	178
	students’ academic performance in secondary schools		Correlation Coefficient	.659**	1.000
			Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
			N	178	178

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.10 shows that the correlation coefficient between school learning environment and students’ performance in secondary schools is significantly high ($r = 0.659$; $p < 0.05$). This analysis shows that school learning environment contributes much to students’ performance in secondary schools. However, this analysis is not conclusive since the relationship is just casual. In trying to establish the extent to which the school learning environment is influencing the students’ performance in secondary schools,

co-efficient of determination was analyzed using linear regression. The responses were presented in the table 4.11.

Key informants were also interviewed using interview guide about how school learning environment influences students' performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Their views were in agreement with the responses of other respondents that were interviewed using the questionnaire for example in his words the DEO said, "Schools that encourage students to speak English amongst themselves and with teachers perform better than those that don't..." This was also reechoed by one of the Head teachers who stated "when teachers speak to students in English, students are also encouraged to use the language and this leads to their improved participation in debate and indirectly improves their academic performance"

Table 4.11 Regression Model Summary for School learning environment

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.659 (a)	.527	.526	.4623

a predictors (constant), school learning environment

The results shown in table 4.11 indicate that the correlation between the observed and predicted values of students' academic performance in secondary schools (R value) is equal to 0.659 while the coefficient of determination (R square) is equal to 0.527. This implies that 52.7% of the changes in students' academic performance are significantly explained by school learning environment.

From the above findings, the Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient shown in the table 4.10, regression analysis as presented in table 4.11 and the descriptive statistics presenting the responses of the respondents which are presented in table 4.9, the null hypothesis that School learning environment

positively influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera Districts is accepted to be true.

4.6 Extent to which Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

This intends to answer the third objective of the research study, which was "To assess the extent to which Basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District". Here, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills" was seen as an independent variable whereas students' academic performance as dependent variable. This section therefore, presents, analyses and interprets the relationship that exist between the two variables as presented in table 4.12. The analysis was done using 5-likert scale, where strongly agree and agree were taken to be agree; strongly disagree and disagree were taken to mean disagree. Mean and standard deviation were also used for the analysis. A mean of above 3 means respondents agreed with the statements put to them; a mean of 3 means respondents were undecided and a mean of below 3 means respondents disagreed with the statement put to them. The elicited responses were presented in table 4.12

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics showing Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

Basic interpersonal communication skills	SA%	A%	UN%	DA%	SDA%	Mean	SD
Students' pronunciation of English words is proper	29.4	50.6	2.9	11.8	5.3	3.70	1.25
It is sometimes difficult for students/teachers to explain their point to the teacher/students in English language	23.5	43.5	1.8	22.4	8.8	3.22	1.39
Pronunciation of English words directly contributes to poor performance in national exams	12.9	38.2	1.2	25.9	21.8	3.10	1.32
Students/Teachers find it difficult to understand and explain some texts in English language which leads to their poor performance	15.7	49.2	4.5	18.4	12.4	3.55	1.48
Students/teachers make a lot of grammatical errors which hampers their performance	12.1	46.9	3.1	12.6	25.3	3.08	1.45

Table 4.12 shows that all the respondents agreed to the statement put to them. This is shown by the mean that is greater than 3 and the standard deviation close to 1.

Table 4.12 also presents the views of respondents on the effects of interpersonal communication skills on the students' performance in secondary schools in Rwanda. According to the majority 80% of the respondents that were interviewed in this study, it is agreed that students' pronunciation of English words is proper but it is sometimes difficult to for students/teachers explain appoint to a teacher or

teachers to students in English according to the majority 67.0% as compared to 31.2% who were disagreeing and the minority 1.8% who were undecided.

The findings further show that majority 51.1% agree that pronunciation of English words directly contributes to poor performance in national exams. However, another reasonable percentage of respondents (47.7%) disagree saying that it has no direct effect on the poor performance of students while the minority 1.2% remained undecided on whether or not pronunciation of English words has direct effect on the poor performance in national exams.

It is also given by the majority 64.9% of the respondents that Students/Teachers find it difficult to understand and explain some texts in English language which leads to their poor performance. Also, majority 59.0% agree that Students/teachers make a lot of grammatical errors which hampers their performance.

4.6.1 Testing the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District

The third hypothesis of the study was an alternative hypothesis (H_A) which stated that; “there is a significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District”. This was tested at sig. level (0.05) using Spearman's rank order correlation coefficient method and regression model to determine the relationship between the two variables. The results for this hypothesis testing were presented in the tables 4.13 and 4.14

4.13 Table Spearman’s correlation coefficient between basic interpersonal communication skills and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Correlations				
Spearman's rho			Basic interpersonal communication skills	Students’ academic performance in secondary schools
	Basic interpersonal communication skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.758**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	178	178
	Students’ academic performance in secondary schools	Correlation Coefficient	.758**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	178	178

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4.13 shows that the correlation coefficient between basic interpersonal communication skills and students’ performance in secondary schools is significantly high ($r = 0.758$; $p < 0.05$). This analysis shows that basic interpersonal communication skills contributes much to students’ performance in secondary schools. However, this analysis is not conclusive since the relationship is just casual. In trying to establish the extent to which the basic interpersonal communication skills is influencing the students’

performance in secondary schools, co-efficient of determination was analyzed using linear regression.

The responses were presented in the table 4.14

Key informants were also interviewed using interview guide about how basic interpersonal communication skills influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Their views were in harmony with the responses of other respondents that were interviewed using the questionnaire because they also agreed that basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' performance as said by one head teacher, "students' classroom performance is much related to their ability to speak fluently in the language of teaching".

Table 4.14 Regression Model Summary for Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.758 (a)	.627	.626	.5339

a predictors (constant), Basic interpersonal communication skills

The results shown in table 4.14 indicate that the correlation between the observed and predicted values of students' performance in secondary schools (R value) is equal to 0.758 while the coefficient of determination (R square) is equal to 0.627. This implies that 62.7% of the changes in students' performance are significantly explained by basic interpersonal communication skills.

The findings as shown by the spearman's rank order correlation coefficient shown in the table 4.13, regression analysis as presented in table 4.14 and the descriptive statistics presenting the responses of the respondents which are presented in table 4.12 are in agreement with the hypothesis of this study that "there is a significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District". Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted to be true.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed at investigating the impact of English language proficiency on students' academic performance in Secondary Schools in Bugesera District.

In this study, the Researcher therefore, establishes relationship that exists between independent and dependent variables. The researcher looks at literacy skills, school learning environment and basic interpersonal communication skills and their influence to students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

This chapter therefore, presents the summary of the findings of this study. It also presents the discussion of the findings, conclusion and recommendations basing on the study findings as per the study objectives.

5.2 Summary

The findings of this study reveal that although the population sample was skewed in favour of secondary schools in Bugesera District as they were the main focus of this study, the findings show that the characteristics are not only for Bugesera District but also for other schools in other Districts in Rwanda. These characteristics include the following;

5.2.1 Literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools.

There is a high and positive correlation coefficient (0.869) between literacy skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Also majority of the respondents (71.1%) agree that literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in

Bugesera District. Also the mean of above 3 shows that literacy skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

5.2.2 Learning environment on students' academic performance in secondary schools.

There is a high and positive correlation coefficient (0.758) between School learning environment and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Majority of the respondents (89.0%) believe that school learning environment positively influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. This is further shown by the value of mean of 3 which shows that respondents were agreeing that school learning environment positively influences students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

5.2.3 Basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' academic performance in secondary schools.

There is a high and positive correlation coefficient (0.693) significant relationship between basic interpersonal communication skills and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. Also 84.1% of the respondents agree that basic interpersonal communication skills affects students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District. This is also confirmed by mean of above 3 which shows that respondents agreed that basic interpersonal skills affects students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

5.3 Discussion

This section presents the discussion of the findings of this study. The discussion relates the study findings of this research study to the views of other writers' literature in order to determine the consistence that exists between what other writers say and what the findings reveal so as to draw

conclusions and make reliable recommendations that may assist policy makers and implementers during the process of policy formulation and implementation especially on issues concerning introduction of English language as a medium of instruction in secondary schools in Rwanda. The discussion of the study findings are therefore presented below as per the study objectives of this study.

5.3.1 The extent to which literacy skills influence students' performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District.

The study reveals that literacy skills and performance of students are significantly related as given by a high correlation coefficient and a p value of $P \leq 0.05$.

This means that the ones that perform very well in their exams including national exams have improved literacy skills. The findings are therefore in agreement with the work of Alidou, (2009), who also believes that literacy skills have a significant effect on the performance of learners. In addition, Prophet and Badede, (2006), agree that English language, they become motivated to speak and use it which enables them perform very well in their exams since they can now read and interpret the questions asked to them. This is so because according to Roy-Campbell & Qorro (1997), children who have a language background of studying English from kindergarten or class one and a home environment that was supportive that allowed them to practice English with family or with friends, had a positive contribution in helping them learn English language while those who started English later (from class three) and usually spoke their mother tongue at home or with friends indicated that their poor competence in English was due to the weak foundation from primary school.

5.3.2 Influence of learning environment on students' performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District.

From the second objective, the research hypothesis that “School learning environment positively influences students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District” was derived. The results that were verified indicated that the relationship between School learning environment and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugesera District is positive and statistically significant (0.659). This implies that the way the students perform in secondary schools in Bugesera District and Rwanda in general perform, depends on the environment they are studying in. This is in agreement with the works Olutola, (1982), who noted that, the availability of the school building and other plans contribute to good academic performance as they enhance effective teaching-learning activities. He further stated that well sited school buildings with aesthetic conditions, playground, lavatory, etc usually contribute to achieving higher educational attainment by the students.

The findings further show that the text books written in English language in the library create a conducive environment that enables students to understand English and speak it fluently which in turn make them pass their exams very well. This is according to 89.4% of the respondents and the work of Howie, (2002), who says that the impact of availability of textbooks in a learning environment should not be undermined. According to Prophet and Badede, (2006), Students who have had early exposure to English from the beginning of primary school where the learning environment was conducive are able to cope using English as a medium of instruction in secondary schools, which makes them perform better academically. They further argue that Students who access more materials to read and interact with have more chances of improving their performance than those students with less access to study materials whether at home or at school. The low English language proficiency is also closely linked to students’

lack of books to use at home. Also, one key respondent said: “for students to perform well academically, the school learning environment in form of infrastructure and learning materials should be improved”

5.3.3 The extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ performance in secondary schools in Bugeresia District.

The third objective of this study aimed at finding the extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Bugeresia District. It aimed at finding out how students’ academic performance is affected by the basic interpersonal skills. The answers to the objective were generated through collecting responses from the respondents and then testing those responses using Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient.

According to the results, it was found out that truly basic interpersonal communication skills influence students’ academic performance in secondary schools. This is shown by correlation coefficient of 0.758 at a significant level of $P \leq 0.05$. The study findings are therefore, in harmony with what was put down by Mwinsheikhe, (2003), who shares her experience as a National examination marker and says that students who attempted to answer in Kiswahili usually the answers were correct because they were able to comprehend what they studied in Kiswahili than in English. According to Alidou, (2009), under-achievement is not experienced by learners because they have inherent cognitive problems but due to the fact that most learners do not fully master the language of instruction used, the pronunciation of words and grammar.

5.4 Conclusions

In this section, the researcher presents conclusions drawn from the study findings. The conclusions made are in accordance with the study objectives as presented below.

5.4.1 Extent to which literacy skills influence students' performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District.

There is a positive and significant relationship between literacy skills and students' performance in secondary schools. This means that literacy skills in form of reading and writing influence students' performance in secondary in form of Grades/ Scores at National exams and English Language Mastery by students.

5.4.2 Influence of learning environment on students' performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District.

There is a significant positive relationship between the learning environment and students' performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District as well as in other schools in Rwanda. This means that the way students in secondary schools that is mastering of English and getting good scores/grades is determined by the learning environment in form of classrooms, text books, & curriculum & syllabi (policies).

5.4.3 The extent to which basic interpersonal communication skills influence students' performance in secondary schools in Bugerese District.

It is concluded that students' academic performance in secondary schools including those in Bugesera District is affected by basic interpersonal communication skills in that the grades obtained or scores got at national exams and the proficiency in English language in terms of speaking it and or writing it is highly attributed to the basic interpersonal skills that is pronunciation comprehension and comprehension

5.5 Recommendations

In light of the above conclusions drawn from the study findings, the followings recommendations are made:

5.5.1 Extent to which literacy skills influence students' performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District

Since one of the major factors that influence students' performance is literacy skills, government authorities in Rwanda and Bugesera District in particular together with parents should ensure that these skills are imparted in students right away from their tender age. This can start from the family level and nursery education level. If this is emphasized then students will join secondary school level when they already can speak and write English without any difficulty hence enabling them to pass well their national exams.

5.5.2 Influence of learning environment on students' performance in secondary schools in Bugeresa District

The Government, the district, parents and the community should ensure that the learning environment is made conducive enough for meaningful students' academic performance to be realized especially in facilitating speaking of English language at school, for example by introducing debates and language clubs.

5.5.3 Extent to which basic interpersonal skills influence students' performance in secondary schools in Bugesera district

All stakeholders be it government, district education authorities, teachers and parents should try to encourage students to speak the language of instruction amongst themselves and with teachers to be able

to improve their pronunciation, comprehension and grammar and this will lead to improved students' performance.

5.6 Limitations of the study

The study was carried out in Bugesera district in Rwanda. The following are the limitations:

The study faced a problem of some government officials hesitating to give information as they did not regard themselves as the spokespersons of their institutions. This was overcome by engaging the relevant officials and creating rapport and assuring them that the information was only for academic purposes.

Some questionnaires were not returned on agreed upon time due to tight schedules by some respondents however it was ensured that research assistants went back for reminders and these were later collected after they were filled.

Another challenge was dealing with a busy community that felt was being inconvenienced. This was overcome by visiting them on appointment.

5.7 Contributions of the study

The study contributed recommending some solutions for improved English language proficiency for students in secondary schools.

The study has also contributed to the world of research in terms of effects of English language proficiency and students' performance in secondary schools in Rwanda.

Findings will contribute to areas of policy formulation on issues of language policy, curriculum reviews and teacher trainings in Rwanda.

5.8 Areas recommended for future research

The future researchers can look at the following;

- a) Teacher's level of education in relation to students' performance in school. This needs to be researched on to establish how this also relates to students performance in secondary schools other than the areas researched on already.
- b) The effect of Trilingualism to the mastery of the language of instruction. In Rwanda, three languages are used in schools, i.e Kinyarwanda, English and French. Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction up to grade three (Primary three) while English as the language of instruction covers other grades going forward. French is also taught as a language and this may hinder the mastery of the language of instruction.

REFERENCES

- Alidou, P. (2009). *The effects of Language Proficiency on students' performance*. London UK
- Aguti, J.N. (2002). *Facing up the challenges of Universal Primary Education in Uganda through distance Teacher Education programmes*. Paper presented at Plan Common Wealth Forum on open

learning, transforming Education for development. Kampala 2002, 29th July – 2nd August. Department of distance education, Makerere University Kampala.

Amin, M.E. (2005). *Social Science Research Conception, Methodology and Analysis*. Makerere University

Baptist. (2004). *Language influence on students' performance in Tanzania*.

Bellis, M.J. (2002). *Teacher Motivation and students' performance in Asia*. Brighton knowledge and skills for development.

Bender, Y. & Ruiz. (1974). *Factors affecting students' performance in Government Aided Secondary schools in Ghana*. Accra - GHANA

Berg. (1989). *Qualitative Data Analysis Methods*. London, UK

Benardin, H.J. (2004). *Teacher Motivation and incentives in Sub – Saharan Africa & Asia*. Brighton knowledge and skill for development.

Bowen, B. R. (2002). *Recognizing and Rewarding employees*. London, UK.

Brurchfield. *Appalachian English Stereotypes: Language Attitudes in Kentucky*.

Reid Luhman. (2004).

Bugesera District Education Report. (2012). Kigali, Rwanda.

Campbell & Qorro. (1997). *Universal Education on students' performance in South Africa*.

Johannesburg.

Chamot, N. (1999). *Tracking and High School English Learners: Limiting Opportunity to Learn*.

Crum, Mc. (2006). *The challenges of English Language on students' performance in California, USA*.

Encyclopedia of Educational Research. (1999).

English Oxford Dictionary. (1993).S

- Francis.L. Rivera, Lesaux, & Kieffer. (2006). *English language proficiency assessment in the Nation: current status and future practice. Paris, France.*
- Kombo, D. K & Tramp, D. L.A. (2009). *Proposal and thesis writing. An introduction. 7th edition. Pon lines publications Africa*
- Ministry of Education, Rwanda. (2008). *Girls' Education Policy .Government of Rwanda*
- Minutes of Cabinet Meeting. (2008). Kigali, Rwanda*
- Mugenda,O. & Mugenda, A.G.(2005). *Research Methods; qualitative and quantitative approaches. African Centre to Technical studies (Acts). Nairobi - Kenya*
- Mvungi, F. (2003). *The challenges of English language and students' academic achievement in Rwanda.*
- Mwinsheikhe, O. (2003). *Language influence on academic achievement in Tanzania. Dar es salaam – Tanzania*
- National Examination Council of Tanzania. (1993,2003). Ministry of Education, Tanzania*
- National Planning and Development Review. (2013). Ministry of Planning and Economic Development*
- Oxford English Dictionary. (1993). Longman.*
- Pinon. & J. Haydon. (2010). *English language Quantitative indicators: Cameroon, Nigeria, Rwanda, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A custom report compiled by Euromonitor Interantiona for the British Council (December 2010). Government of Rwanda*
- Platt, A. (2004). *The academic voice in English and Czech higher education quality.*
- Prophet & Badede. (2006). *Language proficiency and academic performance in Botswana.*
- Rumberger, W.& Scarcella.P. (2000). *How Family Background influences Student Achievement*
- Rwanda National Examination Council. (2011). Ministry of education, Rwanda*
- Samuelson. B.L. & Freedman.W. (2010). *Language policy, multilingual education, and power in Rwanda.*

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research*. Third edition, Macmillan publishers, New York

Sekaran, U.(2003). *Research Methods for building approach*. John Wiley & Sans, inc. 605.

Solomon & Rhodes. (1995). *Language proficiency and academic performance*.

Shuy,M. (2001). *English Language Proficiency as a Predictor of Academic Achievement among EFL Students in Nigeria*

Sternberg, B. (2008). *Definition of oral language proficiency for EFL teachers. Perspectives and contributions from current research*

Wayne,F.C. (2006). *Managing human resources; Productivity Quality of Work Life Profits. 7th edition*.
Mac Graw – Hill Irwin

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

Dear Respondent,

I am pursuing a Masters Degree in Management Studies at Uganda Management Institute conducting a research on the topic: **ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN RWANDA: a CASE STUDY OF BUGESERA DISTRICT** as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a master degree in management studies (project planning and management).

I would be grateful if you spare some time to complete this questionnaire. Please do not indicate your name anywhere on this questionnaire and the information gathered will be treated confidentially and for academic purposes.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATIONs

Please tick the most appropriate.

1. Age

14-23years 24-33years 34-44years 44-aboveyrs

2. Sex

Male Females

3. Marital status

Married Single Windowed Divorced

4. Highest Level of Education

S.4 Diploma Degree Postgraduate Dip Master

SECTION B: ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIANCY

From 5-----30, tick the numbers that best show your opinion on the questions using the scale below

Scale	5	4	3	2	1
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Un decided	Disagree	Strongly Agree

LITERACY SKILLS

5	Students/teachers can speak English fluently	5	4	3	2	1
6	The way students/teachers speak English makes them proud of the language	5	4	3	2	1
7	Students speak English perfectly, which helps them to understand and interpret the questions in exams	5	4	3	2	1
8	Students/teachers can read and write English Language without difficulty, which helps perform better	5	4	3	2	1
9	Students are able to read and write English properly, which enables them to understand what is taught	5	4	3	2	1
10	Performance in national exams is largely affected by what students write down in English	5	4	3	2	1

SCHOOL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

11	Teaching in Kinyarwanda at school by some teachers affects students' acquisition of English language.	5	4	3	2	1
12	Students speaking Kinyarwanda at school with each other, with teachers & school administration limits their acquisition of English language	5	4	3	2	1
13	The school curriculum is in line with the students' expectations and interests in education	5	4	3	2	1
14	The curriculum provides for effective learning of English language	5	4	3	2	1
15	The curriculum helps students learn English which makes them pass better	5	4	3	2	1
16	There are enough text books written in English language in our school library	5	4	3	2	1
17	The text books in English in the library enable us to understand English and speak it fluently	5	4	3	2	1
18	Students read and understand the text books in English which encourages them to speak the language properly	5	4	3	2	1

BASIC INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

20	Students pronunciation of English words is proper	5	4	3	2	1
----	---	---	---	---	---	---

21	It is sometimes difficult for students/teachers to explain their point to the teacher/students in English language	5	4	3	2	1
22	Poor pronunciation of English words directly contributes to poor performance in national exams	5	4	3	2	1
23	Students/Teachers find it difficult to understand and explain some texts in English language which leads to their poor performance	5	4	3	2	1
24	Students/teachers make a lot of grammatical errors which hampers their performance	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION C: STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

25	Students' scores in exams is determined by their ability to speak read or write English	5	4	3	2	1
26	English language has a strong effect on the passing of students at national level	5	4	3	2	1
27	The introduction of English as a medium of instruction contributed to failure in national exams	5	4	3	2	1
28	Proficiency in English language determines the scores in other subjects	5	4	3	2	1
29	The way students understand English leads to their final performance in national Exams	5	4	3	2	1

30	Students' understanding of English, helps them to pass better in national exams	5	4	3	2	1
31	With the introduction of English as a medium of instruction, students' passing rate in national exams have increased	5	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

A: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

1. Are all your teachers fluent in English Language? If not, how do they manage to teach students yet English is a medium of instruction?-----

2. Do all your students speak and write good English? If not, don't they get difficulty in writing exams?-----

3. Does English Language affect the performance of students in other subjects in national exams?--

4. Are there challenges created by the introduction of English as a medium of instruction? If yes, please explain-----

5. As a head teacher, how would rate the performance of your teachers as far as the teaching of English is concerned?-----

6. What recommendations would you make to improve the teaching and learning of English Language so as to better the performance of your school in national exams?-----

B: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS (DEOs)

1. As a DEO of Bugesera district, do consider the teachers fluent in English Language? If no, please explain-----

2. How has the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction affected students' academic performance?-----

3. How has the introduction of English Language affected the students' academic performance?-----

4. What challenges did the introduction of English Language bring to the Education System in general?-----

5. What recommendations would make to better the teaching and learning of English Language in order to improve the performance of students at national level?-----

C: INTERVIEW GUIDE PARENTS' REPRESENTATIVES (PRs)

1. As a parents' representative, are you happy with the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction given the fact that most teachers in Rwanda know French more than English? If no, what is your view?-----

2. Do you think the introduction of English has affected students' academic performance in your school? If yes, show how-----

3. Do you think all the teachers at your school are fluent in English language to be able to teach in English language? If no, what measures have you put in place to rectify the situation?

4. Are all parents, teachers, students and the community supportive of Government Policy of introducing English as a medium of instruction? If no, give reasons why-----

5. What suggestions would you give for effective implementation of English language as a medium of instruction?-----

**D: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RWANDA EXAMINATION BOARD REPRESENTATIVE
(REB)**

1. With the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction in Rwanda, is there any change in students' performance at national level? If yes, please explain-----

2. As a REB representative, has the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction affected the performance of students in other subjects? If yes, show how-----

3. What challenges do you face in REB while handling exams given the introduction of English Language as a medium of instruction?-----

4. What steps has the Government put in place to ensure effective implementation of English Language in Rwandan schools?-----

5. In your own opinion, what do you think should be done to better the teaching of English Language in Rwandan schools?-----
