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Investigation of English Oral Skills and Learning Motivation in Rwanda Polytechnic Colleges: The Case of IPRC Ngoma

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Abstract. English language has become a language of instruction in Rwanda over the last few decades, and students and graduates are supposed to be fluent in it at the moment. However, the literature indicate that employers are not satisfied with the level of English oral skills of graduates from IPRCs in the job. Thus, this study aimed to investigate the students' level in English oral skills and what motivates them to learn English language. Using an explanatory mixed methods design, quantitative and qualitative data were collected data by means of questionnaires. Questionnaires were administered to three (3) English lecturers of English language and sixty (60) students from different departments in IPRC Ngoma.

The findings indicate that the students' level in English oral skills is good. It was also found that students are extrinsically motivated to learn English language and the reasons for their motivation are associated with instrumental reasons where English would help them in their future career of learning and integrative benefits where English will help them exchange information with people from different parts of the world.

Key words: English language, oral skills, learning motivation, education

Introduction

Background

English language was made an official language in Rwanda in 1996 after a long time of its introduction in 1960 by European colonizers and was declared a medium of instruction in 2009 in Rwandan schools. From that time, it was added to Kinyarwanda and French, the already existing official languages (Sibomana, 2011).

Speaking refers to the words or expressions that an individual uses for the purpose of identifying their intentions (Gert and Hans as cited in Efrizal, 2012). Therefore, learners should have good English oral skills in order to communicate their thoughts. Speaking skill should be given much importance in language learning so that learners can express their emotions and ideas and know others' ideas.

English as an international language is the language of the world whose importance can be denied by none all over the world. For this reason, the knowledge of it makes a person, a citizen of the world. In order to achieve the knowledge of English language, the teacher should motivate students to learn it because motivation gives necessary encouragements for learning (Patel & Praveen, 2008). In this way, the teacher must motivate the learner as the parents does to his/her child to learn the mother tongue in the beginning and this ends by the child managing to learn the language him/herself.

There are four basic skills in English that should be mastered by students: Listening, Writing, Reading and Speaking, and speaking is the hardest language skill that a student has to learn (Rababa'h as cited in Efrizal, 2012). According to Jafarpur (1992), speaking a language is among the most important skills of the four language skills since people who learn a language are meant to be the speakers of that language. Oral skill is usually not emphasized by some teachers because students do not get enough opportunity to speak in the

class. They can perform other language skills well but face challenges in speaking. However, learners need a lot of practice to speak through speaking in order to become fluent.

Leong and Ahmadi (2017), state that the speakers of the language have greater chance for good jobs in various companies and organizations, better education, promotions. In order to achieve a level of oral communication, students need many opportunities for language repetition through meaningful tasks. Rwanda Polytechnic (RP) students need to be good in speaking English language so that they can profit from different opportunities related to the current use and stand of English language as the language of the world.

According to IPRC Ngoma (2018), it was revealed that graduates are good at applying practical skills they learned but still challenged in oral communication, and their employers are not satisfied by the level of graduates' English oral skills. Because of communication difficulties, the report proposes the continuous language improvement in teaching and learning to empower students with oral communication skills.

Therefore, educational stakeholders and policymakers, stakeholders like Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges (IPRCs), and teachers should be aware of students' English oral skills and English learning motivation in order to prepare well graduates for effective oral communication in English in the industry where they will interact with a diversity of people.

Problem Statement

It was discovered that the level of graduates from IPRC Ngoma in English oral fluency is low at the rate of 77 % (IPRC Ngoma, 2018). In addition to this, the research pre-observation conducted during final year project oral examination revealed that some students totally fail to defend their projects in English and decide to mix English with Kinyarwanda language, their mother tongue. Therefore, these poor English oral skills may impact negatively their job.

The previous researches indicate that the level of oral communication skills in English language do not meet industry expectations. It was noted that the main complaint from employers to Malaysian graduates from polytechnics is lack of communication and presentation skills in English language. This has become a significant concern in many Malaysian tertiary education institutions as the big number of students graduate with excellent results but do not get jobs due to communication skills deficiency. They are very good technically, but they are unable to express their ideas in English language (Marcus et al., 2015). Students may be good in their field of specialization with hands on skills but fail to get jobs due to poor oral skills in the language. Therefore, there is need to improve students 'English oral skills in Rwanda Polytechnic for graduates to be able to communicate effectively the workplace.

It is within the above background that the researcher came up with the idea to conduct the investigation of the current level of students 'English oral skills and learning motivation in Rwanda Polytechnic (RP), the case of IPRC Ngoma.

Research Questions

The following two (2) research questions guided this study:

1) What is the current situation of Rwanda Polytechnic students in English oral skills?
2) What motivate Rwanda polytechnic students to learn English language?

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is referred to as the structure or the conceptual foundation that guides the development and interpretation of your own particular research study (Kivunja,

2018). In other words, a theoretical framework is a structure, which can serve as the basis for any research study theory (Swanson & Chermack, 2013).

In order to investigate students' English oral skills and learning motivation, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) was chosen as the theoretical framework to guide this study. SDT is a prominent framework in the field of motivation and education which was developed by psychologists Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan at the University of Rochester and deals with individuals' natural psychological need to be independent, competent and related, and how these are influencing their motivation and participation in educational activities. When the social setting encourages these three essential needs, an individual is more likely to engage intrinsically motivated behaviors and the person's normal behavior is more likely to be self-motivated (Flannery, 2017). SDT indicates that autonomous and controlled motivations exhibit variations in their fundamental regulatory mechanisms and the associated feelings. This implies that behaviors can be discerned based on the level of autonomy or control they possess. Unlike amotivation, which entails absence of intent and drive, both autonomous motivation and controlled motivation are driven by intention (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

In the context of investigating students' English oral skills and learning motivation, SDT can provide valuable insights. The framework suggests that students are more likely to be motivated and engaged in learning when they perceive a sense of autonomy, meaning they have choices and control over their learning process. It also emphasizes the importance of students feeling competent in their language skills and the relevance of their learning to their personal goals and interests. In addition to this, SDT emphasizes the significance of relatedness, which refers to students' need for social connection and support in the learning environment.

By adopting SDT framework, researcher could examine students' English oral skills and learning motivation and how they are influenced by factors such as autonomy-supportive teaching practices, the development of students' perceived competence, and the creation of a supportive and inclusive learning environment. It can also help identify strategies to enhance students' English oral skills and English language learning motivation.

Literature Review

Factors Influencing Students' English Oral Skills and Learning Motivation

Motivation

The motivation is a state of cognitive alertness, which makes the individual feel compelled to take action due to an ongoing effort in thought and or physical activities so that he can attain some previously established objective (Burden, 1997, as cited in Harmer, 2001).

Zahra (2008) states that the first thing to do when learning English as a Second Language is to motivate the students and this can be achieved through making English relevant and meaningful, giving them something that they are interested in. Therefore, rather than topics, we must give emphasis to activities that can boost motivation and stimulate interest.

For RP students of English to achieve the needed degree of motivation, there must be a smooth cooperation between them and their teachers where teachers need to provide topics and activities that learners are familiar with and then motivate them through enjoying different language scenario. In this regard, Harmer (2001), distinguishes extrinsic motivation from intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic motivation

This type of motivation is triggered by various external influences. For instance, an individual's drive to learn English can be sparked by the necessity to excel in an exam, the anticipation of financial gain, or the prospect of future travels.

Intrinsic motivation

This form of motivation originates internally within the individual. This implies that a person's drive to learn might arise from finding pleasure in the learning process or from a wish to enhance their personal well-being. The initial form of satisfaction for the student is intrinsic, stemming from inherent interests. Following intrinsic satisfaction, external rewards such as teachers, institutions, and job prospects come into play. The combination of both satisfaction and rewards contributes jointly to achievement in language learning (Kamo & Rimma, 2015).

Some sources of motivation that are discussed in this concern are the society which learners live in, the teacher and learning environment. It is possible that students of RP are motivated to learn English. However, the environment is not facilitating them to increase their performance because they pass long time in practical activities of technical courses and do not use English while interacting.

Insufficient practical exercises

It is not easy for Polytechnic colleges' students to manipulate a foreign language (FL) effectively since oral communication requires the ability to use it appropriately in social interactions. They do not have sufficient occasions for practice. To practice the language well, it should be used in a meaningful way. Students should be given opportunity for authentic language use in classroom which mainly comprises classroom talk and tends to be transactional in nature (Murat, 2011).

On this, Ushioda (2016) adds that the amount of time and effort reserved for exposure, practice and revision are important factors in retention and in ensuring that the items become part of students' productive vocabulary. The items to be taught must be practicable to help learners improve their level of oral skills and motivation in language.

In the same perspective, Yan (2010) argues that in order to operate effectively in real world, learners want enough opportunity to practice language in a context which motivates them to communicate their needs, ideas and opinions.

Insufficient practical exercises affect negatively the level of English oral skills and students' learning motivation in RP. To solve this problem, teachers should provide meaningful situations to learners in order to practice the language. This means they should be given integrated situations related to the ones in the industry so that they develop well their communication skills in real life of their area of specialization. For instance, students who are studying hospitality need a situation that reflects what happens in the hotel. Therefore, they practice the language and the teacher is there to help in correcting errors of pronunciation, grammar usage and so on.

Environment

The environment in which learners' live shapes their language use. When it is linguistically poor, the mastering of L_2 becomes difficult. When the speaking and learning in which the learner is engaged are viewed as an integral and mutually influential whole in everyday conversation, there are two major perspectives involved: one psycholinguistic and another, sociolinguistic (Rosamond & Myles, 2004).

In other words, the acquisition of language emerges from the combined endeavors of the learner and their conversational partners, encompassing a constantly changing interaction of influences both outside and within. As a result, learners require opportunities to engage in unstructured conversations with speakers of the second language, enabling them to communicate openly. Furthermore, fostering an engaged setting necessitates a collaborative

commitment between students and educators, wherein they jointly embrace a shared goal and duty for instruction. Within this framework, students not only grasp subject matter, enhance conceptual understanding, but also gain language skills through a guided approach (Grainger, 2010). To this approach, learners are the ones who are responsible to discover, construct and create something new. Therefore, this should be emphasized to develop students' speaking ability in the classroom even though they experience speaking difficulties outside.

In Rwanda Polytechnic colleges, the environment in which students live might not be conducive to give opportunity to students to fine-tune the language input they receive. They speak the second language in the class and when they arrive out of it, the environment hinders their speaking of English, the language in which they are supposed to be fluent in nowadays.

Interference from mother tongue

Interference from mother tongue is one of the challenges that learners of English face when speaking. One of the student/teacher failure is when the student is apparently unwilling to speak English in the classroom in especially in communicative activities and this can drive the teacher wild (Harmer, 2001).

In RP, students use their mother tongue and mix it with English for long time when they are in their workshops doing practices. In their English classes most of them fail to intervene when asked to do so and when they try hardly, they mix English and Kinyarwanda. The cause of this challenge is their mother tongue where they translate their ideas in the target language and this may lead to the failure for both teacher and learner in the class.

Sibomana (2014) states that English is still an obstacle to be acquired as s second language in Rwanda because of its low use on a daily basis for official communications within the Rwanda community, and the most important factor for this situation is the fact that Rwanda is a virtually monolingual community, where all members speak the same mother tongue which is Kinyarwanda.

Students of Rwanda Polytechnic are challenged in the same way because when performing instructional tasks especially when one student is explaining something to colleagues. This is a habit that occurs without encouragement from the teacher. Teachers happen to give group activities in the class or assignments to be done outside the class but when students are doing these tasks, they read them in English and explain to each other in their mother tongue, and proceed to do their works after. Due to this they cannot perform well in English because it is not their culture, and this a big challenge for their oral skills development (Harbord, 1992 as cited in Harmer, 2001).

In other words, English is hardly used in communication among students in Rwanda Polytechnic. Kinyarwanda interferes much in English class and activities, and this hinder the development of speaking skills of English language. Interference occurs mainly by code-mixing and code-switching. This behavior should change in order to prepare students for excellent oral communication because the workplace needs people who are able to express themselves in English language.

English is affected by negatively by Kinyarwanda. In RP, teachers and learners think in their mother tongue and try to translate into English. This is a hard task because there is no similarity between the two languages. Therefore, they should work hard to become familiar with English language speaking. This will facilitate the teaching of speaking skills whereby students will learn by imitating their teachers.

Attitudes

An attitude is defined as an organization of beliefs around an object or a situation that lasts for a relatively long time and forces you to respond in a certain preferential way (Smith, 1971, as cited in Nasser and Majid, 2011).

From the above definition, people can react to any social issue or event that is new in their society and have different thinking and feelings about it. This issue or event can include language and any other social events like wars, draughts, earthquake, and so on.

The English language holds substantial importance across various domains like scientific communication, the business realm, cultural exchanges, and political matters. It's widely acknowledged that achieving fluency in English is pivotal for a prosperous life. One of the factors affecting the effectiveness of language acquisition is the attitude one holds (Nasser & Majid, 2011).

In order to be successful in second language learning, Students need to possess a constructive outlook toward the speakers of the language and their cultural practices. Second language learners who hold positive attitudes toward the individuals and culture they are aiming to connect with tend to acquire the language more efficiently compared to those lacking such a positive perspective (Gardner, 1985 as cited in Eiko, 2003).

Therefore, the learner is required to have positive attitudes towards the second language. In the formal settings they should be sensitized about the value of the language so that they develop the favorable attitudes towards the language and its speakers.

Anxiety

Language anxiety is perceived as enduring attributes of one's personality, signifying a person's inclination to respond with unease while communicating in a second language. It involves experiencing feelings of self-doubt or apprehension, and even bodily responses like heartbeat (Rosamond & Myles, 2004). Anxiety comes in when it comes to expressing oneself. It is defined simply as a fear related to oral communication (MaCroskey, 1970 as cited in Said, 2015). In fact, anxiety is opposed to self-confidence. An anxious learner is less willing or motivated to speak in the classroom or to engage with the speakers of the L_2 language in formal interaction. Therefore, students are required to try their best to avoid anxiety and develop or enhance self-confidence quality that will help them develop speaking skills in the second language.

It would be important now to talk about teaching methods, teaching materials and teaching activities as they could be key factors that can affect the teaching learning of spoken language.

Teaching Methods, Materials and Activities

The importance of teaching methods, materials and activities cannot be underestimated in increasing one's level of oral performance in language. Some of them are going to be discussed here below.

Audio-Lingual Method

The audio-lingual method refers to an aural- oral based method though which teachers prepare and encourage learners to use the target language communicatively. In audio-lingual method, sequencing language skills is probably the most important feature. First comes listening, speaking, reading and then writing. It is evident that the hierarchy suggests listening to a language before developing any further skills (Abdel-Rahman, 2009). With audio-lingual method, learners must hear what the teacher says and then imitate his/her teacher, and this implies that a good listener would no doubt become a better speaker. Through this method, learners develop both listening and speaking skills. They try to imitate the pronunciation, stress and intonation of their English teachers.

Communicative Language Teaching

According to Richards, et al. in the Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, Communicative Language Teaching is characterized as a method for instructing

foreign or second languages that emphasizes the idea that language acquisition centers on developing communicative proficiency (Richards, et al., 1992 as cited in Simhachalam, 2015).

Competence is explained by the use of expressions, interpretation, negotiations of meaning and takes into account in second language acquisition research both at psycho linguistic as well as cultural perspectives to account for its development (Savignon, 1972, 1997 as cited in HAMID, 2014)). However, communicative approach is not only limited to oral skills. To strengthen pupils' confidence in all four skills areas, it is essential to develop reading and writing skills. From the start, students work on each of these four skills, i.e., a task that involves reading, speaking, singing or maybe even playing an instrument. From the start Students work on all four skills , which means that a given activity might involve reading, speaking, listening and perhaps also writing (Cele-Murcia 1991, as cited in Simhachalam, 2015).

Communicative language teaching is first and foremost used in language classroom in order to help learners to express themselves in the language they are learning. This method could help learners especially those in RP to increase their level of oral skills in English as well as other language skills because its goals are authentic meaningful communication of needs, fluency and expression through task practices.

Written Materials

Materials of this type are appropriate textbooks, dictionaries and newspapers written in English. Their role is to help learners to store vocabulary and grammatical structures that they use in speaking. Bei (2013), states that before embarking on writing, the student needs a solid grasp of English vocabulary, enabling the choice of suitable words for their composition. Moreover, proficiency in various sentence structures and a considerable understanding of English grammar are prerequisites. Ultimately, creating a coherent outline for the writing piece is also imperative. Therefore, students in RP should be given enough written materials so that they can increase their vocabulary and learn grammatical structures of English that will help them in their speaking.

Audio-Visual Materials

Learners of English need access and sufficient exposure to audio-visual materials such as films, radio, television, videotapes and computers connected to internet as response to the lack of opportunities in Foreign Language classroom setting to interact with native speakers. This can develop their level of oral performance by imitating varied range of speeches of famous speakers, with their accents, intonations, rhythms and stresses.

The video can offer realistic models for simulating the student's role-play; by teaching in a way that is acceptable and suitable, it will increase awareness of other cultures while simultaneously strengthening audiovisual linguistic perceptions; can provide an opportunity for broadening the classroom's content and a variety of activities; facilitating language learning by using modern technologies to facilitate it; can teach with direct observation of linguistic features which are related to the target language. it can also offer a visual reinforcement of the target language and can lower anxiety when practicing the skill of listening (Arthur, 1999 as cited in Christine, 2020).

It is important to use video as instructional materials in the classroom which by sight and sound increase the individuals' motivation and make it easier for language learning.

Communicative Teaching Activities

In the perspective of English language teaching, work activities and tasks enable learners to develop their habits. Alan and Beglar (2018) state that by using, the task-based

approach learners feel highly engaged and this is done in designing free discussions and dialogues to promote confidence with enough opportunities to practice the language in the classroom without being shy and students are free from fear of making mistakes.

Numerous educational theorists assert that the ability to speak can be improved by engaging in communicative exercises like tasks involving sharing information gaps, solving jigsaw puzzles, playing games, and role-playing scenarios. Furthermore, Hedge backs this perspective, affirming that activities such as open discussions and role-playing are beneficial for enhancing speaking proficiency (Hedge as cited in Thanyalak, 2012). Language activities play a significant part in teaching language for communication. Activities in the language classroom help to stimulate interaction between students. Communication activities may also motivate the learner and build good relationships between teachers and students, both of whom will help to foster a supportive environment for learning languages (Harmer, 2001).

Therefore, the use of the above communicative activities in teaching and learning of English language is very significant to improve students' English oral skills and motivation to learn English language. In In RP, teachers or lectures of English should try to use those activities so that learners benefit from them.

ICT Tools

Language teaching and learning in Rwanda is a very fascinating issue specifically when we talk about English language. As we are in a digital era of 21st century, we are becoming familiar with devices such as audio-visual devices, computers, mobile phones and robots which are currently being used in order to help people learn language skills from everywhere at any place. One type of input that has started to emerge more and more frequently within the L2 acquisition context, at a time when Mobile Technology developments have been taking place, is one with connectivity and portability characteristics: inputs from Modern Mobile Devices (Uwizeyimana, 2018). This means that with technological devices language learning is ubiquitous as it can take place anywhere at any time and this is very motivating for today's youth because they often use mobile devices and they are good at them. So, Rwanda Polytechnic students should take this into account and use this opportunity to learn English themselves out of the class and improve their level of oral skills as the class time might not be enough for them to develop it. The same author says that the large number of Rwandans have opportunity to access to mobile technological devices and once they fully and appropriately exploit these devices, they will help them explore the world and interact with it and this opportunity can help to acquire a high level of proficiency as they come across enough rich and sufficient English input which will lead to effective output.

Furthermore, the utilization of digital resources, particularly mobile devices, amplifies the motivation, self-assurance, and self-assurance of language learners, leading to noteworthy favorable effects on students' viewpoints and achievements. Clearly, students should receive supplementary language assistance as they endeavor to enhance their proficiency in English as a Second Language (Minoo, 2016). In this regard, ICT tools are very fruitful in that learners are self-motivated and this helps them increase their proficiency in the target language. In addition to this, technological devices help teachers also improve their language performance because they move with their training materials and learn more about the language especially English as second language in our country.

Global Status of English

English language is a medium in different fields of knowledge including science and technology. It has become an official language in so many countries or chosen as medium of instruction in schools for educational reasons in recently. Photis and Yvonne (2003) asserts that in an era characterized by growing interconnections between countries and swift

transformations in society and technology, English can serve as a significant asset. Additionally, they highlight that English's heightened advantage lies in its role as the primary language for business and commerce. This advantage is closely tied to the fact that major corporations originating from English-speaking nations have played a central part in the globalization of production processes.

Basing on the above role that English plays, there is a great demand that it should be emphasized all over the world. It is no longer the language of the United Kingdom, nor the United States but the language of the world and this status however shapes the students' attitudes and motivation towards this language although they face difficulties in learning and use it as a medium of instruction and communication. Therefore, students of Rwanda Polytechnic must view it positively and know it in order to benefit information from media, radio, T.V, movies, and internet.

The Status of English in Rwanda

Learning, mastering and using English are of ways of improving learners' attitudes towards English language as medium of instruction. The other way is to create students' awareness towards the status of its power and the importance of knowing and using it and the benefit of having positive attitudes towards it especially at the time the government has promoted it so that learners struggle to develop oral skills in it.

In Rwanda, English is an official language, an international language and a medium of instruction. As an international language, it has the function of being a language of wide communication in the country and beyond. Rwanda Polytechnic students should be aware that English is not only a medium of instruction but also communication in the region. This means that it is a medium of communication with people in East African Community, Common Wealth, COMESA and the world in general.

The above status makes English an important language in Rwanda. The illustration is that the ordinal level English program recommends the teaching of English with the view to facilitate national and world communication, to share experience and personal development (NCDC, 1998, as cited in Sibomana, 2016). In addition, recently Rwanda decided to promote English as medium of instruction at all levels educational minus nursery schools. The reason for this promotion is linked to increasing access to the global economy and not to minimizing the long-term dominated international and official language. Therefore, learners have to develop their oral performance in English and use it so that they enjoy the national, regional and world integrity.

Methodology

This chapter indicates research paradigm, research approach, research design, area of study, instruments for data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity of data as well as ethical considerations.

Research Paradigm

A paradigm can be defined as a set of beliefs that guides action in inquiry or research (Crotty, 1998, Guba & Lincoln, 2000 as cited in Gregson and James, 2001). This study was guided by pragmatic research paradigm. According to David (2014), in spite of whether the study uses qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods, pragmatism may serve as a philosophical instrument for social research. Pragmatism is based on the idea of what's working (Heba, 2019). Rather than relying on assumptions about the nature of knowledge, pragmatism is dedicated to addressing practical problems in the real world. It is a modern philosophy, providing epistemology and logic for the integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches and methods (Creswell, 2012).

Research Approach

To conduct this study, mixed research approach was used. Through this approach, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed in order to find solutions to the research questions. Mixed methods are gaining popularity as the latest development in educational research techniques, given that qualitative research is being accepted by researchers now and quantitative research has been an approach for many years (Creswell, 2014).

Research Design

During this research, explanatory sequential design was used in order to investigate students' English oral skills and learning motivation in Rwanda Polytechnic Colleges, the case of IPRC Ngoma. Explanatory sequential design is a process in which quantitative data are first collected and followed by qualitative data for the purposes of explaining or elaborating on them (Creswell & Plano, 2011 as cited in Creswell, 2014). It is within this perspective that the researcher collected both quantitative data with close-ended questions and qualitative data with open-ended questions using questionnaires for both students and teachers of English. Then, qualitative data were used to explain, extend, refine or elaborate on quantitative data.

Area of Study

The study has been conducted at IPRC Ngoma, Rwanda Polytechnic College located in Ngoma District, Eastern Province.

Study Population

The study population has included English teachers and all students of IPRC Ngoma in the academic year 2021-2022.

Table 1: Population of the study

Students				**Lecturers**			**Total**		
Department	**Number**			**Number**			**Number**		
	M	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**
Civil Engineering	376	64	440	3	0	3	735	227	962
Mechanical Engineering	244	82	326						
ICT	112	81	193						
Total	732	227	959						

Source: IPRC Ngoma Head of Departments' offices (2022)

Sampling and Sample Size

Sampling is the process, technique or method used to select a representative portion of the population to establish parameters for the purposes of calculation or characteristics of the population as a whole (Gentles, Charles, & Ploeg, 2016). In the same way, the researcher resorted to the sampling technique in order to find a small part that can represent the population because it was not possible to use the whole population.

The first and important thing to do is to determine the sample size to use as far as sample and sampling techniques are concerned. For students' sampling technique, the model of Alain Bouchard was used. On the basis of the formula stipulating that when the universe of the population is lower than 1000 individuals, we match a sample of 63 individuals and when the universe of the population is lower than 500 individuals, we match a sample of 60

individuals being given a margin of error of 10%. Our case coincides with the following formula:

$$nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n}$$

N: Size of the statistical universe
n: Sample size for the statistical universe
N.C: Corrected sample size
Thus, for learners, we have,
N = size of the statistical universe which corresponds to 959
n = sample size for the infinite statistical universe: 63
nc = sample size corrected for an infinite statistical universe
Indeed,

$$nc = \frac{N \times n}{N + n} = \frac{959 \times 63}{959 + 63} = 59.11 \approx 60$$

By applying the formula to our population of 959 students, we obtain a sample of 60 students. For teachers, we considered all 3 teachers of English because their number is not big.

Table 2: Sample population

Students				**Lecturers**			**Total**		
Department	**Number**			**Number**			**Number**		
	M	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**	**M**	**F**	**T**
Civil Engineering	20	9	29	3	0	3	44	19	63
Mechanical Engineering	14	6	20						
ICT	7	4	11						
Total	41	19	60						

Source: Calculated from the population (2022)

The sample population of our research is composed by all three (3) lecturers of English subject, and sixty (60) students. After getting the number that represents the whole population, the researcher used simple random sampling within different departments and levels where members had equal chance to be part of respondents.

Data Collection Method and Instruments

In this study, two kinds of questionnaires were designed one for learners and another questionnaire for English Lectures. The questionnaire for students were randomly distributed among them within their departments while all three (3) lecturers were all involved in the study. Both questionnaires included close-ended questions and open-ended questions and provided important quantitative and qualitative information on the topic under investigation.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

Presentation and Analysis of Data from English Lecturers

Gender of Lecturers of English language

The total number of respondents from the interview conducted on English lecturers by gender is represented in the chart below:

The following pie chart gives information about the gender of lecturers of English language in IPRC Ngoma.

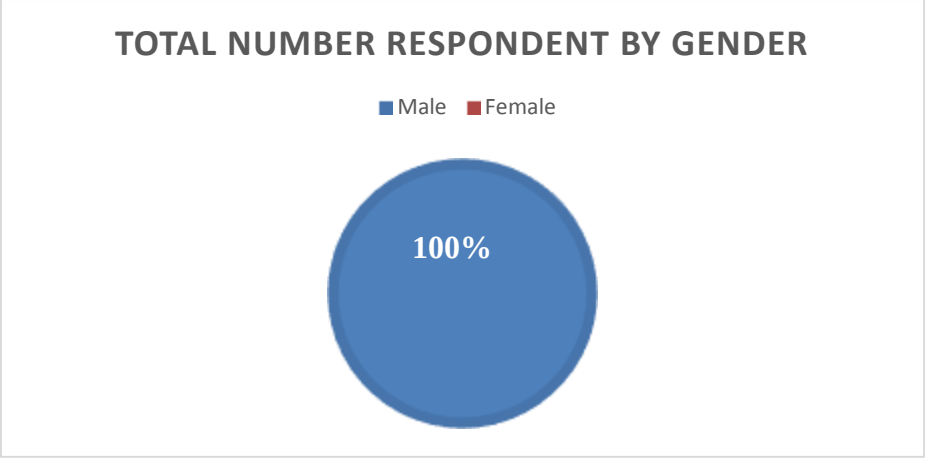

Figure 1: Gender of English Lecturers

The results of the chart above show that a 100% (equivalent to 3 of 3 respondents) from the study are male English lecturers. It was revealed that gender of lecturers or teachers does not have any significant impact on students' academic achievement/performance in English language (Alufohai & Ibhafidon, 2015).

English lecturers' qualifications and teaching experience

The following figure shows the lectures' levels of Study and their teaching experience.

Figure 2: Lecturers' qualifications and teaching experience

According to the above figure, it was revealed that the minimum qualification for lecturers of English is Bachelors' degree while the maximum level is Maters. The minimum teaching experience for lecturers with Bachelors' degree varies from seven (7) to twenty-two (22) years while it is fourteen (14) years for Lecturers with Masters 'level. The research reported that the presence of teacher with experience in schools has much relationship with students' learning outcomes (Adeyemi, 2008).

It was noted that students taught by Lectures with Ph.D. and M.Sc. were average in academic performance and the performance of students taught by lecturer with Ph.D. was higher than that of students taught by lecturer with M.Sc. (Igberadja, 2016). This means that students' academic performance has a significant relationship with the lectures' qualification.

English lecturers' interest in English teaching

The following chart presents lecturers' interest or motivation in teaching English language.

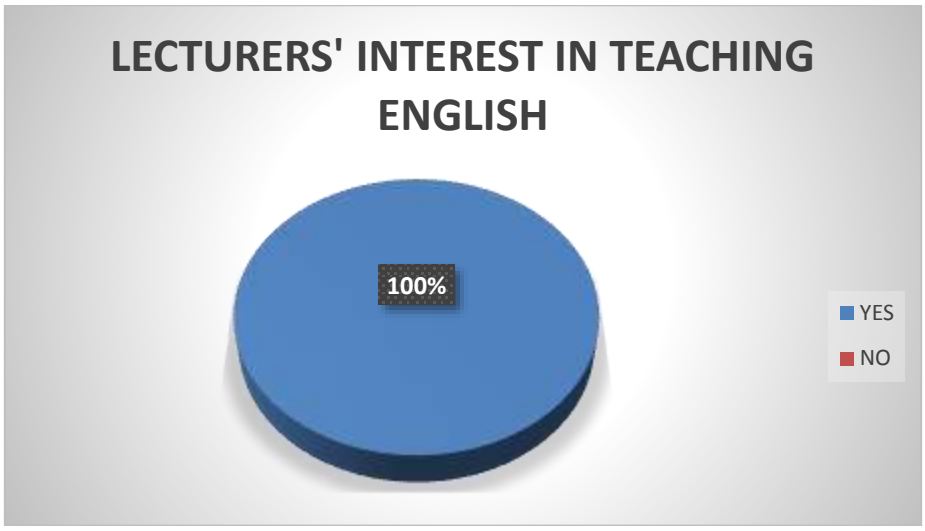

Figure 3: Lecturers' interest in teaching English language

According to the chart above all 3 teachers (100%) like teaching English language. The main reasons from them to like English is that it is their area of specialization, English become more popular language used for various businesses in Rwanda, Africa and worldwide. In addition, the English language is serving as academic instruction language.

The reason for English language to serve as the language of the world has also been pointed out by students teachers of English in Slovenia stating that English language helps students become familiar with the culture of another country (Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998). The position of English language in the country has been also pointed out by previous studies as one among common motivators for English teachers to teach English language because it gives them a high social prestige (Sujeewa, 2013).

Students' level in speaking English language

The following chart presents the level of students' English oral skills according to their lecturers' views.

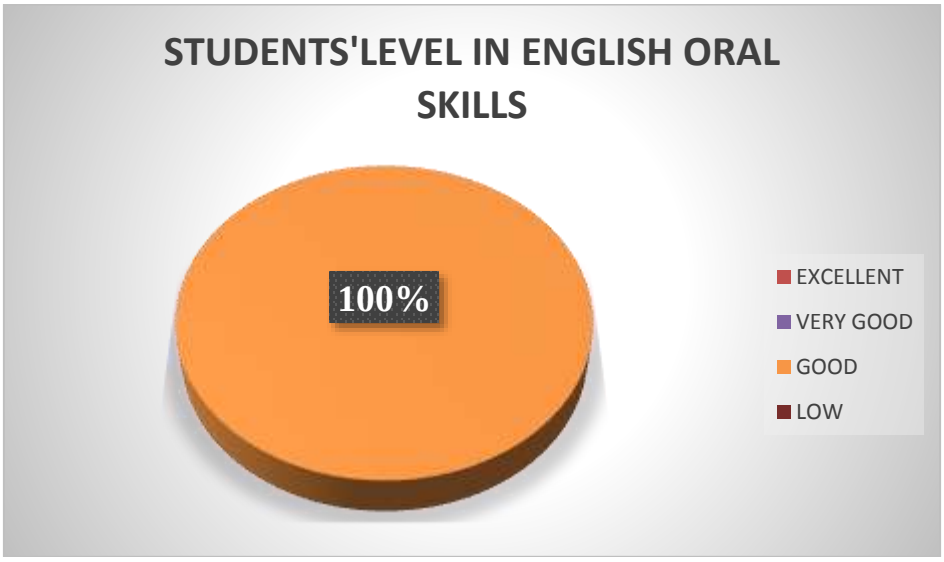

Figure 4: Students level in English language

Figure 4 above shows that 100% of lecturers contacted, ranked the English oral skills from students' performance as good. Lack of commitment to speak English, the shyness of speaking in public, and interference from mother tongue are the root causes for the students' level of English oral skills being good.

Marriam et al. (2011) states that student may feel shyness or unmotivated towards speaking English in the classroom due to classroom climate where the teacher using interactive activities in the class may pay more attention to students' speaking activities. Interference from mother tongue has been pointed out by previous studies to influence students' oral skills in the second language. For example Dedy (2017) found that there are factors that influence mother tongue interference in second language learning that include the environment where students live which affect their communication and the school area where students use their mother tongue to talk to friends in the classroom since teachers could not control all students for not speaking their mother tongue. In addition to this, students use high accent of their mother tongue when they speak English language. In the case of present study, students' environment does not allow students to develop well their spoken English because they pass long time in their home communicating in their mother tongue, Kinyarwanda. In the classroom also when they happen to exchange information with colleagues, they do it using their mother tongue.

The skills focused most in English teaching by Lectures

The following chat presents the skills which are more focused by lecturers while teaching English language.

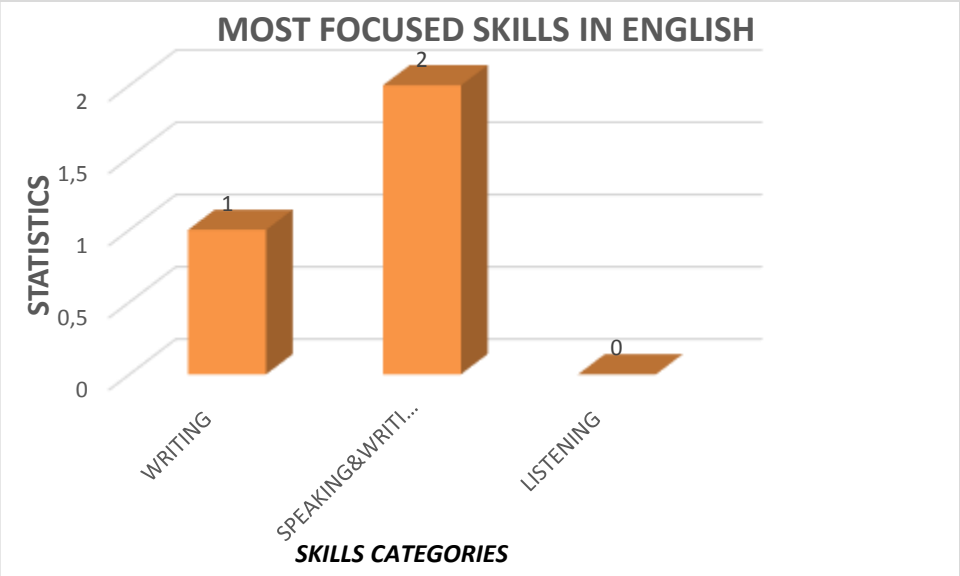

Figure 5: The skills focused most by English lecturers

As depicted by the above chart, two (2) lecturers focus more on teaching speaking and writing skills while one (1) of them focuses more on writing skills. The reasons for their focus are respectively that both writing and speaking are the skills seeming to be more difficult for students and the most needed at the workplace and writing only because of limited didactic materials.

In order to communicate effectively in the workplace graduates, need to be good at speaking and writing as revealed by lectures of English. However, he previous studies also found speaking and important in the workplace for engineers. For example, Darling & Dannels (2015) state that engage with many and complex audiences such as fellow engineers, clients government agencies and staff support, some with technical backgrounds and others

with no technical backgrounds. Writing and speaking are both important but speaking is the most important skill to take care of for engineers for effective communication specifically those related to oral communication because they are central to their daily interpersonal communication. Moreover, graduates need to possess excellent English communication skills in order to maintain their positions in today's competitive labor market (Kassim &Fatimah, 2010). Regarding the present study, students of Rwanda Polytechnic are future engineers and they need to competent in oral performance to that they become successful in interpersonal communication in the workplace. The mastery of English language communication skill would help them develop self-confidence, solve problems more efficiently and present their projects with greater clarity.

Use of communicative teaching activities

The following chart presents how often do teachers use communicative teaching activities in their English classes.

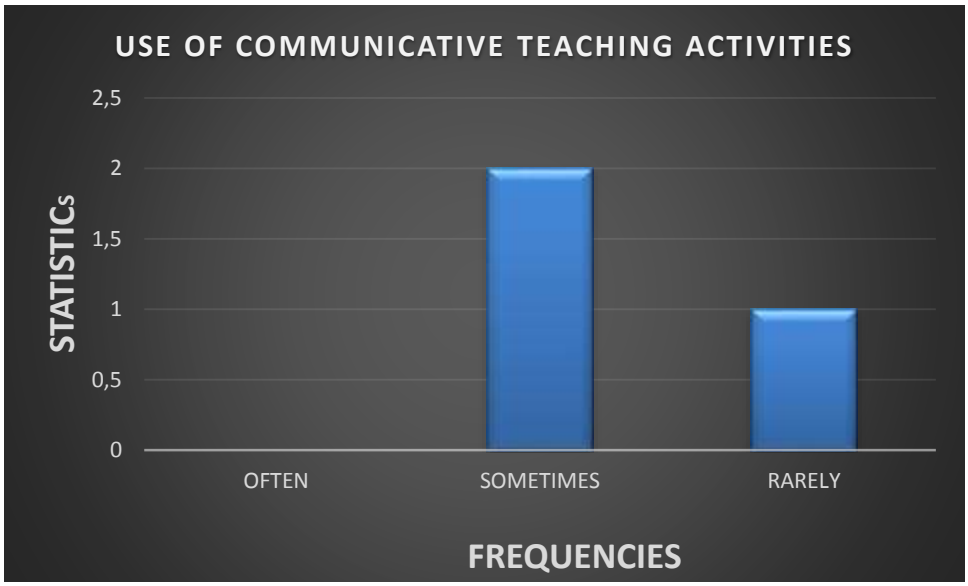

Figure 6: Use of communicative teaching activities

The data presented in the above chart show that, two (2) lecturers sometimes use communicative teaching activities in the class while one (1) uses communicative teaching activities rarely. The communicative teaching activities are sometimes used due to the different factors including large classroom, limited session time/longevity and teaching methods (group discussions, debates and presentations). They are rarely used also due to lack of appropriate teaching aids.

Communicative teaching activities are found useful and effective for successful language teaching and learning. Long ago, researches revealed that communicative language teaching requires the involvement of students in the dynamic and interactive process of communication where students are allowed to experience (practice) language and analyze it (Savignon, 1987). In a communicative teaching classroom, the teacher is an active facilitator. He or she sets up an exercise and step back to let students do most of speaking (Galloway, 1993). In order to help students learn through communicative activities, they should be given contexts, roles and tasks that reflect situations that they could face someday in the workplace such helping a foreign visitor or exchanging information with a foreign engineer and this will help them for authentic communication (Zhenhui, 2002). Although communicative teaching activities are not often used by lecturers due to the size of the class, time and teaching

methods, their role cannot be left behind. Teachers should struggle to use them where possible in order to prepare students for effective oral communication in the workplace.

Participation of students in English class sessions

The following chart present how often do students participate in English class.

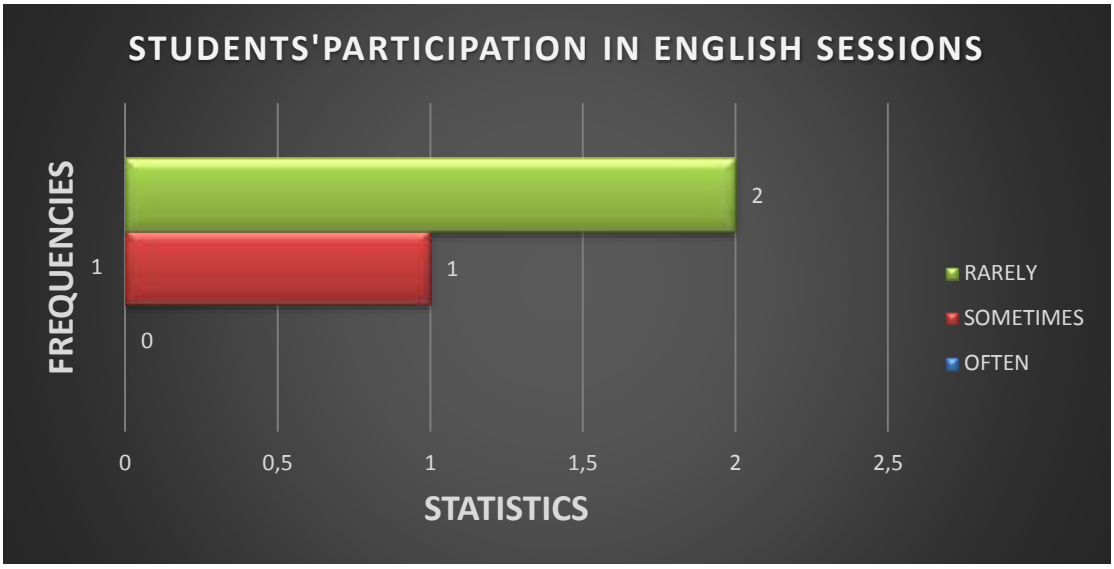

Figure 7: Participation of students in English Class sessions

The results from the figure 7 show that students rarely participate in English class sessions as confirmed by two (2) lecturers corresponding to 66.67% and sometimes as confirmed by one lecturer corresponding to 33.33%. The students' participation in English oral sessions is rare, due lack of confidence. The previous studies also mentioned lack of confidence as the source of being reluctant for students to participate in English classes. For instance Arafat (2013) states that many learners don't feel confident to participate in the class and believe that their English language skills are weaker compared fellow students' English language skills.

Lack of confidence or anxiety has been investigated by different researchers to find out the cause of it among students. According to Maria and Listyani (2020) a big number of students suffered from anxiety in front of their colleagues due to three main factors. These are communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The same researcher continues by explaining the meaning of these factors. Communication apprehension refers to a type of shyness which is characterized by fear of and anxiety about communicating with other people due to the lack of ability of speaking in English language. Test anxiety comes when learners face an English language oral test while fear of negative evaluation happens when the student think that others will evaluate him/her in a negative way. Consequently, these factors will bear shyness in the students and keep quiet in English language class.

Presentation and Analysis of Data from Students

Gender of Students Included in this Study

The chart below presents the gender of participants included in this study on the side of students.

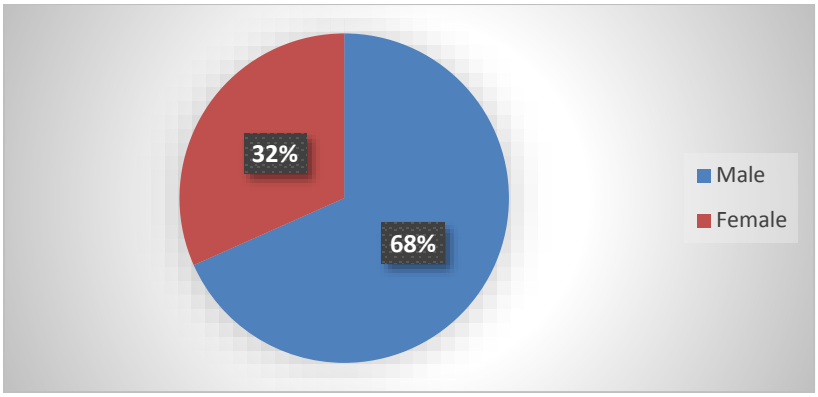

Figure 8: Gender of students

The figure 8 shows that among the population sampled, the 68% of respondents corresponding to 41 students are male while 32% of respondents corresponding to 19 students are female. It is evident that the number of girls enrolling in TVET sector is smaller than the number of boys. The consistent trend of a limited number of female students opting for Engineering courses is evident in the nationwide enrollment data. To illustrate, the 2018 Education Statistics provided by the Ministry of Education highlight that out of 13,447 students enrolled in polytechnics, merely 3,786 (28%) were females. As pointed out by (MINEDUC, 2018), the cause for the diminished enrollment of girls in polytechnics is attributed to the fact that many polytechnics provide programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, which are perceived as less attractive to females.

Respondents' Departments

The following pie chart presents the percentage of respondents by departments.

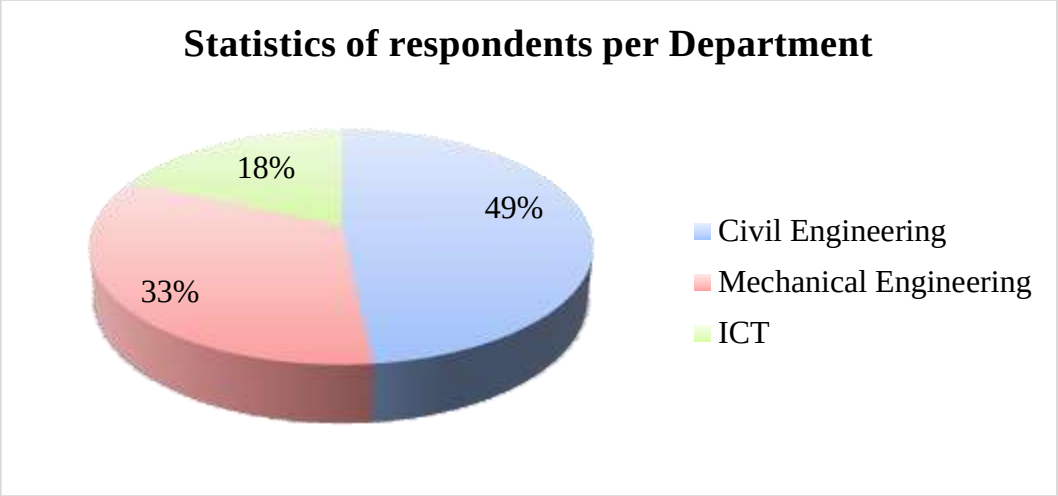

Figure 9: Respondents' statistics per department

As shown in the above chart, the respondents comprise of students from different departments of IPRC Ngoma specifically, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and ICT. It was noticed that among the 60 students contacted, the highest percentage of respondents are students from Civil engineering which correspond to 49% (29students). However, this number is proportional to the number of students enrolling in civil engineering department in the academic year 2021-2022.

Students' Motivation in Learning and Speaking English Language

The following chart presents the way students are interested in English language.

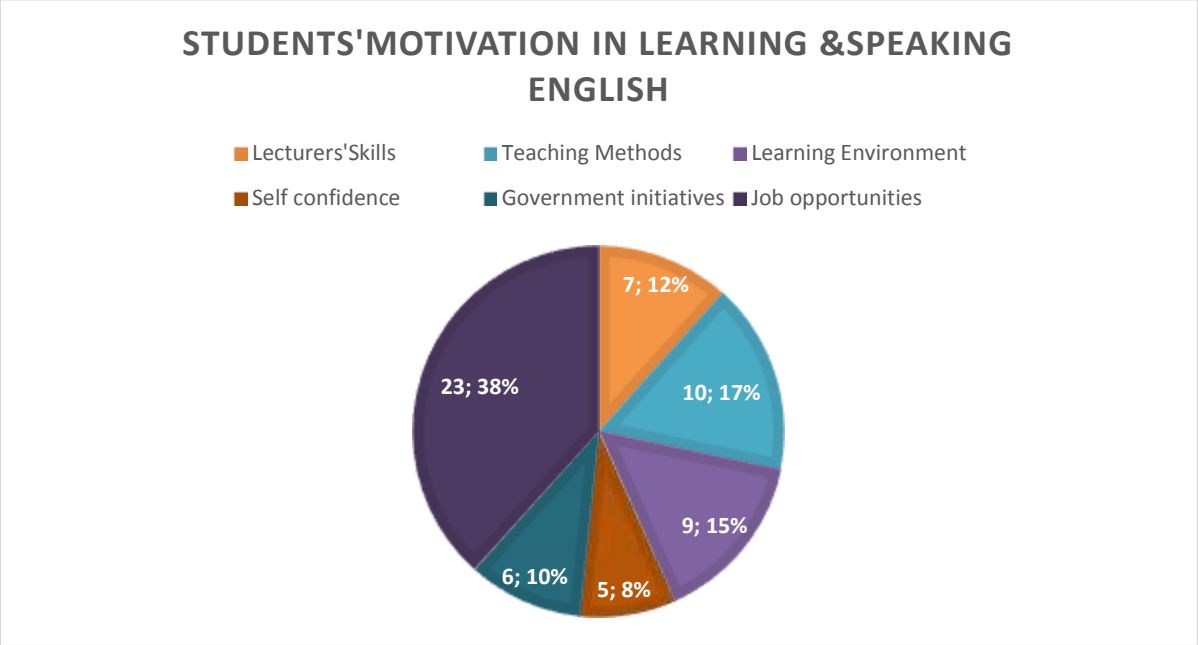

Figure 10: Students' motivation in English language

From the above chart regarding the students 'motivation in learning and speaking English language, shows that 38% (23 students) of students are motivated by job opportunities, 17% (10 students) are motivated by teaching methods used by lecturers, 15% (9 students) are motivated by learning environment, 12% (7 students) are motivated by Lecturers' skills in English language, 10% (6 students) are motivated by Government initiatives such as membership in East African Community and COMESA, etc and 8% (5 students) are motivated by self-confidence.

The role of English language as an opportunity to get and perform jobs have been pointed out by students. The previous studies also mentioned mastering English language as a tool to enter the world of business. Dita (2021) states that for the people of Indonesian countries to meet the opportunities and challenges of entering the free market era, they should master global languages including English which is a global language. Similarly, Cahya, et al. (2022) state that students value the English they learn hoping it will help them improve their academic performance and get jobs after completing their studies. In this regard, English language as an international language and a contact language all over the world, it will help graduates cope with life when they join the society where business dominates and English language serves as a communication tool.

Students' Participation in English Sessions

The following chart presents students' participation in English sessions.

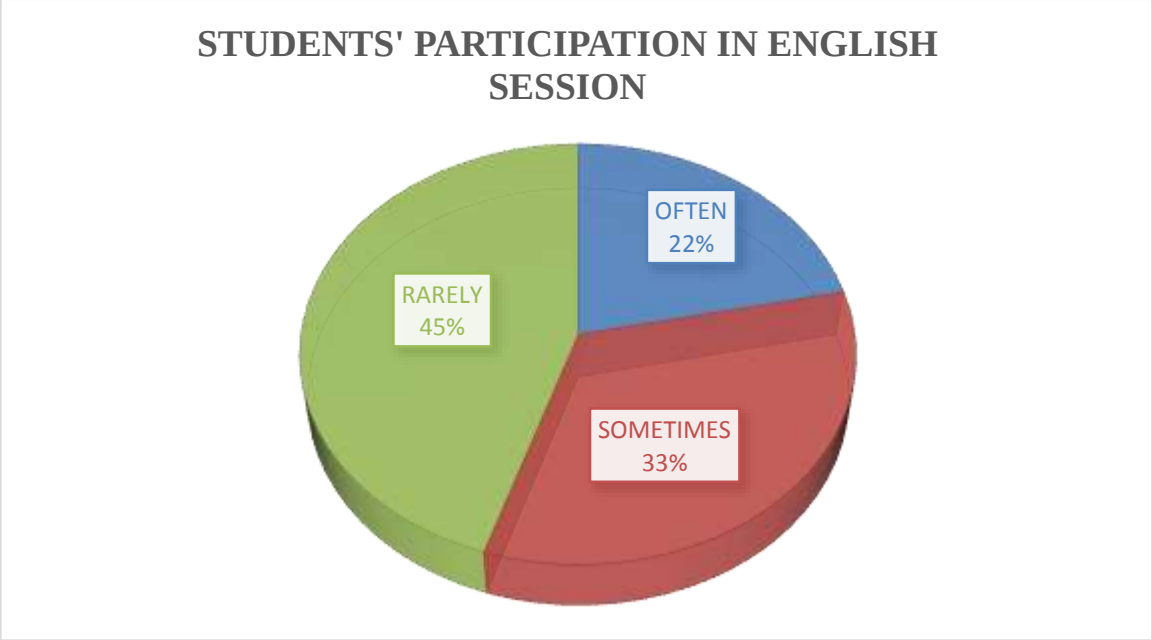

Figure 11: Students' participation in English class

Figure 11 regarding students 'participation in English session shows that among 60 students contacted, 45% (27 students) of students are rarely participating, 33% (20 students) are sometimes participating and 22% (13 students) are often participating.

As the data revealed, a big number students rarely participate in English sessions. Similar results have been also pointed out by their English lecturers. This inactive participation impact negatively their oral skills improvement. The sources of inactive participation in English class in higher learning institution had been pointed out by Zan and Goh (2011). Among them teacher, students and context are mentioned. The teacher may have difficulties to develop learners' motivation, and inadequate knowledge for effectively plan and implement oral activities. The teacher may also lack strategies to find out and balance the needs of students based on their needs. It is a big challenge to teach oral skills in the class since the students participate inactively and have low proficiency in English language. On the side of the context, the absence of conducive environment, large size of the class, limited teaching resources and insufficient teaching time are mentioned as challenges to teaching oral skills and sources of inactive participation of students. Regarding the current study, students' oral skills development is hindered by their inactive participation but also the students' English proficiency and the context play a great role in their inactive participation in English classes. In addition to this, teachers may also have limited knowledge and teaching skills of practical activities.

Students' Difficulties to Speak English Language

The following chart presents lecturers perception towards students speaking difficulties in English language.

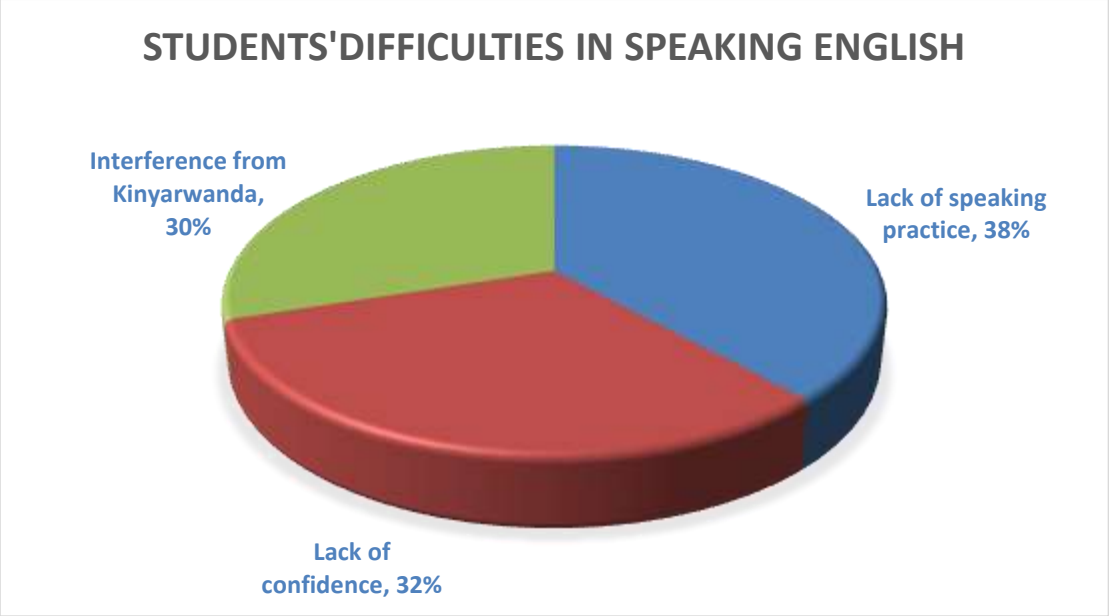

Figure 12: Students' difficulties in speaking English language

The chart above shows that the most difficult issue affecting the students to effectively speak English is the lack of speaking practice (38%). The other difficulties found to be lack of confidence (32%) and interference from Kinyarwanda (30%).

Students' lack of English-speaking practices is the major source of their speaking difficulties. English speaking practices requires students who are motivated and willing to use English in the classroom (Ming, 2011). As discussed in the previous section, IPRC Ngoma students are motivated to learn English language but still, their participation in English class is low due to lack of confidence. However, students should be provided with more suitable support to help them become active in English language classroom.

One of techniques that can be used by lecturers to raise students' confidence is using oral presentations. Oral presentations make the class more communicative because it uses communicative activities. Previous studies about oral presentations found them very beneficial for English language learners. For example Gavin and John (2014) state that oral presentation activities are student centred and they are successful in improving learners' language skills and increasing their autonomy. While planning preparing their presentations, students get opportunities to negotiate meaning with group members and learn English language in a real situation. In addition to this, oral presentations involve all the four language skills; writing, reading, speaking, and listening. To strengthen this, Richard (2009) adds that in university environment, oral presentations as part of language teaching skills is becoming more important because prepares learners for business presentations which they will likely be expected to perform after they graduate and get jobs. Therefore, oral presentations would be a fruitful approach to help learners improve their oral skills in English language and learning motivation as well as other language skills and overcome they shyness in the classroom by giving them time for speaking practice between the presenter and the audience.

Students' Perception of an Excellent Level in English Oral Skills and Reasons

The following chart presents how students perceive an excellent level of oral skills in English language.

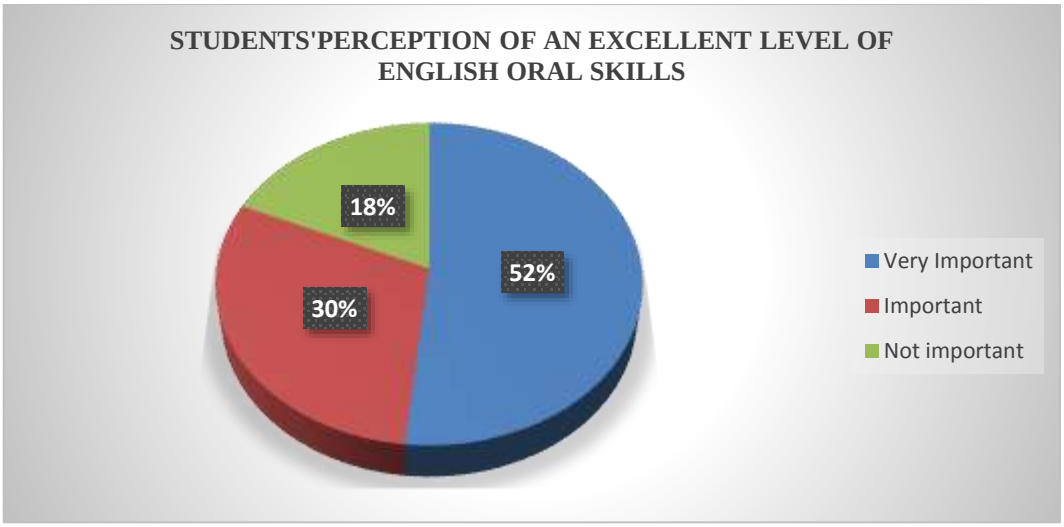

Figure 13: Students' perception towards an excellent level of English oral skills

The data presented in the above chart regarding the perception of students on an excellent level of English oral skills show that 52% (31 of 60 students) find it very important. 30% (18 over 60 students) find it important and 18% (11 students) find it not important.

A big number of students have a positive perception towards an excellent level of English language. Communication skill in English have been found very important in this age of globalisation. The previous studies found that English language is the prime mean of communication between people from different countries and different cultures and it is particularly very important for engineers because there is an increase of number of international projects. In this this regard, a cross-cultural exchange of information and collaboration is on the rise (Riemer, 2002). In line with the present study, students need to struggle towards and excellent level of English language because they will need it in the world of businesses as future engineers. They will need to work in different projects either national or international and English will help them communicate with fellow engineers from different countries and exchange knowledge and skills.

Students' Commitments to Speak English Language out of the Class

The following chart shows the statistics of students 'initiatives to speak English language out of the class.

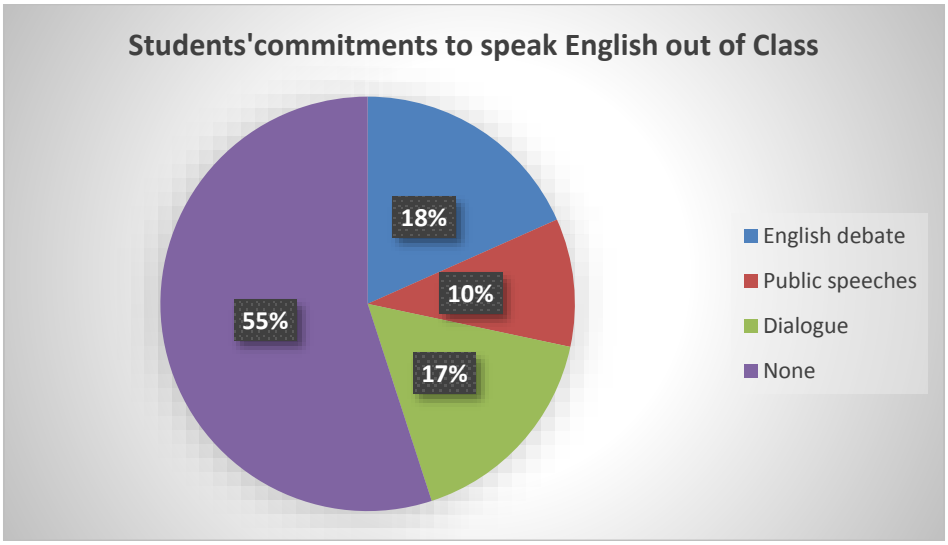

Figure 14: Students' commitments to speak English out of the class

As depicted by the data presented in the figure above, 55 % (33 students) of students contacted are not committed to speak English out of the class, 18% (11 students) are committed in English debate, 17% (10 students) are committed in Dialogue and 10% (6 students) are committed in public speeches.

As revealed by the above data, a big number of students are not committed to speak English language out of the class, and this is very challenging for oral skills development. This means that they do not have English clubs, no public speeches they participate in and do not try to have dialogues in English language with colleagues when they out of the classroom. The previous studies discovered that most students when they are out of class the materials they choose for language learning only help them to improve their vocabulary, learn grammar and receptive skills rather than concentrating on productive skills (Julide, et al. 2010). As far as the present study is concerned, students should also be aware of the role of out of class language learning and involve productive skills in their out of class language learning including speaking skills where they can attend and participate in clubs and public speech and get chance to practice English language.

Discussion

This section discussed the findings of the present study in relation to its aim which was to investigate the students' current level of English oral skills and learning motivation in Rwanda Polytechnic (RP). The findings were discussed by answering research questions regarding, (1) the current level of students' English oral skills, (2) students' motivation to learn English language, and (3) strategies that could help students improve their level in English oral skills. The discussion of the findings was also done in light with existing literature of English language oral skills and learning motivation.

Students' Current Level in English Oral Skills

The first research question sought to find out the current situation of students' English oral skills in Rwanda Polytechnic and it was addressed to lecturers of English. English lectures' views depicted that the level of students in English oral skills is good. The tracer survey conducted by IPRC Ngoma revealed that the level of employees' English language proficiency graduated from IPRC Ngoma is low while it is excellent for practical skills (IPRC Ngoma, 2018). This means that students might join the workplace with a good level of English proficiency and then their level decreases due to the working environment or the students' attitudes and perception towards English language proficiency and learning motivation is increasing nowadays.

However, the data revealed that they have a positive perception toward having an excellent level of English oral skills as it would help them perform well their courses because English serves as a means of teaching. Past research indicates that employing English as an instructional medium can potentially grant access to higher-level expertise, attract both international students and faculty, facilitate collaborative training of university students within diverse international cohorts, enhance academic mobility, entice capable students toward scholarly and professional research endeavors, broaden the institution's research capacities, and establish a competitive advantage within the educational landscape (Litovchenko & Shmeleva, 2020). There is no doubt that students will benefit a lot from mastering English language as a medium of instruction in different corners of academic life.

Moreover, an excellent level of English oral skills would help them communicate effectively with customers when they join the workplace. The previous studies found that being proficient in English language is very important in todays' pioneering businesses. For example Dita (2021) revealed that English language is a very promising asset in today's business as business and technology develop faster and provide opportunities for

international exchanges. Therefore, in order to have a good career prospect, mastering English language is very important because most international companies expect their employees to be conversant with English language as it is used from manufacturing service industries to information technology and internet. Rwanda polytechnic students as part of future businessmen will benefit more from mastering English language as it will serve as the tool for communication in the social diverse environment of work where they will meet people from all over the word and exchange business information and services for successful life.

Motivation of Students to Learn English in Rwanda Polytechnic

The second questions sought to find out what motivate students to learn English language. The inquiry exclusively targeted students with the intention of uncovering their motivations for acquiring proficiency in the English language. The outcomes exposed that a significant proportion of students are driven to learn and communicate in English due to its potential advantages in the professional realm, indicating an extrinsic motivation. Various research efforts have identified three primary sources that prompt students to learn a foreign language: (i) Intrinsic factors, which pertain to a personal fascination with and pleasure derived from learning and using a foreign language; (ii) Instrumental factors, relating to the practical applications and benefits that accompany foreign language proficiency, such as enhanced career opportunities and access to higher education; and (iii) Integrative factors, concerning how language proficiency empowers individuals to engage with the culture of another region or country and interact with its people (Gardner & Lambert 1972, as cited in Kyriacou & Kobori, 1998) . Among these reasons, students are motivated by instrumental reasons as they will benefit from the use of English language in their future career of learning, and also by integrative reasons where learning English language will enable them get job, and exchange information in a social diverse environment where they will meet and interact with different people from different parts of the world in the workplace.

The same findings have been also pointed out by other previous studies. For example, Tabaro (2015) found that Rwandans motives to learn and mastering English as a medium of instruction is in line with extrinsic motivation where mastering English will open doors for students to many job opportunities, facilitate their understanding in other taught subjects, further studies in English speaking countries. This means that learning and mastering English language would help them cope with the world globalization where English keep taking the lead among other languages.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

This chapter aims to present the conclusions based on the students' and English lecturers' questionnaires results' analysis. In addition, it gives recommendations for further researches and English oral skills improvement.

Objectives of the present study read as follow:

- To investigate the current situation of Rwanda Polytechnic students in English oral skills.
- To find out how motivated students of Rwanda Polytechnic are towards learning English language.

By referring to the first objectives, this study revealed that the level of Rwanda Polytechnic students' level in English oral skills is good according to English lecturers' views. In addition to this, students are aware that having an excellent level of English oral skills is very important for them as a language of instruction because it would help them

perform well in their studies. Moreover, an excellent level of English oral skills will enable them communicate effectively in the workplace where they will meet a diversity of people from different corners of the world where English serves as a contact language.

By referring to the second question, it was found out that Rwanda Polytechnic students are extrinsically motivated to learn and master English language according to students' views. The reasons behind their motivation include instrumental reasons as they will benefit from the use of English language, and integrative reasons where learning English language will help them get job and exchange information in a social diverse environment where they will meet and interact with different people from different parts of the world in the workplace.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the present study, the following recommendations were given:

- More researches should be undertaken about factors that affect graduates' oral skills in the workplace.
- More enough facilities that help in the teaching and learning of English oral skills should be provided.
- Libraries should be equipped with enough English language books for students to read and increase their vocabulary and learn more about grammar of English language.
- English lecturers should use oral presentations in their teaching activities.
- English language lecturers should raise the students' awareness towards ICT tool they have in self-learning and their role in language learning, and encourage students to use them.
- English language lecturers study to get further qualifications because there is a significance of lecturers' qualifications on students' performance.

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